

A Summer Senior Newsletter from Assemblyman Michael Montesano!

For more information on this or any other legislative matter,
please contact my district office at **(516) 937-3571** or
111 W. Old Country Road, Suite 202, Hicksville, NY 11801.

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News for Seniors!

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Dear Neighbor,

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and that you are enjoying summertime here on Long Island. As your Assemblyman for the 15th Assembly District, helping Long Islanders maintain a good quality of life, in particular senior citizens, is important to me. This is why I have filled my annual Summer Senior Newsletter with tips, events and news from Albany to help keep you up-to-date. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future newsletters, please contact me at my district office at (516) 937-3571.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Montesano

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

This legislative session, I have fought to improve the quality of life for New York's senior citizens by cosponsoring legislation which would:

- Establish an Aging in Place Council to help support seniors who would like to remain in their homes or communities for the rest of their lifetime or to "age in place." (A.3240)
- Protect individuals from becoming ineligible under the EPIC program if they receive an increase in Social Security benefits, or a public or private pension if the increase does not exceed the consumer price index. (A.3145-B)
- Form an Alzheimer's disease outreach and education program. (A.1430)
- Create a real property tax freeze for property owned by those who are 62 years of age or older. (A.4786)
- Institute a lifespan respite care program in New York's Office for the Aging to foster the development of community respite care programs. (A.5063)
- Develop a multi-disciplinary team demonstration program for complex cases of adult abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. (A.5293)

Upcoming Events:

Senior ID Program

With: Assemblyman Michael Montesano and New York Life Insurance Co.
When: Thursday, August 15, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Where: Farmingdale Public Library
116 Merritts Road, Farmingdale, NY

What it is: Join us to receive a FREE ID card containing your photo, doctor's contact information, list of current medication, dosage and frequency, blood type, allergies to medications, emergency contact information and physical traits. Why is this important? Having such a card on hand can help ensure you get the proper assistance and treatment in an emergency. Walk-ins are welcome!

Please bring or know the following: doctor's contact information, list of medications with dosage and frequency, blood type, allergies to medication, emergency contact information and a recent photo.

AARP Smart DriverTEK Program

With: Assemblyman Montesano and the Oyster Bay Life Enrichment Center
When: Thursday, July 11, 11:00 a.m.
Where: Oyster Bay Life Enrichment Center
45 Main Street, Oyster Bay, NY

What it is: An AARP program designed to bring senior citizens up-to-date on available safety technologies in cars by teaching them how these technologies, when properly used, can provide a safer driving experience and extend safe driving years. This program is an interactive discussion with plenty of opportunity to ask questions! Space is limited! Please call the center at (516) 922-1770 and ask for Mary or Nancy in the programing office to register.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT NEW STAR PROGRAM CHANGES

Attention Homeowners!

WHAT IS THE STAR PROGRAM?

The School Tax Relief (STAR) program provides eligible homeowners in New York State with relief on their property taxes through the Basic STAR and Enhanced STAR programs. If you're a recipient, you may be receiving the benefit in one of two ways:

The STAR exemption program (now closed to new applicants after fiscal year 2015-16):

- You receive a direct reduction on your school tax bill in the form of a property tax exemption.

The STAR credit program:

- You receive a check in the mail from the Tax Department to apply to your school taxes. If you are in this program, you will continue to pay your taxes and receive your check as normal.

Basic STAR

- Available for owner-occupied, primary residences
- The income limit for the Basic STAR credit is \$500,000 (the new income limit for the Basic STAR exemption is \$250,000).
- Reduces the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home.

Enhanced STAR

- Provides an increased benefit for the primary residence of senior citizens (age 65 and older).
- The income limit for Enhanced STAR benefit is \$86,300 or less for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Reduces the first \$68,700 of the full value of a home for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Enhanced STAR recipients are required to enroll in the Income Verification Program (IVP). To learn more, please go to: www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/ivp.htm.

BEFORE YOU MAKE THE SWITCH

Before registering, be sure to have the following information on hand for reference. You will not be able to save your online registration mid-point to complete at a later time if you do not have these materials on hand before you start:

- The names and Social Security Numbers of all owners of the property and their spouses
- The primary residence of the owners and their spouses
- Approximate date the owners purchased the property and the name of the sellers (This information is on file with your Town Clerk if you do not have it)
- 2018 school tax bill, if the current owners received one
- Address of any residential property owned in another state
- The legal name of the trust, if applicable
- 2017 federal or state income tax returns for all owners

NOTE: If you weren't required to file a 2017 income tax return, you will need the following information for all property owners: total wages, salaries, and tips; taxable interest income and dividends; unemployment compensation; total pensions and annuities, Social Security benefits; and other income.

FAQ'S

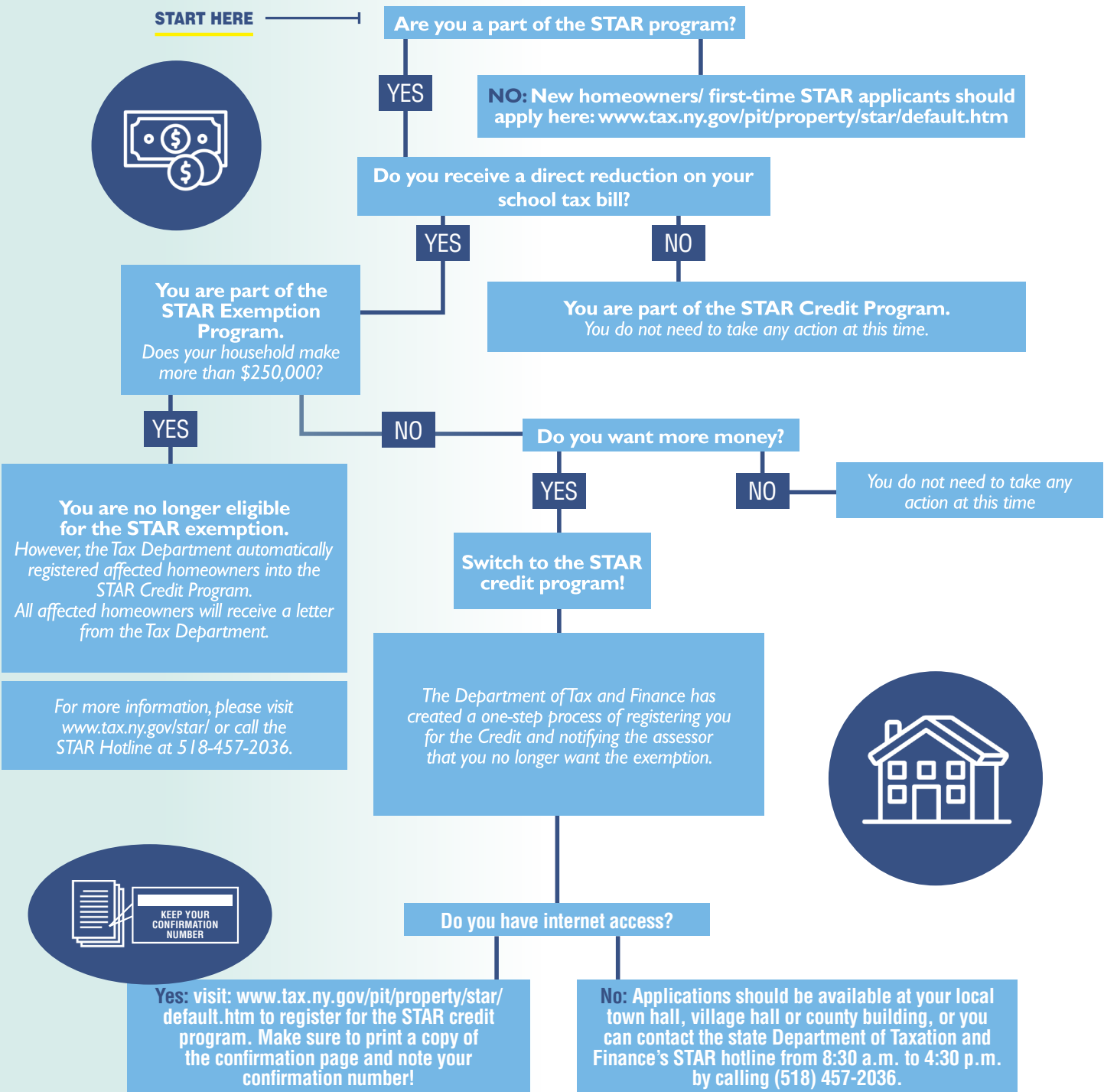
Who is eligible? If you own your home, and it is your primary residence, you may be eligible for either Basic STAR or Enhanced STAR.

Why are the changes taking place? The Department of Taxation and Finance claims the changes are being made to make it easier to track the STAR program. The real reason is to keep state spending below 2%. Real Property Tax Credit checks are tied to tax revenue and recorded as a reduction in revenue going to the state. Exemptions, however, are a state expense.

What if I don't have internet access? These applications should be available at your local town hall, village hall or county building, or you can contact the state Department of Taxation and Finance's STAR hotline from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by calling (518) 457-2036.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES TO THE STAR APPLICATION PROCESS?

Beginning in 2019, homeowners with an income greater than \$250,000 and less than or equal to \$500,000 must join the STAR credit program to be eligible to receive their STAR benefit. This is because for homeowners in that income range, the law ended the STAR exemption program that reduced property tax bills before they were paid. Secondly, recipients of the STAR credit program may see their savings increase by as much as 2% each year; however, there will be no increase for those who participate in the STAR exemption program. If you currently receive your STAR benefits as a reduction on your school tax bill (the STAR exemption), you may receive greater benefit if you switch to the STAR credit.



TOWN AND VILLAGE PHONE NUMBERS

Town of Hempstead	516-489-5000
Town of North Hempstead	516-627-0590
Town of Oyster Bay	516-624-6365

It is strongly encouraged that homeowners apply for the STAR credit as soon as possible to potentially receive their STAR credit check for this school year.