

The 65-10 5 Year Senior Property Tax Credit has been an initiative of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County established on July 1, 2017. Upon authority granted from the Maryland General Assembly, the County Commissioners, with the help and input of local senior citizens, created the 65-10 5 Year Senior Property Tax Credit to assist seniors and retired members of the Armed Forces of the United States in keeping up with escalating real property values, assessments, and taxes on the homes that they have worked so hard for all their lives.

→ **Am I eligible for the 65-10 5 Year Senior Property Tax Credit?**

To qualify for this credit upon your dwelling, you must be a senior citizen who has owned and resided in the same home in St. Mary's County, Maryland for 40 years or longer **or** be a retired member of the Armed Forces of the United States. For the purposes of this credit, a senior citizen is a person sixty-five (65) years old or older as of July 1 of the tax year in which application for the credit is submitted. Furthermore, you must have a household taxable net income (line 20 of the Maryland Income Tax Form 502) equal to or less than \$80,000. (This does not mean gross income or "pre-tax income." Therefore, all of your deductions and exemptions are calculated before your eligibility of this credit is determined). If you are a retired military member you must provide a copy of your DD214. All other applicants must provide a copy of their deed to prove their long term residence. Your property tax assessment must be equal to or less than \$400,000.00.

→ **My home is in a Living Trust. Am I eligible for the Senior Property Tax Credit?**

No, your principal residence must be in your name.

→ **What is a "Dwelling?"**

A dwelling is real property that is the legal and principal residence of the senior citizen for more than six (6) consecutive months in the tax year. It cannot be occupied by more than two families. Seniors are not penalized for non-occupancy of the dwelling because of illness or the need for special care (i.e., stays in a nursing home).

→ **How long can I receive this credit?"**

The credit is granted on an annual basis, to be received for no more than five (5) years. You must complete the application each year. During each of the five years you receive this credit you are not eligible to receive another senior tax credit while receiving the 65-10 5 Year Senior Property Tax Credit. Only one senior citizen tax credit will be applied to any account each tax year.

→ **What is the amount of the credit?**

The credit amount is 10% of your county real property tax.

→ **I have been given the Credit. Does this mean my total tax bill will not increase?**

In short, the answer is no. There are many components to a property tax bill. On everyone's property tax bill in St. Mary's County there is a State Tax, which may increase up to 10% per year; the County Tax, which may increase up to 5% per year; a Fire Tax; a Rescue Tax and an Emergency Services Tax; and fees, such as the Bay Restoration Fund Fee and the Environmental Solid Waste Fee. In addition, some residents of the county pay special benefit assessments on their tax bill, such as MetCom, special taxing district or road and/or shore erosion taxing district. The St. Mary's County has received authority from the Maryland General Assembly to grant a credit only on the County's Tax portion of you tax liability.

→ **My spouse had applied for and was granted the Credit, but has since passed. Do I have to repay the Credit and what happens next tax year when he or she can no longer apply?**

The credit is good for an entire tax year. Therefore, if the senior citizen who applied for the credit passes during the tax year, the surviving spouse will not have to repay the credit for that year. If the surviving spouse is also an eligible individual, he or she may apply for the tax credit in the succeeding years and continue to live in the marital home. This insulates the surviving spouse from increases in the county's portion of the property tax from the time the deceased spouse first applied and was granted the credit until the death of that spouse.

→ **When do I apply for the Senior Property Tax Credit?**

You must apply for the 65-10 5 Year Senior Property Tax Credit before September 1, each year to receive credit for that tax year. Your application will be reviewed. If qualified, the credit will be on your real estate tax bill coded as "6510". ***You must complete an application each year for this credit; it cannot be automatically renewed.***

→ **Where do I apply?**

You may apply for the 65-10 5 Year Senior Property Tax Credit on line at www.stmarysmd.com/treasurer. The Department of Aging and Human Services offers assistance with all tax credit applications on an appointment only basis, please contact (301) 475-4200 ext. *1064 to set an appointment.