
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 156 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY FARRY, BOSCOLA, BARTOLOTTA, PENNYCUICK, COSTA AND
STEFANO, JANUARY 19, 2023

REFERRED TO FINANCE, JANUARY 19, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in assessments of persons and
3 property, providing for senior property tax freeze.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Chapter 85 of Title 53 of the Pennsylvania
7 Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a subchapter to read:

8 SUBCHAPTER G

9 SENIOR PROPERTY TAX FREEZE

10 Sec.

11 8591. Scope of subchapter.

12 8592. Definitions.

13 8593. Authority.

14 8594. Income eligibility.

15 8595. Tax freeze.

16 8596. Application procedure.

17 8597. Program performance and annual report.

18 8598. Report.

1 § 8591. Scope of subchapter.

2 This subchapter relates to senior citizen property tax
3 freeze.

4 § 8592. Definitions.

5 The following words and phrases when used in this subchapter
6 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
7 context clearly indicates otherwise:

8 "Applicant." An individual 65 years of age or older who has
9 established residency in this Commonwealth for five or more
10 years.

11 "Base payment." The amount of property tax paid by an
12 applicant in the base year.

13 "Base year." The tax year preceding the first tax year for
14 which a taxing authority implements the provisions of this
15 subchapter or the tax year immediately preceding an applicant's
16 approval for a tax freeze under section 8595 (relating to tax
17 freeze).

18 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
19 Development of the Commonwealth.

20 "Household income." All income as defined in section 1303 of
21 the act of June 27, 2006 (1st Sp.Sess., P.L.1873, No.1), known
22 as the Taxpayer Relief Act, received by the applicant and by the
23 applicant's spouse during the calendar year for which a tax
24 deferral is claimed.

25 § 8593. Authority.

26 All political subdivisions shall have the power and authority
27 to grant annual tax freezes in the manner provided in this
28 subchapter.

29 § 8594. Income eligibility.

30 (a) Tax freeze eligibility.--In the initial year following

1 the enactment of this subchapter, an applicant shall be eligible
2 for a tax freeze under this subchapter if:

3 (1) the applicant and the applicant's spouse have a
4 household income not exceeding \$65,000 annually; or

5 (2) the applicant and the applicant's spouse real
6 property taxes exceed 10% of their household income.

7 (b) Subsequent eligibility.--In each subsequent year, the
8 income eligibility amount under subsection (a) shall be adjusted
9 in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for All Urban
10 Consumers (CPI-U).

11 § 8595. Tax freeze.

12 (a) Amount frozen.--An applicant shall have real property
13 taxes frozen at the applicant's base year amount for as long as
14 the applicant remains eligible under this subchapter.

15 (b) Tax application.--A tax freeze granted by a political
16 subdivision under this subchapter shall only apply to an
17 applicant's primary residence.

18 (c) Change of residence.--In the event an applicant changes
19 residences within the political subdivision that implements this
20 program and the political subdivision deems an applicant
21 eligible under section 8594 (relating to income eligibility),
22 the real property tax freeze shall be transferred to the new
23 property and frozen at the rate at which the applicant purchases
24 the residence.

25 (d) Current rate.--The real property tax and the tax rate on
26 the residence shall become current on the sale or transfer of
27 the property for which the tax freeze is in effect.

28 § 8596. Application procedure.

29 (a) Initial application.--Any person eligible for a tax
30 freeze under this subchapter may apply annually to a political

1 subdivision. In the initial year of application, the following
2 information shall be provided in the application provided under
3 subsection (b):

4 (1) A certification that the applicant or the
5 applicant's spouse are jointly the owners in fee simple of
6 the homestead upon which the real property taxes are imposed.

7 (2) Receipts showing timely payment of the immediately
8 preceding year's base payment of real property taxes.

9 (3) Proof of income eligibility under section 8594
10 (relating to income eligibility).

11 (4) Other information required by the political
12 subdivision for the purpose of complying with section 8597(c)
13 (relating to program performance and annual report).

14 (b) Application form.--The department shall develop a
15 standardized application form for use by political subdivisions.
16 The application form shall be substantially similar to the
17 application form for property tax or rent rebate claims under
18 Chapter 13 of the act of June 27, 2006 (1st Sp.Sess., P.L.1873,
19 No.1), known as the Taxpayer Relief Act. The department shall
20 transmit the application form to the Legislative Reference
21 Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin and transmit
22 the application to political subdivisions upon request. The
23 department may post the application on a publicly accessible
24 Internet website.

25 (c) Subsequent years.--After the political subdivision
26 authorizes an applicant's initial application, the applicant
27 shall remain eligible for a tax freeze in subsequent years so
28 long as the applicant annually refiles the application with the
29 political subdivision showing that the applicant continues to
30 meet the eligibility requirements of this subchapter.

1 (d) Death of eligible applicant.--In the event of the death
2 of an eligible applicant, the applicant's spouse, if applicable,
3 shall be eligible for the tax freeze established under this
4 subchapter provided the spouse is 60 years of age or older and
5 meets the income eligibility requirements established in section
6 8594.

7 § 8597. Program performance and annual report.

8 (a) Duties of department.--The department shall:

9 (1) Compile a list of political subdivisions that grant
10 a tax freeze under this subchapter.

11 (2) Compile the aggregate number of individuals granted
12 a tax freeze in each political subdivision that grants a tax
13 freeze under this subchapter.

14 (3) Calculate the difference between the total amount of
15 real property taxes payable by the individuals granted a tax
16 freeze under this subchapter and the total amount of real
17 property taxes that would have been payable by those
18 individuals but for the tax freeze.

19 (4) Publish an annual report with the information under
20 paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) and post the annual report on the
21 department's publicly accessible Internet website.

22 (b) Costs.--The department shall collect the information
23 under subsection (a) in a manner as to minimize the costs and
24 administrative requirements on political subdivisions.

25 (c) Duties of political subdivisions.--

26 (1) A political subdivision that has granted a tax
27 freeze under this subchapter shall notify the department in
28 writing and assist the department in compiling the
29 information under subsection (a).

30 (2) The reporting requirements under this subsection may

1 be submitted electronically to the department.

2 § 8598. Report.

3 The department shall submit a report with the information
4 under section 8597(a)(1), (2) and (3) (relating to program
5 performance and annual report) and any other relevant
6 information to the General Assembly before December 31, 2029,
7 for the purpose of reviewing the eligibility criteria and
8 effectiveness of the tax freeze under this subchapter.

9 Section 2. The provisions of this act are severable. If any
10 provision of this act or its application to any person or
11 circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect
12 other provisions or applications of this act which can be given
13 effect without the invalid provision or application.

14 Section 3. This act shall take effect immediately.