

**Town of Southborough
Senior Property Tax Work Program FY 2017-2018**

*****Please note that an article is planned for the April Town Meeting to increase the reduction amount from \$1000 to \$1500. If that article passes at Town Meeting, then the hours needed to complete the program will be increased to up to 136 hours. (If the article does not pass the program will remain at \$1000 and 91 hours will be needed to complete the program.)***

**Applications will be available March 1st at the Senior Center, Assessors Office, Selectmen's Office and on the town website
[www.southboroughtown.com].**

**Applications will be accepted at the Senior Center beginning April 18th
at 8:30 a.m.**

IMPORTANT: THE INDIVIDUAL WHO WILL PERFORM THE WORK MUST EITHER SUBMIT HIS/HER OWN APPLICATION IN PERSON OR HAVE ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL WHO IS NOT APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM BRING IN THE APPLICATION FOR THEM.

***No applications will be accepted in advance of April 18th.**

Since fiscal year 2000 the Town of Southborough/Senior Center has offered a program to senior homeowners (preference given to those with an income of less than \$45,000) designed to trade volunteer work hours for town departments with a reduction of their property tax bill of \$1000**. It has proved to be a popular program as it helps seniors having difficulty with the rising property tax bills and benefits the town by providing various town departments the ability to accomplish tasks for which they lack people or staff to handle other tasks, or to provide needed office coverage.

In the past, seniors have worked at the Senior Center, Library, Assessor's Office, Building Department, Board of Health, Town Clerk's Office, Selectmen's Office, DPW, and in various schools. Examples of the type of work done in the past include: data entry, organizing the swap shop at the transfer station, receptionist at town hall, office assistant at the Board of Health office, assisting in classrooms at the schools, and building

maintenance. We will also try and match any special areas of expertise that a senior might bring to the appropriate department.

The Senior Center will be offering the program again for FY 2018 and it has been approved for 30 seniors. Each year is treated as a separate program so seniors repeating the program must sign up again. We will be accepting applications for this program starting April 18, 2017 at the Senior Center for the FY 2018 year program.

To qualify for the program a senior must be 60 years of age or older when signing up for the program, be a Southborough resident, a homeowner or spouse of a homeowner, and own and occupy the property to which the tax credit will be applied. The applicant must also agree to complete the entire 91 hours of work during the period from April 18, 2017 to March 1, 2018**.

The main purpose of this program is to assist seniors who are having difficulty with increasing property tax bills. Given the popularity of the program over the past years and the limited number we can accommodate, we are obliged to give preference to those applicants with incomes under \$45,000.

To apply applicants must bring to the Senior Center beginning on April 18, 2017:

- **a completed application**
- **a copy of the tax bill for the property to be rebated**
- **proof of income from Social Security, pensions, and investment income if under the household income guideline**
- **completed W-4 form.**

Place this information in a sealed envelope which will be reviewed by the Assessor's Office for verification of income and residence and held in a locked file at that office in complete confidence. We urge all interested seniors to apply regardless of income; if we have less than 30 applicants the income requirement will be waived. All applicants will be accepted in the order the applications were received. Those who have household incomes of under \$45,000 will be considered first. Those with a household income of over \$45,000 will be considered in the order in which they were received if all 30 slots have not been filled. If you participated in the program in the past, you have to apply

each year as a new applicant. The application process will close 2 weeks after sign up so participants can begin work. Others applying after that date can fill slots if they are available.

If you are placed in one of the 30 available slots, then you will be matched with an available position. If an available match is not found by June 1st then you will be removed from the list and we will have to move to the next available qualified applicant.

Several of the Southborough town departments will make available positions requiring varying skills. Participants will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis provided the applicants are deemed qualified for the work by the department personnel. The \$1000 tax reduction will not be paid directly to the participant. *The \$1000 (less any federal taxes and medicare taxes withheld) will be shown on the last quarterly tax bill in April as a reduction to the real estate tax. This program is not considered regular employment and any work completed is not eligible for unemployment benefits**.*

Per Massachusetts Law Chapter 184, Section 52 of the Acts of 2002, the property tax reduction earned by the taxpayer under this program is not considered income or wages for the purpose of state tax. However, these amounts are subject to federal taxes.

Upon completion of the program, a check will be issued by the town and applied to the real-estate taxes. Upon the end of the calendar year, this benefit will be transmitted to the IRS and a **W-2 Form** will be issued to the participant. It will be the participant's responsibility to report this on **their** annual tax filing. If you have any questions regarding this new information please contact the Town Treasurer at 508-485-0710 or the Senior Center at 508-229-4453.

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