

## **School Property Tax Exemption Updates**

A majority of electors voted for the two proposed senior exemptions for school property taxes in the November 2 referendum. The election results have since been officially certified by DeKalb County and declared by the Decatur City Commission.

### **S-5 Exemption**

The S-5 will provide an exemption on \$200,000 of assessed home value (\$400,000 of appraised value). Resident homeowners age 65-69 with household federal adjusted gross income under \$53,000 will qualify to apply in 2022.

To receive the exemption, the City will need to see a copy of the first page of the homeowners' federal income tax return and the income tax return of any other resident family members who live at the home. On the federal tax form 1040, taxpayers should look for the line that says adjusted gross income. That is the amount that should be entered on an S-5 application. The number cannot exceed \$53,000 to qualify.

The income limit is based on income in 2021, and 2021 tax returns are preferred for verifying income. However, the city will accept 2020 tax returns for residents who do not have their 2021 income taxes completed in time for the deadline.

Homeowners who do not have an income tax filing requirement with the IRS will need to show the city documents such as a social security benefit statement showing total income.

### **S-6 Exemption**

The new S-6 exemption is for homeowners age 70 and above for a reduction of \$200,000 of assessed home value (\$400,000 of appraised value) without an income cap.

A separate S-3 partial school exemption for homeowners age 70 and above has been in effect since 2002. The majority of senior homeowners already have the S-3 on their accounts. Homeowners with the S-3 will be granted the new S-6 exemption automatically because the eligibility requirements for these two exemptions are the same. Homeowners who applied for the S-3 during 2021 for tax year 2022 will also automatically receive the S-6 exemption. Owners who never had the S-3 or who just turned 70 in 2021 may apply for the S-3/S-6 exemptions beginning in January.

### **How to Apply**

The City will make the S-5 exemption application available online sometime in January. For health and safety, eligible homeowners will be encouraged to apply online. A taxpayer without internet access may call to schedule an appointment at City Hall once the homeowner has the required income tax returns ready.

The S-6 exemption application will also be available online.

The time period to apply for a new exemption will begin in January 2022 end March 15, 2022, in order for the exemption to appear on first installment 2022 tax bills which will be issued April 1, 2022. A link to the new application forms will be posted at [www.decalurga.com/homestead](http://www.decalurga.com/homestead).