

STAR eligibility

The eligibility criteria are the same for both the STAR credit and the STAR property tax exemption. You can't receive both the credit and the exemption.

Eligible types of property

- houses, condominiums, cooperative apartments, manufactured homes, and farm houses
- mixed-use properties, including apartment buildings (but only the owner-occupied portion)

Eligible homeowners

	Basic STAR	Enhanced STAR
Residency	You must own your home and it must be your primary residence.*	
Age	No age restriction	65 or older For jointly owned property, only one spouse or sibling must be at least 65 by December 31 of the year when the exemption will begin.
Income**	<u>\$500,000 or less</u> The income limit applies to the combined incomes of only the owners and owners' spouses who reside at the property.	For 2016 benefits, \$84,550 or less. For 2017, \$86,000 or less. The income limit applies to all owners, and any owner's spouse who resides at the property.

Determining your primary residence *

Some factors that help determine whether a property is your primary residence include:

- voting,
- vehicle registrations, and
- length of time spent each year on the property.

The Tax Department may also request proof of residency.

Income eligibility **

Eligibility in 2017 is based on income information from the 2015 tax year. Income means federal "adjusted gross income" minus the "taxable amount" of total distributions from individual retirement accounts or individual retirement annuities (IRA's).

Special eligibility rules

Surviving spouses

You can retain an existing Enhanced STAR benefit if you're at least 62 years old as of December 31 in the year the benefit will continue. Otherwise, you may receive the Basic STAR benefit.

Nursing home residents

If you own your home, you're eligible for Basic or Enhanced STAR, as long as no one other than the co-owner or spouse resides there.

Trusts

If you're a trust beneficiary who conveyed your home to trustees but continues to live in the home, you get the STAR benefit. For example, a senior creates a trust and conveys her home to her children as trustees. If she remains in the home as the beneficiary of the trust, she is considered the homeowner and gets the STAR benefit.

Life estates

Under a life estate, one party has a "life tenancy" (ownership for the rest of his or her life) and another party will become the owner after the life tenant dies. For exemption purposes, the life tenant is deemed to own the property; so STAR eligibility is based on the life tenant's qualifications.

Questions and answers for homeowners about the new STAR Credit Program

Q 1. Has the STAR Program been abolished?

- A. No. There have been some changes in how certain homeowners will apply for STAR and in how we distribute the STAR benefit to them, but the STAR program is still very much alive.

See [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 2. What are the changes?

- A. New applicants who qualify for STAR will register with New York State instead of applying with their assessor. If they qualify, they will receive a STAR credit in the form of a check, rather than receiving a property tax exemption. The dollar value of the credit will be the same as the property tax exemption.

See [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 3. I have been receiving the STAR exemption on my school tax bill. Do I need to register for the STAR credit?

- A. You need to register for the STAR credit if:
- you purchased your home after August 1, 2015;
or
 - you purchased your home between May 1, 2014, and August 1, 2015, **and**
 - bought your home after the 2015 STAR application deadline, or
 - you did not apply for the STAR exemption on your home by the 2015 application deadline.

Otherwise, no action is necessary—you will continue to receive the STAR exemption on your school tax bill.

See [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 4. What was the 2015 STAR application deadline?

- A. It depends on where your home is located. In towns outside of Nassau and Westchester Counties, the 2015 STAR application deadline was March 1, 2015. In cities, and in towns in Nassau and Westchester Counties, there were a variety of different deadlines.

See [2015 STAR application deadlines](#) to find the deadline for your city or town.

Q 5. I've had a STAR exemption on my home for several years. Do these changes affect me?

- A. No. You will continue to receive the STAR exemption in the same manner and on the same terms as before, as long as:
- you received the STAR exemption on your 2015 school tax bill, and
 - you applied for that exemption in *your* own name, based on *your* eligibility, and
 - you still own the property, and
 - it is still your primary residence.

You do not need to reapply. Your STAR savings will continue to appear as a direct reduction on your school property tax bill.

See [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 6. Did I receive the STAR exemption in 2015?

- A. Look at your 2015 school tax bill to see if it shows “STAR tax savings.” You can also check the assessment roll to see if you’re receiving the exemption. See [Check your assessment](#).

Q 7. I have been receiving a Basic STAR exemption since 2014. I turned 65 years old a few months ago and believe that I now qualify for the Enhanced STAR exemption. May I apply for it?

- A. Yes. If you have been receiving STAR since before the [2015 STAR application deadline](#), the STAR rules are the same for you as before.

To have your Basic STAR upgraded to Enhanced STAR, you must:

- Submit a paper application form (RP-425) to your local assessor, and
- Do one of the following:
 - Enroll in the Income Verification Program, or
 - Reapply every year with your local assessor using Form RP-425-Rnw.

To learn more about upgrading to Enhanced STAR from an existing Basic STAR exemption, see [STAR Exemption Program](#) and [STAR—Income Verification Program](#) (IVP).

Q 8. I've been getting the Enhanced STAR exemption on my home for several years. What do I need to do now?

- A. The rules are the same for you as before. That means:
- if you are enrolled in the Income Verification Program, you do not need to do anything.
 - if you are not enrolled in the Income Verification Program, you must either:
 - reapply every year with your local assessor using Form RP-425-Rnw, or
 - enroll in the Income Verification Program.

See [STAR Exemption Program](#) for more information.

Q 9. I registered for my STAR exemption in 2014. Do I need to register again?

- A. No, not if you still own the same home and it is still your primary residence.

See [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 10. I purchased my home in 2015 after the 2015 STAR application deadline, but I received the STAR exemption on my 2015 school tax bill. Do I need to register?

- A. Yes. The reason you received the STAR exemption on your 2015 school tax bill is that the person who sold the home to you had qualified for the STAR exemption. You were entitled to the benefit of the seller's STAR exemption for the rest of the 2015-2016 school year, but you are not entitled to keep the seller's STAR exemption beyond that and must register for the STAR credit in order to receive STAR benefits in the future.

To register, see [Register for the STAR credit](#), or see [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 11. How do I register?

- A. To register, see [Register for the STAR credit](#) or call 518-457-2036. Have your school tax bill handy when you call.

To learn more about STAR, see [STAR property tax relief](#).

Q 12. When should I register?

- A. We recommend that you register as soon as possible after you purchase or move into your home.

Registrations will be accepted for three years from the income tax filing deadline for the year that the credit covers. For example, to claim the STAR credit for 2016, you must register by April 15, 2020. However, the sooner you register, the sooner you will receive your STAR check.

To register, see [Register for the STAR credit](#), or see [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 13. Do I need to register every year?

- A. No. Once you've registered, we'll automatically review your eligibility for the credit every year after that for as long as you continue to own and occupy that home.

To register, see [Register for the STAR credit](#), or see [STAR property tax relief](#) for more information.

Q 14. Will I be required to claim the STAR credit as income on my personal income taxes?

- A. We do not expect so. The income tax implications of state tax credits are determined at the federal level. Taxpayers who take the standard deduction—as most do—would likely see no impact at all. Taxpayers who itemize their deductions will likely need to subtract their STAR credit from the real estate taxes they paid if they claim a real property tax deduction. The resulting deduction would be equivalent to the impact of the STAR exemption, which reduces a taxpayer’s property tax bill by the same amount as the STAR credit.