



MILLIONS of Tax Dollars Go Unclaimed Every Year by Texas Homeowners

Williamson Central Appraisal District urges homeowners to take advantage of available savings on their Texas property taxes.

Georgetown Texas, April 13, 2020: Today, Williamson Central Appraisal District announced that approximately **\$6,175,000** in savings are being left unclaimed by homeowners who have a rightful stake in those monies. This is based on the 18,977 property owners in 2019 who had a mailing address that matched the situs address of their property. The district included a homestead application with the 2019 Notice of Appraised Value, in hopes that it would encourage property owners to apply and claim some of the savings. Texas law mandates that schools give a \$25,000 reduction in taxable value to residential homestead properties. At the 2019 average school tax rate of 1.301153%, each property could have saved an average of \$325 on the school taxes. When these potential savings are multiplied by the 18,977 properties that started 2019 without a general homestead, the amount of money that could remain unclaimed is incredible.

Almost daily, the district encounters property owners who have gone years without the benefit of a homestead exemption. Add in the property owners who were unaware that they could also qualify for an over 65 or disabled person exemption, and the amount of savings lost is staggering. Can any of these lost monies be recouped?? YES!! They most certainly can. Texas has a late filing provision that allows for exemption applications to be filed past the deadline, if the application is filed no later than two years after the delinquency date for the taxes on the homestead. Plainly speaking, a homeowner who owned and occupied their home as of January 1, 2018, can still apply and be approved today with any refund by the tax office issued shortly thereafter.

Texas law offers many exemptions to help reduce property taxes for homeowners who meet certain requirements. Even better, property owners can claim multiple exemptions if they meet the requirements for each one. The available exemptions in Texas are:

- **General Homestead Exemption**
- **Age 65 or Older, or Disabled Person (or Surviving Spouse)**
- **Donated Residence Homestead of Partially Disabled Veteran (or Surviving Spouse)**
- **100% Disabled Veteran (or Surviving Spouse)**
- **Surviving Spouse of a Military Service Member Killed in Action**
- **Surviving Spouse of a First Responder Killed on Duty**
- **Disabled Veteran (or Surviving Spouse or Child)**

To qualify for an exemption listed here, a property owner must meet specific requirements. The most basic is possessing a Texas driver's license or Texas identification card bearing the address of the property on which the exemption is being claimed. Other requirements include, but are not limited to, owning and occupying the property for which the exemption is being claimed as of January 1, and documentation in support of the owner's claim to the exemptions. For more requirements on each exemption, please visit our website at <https://support.wcad.org/portal/kb/articles/homestead-exemption-requirements>.

"Property appraisal and taxes are rarely a welcome subject," shares Rae Wilhite, Records Manager for the district, "and that may be part of why many property owners remain in the dark about exemptions. Our goal is to highlight this particular cog in that wheel and impress upon our homeowners how important it is that they learn about and apply for all the exemptions they qualify for. We invite our property owners to visit our website to confirm whether there are exemptions on their property and then proceed to apply if there are none. They will also find articles on this topic and more in our Knowledge Base which is located within the red chat icon at the bottom right corner of our webpage at www.wcad.org."

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alvin Lankford".

Alvin Lankford
Chief Appraiser