



Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program

GUIDELINES

Purpose

Participating senior citizens provide assistance to the municipality in exchange for a property tax credit. The Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program ensures that senior citizens with limited incomes can reduce their property tax bill and the city is able to benefit from needed assistance.

General Information

The Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program is open to qualified senior citizens who are homeowners and pay real estate taxes to the City of Saco (subject to annual council approval). Participants must complete 100 hours of service in the program year, which runs from May 1 to April 30. After completion of service hours, a property tax credit will be applied to the participant's actual real estate tax bill. The current maximum property tax credit amount is \$1200 (minus the required withholdings). Applications are available in March of each program year. The Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program has forty openings for eligible senior citizens.

Participant Requirements

- Age: sixty-five (65) years of age or older as of April 1 of the program year. Verification of date of birth will be required for program applicants.
- Participants must adhere to the guidelines for the program and provide 100 hours of service to the City.
- Only one (1) tax credit per household per program year is allowed. The participant's spouse may contribute service hours if they are accepted participants in the program.
- Must own and occupy the property as their principal residence for the past three years.
- Must possess necessary skills for the position.
- All participants are expected to attend the yearly training in May.
- Participants may not participate in the City of Saco EZ Pay program.
- Participants in the Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program are not eligible to apply or participate in the Senior Tax Assistance Match Program.

Required Application Forms

- Tax Work-Off Program application and copy of Maine State Income Tax Form 1040 ME or other documents (Social Security statements, etc.) to verify income.
- Completed form for a background check.
- Other forms (Contact Information form, Federal and Maine W-4 and I-9 forms).

Application Procedure

- Applications are available online at www.sacomaine.org or can be requested from Mary Starr at mstarr@sacomaine.org or 207-710-2654.
- Applicants may submit their application to Mary Starr, Senior Volunteer Coordinator, City Hall Annex 11 Cutts Ave. Saco, ME 04072 or via email to mstarr@sacomaine.org.
- The Senior Volunteer Coordinator will contact all new applicants to request an interview.
- Individuals will be chosen based on the best match between the applicant's qualifications and the skill requirements of the available positions. There is no guarantee of a placement in any city department. Primary consideration will be given to applicants based on income level.
- Previous program participants may make re-application in subsequent years. No applicant is guaranteed a position.
- Program participants may not work for relatives who are City employees.

Income Guidelines for Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program

The participant's household income cannot exceed the average Low-Income Limits (80%) for York County as published by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Applicants must have an income level **below** the following amounts.

Household Size Maximum	TOTAL GROSS Annual Income
1	\$41,100
2	\$46,950
3	\$52,800
4	\$58,650

Property Tax Credit Procedures

- Currently, participants receive a property tax credit on their actual tax bill for up to 100 hours of service at a rate of \$12 per hour. All service hours must be completed in the program year (May 1- April 30) and cannot be carried over to the next program year. Any service hours above the 100-hour maximum would be designated as volunteer hours.
- To be eligible for the maximum \$1,200 property tax credit (minus applicable FICA and Medicare withholdings), the participant **MUST** provide 100 service hours. The property tax credit will be pro-rated if the participant provides less than 100 service hours.
- Currently, the maximum allowable amount of property tax credit is \$1,200 per household per program year.
- The tax credit earned under this program is not considered income or wages for the purposes of state income tax withholding, unemployment compensation, or workers compensation.
- The property tax credit amount is included in the taxpayer's gross income for both federal income tax and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) purposes. The taxpayer's share of FICA and Medicare taxes will be deducted from the property tax credit amount.

Treatment of Amount Earned

- Time sheets must be filled out by the participant and submitted at the end of the month. All time sheets must be approved monthly by the department supervisor/Senior Volunteer Coordinator.
- Upon completion of the service hour commitment, a final accounting of service hours will be submitted to the Senior Volunteer Coordinator by the supervisor. Once verified, the Senior Volunteer Coordinator will submit the service hours and completion form to Payroll Specialist and Tax Collector to process the property tax credit.
- Participants will be notified of property tax credit amount and date of credit to their account.
- Participants will receive an IRS W-2 form for the property tax credit earned through the program.

Positions Available

Positions may include, but are not limited to, clerical assistance, data entry, filing, maintenance, hosting at the train station, and more. Volunteering at the Saco school system is included in this program. Individualized training and a yearly group training will be provided for all participants.

Program Benefits

All participants in the program are eligible to attend monthly coffee hours hosted by the Senior Volunteer Coordinator. The monthly coffee hour is an opportunity to get to know the other senior citizens in the program. A wide variety of speakers from the community are invited to share information with the participants at the coffee hours. All participants are welcome to attend the yearly holiday pot luck luncheon in December. Train station hosts are invited to attend the yearly volunteer appreciation luncheon hosted by the Downeaster train service.

Important Dates

- Application and program guidelines will be available by **March 1**.
- Application deadline: **April 1** (applications accepted on a rolling basis if space is available).
- Senior Volunteer Coordinator will schedule new applicant interviews in **April**.
- Participants will be notified if they are accepted into the program by **April 25**.
- Service time may commence for participants after the participant has been accepted to the program, and assigned to a department.
- The Senior Volunteer Coordinator will develop a mutually agreed upon schedule for all participants.
- The Train Station schedule will be sent to all station hosts by **May 1**.
- The yearly training for all participants will be scheduled in **early May**.