

State of California
Franchise Tax Board

Homeowner and Renter Assistance - Frequently Asked Questions

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When should I file my homeowner or renter assistance claim?

The filing period for the 2007 claim year begins July 2, 2007 and assistance is available through October 15, 2007. For information to file a past year claim, see [Can I file an assistance claim for past years](#)

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What is renter assistance and what is the maximum amount a claimant can receive?

Renter assistance is a once a year payment from the State of California of a portion of the property taxes that you pay indirectly when you pay your rent. The amount a claimant may be eligible for ranges from \$15.00 to \$347.50. See your homeowner and renter assistance claim booklet.

Renter assistance is not the same as the non-refundable renter's credit. To view more information regarding renter's credit, see [What is and how do I qualify for the Nonrefundable renter's credit.](#)

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What is homeowner assistance and what is the maximum amount a claimant can receive?

Homeowner assistance is a once a year payment from the State of California of a percentage of the property taxes the county assesses and requires you to pay on your home. The amount a claimant may be eligible for ranges from \$19.72 to \$472.60. See your homeowner and renter assistance claim booklet.

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Who is eligible for renter assistance?

You may be eligible to file a 2007 claim for renter assistance if you were one of the following on December 31, 2006:

62 years of age or older

Blind

Disabled

And you meet all of the following requirements:

You lived in a qualified rented residence in California in 2006.

You paid \$50 or more rent per month on that residence.

You had a total household income of \$42,770 or less in 2006.

You are a United States citizen, or a designated alien or qualified alien when you file your claim.

NOTE: If you lived in a rented residence with other qualified renters, each renter may file a separate claim unless the other renter was your spouse. If you were married and lived together, you and your spouse are considered one renter and are allowed to file only one claim for each year. You must decide which of you will file the claim. However, if you are married and have not lived together for the entire year, each spouse may determine if he or she qualifies to file his or her own claim.

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Who is eligible for homeowner assistance?

You may be eligible to file a 2007 claim for homeowner assistance if you were one of the following on December 31, 2006:

62 years of age or older

Blind

Disabled

And you meet all of the following requirements:

You owned and lived in your own home on December 31, 2006.

You had a total household income of \$42,770 or less in 2006.

You are a United States citizen, or a designated alien or qualified alien when you file your claim.

NOTE: Only one homeowner from each household is entitled to the assistance each year. When two or more owners of the same home meet the qualifications, they must decide which one of them will file the claim.

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Will the homeowner assistance create a lien on my house?

Homeowner assistance will not create a lien on your house. However, if you postpone your property taxes through the State Controller's Property Tax Postponement Program, a lien will be filed against your property. If we grant your claim for homeowner assistance and the State Controller grants your claim for property tax postponement for the same fiscal year, the amount of the homeowner assistance will be sent to the State Controller's office to reduce the balance due on the postponed tax payments.

Get more information on Property Tax Postponement:

Website: www.sco.ca.gov

Telephone: (800) 952-5661

Mail: California State Controller
Property Tax
Postponement
PO Box 942850
Sacramento CA 94250-

5872

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Can I file an assistance claim for past years?

You have until June 29, 2007 to file a claim for 2006.

You may only file a claim for other past years if you could not file the claim on time because you were medically incapacitated. If you were medically incapacitated, you may file a claim within six months of your recovery or within three years of the end of the fiscal year that you are filing for, whichever is sooner. You must submit proof of medically certified incapacity with your claim, and use the claim form for that specific year. Do not use the 2006 claim form for past years. There are no other exceptions that would allow you to file a claim for past years.

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When will I get my assistance check?

Processing your claim may take up to 15 weeks from the date you mail it. To check the status of your assistance payment, call (800) 868-4171.

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Can I file a claim for both homeowner and renter assistance?

No. You can file as a homeowner or renter, but not both.

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How can I prove my blindness or disability?

If you are:

- **Blind:** You must send proof of blindness only for the first year you file your claim. Provide a statement of blindness signed by a registered optometrist or physician on the doctor's letterhead verifying that you have: sharpness of vision of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens, or tunnel vision (a limited visual field of no more than 20 degrees). The statement must also include the date when you became blind under the definition.
- **Disabled:** You must send proof of permanent disability only for the first year you file your claim. If you are not permanently disabled you must provide proof of disability each year. Acceptable forms of proof include a copy of: 1) Medicare card, if receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits as a disabled person, 2) Social Security Award Letter, 3) Supplemental Security Income payment decision letter, or 4) Documentation accepted by a local, state or federal agency to support its determination of disability, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 12050. However, if you are unable to provide one of those documents, you can send us other documentation to establish that you were disabled during the claim year. For example, you can provide a statement from your physician describing your specific impairment and how the impairment prevents you from engaging in substantial gainful employment. In order to meet the legal definition of disability, this statement must also include the date your disability began, and the date your disability ended or whether it was ongoing. The statement must include your physician's medical license number and it must be signed by the physician under penalty of perjury.

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How can I prove my age?

If you were at least 62 years old on December 31, 2006 and receive Supplemental Security Income, you do not need to send proof of age with your claim form.

If you do not receive Supplemental Security Income, you must send proof of age with your claim form for the first year only.

You can prove your age by sending a copy of any of the following items:

Your birth certificate;

Your California driver's license;

- Your California Senior Citizen Identification card;
- Your Medi-Cal Benefits Identification Card (BIC);
- Your hospital birth record;
- Your church baptismal record; or
- Your social security award letter that states your date of birth.

If you do not have any of these items, send a copy of anything you have that proves your age.

Please do not send any original documents, they may not be returned to you.

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I lived in a mobile or manufactured home. Which claim form should I file?

There are three different situations that exist for mobile home dwellers; they are as follows:

Situation 1: If you rent your mobile home, use the FTB 9000R, Renter Assistance claim.

Situation 2: If you own your mobile home and pay property tax, use the FTB 9000H, Homeowner Assistance claim.

Situation 3: If you own your mobile home, pay the In-lieu vehicle tax, and rent the space it is on, you have the option to file either the FTB 9000R, or FTB 9000H, whichever would be most beneficial to you.

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I lived in a mobile or manufactured home. What documents do I attach to my Homeowner Assistance claim?

You must include either a copy of the registration card and registration billing notice issued by the Department of Housing and Community Development or your property tax bill.

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Can I file on behalf of my disabled minor child?

No minor child living in his or her parent's or guardian's home is eligible for renter assistance, because such a minor child cannot be found to have paid rent to the parent or guardian pursuant to a legally binding rental contract. Minor children not living in the home with a parent or guardian may qualify for assistance, if they can establish that, in 2005: (1) they were living outside the family home, and they were a renter under the provisions of the HRA program.

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I lived on tax-exempt property. Do I qualify for Renter Assistance?

For property where you reside to be considered a "qualified Rented Residence", your landlord must pay general property tax or amounts in lieu of property tax (also known as PILOT). If PILOT amounts are paid, they must be (80% or greater) than the property taxes paid on properties of comparable market value. If the property where you reside is "tax-exempt", property taxes are not paid, therefore you will not qualify for renter assistance during the time you lived in tax-exempt property. Special assessments and fees are not property tax.

Tax-exempt property includes most government-owned buildings, church-owned parsonages, college dormitories, and military barracks.

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How do I compute my gross household income?

Gross household income is total household income plus all non-cash business expenses such as depreciation, amortization, depletion, and net operating losses.

Calculating gross household income is only necessary if you had income from rental property or a business.

For example, you had a total household income of \$30,000, plus depreciation expense of \$9,000.

In this example, your total household income would be \$39,000, which is under the gross household income threshold of \$72,200. Assuming all other conditions are met, you would qualify for assistance.

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How do I compute my total household income?

Total household income is all income received by all of the members of your household (except minors, students, and other renters).

This includes social security; interest/dividends; pensions/annuities; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); State Supplemental Program (SSP); Aid to the Totally Disabled (ATD); rental income/loss; gain/loss from sale of assets; wages, alimony, life insurance, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation for temporary disability, and public assistance and relief. In addition, you may deduct the following amounts from your total household income: IRA contributions deduction, student loan interest deduction, medical Savings Account (MSA) deduction, moving expenses, and alimony paid from the total household income.

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Do I need to report my assistance payment as income on my California tax return?

Your assistance payment is not taxable to California; therefore, you do not need to report this as income.

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I need assistance on my property tax bill. Who do I contact?

For questions about your property tax bill, please call the county assessor in the county where your property is located. You can find the number in your telephone directory under county government offices.

If you cannot pay your property taxes you might be interested in the Property Tax Postponement program provided by the State Controller's Office. This program allows some homeowners to postpone payment of all or part of their property taxes. For information on how to qualify and get forms, call the State Controllers Office, Property Tax Postponement Unit at 1 (800) 952-5661.

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Who do I contact about low-income housing?

If you are interested in low-income housing and would like information on locations or how to qualify, call Housing and Urban Development at 1(800) 669-9777.

My claim for Homeowner or Renter Assistance was denied. What are my options?

If we denied all or part of your claim and you disagree with our determination, you can choose to do either of the following within 90 days of the date we mailed the denial letter.

- Submit additional information to us that may allow us to reconsider your claim.
- File an appeal with the State Board of Equalization.

To protect your appeal rights, you may wish to file an appeal with the State Board of Equalization at the same time you submit any additional information to us. To view additional information about these options, click on the links below.

[Submit additional information to the Franchise Tax Board](#)
[File an appeal with the State Board of Equalization](#)

I'm a patient in a Skilled Nursing Facility or Intermediate Care Facility; do I qualify for renter assistance?

No, in order to be eligible for renter assistance, you must be the "renter" of a "rented residence". Patients in a skilled nursing or intermediate care facility do not pay rent for the right to occupy a residence, but pay a fee for the medical services provided by the facility.

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