

## Property Tax Appeals and Exemptions



### Is it possible to reduce what I pay for property taxes?

For many of us the answer is probably no. However, there is an appeals process plus a number of programs where property owners may qualify for exemptions or deferrals.

#### Appeals

Each county provides specific information on appealing your property tax valuation. This information will include instructions on how to appeal, when you may appeal, what evidence you will need to provide, tools for gathering information, and a description of the appeals process.

One of the more common reasons to appeal is a change in property value. For this reason each county provides free databases (or online search tools) that you can use for locating sold properties that are comparable to yours. If you can find similar properties that sold for less than the assessed value of your home, it may be worth your time to appeal your valuation.

**Comparable Sales** - Comparable sales are properties of a similar lot size, quality, living area, age, and added details like view or waterfront. If you are planning on

appealing your property tax valuation, you may be required to list comparable sales that support your request on your appeal petition.

**Errors in your property description** - From time to time the assessor may make errors in the description of a property. Any errors in how your property is described should be noted in your petition. You can also provide other documentation such as pictures, repair bids, or geology reports if there are structural or site problems that would reduce market value.

#### Property Search tools

**King:** <http://your.kingcounty.gov/Assessor/eSales/>

**Pierce:** <http://epip.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/atr/epip/search.cfm>

**Snohomish:** <http://gis.snoco.org/maps/property/index.htm>

#### Information on appeals

**King:** <http://www.kingcounty.gov>

**Pierce:** <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us>

**Snohomish:** <http://boe.snoco.org>

#### Exemption & Deferral Programs

Some taxpayers may qualify for tax exemptions or tax deferrals. Exemptions generally provide a reduction in the amount of taxes due, whereas deferrals provide temporary relief by applying the deferred taxes as a lien against the property.

Below are a few categories of exemptions & deferrals provided by the Washington State Department of Revenue. The county

assessor administers these programs and is responsible for determining if applicants meet the qualifications. Questions about these programs should be directed to the county assessor's office.

#### Deferral Examples

Property tax deferral for senior citizens and disabled persons

Property tax deferral for homeowners with limited income

#### Assistance in the form of a Grant

Property tax assistance for widows or widowers of veterans

#### Exemption Examples

Property tax exemption for nonprofit organizations

Property tax exemption program for senior citizens and disabled

Finally, there is a large list of other possible deferrals & exemptions available through the county assessor that may be available for a qualifying property depending on its condition, historic significance, or how it is used. Some examples are:

- Homeowner Improvement
- Flood and Storm Damaged Property
- Current Use Open Space
- Current Use Forest Land
- Historic Property
- Designated Forest Land
- And more...

As a reference, here are contact numbers for King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

King County: (206) 205-6330

Pierce County: (253) 798-6111

Snohomish County: (425) 388-3540