

# Smithfield Senior Tax Freeze – Q&A Guide

## **Q: What does it mean to freeze my taxes?**

A: Freezing your taxes locks your property tax bill for all future years.

## **Q: When does the freeze take effect?**

A: The year after you apply.

Example: If you apply in 2025 the freeze begins in 2026. You will **NOT** be frozen at your 2025 bill amount. You will be frozen at the 2026 assessed value and 2026 tax rate. Please plan accordingly.

## **Q: Who qualifies?**

A: You must be 65 years of age and have 10 consecutive years of deeded ownership in the Town of Smithfield. You may only receive a residency based exemption on your *primary* residence. If you are receiving any other residency based exemptions on other property you own, you will not be eligible. For example, if you receive an exemption on property you own in Florida, you cannot also receive an exemption on property you own in Smithfield.

## **Q: Do I need to re-apply every year?**

A: No. Once approved, you stay in the program. However, our office does an audit of the freezes each year and we may request an affidavit of residency.

## **Q: What if taxes go down?**

A: If the full tax amount (tax if not frozen) on your property drops below the frozen amount; we will re-freeze the bill at the lower rate. You will never be penalized for being frozen.

## **Q: Do I get any other benefits?**

A: Yes. You also receive an \$8,000 reduction in assessed value.

Example at the 2025 rate:  $\$8,000 \times \$12.39 = \$99.12$  off your tax bill. This discount also freezes.

## **Q: What if I want to put my property into a Trust or Life Estate?**

A: You will not be penalized for putting your property into a trust or life estate, as long as you reside in the property and are responsible for paying the taxes.

## **Q: I want to put on an addition or renovate my home, will my freeze be affected?**

A: Yes, it may, but it depends on the change in value due to any construction or renovations. If you make changes to your property which increase the assessed value more than 10%, the frozen tax amount will be adjusted at the same percentage change to incorporate the additional value.

## **Q: When is the application due?**

A: December 31<sup>st</sup> of any year in order to receive the exemption and freeze the following July bill.

Applications are available on the Assessor page of the Town website or in the office at Town Hall.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Assessors Department at 233-1014.