

It's Time to File Disability Statements to Get Property Tax Exemptions in Illinois!

If you are receiving disability compensation of 30% or more from the VA, you are eligible for a reduction in property taxes in the state of Illinois. But you must re-file for this exemption each year in most cases. If you just started receiving compensation, then you need to file a somewhat more extensive application.

The Exemption levels established by the state are defined as follows:

This veteran with a disability must own or lease a single family residence and be liable for payment of property taxes. The property's total EAV must be less than \$250,000 after subtracting any portion used for commercial purposes. The amount of the exemption depends on the percentage of the service-connected disability as certified by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs.

- A qualified veteran with a service-connected disability of at least 30% but less than 50% will receive a \$2,500 reduction in EAV;
- if the veteran has a service-connected disability of 50% but less than 70%, the annual exemption is \$5,000; and
- if the veteran has a service-connected disability of 70% or more, the residential property is exempt from taxation

For surviving spouses

- An un-remarried surviving spouse of a veteran who was disabled and is now deceased can continue to receive this exemption on his or her spouse's primary residence or transfer this exemption to another primary residence after the original primary residence of a veteran with a disability is sold, not to exceed the amount previously granted, provided this exemption had previously been granted to the veteran with a disability.
- An un-remarried surviving spouse in receipt of Dependent Indemnity Compensation (DIC) the residential property is exempt from taxation (regardless of if the Veteran had been previously granted based on disability level) (effective 2023 tax year).

In Lake County (Illinois) all the filing for the disability exemption can be made electronically. If you are not able to file electronically, you will need to take the necessary documentation to your local Township Assessor's office and they can assist you in filing the application.

To apply electronically:

All applications should be submitted online through the [Smartfile E-Filing Portal](#). You can receive assistance by phone or in person by calling or visiting the Chief County Assessors Office or the local township assessor's office. The Chief County Assessors Office will mail a reminder each year to all applicants who received the exemption the prior year.

If the veteran has a service-connected disability rated at 100% Permanent & Total (P&T) they are no-longer required to reapply for the exemption on an annual basis following the initial P&T application approval (effective 2023 tax year).

Remember, in Illinois we are paying property taxes a year late. So, to get your exemption for property tax year 2023, ideally, you should file your application (either initial or renewal) prior to July 31 of 2023. If the disability

letter is provided after that, it is possible that you won't be eligible for exemption until the following tax year. Here're some examples:

1. I receive a disability letter prior to July 31, 2023 and file with the county assessor prior to July 31, 2023. I will then receive an exemption on the property taxes for 2023 which are payable in 2024.
2. I receive a disability letter prior to July 31, 2023 but don't file with the assessor until after July 31. It will be up to the assessor to accept your application and apply to TY 2023 taxes to be paid in 2024.
3. I receive my disability letter after July 31, 2023 and file before the end of 2023. Since you exemption will only apply to part of the year, it will be up to the assessor to accept your application for tax year 2023 (paid in 2024).

When you sign into the filing process, you will need specific information, and some documents scanned to be uploaded.

To start the application process:

For both processes, you will need your property PIN number, so find your tax bill or assessment document before you start. The other information is different depending on which process you are filing so see those documents below.

- Go to the Chief County Assessment Office [Smart E-Filing Portal](#) at assessor.lakecountyil.gov
 - Log in to your account, create a new account, or log in as a guest
- Click "Available Filings". If you are filing for the first time you will apply through the EX01 process.

EX01: Homestead Exemption Application (First Time Applications ONLY)

Use this form to file for one or more of the following homestead exemptions: General Homestead Exemption, Senior Homestead Exemption, Returning Veterans Homestead Exemption, Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption and Disabled Persons Homestead Exemption. NOTE: You cannot receive both the Disabled Veterans and Disabled Persons exemptions in the same year.

- **EX01: Homestead Exemption Application (First time applicant only)**

For filing the EX01 application, you will need to be able to upload the following information:

 - a disability award or verification letter from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs for the current assessment year (**See below on how to obtain your award letter**).
 - If you downloaded the Benefit Summary Letter, it typically shows your eligible service which, I have been told, is sufficient to prove your military service.
 - If your benefit letter doesn't reflect your time in service, then you need one of the following documents that is the original or a copy certified by the county recorder, recorder of deeds, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, or the National Archives Record Center.
 - **Form DD 214** or separation of service for the War Department (military service prior to 1950),
 - Certification of Military Service Form, or
 - Illinois Driver's license or ID card showing Veteran's Designation
- Click "Begin Filing" and follow the instructions
- **EX03: Disabled Persons or Disabled Veterans Renewal**

EX03: Disabled Persons or Disabled Veterans Exemption Renewal

RENEWAL ONLY! Use this form to file an annual renewal of an approved Veterans With Disabilities or Persons With Disabilities homestead exemption. If you are applying for the first time, please use the "Homestead Exemption Application" link above. The deadline for filing is July 31st, to affect the tax bill issued the following May.

All you need to file for a renewal is the award document indicating the percentage compensation you have been awarded.

To get your disability letter electronically from the VA (for Veterans only):

- Click on the link below – That's where you want to get to
<https://www.va.gov/records/download-va-letters/letters/confirm-address>

This link will require you to log into the VA system (I use Login.gov).

If you do not have any login with the VA (there are several different ones you can use now (MyHealthVet, login.gov, ID.Me and DS Login) contact the VAC at veterans@lakecountyil.gov with a subject of "VA Logins" and we can discuss which one you should create.

- Create a search for "Download VA Benefit Letters" and then select "Download VA Benefit Letters" from the search results. This will result in a screen showing "Get your VA Benefit Letters"
- Choose the letter "Benefit Summary and Service Verification Letter" - It will provide the years of service as well as your current level of disability and monthly compensation amount.

To request the "Benefit Summary Letter" for surviving spouses in receipt of DIC you will need to contact the VA directly via phone at 1-800-827-1000.

If you have any questions about this process, contact the VAC at veterans@lakecountyil.gov with a subject of "Disability Exemptions" and we can give you a hand.