

New Web Tool Allows Pennsylvanians to Check Status of Property Tax/Rent Rebates

Eligible older adults and residents with disabilities can now check the status of Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications online at www.papropertytaxrelief.com

"Our commitment to property tax relief is unwavering, and this new Web tool enhances customer service for the older adults and people with disabilities who rely on these annual checks," Governor Edward G. Rendell said, introducing the new tool in late April.

Six weeks after submitting a Property Tax/Rent Rebate application, the applicant may visit www.papropertytaxrelief.com and check the status of the rebate by entering his/her Social Security number, anticipated rebate amount and birth date. Applicants may use the Web site to confirm claim status, rebate amount and the date a rebate is expected to be mailed or direct-deposited. Rebate checks will begin being distributed to early applicants on July 1.

Through a similar automated phone service, Property Tax/Rent Rebate applicants can check rebate status by calling, toll-free, 1-888-PATAXES.

The new online tool to check rebate status has the potential to reduce administrative costs for the Revenue Department. The online service is maintained at a minimal cost, while each toll-free phone call from taxpayers costs the department about 3.1 cents in phone charges, plus costs associated with staffing.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. A 2006 program expansion increased the income limit from \$15,000 to \$35,000 (which excludes half of Social Security income) for homeowners and raises the maximum standard rebate for both homeowners and renters from \$500 to \$650. The income limit for renters is \$15,000.

The program expansion also provided for supplemental property tax rebates of up to \$325 – on top of the standard rebates – to homeowners in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton and to those in other parts of the state who pay more than 15 percent of income on property taxes.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms (PA-1000) and information are available online at www.papropertytaxrelief.com and by calling 1-888-222-9190. Forms and assistance also are available at Department of Revenue district offices (listed in the government section of local telephone directories), local Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers and state legislators' offices.

The deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2008 is Dec. 31.