

## Reference Senior Citizen Exemption

I don't know if the task force has submitted solutions reference the senior exemption, but wanted to share my thoughts on the subject.

When my husband obtained his senior exemption at 65, I was 4 years younger; however, I was issued a senior exemption when he obtained his. He had my State of Alaska identification card with him so they handed him a card for me also. I wasn't even with him.

Neither of us were every provided with or told the requirements for the senior exemption. I did not use my exemption because I wasn't 65 and did not feel it was right since I had not reached the age requirement even though the application shows Senior age 65+ and spouse. The first time I heard the intent of the original senior exemption was when Steven Eisenbeisz presented his research at an assembly meeting. It was for individuals experiencing financial difficulty; therefore, my husband and I never should have been issued the exemption. Looking at the Assessing Department Senior Exemption brochure, the Senior Citizen Exemption form and the exemption information sheet now available on the city web page there is no mention of financial hardship. The other item Steven pointed out from the original content was if a senior bought a gift for someone they could not use their exemption on that purchase. How would anyone know this?

Number 7 on the Senior Citizen Exemption Information sheet states "Applicant must be a resident of Alaska for the entire year" prior to the exemption year; however, the Senior Citizen Exemption application ask "Did you or will you receive a 2015 Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend? Will you qualify for a 2016 AK Permanent Fund Dividend?" If they answer No to any of the PFD questions, they have to complete the CBS Supplemental Form. Why not ask the date they arrived in Sitka with the intent of becoming a permanent residence? When I worked at the Division of Motor Vehicles and elderly parents moved to Sitka to live with their adult children the first thing they did was bring them in to obtain a State of Alaska identification card so they could obtain the City & Borough of Sitka senior exemption card. Once they had the state identification they obtained the senior exemption and they did not have to wait a year. It was quicker than registering to vote and waiting for the card or studying to take the test to obtain a driver's license or perhaps they could no longer drive. Perhaps the city did not have the senior exemption forms they have now.

A while back a saw a poster on the bulletin board at the city office providing information on heating assistance. It showed the number of people in a household, the income for each member and that determined if they were eligible for assistance. I thought why couldn't the city of Sitka do this reference the Senior Exemption?

So my thoughts were why not start all over, wipe the slate clean, every one has to re-apply for the senior exemption, create a new application that shows in print it's related to **financial assistance**. Have a question on the form that ask does your yearly income exceed \_\_\_\_\_ (yes) (no) to show who qualifies. The problem is how to determine yearly income that requires financial assistance. I know I should not make a suggestion unless I provide a solution also, but I am sure the task force has additional information and suggestions towards making recommendations.

Thank you for giving of your time serving on the Citizen's Taskforce.