

# Act 50: Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **1. What is the Homestead Act, and do I qualify?**

The Homestead Act (Act 50) is a program that reduces your market value by \$18,000 for County taxes only. To qualify, you must be the owner and occupy the dwelling as your primary residence. The application deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. You do not have to reapply each year. Once you have filed, your exemption will remain in effect until you sell/transfer the property or change your occupancy. In addition, if you have previously filed and qualified for the Act 50 exclusion, you are automatically registered for the Act 1 program.

### **2. Why isn't the Homestead (Act 50) applied to my property?**

You must apply for the Act 50 if you purchase a property. Also, if there is a name change to a deed, you must file a new Act 50 application. Example: If you transfer your deed to your maiden name, the Homestead Exclusion will be removed at the end of the year. You must reapply for the Homestead. If you believe the Homestead Exclusion should be applied and have filed your application, we can research that information.

### **3. Do I have to apply every year for the Homestead Exclusion?**

No, you don't have to apply again if you remain the property owner, you haven't filed a deed transfer, and it continues to be your primary residence.

### **4. Can a homeowner have more than one Homestead Exclusion?**

No, a homeowner is eligible for the Homestead Exclusion only for his/her primary residence. Any other Homesteads will be removed, and the owner is subject to interest, penalties and fines up to \$2500.

### **5. How do I get the Act 50 removed from a property I just sold?**

Act 50 will automatically be removed once the sale is processed through the Department of Real Estate, but it will remain on the property until the end of the year. We can research that information for you.

### **6. Why was the act 50 taken off my property? How do I get it back?**

When a deed is filed with Allegheny County and processed by the Department of Real Estate, the Act 50 is removed at the end of the year. We can research that information for you.

**7. How do I remove the Homestead Exclusion from my property?**

If you want to remove Act 50 from a property which is no longer your primary residence, you must submit an Act 50 Removal Form, with your signature, requesting that we remove the Homestead Exclusion. Mail to:

Office of Property Assessments  
Attn: Legislative Acts  
542 Forbes Avenue, Room 347  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**8. My neighbor has moved out and uses his former home as a rental property. It still has a Homestead Exclusion on it. Is that legal?**

No, the owner must use the property as his/her primary residence to qualify for the Homestead Exclusion. We can research that information for you.

**9. How long does the Homestead Exclusion remain on a parcel?**

The Homestead Exclusion remains on the parcel as long as the owner retains the property as his/her primary residence. When a sale or deed transfer occurs, the Homestead stays on the parcel for the remainder of the tax year and then is removed January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

**10. Are Homestead allowed on parcels that are deemed commercial in use?**

A Homestead Exclusion is allowed if the parcel is 'mixed' use, commercial and residential.  
Example: A dentist has an office on the first floor of a building and resides on the top floor. If this is the dentist's primary residence, the Homestead Exclusion will be allowed.

**11. Are parcels that are deemed exempt allowed the Homestead Exclusion?**

In Allegheny County, honorably discharged war- time veterans having 100% service-connected disability can be exempt from real property taxes on their primary residence. They may have the Homestead Exclusion applied as well.

**12. Are homeowners who have placed their parcels in a trust allowed the Homestead Exclusion?**

Yes, Allegheny County views 'trusts' as allowable as long as the owners use the properties as their primary residences.

**13. Are a church's rectory and /or manse allowed to have the Homestead Exclusion?**

Yes, Allegheny County considers a church's rectory/manse allowable since it is a primary residence.