

Stronger Outreach Paying Off for Seniors Eligible for Parcel Tax Exemptions

Parcel tax exemptions have been granted to 1,789 more seniors and people with disabilities in fiscal year 2020-21 than the previous year, after Santa Clara County launched an outreach plan to make them aware of the program and how to apply.

In 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a proposal by Supervisors Dave Cortese and Supervisor Cindy Chavez to develop an outreach plan so eligible property owners could take advantage of this exemption that 24 school districts in Santa Clara County allow.

An estimated 40% of seniors and homeowners with disabilities were not taking advantage of this because school districts were unable to efficiently inform the community through outreach efforts. In some cases, the school districts were also requiring extra or unnecessary steps to apply for the exemption. For many seniors, this savings, from \$49 to \$820 a year, is significant.

“For many seniors on fixed incomes, the parcel tax was a financial burden that was extremely difficult for them to bear as they struggled to make ends meet,” said Supervisor Cortese. “Our outreach campaign is paying off for these taxpayers thanks to the County and the school districts.”

The issue was brought to the attention of Supervisor Cortese by San Jose resident Don Eberhard who spoke to the Board of Supervisors on behalf of all older homeowners who were overpaying their taxes.

“The increase in exemptions is an example of the County of Santa Clara listening to our residents and responding with action and results,” said Cindy Chavez, president of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

As of October 22, all the school districts reported an increase in applications and exemptions granted. In the Alum Rock Union School District, the number of exemptions climbed from 25 to 89, and the Berryessa Union School District approved tax exemptions for 902 residents compared to 743 the previous year. The San Jose Unified School District’s number of tax exemptions climbed from 58 to 291 from the 2018-19 year to 2019-20. Click [here](#) for the full list of districts and exemptions.

Property owners are assessed parcel taxes as a result of a successful school district measure approved by voters in a previous election.

The Board's Children, Seniors and Families Committee, on which Supervisors Cortese and Chavez are members, conducted a special hearing to identify how outreach and the application process could be improved.

Property owners who believe they may be eligible for a parcel tax exemption can visit the County's Finance Agency's [Parcel Tax Exemption](#) page with information about the school districts that do levy a parcel tax and how to apply.

For more information, call the office of Supervisor Dave Cortese at 408-299-5030 or email me at dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org.