Department of Revenue
Local Government Services Division
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Homestead Exemption
Immigrant Status – Verification via SAVE System

September 23, 2008

Recent changes in Federal and State laws redefined the term "Resident" as it concerns the legal status of non-citizens applying for homestead exemption. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information concerning the impact of the aforementioned changes.

One of the requirements in order to be eligible for a homestead exemption in Georgia is that the applicant must be a resident of the state.

Resident:

"Resident" as defined in O.C.G.A. § 48-5-40, was recently amended to incorporate the definition of resident as defined in § 40-5-1 (Motor Vehicle Code).

The term "Resident" as defined in that specific Code section "...means a person who has a permanent home or abode in Georgia to which, whenever such person is absent, he or she has the intention of returning."

"... [T]here is a rebuttable presumption that the following person is a resident [of Georgia]:

- Any person who accepts employment or engages in any trade, profession, or occupation in Georgia or enters his or her children to be educated in the private or public schools of Georgia within ten days after the commencement of such employment or education; or

- Any person who, except for infrequent, brief absences, has been present in the state for 30 or more days;

- PROVIDED ...that no person shall be considered a resident ... unless such person is either a United States citizen or an alien with legal authorization from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Verification of Residency Status:

The following are some of the appropriate ways of verification:

- Georgia Driver's License
- Georgia issued Identification Card.

Individuals without the above identification claiming to be legal residents:

- Non U.S. citizen with legal authorization.
    - SAVE System.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) SAVE System.

Access to the SAVE system.

In order to access this system, you will need to obtain the non-citizen applicant's legal alien registration number.

A revision of the homestead exemption application form now includes a space for the applicant to provide this number.

You can access SAVE registration at the link below.
http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=d283c2ec0c7c8110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD&vgnextchannel=d283c2ec0c7c8110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD

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For more information on this subject
Contact the Local Government Services Division
At 404-968-0707
from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm EST, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
Persons with hearing or speech impairments may call our TDD number
At 404-417-4302.

For forms and other information, visit our website (www.dor.ga.gov).