

2026 PROPERTY TAX POVERTY EXEMPTION APPLICATION AND INFORMATION

Deadline for Submission of Poverty Exemption Applications:

To ensure the application is heard at the March 2026 Board of Review:

The application must be received by the office of the City Assessor by **March 2, 2026.**

To ensure the application is heard at the July 2026 Board of Review:

The application must be received by the office of the City Assessor by **July 1, 2026.**

To ensure the application is heard at the December 2026 Board of Review:

The application must be received by the office of the City Assessor by **December 1, 2026.**

Mail: Office of the City Assessor, 7900 S Westnedge Ave, Portage, MI 49002

E-mail: assessingdept@portagemi.gov

In Person: Assessing Office or 24-hr drop box at Portage City Hall (located near Treasury)

GUIDELINES: To be eligible, a person shall do all the following on an annual basis:

1. Be an owner of and occupy as a principal residence the property for which an exemption is requested.
2. File a claim in the form of a complete application with the assessor or Board of Review. If an area does not apply to the applicant, "N/A" must be used. The application must be accompanied by federal and state income tax returns for all persons residing in the principal residence, including any property tax credit returns filed in the immediately preceding year or in the current year or a signed State Tax Commission Form 4988, Poverty Exemption Affidavit.
3. File a claim in the form of a complete application reporting that the combined assets of all persons do not exceed \$25,000. Assets include but are not limited to real estate other than the principal residence, personal property, motor vehicles that are not required for transportation to and from place of employment or education, recreational vehicles and equipment, certificates of deposit, savings accounts, checking accounts, stocks, bonds, life insurance, retirement funds, etc. Please see page 3 for more explanation regarding assets.
4. Produce a valid driver's license or other form of identification, if requested.
5. Produce a deed, land contract, or other evidence of ownership of the property for which an exemption is requested.
6. Meet the federal poverty income guidelines as defined and determined annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services providing the alternative guidelines do not provide eligibility requirements less than the federal guidelines.

The following are the federal poverty income guidelines, which are updated annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The annual allowable income includes income for all persons residing in the principal residence.

**Number of Persons Residing
In the Principal Residence**

**Poverty Guidelines
Annual Allowable Income**

1 person	\$ 19,563
2 persons.....	\$ 26,438
3 persons.....	\$ 33,313
4 persons.....	\$ 40,188
5 persons.....	\$ 47,063
6 persons.....	\$ 53,938
7 persons.....	\$ 60,813
8 persons.....	\$ 67,688

Each additional person, add \$6,875

Documents Needed: In order for the city to approve your application, you must provide proof of your income and assets. Please provide the following items. **Remove all account and social security numbers from your documents.**

1. The fully completed and signed application form, which includes a complete listing of all persons residing in this home, showing their age, employment/disability status, and income.
2. If the property is not in your name currently due to an unrecorded land contract or otherwise, then provide proof of ownership.
3. Copy of most recent annual Social Security notice of amount of monthly benefit for each person in your household who receives any type of Social Security benefit.
4. Copy of the 2025 Federal and State income tax returns for you and every household member who is required to file. If any person (age 18 or older) in the household is not required to file federal or state tax returns, form 4988 must be completed by each person that does not file taxes.
5. Copies of 2 bank statements from the last 4-6 months for every bank, retirement, annuity, cash value life insurance, brokerage or other financial asset accounts held by you and any person residing in your household. Please include statements from Direct Express, if applicable.
6. A statement detailing any assets owned by any person residing in your household, other than normal household goods and items listed on the application.
7. Again, be sure to include proof of income and assets for each person who resides in your household. Please see page 3 for more explanation regarding assets and income.

The ASSET level does not include the primary residence for which exemption is being sought. It does include, but is not limited to:

- A second home, additional land not associated with the primary residence, or other buildings other than the primary residence being sought for exemption.
- Vehicles and other recreational vehicles such as motor homes, campers, ATVs, boats, and motorcycles.
- Jewelry, antiques, artwork, equipment, and other personal property of value.
- Bank accounts, stocks, bonds, and investments. This also includes the money received from the sale of stocks, bonds, investments, cars, and houses unless a person is in the specific business of selling such property.
- Withdrawals of bank accounts and borrowed money.
- Gifts, loans, lump-sum inheritances, and one-time insurance payments.
- Food or housing received in lieu of wages and the value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms.
- Federal non-cash benefits programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, and school lunches.
- The total interest income in all accounts (checking, savings, CDs, IRAs, 401Ks, money market, annuities, etc.)

***Maximum total allowed assets, including amounts in banking and investment accounts may not exceed \$25,000.

According to the US Census Bureau, INCOME includes:

- Money, wages, and salaries before any deductions, regular contributions from persons not living in the residence.
- Net receipts from non-farm self-employment. (These are receipts from a person's own business, professional enterprise, or partnership, after deductions for business expenses.)
- Net receipts from farm self-employment. (The same provisions as above for self-employment.)
- Regular payments from social security, railroad retirement, unemployment, worker's compensation, veteran's payments, and public assistance, supplemental security income (SSI).
- Alimony, child support, and military family allotments.
- Private and governmental retirement and disability pensions, and regular insurance or annuity payments.
- College or university scholarships, grants, fellowships, and assistantships.
- Dividends, interest, and net income from rentals, royalties, estates, trusts, gambling or lottery winnings.

Application and Affirmation for MCL 211.7u Poverty Exemption

This form is issued under the authority of the General Property Tax Act, Public Act 206 of 1893, MCL 211.7u.

MCL 211.7u of the General Property Tax Act, Public Act 206 of 1893, provides a property tax exemption for the principal residence of persons who, by reason of poverty, are unable to contribute toward the public charges. This application is to be used to apply for the exemption and must be filed with the Board of Review where the property is located. This application may be submitted to the city or township where the property is located in each year on or after January 1 but before the day prior to the last day of the board of review. Poverty Exemptions may be heard by the Board of Review during its March, July, and December sessions.

To be considered complete, this application must: 1) be completed in its entirety, 2) include information regarding all members residing within the household, and 3) include all required documentation as listed within the application. Please write legibly and attach additional pages as necessary.

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION — Petitioner must list all required personal information.				
Petitioner's Name			Daytime Phone Number	
Age of Petitioner	Marital Status	Age of Spouse	Number of Legal Dependents	
Property Address of Principal Residence		City	State	ZIP Code
PART 2: REAL ESTATE INFORMATION				
List the real estate information related to your principal residence. Be prepared to provide a deed, land contract or other evidence of ownership of the property at the Board of Review meeting.				
Property Parcel Identification Number		Name of Mortgage Company		
Unpaid Balance Owed on Principal Residence	Monthly Payment	Length of Time at this Residence		
Property Description				
PART 3: AFFIRMATION OF OWNERSHIP, OCCUPANCY, AND INCOME STATUS (Check all boxes that apply.)				
<input type="checkbox"/> I own the property in which the exemption is being claimed.				
<input type="checkbox"/> The property in which the exemption is being claimed is used as my homestead. Homestead is generally defined as any dwelling with its land and buildings where a family makes its home.				
PART 4: ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION				
List information related to any other property owned by you or any member residing in the household.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you own, or are buying, other property. If checked, complete the information below.			Amount of Income Earned from other Property	
1	Property Address	City	State	ZIP Code
	Name of Owner(s)	Assessed Value	Date of Last Taxes Paid	Amount of Taxes Paid
2	Property Address	City	State	ZIP Code
	Name of Owner(s)	Assessed Value	Date of Last Taxes Paid	Amount of Taxes Paid

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PART 5: EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION — List your current employment information.

Name of Employer

Address of Employer

City

State

ZIP Code

Contact Person

Employer Telephone Number

PART 6: INCOME SOURCES

List all income sources, including but not limited to: salaries, Social Security, rents, pensions, IRAs (individual retirement accounts), unemployment compensation, disability, government pensions, worker's compensation, dividends, claims and judgments from lawsuits, alimony, child support, friend or family contribution, reverse mortgage, or any other source of income, for all persons residing at the property.

Source of Income	Monthly or Annual Income (indicate which)

PART 7: CHECKING, SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT INFORMATION

List any and all savings owned by all household members, including but not limited to: checking accounts, savings accounts, postal savings, credit union shares, certificates of deposit, cash, stocks, bonds, or similar investments, for all persons residing at the property.

Name of Financial Institution or Investments	Amount on Deposit	Current Interest Rate	Name on Account	Value of Investment

PART 8: LIFE INSURANCE — List all policies held by all household members.

Name of Insured	Amount of Policy	Monthly Payments	Policy Paid in Full	Name of Beneficiary	Relationship to Insured

PART 9: MOTOR VEHICLE INFORMATION

All motor vehicles (including motorcycles, motor homes, camper trailers, etc.) held or owned by any person residing within the household must be listed.

Make	Year	Monthly Payment	Balance Owed

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PART 10: HOUSEHOLD OCCUPANTS — List all persons living in the household.

First and Last Name	Age	Relationship to Applicant	Place of Employment	\$ Contribution to Family Income

PART 11: PERSONAL DEBT — List all personal debt for all household members.

Creditor	Purpose of Debt	Date of Debt	Original Balance	Monthly Payment	Balance Owed

PART 12: MONTHLY EXPENSE INFORMATION

The amount of monthly expenses related to the principal residence for each category must be listed. Indicate N/A as necessary.

Heating	Electric	Water	Phone
Cable	Food	Clothing	Health Insurance
Garbage	Daycare	Car Expense (gas, repair, etc.)	
Other (type and amount)	Other (type and amount)	Other (type and amount)	
Other (type and amount)	Other (type and amount)	Other (type and amount)	

NOTICE: Per MCL 211.7u(2)(b), federal and state income tax returns for all persons residing in the principal residence, including any property tax credit returns, filed in the immediately preceding year or in the current year must be submitted with this application. Federal and state income tax returns are not required for a person residing in the principal residence if that person was not required to file a federal or state income tax return in the tax year in which the exemption under this section is claimed or in the immediately preceding tax year.

PART 13: POLICY AND GUIDELINES ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The governing body of the local assessing unit shall determine and make available to the public the policy and guidelines used for the granting of exemptions under MCL 211.7u. In order to be eligible for the exemption, the applicant must meet the federal poverty guidelines published in the prior calendar year in the Federal Register by the United States Department of Health and Human Services under its authority to revise the poverty line under 42 USC 9902, or alternative guidelines adopted by the governing body of the local assessing unit so long as the alternative guidelines do not provide income eligibility requirements less than the federal guidelines. The policy and guidelines must include, but are not limited to, the specific income and asset levels of the claimant and total household income and assets. The combined assets of all persons must not exceed the limits set forth in the guidelines adopted by the local assessing unit.

☐ The applicant has reviewed the applicable policy and guidelines adopted by the city or township, including the specific income and asset levels of the claimant and total household income and assets.

PART 14: LEGAL DESIGNEE INFORMATION (Complete if applicable.)

Legal Designee Name		Daytime Telephone Number	
Mailing Address	City	State	ZIP Code

PART 15: CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the best of my knowledge that the information provided in this form is complete, accurate and I am eligible for the exemption from property taxes pursuant to Michigan Compiled Law, Section 211.7u.

Printed Name	Signature	Date
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This application shall be filed after January 1, but before the day prior to the last day of the local unit's December Board of Review.

Decision of the March Board of Review may be appealed by petition to the Michigan Tax Tribunal by July 31 of the current year. A July or December Board of Review decision may be appealed to the Michigan Tax Tribunal by petition within 30 days of decision. A copy of the Board of Review decision must be included with the petition.

Michigan Tax Tribunal
PO Box 30232
Lansing MI 48909

Phone: 517-335-9760
Email: taxtrib@michigan.gov

Poverty Exemption Affidavit

This form is issued under authority of Public Act 206 of 1893; MCL 211.7u.

INSTRUCTIONS: When completed, this document must accompany a taxpayer's Application for Poverty Exemption filed with the supervisor or the board of review of the local unit where the property is located. MCL 211.7u provides for a whole or partial property tax exemption on the principal residence of an owner of the property by reason of poverty and the inability to contribute toward the public charges. MCL 211.7u(2)(b) requires proof of eligibility for the exemption be provided to the board of review by supplying copies of federal and state income tax returns for all persons residing in the principal residence, including property tax credit returns, or by filing an affidavit for all persons residing in the residence who were not required to file federal or state income tax returns for the current or preceding tax year.

I, _____, swear and affirm by my signature below that I reside in the principal residence that is the subject of this Application for Poverty Exemption and that for the current tax year and the preceding tax year, I was not required to file a federal or state income tax return.

Address of Principal Residence: _____

Signature of Person Making Affidavit

Date