



NEWS FOR SENIORS FROM NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN
PETER J. ABBATE, JR.

49TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

2015

Dear Friend,

Making sure our government protects seniors has always been a top priority of mine. Whether it's enacting legislation that punishes criminals who commit crimes against the elderly, improving health care for seniors or providing basic information about benefit programs, I have always worked hard to advance issues that impact you.

Enclosed, you will find information pertaining to senior citizen issues that we have addressed in the legislature. I have also included information about programs that you may qualify for. If you need further assistance please do not hesitate to contact my office on Fort Hamilton Parkway.

Although we have been able to make strides in improving the quality of life for seniors, more still needs to be done. My efforts will continue to make sure that senior citizens get the kind of benefits and help they truly deserve.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.
Member of Assembly

Helping Seniors Heat Their Homes

Every year my office is proud to participate in the Neighborhood Heating Fund administered by HeartShare. This program helps low-income families with the cost of their high heating bills. At the beginning of this year, within a two month period, my office was able to secure over \$7,000 to help more than 40 households. Over the past few years, hundreds of needy families and seniors have been helped through this program totaling over \$30,000 in paid heating bills.

Next year, my office will again assist residents in signing up for this important program. Registration will begin January 2016 for the next cycle. If you are interested in applying, please contact my district office at 718-236-1764.



Offices

6605 Fort Hamilton Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11219
718-232-9565

839 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-3053

Programs Available for Qualifying Seniors

Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)

EPIC is New York State's prescription plan for seniors age 65 or older with an income below \$75,000 if single or \$100,000 if married. It covers almost all prescription medicines, including insulin and insulin syringes, and works with Medicare Part D. For more information, call the toll-free EPIC hotline at 1-800-332-3742.

A few changes were made to the EPIC program to include out-of-state pharmacies that register with the State. This gives seniors more options when choosing a pharmacy that meets their needs.



Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE)

Available to seniors age 62 and older who are head of household and live in rent-controlled or rent-regulated apartments or Mitchell-Lama public housing. To be eligible, renters must also pay one-third or more of their income towards rent. The income limit can be up to \$50,000 depending on where the senior lives. The chart to the left will help you determine if you qualify for this benefit.

*Annual Household Income	*Monthly Household Income	**Current monthly rent must be greater than or equal to
\$15,000.00	\$1,250.00	\$416.67
\$20,000.00	\$1,666.67	\$555.56
\$25,000.00	\$2,083.33	\$694.44
\$30,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$833.33
\$35,000.00	\$2,916.67	\$972.22
\$40,000.00	\$3,333.33	\$1,111.11
\$50,000.00	\$4,166.67	\$1,388.89

*Income is SCRIE calculated income, not to be confused with Adjusted Gross Income
**Current rent is defined as the new rent after all lawful rent increases for any lease term

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

New York State's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps pay heating costs. Eligibility is determined by annual income and household size. To find out more about HEAP, call the New York State Senior Citizen Office for the Aging hotline at 1-800-342-9871 or the local office for the aging. The NYC Department for the Aging can be reached at 311.

The State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) offer services to assist residents in making energy-efficient improvements to their homes to further reduce their energy costs. For more information, contact DHCR at 1-866-ASK-DHCR or NYSERDA at 1-866-NYSERDA.



Programs Available for Qualifying Seniors

Senior Citizen Homeowners Exemption (SCHE)

SCHE Program benefits senior homeowners by providing a sliding scale real estate tax exemption from 5% - 50% that is renewable every second year.

Owners of real estate including co-op and condo owners, age 65 or over, who use the property as their primary residence are eligible for this program. Those turning 65 anytime during the year are also eligible. Applicants can apply at any time to qualify for benefits for the following July 1st billing period. Those who are eligible for SCRIE are not eligible for SCHE. Those who qualify for SCHE will automatically get Enhanced STAR exemption. Combined total income for all owners from all sources must be less than \$37,399. Individuals can deduct documented unreimbursed medical and prescription expenses.



Reduced-Fare Metrocard

The MTA offers a reduced-fare program 24 hours a day; 7 days a week on NYC owned local route buses and subways. Reduced fare is half the base fare, \$1.35 or less with a qualifying card. Seniors age 65 or older or persons who have an eligible disability may apply. For your convenience, the MTA provides mobile outreach programs to sign-up those who qualify. Call NYC Transit at 718-243-4999 or 311 for information on when and where you can apply.

"We need to show the elderly the respect they deserve by preserving spousal refusal."



School Tax Relief (STAR) Exemption

STAR is an exemption from school property taxes for owner occupied primary residences. All New York City homeowners qualify for a basic exemption and senior citizen homeowners may qualify for an enhanced exemption if they meet additional qualifications. To be eligible for Enhanced STAR, seniors must be 65 years or older, own and live in a 1, 2 or 3 family home, condominium or cooperative apartment, and have income that is less than \$74,700. The average benefit reduces property tax approximately \$350 a year. Basic STAR eligibility includes all residential property owners who live in a 1, 2 or 3 family home, condominium or cooperative apartment, regardless of age and their combined income is less than \$500,000. The average benefit reduces property tax approximately \$200 a year. Call 311 for more information.



Helping Seniors with the Increasing Cost of Health Care

In an effort to help the poor and elderly, the final State budget restored \$78.9 million to Medicaid and \$10.7 million to preserve spousal refusal, which protects couples from losing their life savings in the event that a spouse requires long-term care. In 2013, the median yearly cost of staying in a long-term care facility in New York State

was \$125,732. These costs can be ruinous for seniors on a fixed income. The final budget also rejected the Governor's proposal to greatly reduce pharmacy reimbursements which would have resulted in severe consequences for providers that care for the neediest individuals in our State.



Assemblyman
PETER ABBATE
with News for Seniors

2015

Street Updates

- New stop lights are being installed on 10th Avenue at 64th Street and 63rd Street due to safety concerns.
- Working with the New York City Department of Transportation and Community Boards 10 and 11, funding has been secured for many streets in the district to be repaved, including:
 - 8th Avenue
 - 67th Street from 8th through 15th Avenue

If you have any recommendations for new street lights or transportation related issues, please contact my district office at 718-236-1764.

