



## Charleston County News Release

Release Number: 2876  
Release Date: April 21, 2007

### **Charleston County Launches Pilot Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program**

*Applications will be accepted beginning May 1*

Charleston County will be launching its pilot Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program this summer, allowing senior residents the opportunity to work in County offices for reimbursement of their 2007 Charleston County Government property taxes. Participant applications will be accepted beginning May 1.

Charleston County Council recently voted to approve the pilot program, which will begin July 24, in order to assess its viability.

Participants must be 65 years or older, reside in their primary residence in Charleston County, and have paid their entire 2007 property tax bill.

Eligible participants will be able to work for a reimbursement of the Charleston County Government operations and debt service portion of their total property tax bill only. The average Charleston County Government portion of a senior citizen's tax bill is approximately \$197.

"Program positions will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis taking into consideration applicants' skills, location, transportation, and physical limitations," said Johnna Murray, of the Charleston County Grants Administration Department, who coordinates the program. "All positions will be administrative in nature, and County staff will work to provide positions throughout the county in order to ease the burden of long commutes."

However, the majority of openings will be in the North Charleston and downtown Charleston areas. Participants will be responsible for transportation to and from their assigned job site.

Participants will be paid the new minimum wage rate of \$6.55 per hour for the period of time equivalent to their county tax liability. The compensation is a reimbursement for 2007 Charleston County Government property taxes already paid.

The amount of hours a senior must work in order to be reimbursed for taxes paid will be calculated by dividing the individual's Charleston County Government portion of their tax bill (County operations and debt service only) by the prevailing minimum wage (currently \$6.55). All Homestead Exemptions and Local Option Sales Tax Credits will be taken into account.

"Based on the average senior citizen Charleston County Government property tax payment of \$197, most participants will need to work approximately 30 hours to be reimbursed for their 2007 taxes paid," said Murray.

Participants will be paid biweekly, similar to regular County employees. In most cases, the participants' required hours will be less than a full 80-hour pay period, meaning that most participants will receive a single lump sum payment and conclude their work within a two-week timeframe.

By law, participants must be categorized as temporary County employees. However, participants will not receive health insurance or retirement benefits. If applicable, participants will have state and federal taxes withheld from their income.

## To Apply

Applications will be accepted beginning May 1. The Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program application forms and additional information can be found at [www.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.charlestoncounty.org) on the Grants Administration Department page.

Applications will also be available at the Charleston County Human Resources Department located at the Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building, 4045 Bridge View Drive in North Charleston, S.C. The County is also working with area senior centers and churches to make applications available at those locations.

Seniors should be prepared to provide a copy of the following:

- South Carolina driver's license or picture ID
- Original Social Security Card
- 2007 property tax bill or tax bill receipt (Note: Only the individual listed on the tax bill/receipt is eligible to participate.)

Applications can be submitted:

- By mail to:

Charleston County Grants Administration Department  
Attn: Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program  
4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite B226  
North Charleston, SC 29405

- By fax to (843) 202-6961.

If you have questions, contact Andrea "Andy" Umbreit at (843) 202-6986.

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