

ONTEORA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2020-2021 School Taxes FAQ

When should I expect my tax bill in the mail? Your tax bill will be mailed on or around August 30, 2020.

When is the tax collection period? The tax collection period for this year is September 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020, without payment of a penalty. A penalty will be charged for any payments received after September 30, 2020. No payments will be accepted after November 5, 2020.

Where can I pay my taxes? Payments should be mailed to: **Receiver of Taxes, Onteora CSD, PO Box 6070, Kingston, NY 12402-6070**. If you choose to pay your taxes in person, you may do so at the Catskill Hudson Bank located at 101 Kings Mall Court, Kingston NY (in the Marshalls and Home Goods Plaza).

Can I pay my tax bill in installments? Yes. Your tax bill may be paid in 3 installments, however, the first installment must be 50% of the total bill in order to be accepted. If it is not, it will be returned.

Can I pay my tax bill using a credit card or e-check? Yes. Credit cards can be used to pay your tax bill **online only**. Visit the website at <http://taxlookup.net>, bring up your bill and follow the instructions. A convenience fee will be charged. The fees are not being collected by the Onteora Central School District and are not additional income to the district.

Will I be charged a fee if I pay my taxes late? Yes. Tax bills paid between October 1, 2020 and October 31, 2020 are subject to a 1% penalty. Taxes paid between November 1 and November 5, 2020 are subject to a 2% penalty.

Where can I pay my tax bill after the tax collection period ends? Any checks postmarked after November 5, 2020 will be returned to the property owner. After November 5, please contact the Ulster County Department of Finance at 845-340-3431.

What should I do if I find an error or missing exemption on my tax bill? If the error relates to the property assessment or exemption amounts, please contact the town assessor first.

TAX LEVY

What is the tax levy? The tax levy is the total amount of money needed to be raised from local taxes to fund the Onteora Central School District budget after state aid and other revenue sources are taken into account.

What is the change in the tax levy for 2020-2021? The tax levy for 2020-2021 is 2.51 percent higher than the tax levy for 2019-2020.

TAX RATES

Is the tax rate the same as the tax levy? No, the tax rate differs from the tax levy, and several factors go into determining the tax rate. In calculating the tax rate, the tax levy is divided between the six towns located

within the Ontario Central School District using state formulas. These formulas take into account full values, assessed values and equalization rates, all of which are used to determine the tax rate.

ASSESSMENTS

Who determines the assessed value of my property? Each town has an assessor who is responsible for determining the assessed values for properties within that town. Questions regarding town equalization rates and individual property assessments should be addressed directly to your town assessor. The phone number of the office of the assessor for each town within the Ontario Central School District is listed below.

Hurley	845-331-7474, ext. 5
Marbletown	845-687-7500 ext. 173
Olive	845-657-8137
Shandaken	845-688-5003
Woodstock	845-679-2113 ext. 1
Lexington	518-989-6263 ext. 13

What is Full Value? The full value (also called market value) is what your property would sell for under normal conditions. For residential properties, your assessor generally determines market values by comparing your property with similar properties that have sold in similar neighborhoods, giving consideration to other factors possibly affecting market value.

What is Assessed Value? The assessed value is the assessor's opinion of your parcel's current market value (full value) multiplied by the uniform percentage of value used in your town. Assessed values are used along with the tax rate to compute the tax due for a particular property, before exemptions.

What is an Equalization Rate? Equalization rates are determined by the State and represent the overall ratio of a municipality's total assessed value to the municipality's total property market value. Equalization rates are used in apportioning property taxes among municipal segments of school districts. In order for a school district to fairly distribute its property tax levy, the levy needs to be divided in proportion to the total market value of each municipality or municipal segment. This allows for an equitable distribution of taxes based upon the market value of each municipality.

Why do some towns have equalization rates less than 100%? The State has determined that the values of the homes in those towns are more than what the towns have listed as their value, while the homes in the other towns within the District with an equalization rate of 100% are not. The State determines an equalization rate in order for each town to pay its fair share of property taxes based on actual market value.

The STAR program will consist of the **STAR exemption** and the **STAR credit**. See attached flow chart on the website to see eligibility requirements.

STAR EXEMPTION

What is the STAR exemption? STAR is New York State's School Tax Relief Program that provides a partial property tax exemption from school taxes to eligible homeowners who purchased homes prior to 2015.

There are two parts to the STAR property tax exemption:

- The Basic STAR exemption is available for owner-occupied, primary residences purchased prior to August 1, 2015 where the homeowners' income is under \$250,000. Basic STAR works by exempting a portion of the full value of a home from school taxes.
- The Enhanced STAR exemption is available for the primary residences of senior citizens (age 65 and older) with yearly household incomes not exceeding a statewide standard. For qualifying senior citizens, the Enhanced STAR program provides additional savings by exempting a greater portion of full value from school taxes.

Where do I see how much STAR is saving me in tax dollars? Individuals receiving STAR exemption will see the savings on their school property tax bill.

Is the STAR exemption automatic? No. **To receive the STAR tax exemption, you must have filed an application with your local property assessor before 2015.** If you have applied previously and been granted the Basic STAR exemption, you do not need to reapply. However, if your primary residence changes, you will need to apply for the STAR credit. Most seniors receiving the Enhanced exemption will need to reapply yearly.

What recent changes did NYS make to the STAR program? As a result of recent law changes, homeowners with household income over \$250,000 are no longer eligible for the STAR exemption. They may be eligible for the STAR credit.

STAR CREDIT

What is the STAR credit? The STAR credit program was introduced in 2016 for all new eligible homeowners, and current exemption holders. Instead of applying with the assessor, homeowners must apply with the state and can do so by visiting www.tax.ny.gov/star.

How do I get my savings if it doesn't show up on my bill? STAR credit savings will show up as a check directly to you in the mail. You **MUST** register first in order to get a check.

If I'm receiving the STAR exemption, can I, and should I, switch to receiving a check for the STAR credit? Switching from the STAR exemption to the STAR credit, is a personal decision. Beginning in 2019, homeowners who have the STAR exemption may receive a greater benefit if they switch to the STAR credit. The value of the STAR credit savings may grow by as much as 2% from year to year, but the value of the STAR exemption savings will not increase. In addition, if your income is \$250,000 or higher, you must switch to the STAR credit to continue receiving the STAR benefit.

More information about the new STAR program is posted on the Department of Taxation and Finance website at www.tax.ny.gov or call 518-457-2036.

