

## Important Reminders about Vermont Property Taxes

### What is the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA)?

The CLA is the primary result of the Equalization Study conducted by the Vermont Department of Taxes every year. The study compares the listed value on the grand list to the sale price for all the arms-length sales in the town during a prior three-year period. The CLA doesn't change taxpayer's property values, only the education tax rate in a town. It is a method of ensuring that each town is paying its fair share of Education Property Tax to the state's Education Fund, based on actual real estate market trends.

### Homestead Declaration

If you meet the requirements to file a Vermont Homestead Declaration, you must file each year. A "homestead" is your principal dwelling and parcel of land surrounding the dwelling. Your town uses the Homestead Declaration to assess the correct Education Property Tax rate.

### Penalties for Late Filing / Neglecting to File / Fraudulent Filing

If you file your Homestead Declaration after the July 15 deadline, the town may assess a penalty of up to 8%. The penalty depends on whether the non-homestead rate is lower or higher than the homestead education property rate. See Vermont law at [legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/32/103/03202](http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/32/103/03202). If you file after the October 15 extended deadline or fail to file, the town will classify your property as non-homestead and charge you the higher of the two rates, assess a penalty, and require you to pay any additional property tax and interest due. Before filing, make sure your property meets the definition of Vermont homestead. **If you are found to have filed and you should not have filed, or you have not filed and are required to file, the town may assess a penalty of up to 8%.** If you are found to have filed fraudulently, the town may assess a penalty equal to 100% of your Education Property Tax. For more information, go to [tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/homestead-declaration](http://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/homestead-declaration).

### Property Tax Credit Claim

If you filed a Homestead Declaration, you may be eligible for a Property Tax Credit based on your housesite value and household income. The Property Tax Credit is a credit applied against your property tax bill. The credit is shown on your 2020/2021 property tax bill as a state payment.

### What is the Spending Adjustment?

The Spending Adjustment is calculated based on the per-pupil spending of your school districts, as well as any legislative incentives (such as mergers). Each town has its own district for lower grades, and many towns are also members of union school districts. In those cases, the town gets a tax rate that is a blend of the town's district tax rate and the union district tax rates.

### Vermont Current Use Program (also known as the Use Value Appraisal Program)

The eligible agricultural and forest lands of property owners who enroll in the Current Use Program are taxed at the "use value" (set by the Current Use Value Advisory Board once a year) of the land rather than its listed value. Applications are due by Sept. 1, 2020. For additional information and to apply for a new enrollment or to change your existing enrollment, visit [secure.vermont.gov/TAX/ecuse/](http://secure.vermont.gov/TAX/ecuse/).

### Assistance and Ordering Forms

For assistance, call (866) 828-2865 (toll-free in Vermont) or (802) 828-2865 (local or out-of-state). Paper forms for the Homestead Declaration, Property Tax Credit Claim, and the Current Use Program are available at [tax.vermont.gov/forms](http://tax.vermont.gov/forms). You may also order paper forms at [tax.vermont.gov/form-request](http://tax.vermont.gov/form-request) or call toll-free in Vermont at (855) 297-5600.

### File Online for Free

You may file your Homestead Declaration and if eligible, your Property Tax Credit online at [myVTax.vermont.gov](http://myVTax.vermont.gov).

### More Information

For more information, visit [tax.vermont.gov/property-owners](http://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners).

(Rev. 05/20)