



TAKEROOT JUSTICE

PROTECTING OUR PLACES: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS ON NOT-FOR-PROFIT PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Charity organizations own buildings that house daycares and mosques, arts organizations and churches, food pantries and theaters; they own land for community gardens, playgrounds and farms. State Law is clear that they are all entitled to property tax exemptions from the date they purchase the property until they don't own it anymore.

New York City's Department of Finance (DOF) has the responsibility for administering the way organizations get these exemptions. They set up a system for initial applications and appeals if those applications are denied. Since 2012, DOF has also been requiring organizations with an exemption to renew it annually.

APPLY FOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Organizations have to APPLY for property tax exemptions???

Yes! Property tax exemptions are NOT automatic in NYC, even if an organization is exempt from federal income taxes. Find out if you are eligible for exemption using DOF's eligibility tool: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nfp/eligibility/eligibility-tool.page>. Keep in mind that many organizations are federally tax exempt automatically without needing to get a formal letter from the IRS and can answer YES to the first question: "Is your organization federally tax-exempt today?"

What if we don't apply?

If an doesn't apply and receive a property tax exemption, the City will send it bills for property taxes. If the organization does not pay them, the City has the right to turn them into lien and sell it. *UPDATE: As of the 2020 lien sale, the City cannot sell liens on organizations that have applied for an exemption and not gotten a response from DOF, or have appealed a denial.*

Ok – how do we do apply?

Go to: http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/finance/downloads/pdf/08pdf/not_for_profit_appl.pdf

Print, fill out and mail the application and materials to:

New York City Department of Finance

Commercial Exemptions–NFP

59 Maiden Lane, 22nd Floor

New York, NY 10038



RENEW PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

How often do we have to renew?

Every year. Properties owned by nonprofits will need to renew their exemption for each year in the fall of the previous year; for example, renewals for 2021 must be done in the fall of 2020.

You can also see a list of organizations that have had exemptions in the past but have not yet renewed here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nfp/how-to-apply/renewing-your-benefit.page>.

How do I submit my renewal and what information will I need?

Here are the renewal instructions: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nfp/how-to-apply/renewing-your-benefit.page>. To renew, you will need your user ID and password that was included in a letter sent by the Department of Finance every year in October. If you did not receive a letter in October with this information, call 311 and ask to speak with a representative in the Not-for-profit Tax Exemptions Unit, or use this form to reset your user ID and password: <https://nycdepartmentoffinance.dynamics365portals.us/SignIn?ReturnUrl=%2Fcreate-case%2F%3Ftopic%3DNotForProfit>

What if we don't renew?

If an doesn't apply and receive a property tax exemption, the City will send it bills for property taxes. Although the bills are illegal under State law, if the organization does not pay them for two years, the City has the right to turn them into lien and sell it. *UPDATE: As of the 2020 lien sale, the City cannot sell liens on organizations that had exemptions in either of the last two years.*

The NYC Department of Finance, Nonprofit Ombudsperson

If you receive a notice of a pending tax lien, contact NFP-Ombuds@finance.nyc.gov, or by phone (212) 748-4732.

Department of Finance, Office of the Taxpayer Advocate

When you are having trouble with the Department of Finance Exemptions Unit, the Ombudsperson or any other part of the Department:

Visit: nyc.gov/taxpayeradvocate

Email: DOFTaxpayeradvocate@finance.nyc.gov

Call: (212) 312-1800

APPLY FOR WATER AND SEWER BILL EXEMPTIONS

Lots of organizations can get an exemption from water and sewer debt, but they must apply and renew every two years. The application materials are here:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dep/downloads/pdf/pay-my-bills/customer-service/application-for-exemption-from-water-and-sewer-charges.pdf>

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Contact TakeRoot's Equitable Neighborhoods
equitableneighborhoods@takerootjustice.org,
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PROTECT CHARITY PROPERTY FROM LIENS AND FORECLOSURE

All unpaid bills from City agencies, including emergency repairs, property taxes and water bills, are sold every summer to a private tax lien trust for collection. The trust puts a lien on the property that can turn into a foreclosure action. Stopping the lien sale is the surest way to protect a property.

UPDATE: As of the 2020 lien sale, the City cannot sell liens on organizations (1) had exemptions in either of the last two years, (2) have applied for an exemption and not gotten a response from DOF, or (3) have appealed a DOF exemption denial.

If your organization has property tax debt heading to the lien sale, call these two offices in the Department of Finance **IMMEDIATELY** and ask that your organization's property be **TAKEN OFF THE LIST**:

- The NYC Department of Finance, Nonprofit Ombudsperson: NFP-Ombuds@finance.nyc.gov, or by phone (212) 748-4732.
- The NYC Department of Finance, Office of the Taxpayer Advocate, DOFTaxpayeradvocate@finance.nyc.gov, (212) 312-1800
- The NYC Department of Finance, Nonprofit Ombudsperson: (212) 440-5408

If your organization has water and sewer debt heading to the lien sale, call these two offices in the Department of Environmental Protection **IMMEDIATELY** and ask that your organization's property be **TAKEN OFF THE LIST**:

- The NYC Department of Environmental Protection Ombudsperson: (718) 595-OMBU, ombuds@dep.nyc.gov

Andrew Rettig, Director of Legal Services and Data Quality Assurance: (718) 595-5650, Andrewr@dep.nyc.gov.