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§9–102.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) (i) "Assets" include:

1. real property;

2. cash;

3. savings accounts;

4. stocks;

5. bonds; and

6. any other investment.

(ii) "Assets" do not include:

1. the cash value of the life insurance policies on the life of the renter;

2. the cash value of any qualified retirement savings plans or individual retirement accounts; or

3. tangible personal property.

(3) "Assumed real property tax" means:

(i) 15% of the occupancy rent paid by a renter during the calendar year; or

(ii) 15% of the occupancy rent paid by a renter during the calendar year plus any tax paid under § 20–501 of the Local Government Article.

(4) "Combined income" means the combined gross income of all individuals who actually reside in a dwelling except an individual who:

(i) is a dependent of the renter under § 152 of the Internal Revenue Code; or

(ii) pays a reasonable amount for rent or room and board.

(5) (i) "Dwelling" means a rental unit that is the principal residence of a renter.

(ii) "Dwelling" includes a mobile home pad on which the principal residence of the renter rests.

(6) (i) "Gross income" means the total income from all sources for the calendar year that immediately precedes the taxable year, whether or not the income is included in the definition of gross income for federal or State tax purposes.

(ii) "Gross income" includes:

1. any benefit under the Social Security Act or the Railroad Retirement Act;

2. the aggregate of gifts over $300;

3. alimony;

4. support money;

5. any nontaxable strike benefit;

6. public assistance received in a cash grant;

7. a pension;

8. an annuity;

9. any unemployment insurance benefit;

10. any workers' compensation benefit; and

11. the net income received from a business, rental, or other endeavor.

(iii) "Gross income" does not include:

1. any income tax refund received from the State or federal government, including any refundable portion of the federal earned income tax credit; or

2. any loss from business, rental, or other endeavor.

(7) "Net worth" means the sum of the current market value of all assets, less any outstanding liability.

(8) "Occupancy rent" means the rent paid for the right to occupy a dwelling less the reasonable value of the utilities or furnishings or both if the utilities or the use of the furnishings or both are included in the rent.

(9) "Renter" means an individual, who during the calendar year for which the property tax relief under this section is sought, actually occupies a dwelling in which the individual has a leasehold interest and who:

(i) is at least 60 years old;

(ii) has been found permanently and totally disabled and has qualified for benefits under:

1. the Social Security Act;

2. the Railroad Retirement Act;

3. any federal act for members of the United States armed forces; or

4. any federal retirement system;

(iii) has been found permanently and totally disabled by a county health officer or the Baltimore City Commissioner of Health; or

(iv) is under the age of 60 years and:

1. has gross income below the poverty threshold that is established by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census in August of the previous calendar year;

2. has 1 or more dependent children under 18 years old living with the renter; and

3. does not receive federal or State housing subsidies or reside in public housing.

(b) There is a property tax relief program for any renter.

(c) The Department shall adopt regulations necessary to carry out this section.

(d) (1) (i) The Department shall:

1. give to each renter notice of possible property tax relief under this section; and

2. establish a marketing campaign to promote the use of the property tax relief program under this section.

(ii) The marketing campaign shall focus on reaching renters in high poverty areas throughout the State.

(2) The Comptroller shall provide in each package of income tax forms and instructions notice of the availability of a property tax credit under this section. Such notice shall be similar in every way to that provided homeowners in § 9–104(f) of this subtitle.

(3) The Department shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, on or before December 31, 2015, and every 2 years thereafter, on the promotion of the property tax relief program under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(e) If a dwelling is not actually occupied or expected to be occupied by the renter for 6 months or more of the calendar year, the dwelling is not a principal residence.

(f) (1) (i) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, on or before October 1 of the year following the calendar year for which property tax relief under this section is sought, a renter may apply to the Department for the property tax relief.

(ii) The application shall be made on the form that the Department provides.

(2) For good cause, the Department may accept an application from a renter after October 1 but on or before October 31 of the year following the calendar year for which property tax relief under this section is sought.

(3) The Department may accept an application from a renter within 3 years after October 1 of the calendar year for which the property tax relief under this section is sought if the renter was:

(i) at least 70 years old in the calendar year for which the property tax relief under this section is sought; and

(ii) eligible for the property tax relief under this section for the taxable year for which the relief is sought.

(4) The renter shall state under oath that the statements in the application are true.

(5) To substantiate the application, the applicant may be required to provide a copy of an income tax return, or other evidence detailing gross income or net worth.

(g) Notwithstanding § 13–202 of the Tax – General Article, to verify the income stated in an application, the Comptroller shall give the Department the information required.

(h) (1) The property tax relief that a renter may receive under this section is the assumed property tax on real property less a percentage of the combined income of the renter.

(2) The percentage is:

(i) 0% of the 1st $4,000 of combined income;

(ii) 2.5% of the 2nd $4,000 of combined income; and

(iii) 5.5% of the combined income over $8,000.

(i) The property tax relief under this section may not be:

(1) more than $1,000;

(2) granted to any renter whose combined net worth exceeds $200,000 as of December 31 of the calendar year for which the property tax relief is sought;

(3) granted to any renter whose dwelling is exempt from property tax; and

(4) granted if the credit under this section is less than $1 in any year.

(j) (1) The Department shall:

(i) process applications upon receipt;

(ii) certify to the Comptroller the property tax relief under this section due each renter; and

(iii) make the certifications required under item (ii) of this paragraph no less frequently than each month.

(2) The Comptroller shall pay the amount to the renter upon receipt of the certification from the Department.

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