

# How Can Seniors Stop Rent Increases?

## HOW CAN SENIOR CITIZENS STOP THEIR RENT FROM GOING UP?

New York City (NYC) has a special program to protect limited-income seniors from certain kinds of rent increases—the **Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE)** program. Even if you qualify for SCRIE benefits, **your rent will not be frozen until you apply.**

The SCRIE program costs landlords nothing because any allowable increases that they would have received from their tenants are subtracted from their NYC property taxes. Your landlord cannot refuse to be in the SCRIE program or keep you from being in it.

You can stop your rent from going up if you meet all of the following five requirements:

1. are the head of household—your **name is on the lease or rent roll**
2. are **62** years of age or older
3. live in a rent-regulated apartment or hotel room or in certain types of government-supervised or government-insured apartments or coops
4. have a total household **income, after taxes** and other allowable deductions, of not more than **\$50,000 per year** (check with NYC Department of Finance for latest eligibility income).
5. have a rent or carrying charge, including any allowable increase, that is **one-third or more of your household income**

Tenants who live in Public Housing Authority apartments or receive Section 8 rental subsidies do **NOT** qualify for SCRIE benefits.

You can find more information on SCRIE online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/tenants-scrie.page>.

## HOW DO I GET SCRIE BENEFITS?

To find out if you qualify for SCRIE benefits, get an **Application Form plus instructions**. These materials will help you figure out if you can get SCRIE benefits and tell you what documents to attach to your application.

- If you live in **rent-regulated** housing: **You will** need to apply to the **SCRIE Exemption Unit, NYC Department of Finance (DOF)**, 59 Maiden Lane, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10038. You can get an application by:
  - Calling 311. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is 212-504-4115.

- Visiting the SCRIE/DRIE walk-in office located at 66 John Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, New York, NY Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Applying online at [https://a858-ihss.nyc.gov/ihss1/en\\_US/IHSS\\_homePage.do](https://a858-ihss.nyc.gov/ihss1/en_US/IHSS_homePage.do). SCRIE applications can be downloaded at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/property-benefit-forms/benefits-forms-property-tenants-scrie.page>.

You can check on the progress of your application by calling 311, or if you know the docket number of your application, by checking online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/tenants-scrie.page>.

- If you live in **government-supervised or government insured housing** (Mitchell-Lama and Redevelopment Company developments and certain other housing) you will need to apply to the **NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)**, 100 Gold Street, 9th floor, New York, NY 10038, 212-863-8494. SCRIE instructions and the application form can be downloaded at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/renters/resources-subsidies.page>.

### WHEN WILL MY SCRIE BENEFITS BEGIN AND END?

You will receive an **Approval Order** that will say when your SCRIE benefits start. Until you get that Order, **you must pay the full rent or carrying charge, including the increase.** Your landlord must then change your rent or carrying charge and return the increase that you paid after the effective date of the Order.

**Reminder:  
Even if you qualify for SCRIE,  
you can only get  
it if you apply for it.**

You must renew your SCRIE benefits on a regular basis. DOF and HPD should send you the renewal forms. **If you do not fill out these forms, you will lose your SCRIE benefits.**

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I MOVE?

If your new housing qualifies for the SCRIE program, you must file a **Portability Application**. Your rent or carrying charge will be changed as necessary. It must be filed **WITHIN 30 DAYS before or after you move**; contact DOF or HPD to obtain the form.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I OR ANOTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER DIES?

SCRIE benefits stop the month after the head of household dies **UNLESS** a surviving household member qualifies for SCRIE benefits. This happens **ONLY IF** (1) that person's name and source of income were previously listed on the SCRIE application or renewal forms, (2) that person meets the other age and income criteria, and (3) that person must be the legal tenant or be granted succession rights to the apartment.

In order to continue receiving SCRIE benefits, you must file the **Benefits Takeover Form**. You can get the form by calling 311 or by going to <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/property-benefit-forms/benefits-forms-property-tenants-scrie.page>.

Often a death in the household results in a major loss of income for those who remain. When this happens, the qualifying surviving household member can ask for a **redetermination in writing** of the amount of the rent freeze in order to lower the rent because of reduced income.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF I DISAGREE WITH A SCRIE DECISION?**

If you disagree with a decision by the SCRIE Office, you can file an **Administrative Appeal**. You should get the proper form from DOF **as soon as possible** after the decision. You must return it within the time period set forth on the form, **60 days** from the date written on the decision.

You can get an appeal form by calling 311, visiting the SCRIE/DRIE walk-in office at 66 John Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, New York, NY Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or by downloading it at [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/finance/downloads/pdf/drie/scrie\\_appeal\\_application.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/finance/downloads/pdf/drie/scrie_appeal_application.pdf).

For HPD, you should contact the office and they will explain the procedure for writing a letter to the supervisor to request a review.

### **WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

If you have questions or need help with an application or appeal you may visit the SCRIE/DRIE walk-in office located at 66 John Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, New York, New York Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you live in Manhattan, Brooklyn or the Bronx you may also call MFY Legal Services, Inc.'s Housing Project on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 212-417-3888.

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**