

How Can People With Disabilities Stop Rent Increases? 2014

HOW CAN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES STOP THEIR RENT FROM GOING UP?

New York City has a program to subsidize rent increases for people with disabilities who live in rent-regulated apartments. **This program is called the Disabled Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program.**

The DRIE program does not cost landlords anything because any allowable increases landlords would receive from their tenants will be subtracted from their NYC property taxes. **Your landlord cannot refuse to be in the DRIE program or prevent you from being in it.**

In order to qualify for DRIE you must fit the following guidelines:

1. You receive one of the following: SSDI, SSI, Veteran's Benefits, or disability-related Medicaid.
2. Your income is not over the limit. Income limits are as follows: for one person households: \$20,412. For households with two or more members: \$29,484. Eligibility limits do change over time. For the latest figures contact the NYC Department of Finance through 311, at 212-639-9675 or at www.nyc.gov/finance.
3. You live in rent regulated housing (rent-controlled, rent-stabilized, Mitchell Lama or certain other categories of housing indicated in the application materials)
4. Your rent is one-third or more of household income
5. You are the tenant of record or you are the disabled spouse of the tenant of record.

HOW DO I GET DRIE BENEFITS?

To receive DRIE benefits, you must submit an Application for Disability Rent Increase Exemption. To get the application:

- **call 311** to request an application by mail, or
- download a paper application at:
http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/downloads/pdf/drie/drie_appl.pdf

If you need assistance completing the DRIE application or have eligibility questions, you can call 311 or contact the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities at 212-788-2830.

When you receive the application it is important you submit it in a timely manner. Even if you qualify for DRIE benefits, **your rental obligation will not be frozen until you apply and are approved.**

HOW MUCH IS THE DRIE BENEFIT?

If the application is approved, your rental obligation will be frozen at the amount you are currently paying or at the amount of your prior lease, depending on certain factors. The benefit becomes effective the first day of the month following the month in which your application was received.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE INCOME LIMIT?

The rules for determining whether you meet the income requirement are very similar to those for SSI and SSDI eligibility. As with SSI and SSDI, deduction rules allow for some un-reimbursed “impairment related work expenses” (IRWE’s) to be deducted from income before the disability payment amount is determined. These include expenses such as attendant care, transportation, medical devices, prostheses, work-related equipment and assistants, residential modifications, medications and medical services, diagnostic procedures, and non-medical appliances and devices.

In addition to IRWE’s, “blind work expenses” (BWE’s) are also deducted from income, and employment income disregards for people with severe visual impairments are generally higher.

The IRWE’s and BWE’s should be reported when completing the DRIE application if they have not already been calculated in your existing income.

Also, income gained from employment will only be partially counted. See the application for details.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MOVE?

If you move to another rent regulated apartment, you can apply to have your rent increase exemption recalculated for your new apartment. **You must submit a new application if you move.**

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY APPLICATION IS DENIED?

If your application is denied, you can appeal the decision by submitting an Application for Appeal of the Disability Rent Increase Exemption Determination **within 60 days of notification of the denial**. You can request an appeal form by mail or by calling 311, or download the application at http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/downloads/pdf/07pdf/drie_appeal.pdf

For information on the status of an application or appeal, you can contact the Department of Finance DRIE Unit by calling 311.