

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Vivian Po, (415) 554-5502

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Controller Yee, SF Assessor-Recorder Chu Announce Return of Property Tax Assistance for Low-Income Homeowners

San Francisco, CA – State Controller Betty T. Yee and San Francisco Assessor-Recorder Carmen Chu today announced the return of property tax assistance for eligible homeowners, seven years after the Property Tax Postponement (PTP) program was suspended by the legislature for lack of funds at the height of the Great Recession.

All California property owners are required to pay annual taxes based on the property's assessment. Failure to pay property taxes may result in penalties, tax liens, or foreclosures. The PTP Program administered by the State Controller allows eligible applicants in all 58 California counties to defer payment of their residential property taxes.

“San Francisco is one of the most expensive cities to live in the state. For seniors who are on a fixed income, there may be not much left for property tax after paying other necessary expenses, such as food, utilities and medical expenses,” said Assessor-Recorder Chu, who is responsible for establishing a taxable value for all property in San Francisco. “PTP will be a helpful State sponsored program for low-income homeowners who are running out of options.”

“Through sound fiscal management, California is once again in an economic position to offer this assistance to homeowners in need,” said Controller Yee, the state's chief fiscal officer. “PTP offers crucial housing security for seniors and people with disabilities who are struggling to get by. The economic recovery has not reached every individual in every corner of our state, and PTP is another tool to help address those inequalities.”

From 1978 until the suspension of PTP in 2009, thousands of homeowners benefited from the program each year. The State Controller's team will begin processing applications for the reinstated program on October 1. Funding for the program is limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

“Older adults are not only happier when they can age in place, but they have better health outcomes, and we know that caring for older adults is often far less expensive in the community than institutional care,” said Thomas Briody, President and CEO of the Institute on Aging, a nonprofit organization that offers a broad spectrum of services including home care, education, caregiver support, client advocacy, care coordination and other health services to help seniors maintain their independence.

To be eligible for PTP, a homeowner must be 62, or blind, or have a disability. The homeowner must also have a household income of \$35,500 or less, have at least 40 percent equity in the property, and occupy the home as the primary residence. The program application and more details are available on Controller Yee's website at http://sco.ca.gov/ardtax_prop_tax_postponement.html or by calling 1-800-952-5661.

The interest rate for taxes postponed under PTP is 7 percent per year. Postponed taxes and interest become due and payable under PTP when the homeowner moves or sells the property, transfers title, defaults on a senior lien, refinances, obtains a reverse mortgage, or passes away.

