

Information for Homeowners whose City Tax Liens were Purchased at the Annual Tax Sale

If someone had a tax bill, water bill, or other City citation that resulted in their tax lien being sold at the City's May 16 tax sale, they need to know the following.

A tax lien sale does **not** mean that someone has purchased a property at this time. It means that someone has paid off the homeowner's city bills and that the homeowner is now obligated to the tax lien purchaser.

Redemption (repayment of their city obligations and clearing the title to their property) can begin as early as **May 26, 2016**, and continue until such time that a Circuit Court judge signs a decree foreclosing the right of redemption.

Redemption involves the owner or an interested party, such as a mortgage holder, reimbursing the tax lien holder an amount of interest and other fees and costs. If a property is not redeemed by July 1, then the new fiscal year's property taxes must also be paid to redeem the property.

Once the tax lien holder has paid to the City all of the taxes and charges listed in the tax sale for a property, the property owner may only redeem their property by reimbursing the lien holder. The sooner a property is redeemed, the lower the additional charges imposed by the lien holder will be.

Fees and most costs are defined by State law and are owed to the tax lien holder, not to the City. The City has no power to waive or to reduce the fees and costs set by State law. The earlier a property is redeemed, the smaller the amount to redeem will be. Delay causes the costs to increase significantly. The following information applies to owner occupied properties:

- By state law, tax lien certificate holders must be repaid the lien amount plus **18%**
- **6 ½ months** after tax sale, up to **\$750** in fees and costs may be added
- **9 months** after tax sale, lien certificate holders may file to foreclose the right of redemption.
- **Up to \$750 more** in fees and costs may be added after foreclosure is filed

A Tax Lien Certificate Holder has no right to possession of the property until a deed is acquired through a court process.

The **amount owed** to the tax lien certificate holder is available online at BaltimoreCity.gov, by calling 410-396-3987, or by visiting Counter 2 in the Wolman Municipal Building, 200 Holliday St., and any weekday between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. .

A property owner who is prepared to redeem (i.e. pay off the amount owed) should come to the Abel Wolman building with cash or a certified check or money order. A written statement that the payment has been applied to pay their tax sale lien should be requested.

Other steps that they can take:

1. If their tax lien was purchased because of a delinquent water bill they may be eligible for the following programs:
 - Senior Citizens Water Discount
 - Low income water assistance Program
 - Hardship Exemption application to have certain fees removed from their water bill
2. Apply for the State's **Homeowners Property Tax Credit** - If over 70 years old they may apply retroactively for three years for every year they are past.
3. Apply for the Homestead Tax Credit

For more information and assistance in applying for these programs contact:

The **Community Action Program (CAP)** can be contacted at one of the following locations, depending on where they live.

- Southeast Community Action Center: 410-545-6518
- Eastern Community Action Center: 410-545-0136
- Northwest Community Action Center: 443-984-1384
- Southern Community Action Center: 410-545-0900
- Northern Community Action Center: 410-396-6084

Those 55 or older may contact **Maryland Access Point** at 410-396-2273.

Other housing counseling and legal services agencies that can assist:

Neighborhood Housing Services:	410-327-1200 ext. 104
St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center	410-366-8550
Southeast CDC	410-342-3234
Maryland Volunteer Lawyers	410-547-6537
Legal Aid Bureau	800-999-8904

For more information, contact Michael O'Leary, Baltimore City Housing, 410-396-3483 or email Michael.O'Leary@baltimorecity.gov