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Executive Kittleman announces expansion of tax credits geared toward older population and retired military

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman today announced applications are now being accepted for the County's newly expanded Senior Tax Credit and new Aging-in-Place Tax Credit. In addition, the County's Department of Finance will begin accepting applications starting this May for the expanded Livable Homes Tax Credit.

"These tax credits will provide important assistance for our senior population and retired military personnel to age in place and continue to call Howard County home," said Kittleman. "I thank the County Council for approving our legislation and supporting these residents."

The recent expansion of the Senior Tax Credit lowered the eligibility age to 65. Previously, it had been 70. The lower age expands the potential number of county property owners who could qualify for a 25 percent credit from 26,000 to more than 40,000.

In addition to being at least 65 years old, to qualify for the Senior Tax Credit residents must also use the property as their principal residence and not have gross household income over \$81,200 for 2017. The combined net worth of the household must also not exceed \$500,000, which includes all real property, cash, savings and investments, but does not include the dwelling on which the credit is sought, cash value of life insurance and any tangible personal property. Applications for the Senior Tax Credit are due by September 1, 2017. Applications for the Aging in Place Tax Credit are due by April 1, 2017. Both can be found online at taxcredits.howardcountymd.gov.

Enacted in 2012, the Livable Homes Tax Credit helps seniors and individuals with disabilities make the necessary improvements that will allow them to stay in their homes by providing a tax credit for the cost of installation of accessibility features in existing owner-occupied residences. The recent amendment to the Livable Homes Tax Credit increased the credit amount from 50 to 100 percent of eligibility costs up to \$2,500 per year. The amendment also expanded the types of projects that qualify a homeowner for the credit, such as accessible pathways between parking and residences, adding railings to hallways, installing slip-resistant flooring and

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improving stair design. Age and income are not factors in determining eligibility for this tax credit.

The newly created Aging-in-Place Tax Credit is geared toward helping older residents living on fixed incomes stay in Howard County as they age. To be eligible, a County property owner must be either: at least 65 years old and have lived in the same dwelling for the last 40 years; OR, be at least 65 years old and a retired member of our Armed Forces. This tax credit is equal to 20 percent of the eligible County tax on the lesser of either the assessed value of the property or \$500,000 reduced by the Homestead Tax Credit assessment. This credit may be granted for up to five years as long as the property owners remains qualified.

Improving services and initiatives for the county's senior population has been a priority for Kittleman since he took office more than two years ago. He elevated the county's Office on Aging and Independence administrator to a cabinet-level position and renamed senior centers to 50+ Centers to accommodate growing services for all seniors, including aging Baby Boomers

Kittleman has also been a strong advocate for our retired military personnel, creating an Office of Veterans and Military Families within the Department of Community Resources and Services.

For more information on these tax credits, visit the Department of Finance's website at taxcredits.howardcountymd.gov or contact the Department's Tax Credit line at 410-313-4076. Applications for the Livable Homes tax credit will be available from this website starting in May.

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