



# TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON

## RESIDENTIAL TAX EXEMPTION

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

#### **Q1. What is the Residential Tax Exemption?**

The Residential Tax Exemption (RTE) is an option allowed under Massachusetts law that enables a municipality to shift a portion of the property tax levy away from year-round residential properties and onto other classes of property, such as non-resident residential, and higher valued homes. Communities that adopt an RTE do so through an annual vote of the Select Board at the tax classification hearing.

#### **Q2. Has Great Barrington adopted the Residential Tax Exemption?**

No. Great Barrington has not adopted the RTE. The Town is currently in an evaluation and information-gathering phase to better understand how the exemption works, how it has been implemented in other communities, and what impacts it could have locally.

#### **Q3. Why is the Town exploring the Residential Tax Exemption?**

Great Barrington, like many Massachusetts communities, is experiencing rising property values, housing affordability challenges, and a growing share of seasonal and non-resident property ownership. The Town is reviewing the RTE as one of several potential tools to better understand how the exemption may play a role in addressing tax equity and community stability.

#### **Q4. Who would benefit from the Residential Tax Exemption?**

In communities that have adopted an RTE, the exemption typically provides local property tax relief to year-round residential property owners who use their property as their primary residence, and whose residential property is valued below a certain amount. The amount of relief varies based on the exemption structure and overall tax levy.

#### **Q5. Who would pay more if an exemption were adopted?**

If adopted, a portion of the tax levy would shift to properties of higher value and to properties owned by non-resident homeowners. The specific impact depends on the exemption percentage and the overall tax base.

#### **Q6. Does the Residential Tax Exemption increase the total amount of taxes collected?**

No. The RTE does not increase the total tax levy. It changes how the existing levy is distributed among the residential classes of property.

**Q7. How is the exemption amount determined?**

If adopted, the Select Board would vote annually on the exemption percentage within limits set by state law. That decision is informed by financial analysis, property valuation data, and policy considerations.

**Q8. Is the exemption permanent?**

No. The RTE must be re-adopted annually. Each year, the Select Board has the option to adopt, modify, or decline to implement the exemption.

**Q9. What is the Town doing as part of its review?**

As part of this evaluation, the Town is:

- Reviewing financial and assessment data
- Gathering input from peer Massachusetts communities that have adopted the exemption
- Reviewing best practices and lessons learned
- Receiving presentations and discussing the topic at public Select Board meetings

All materials and presentations related to this process will be posted on the Town's dedicated webpage as they become available.

**Q10. Will there be opportunities for public input?**

Yes. Public input is an important part of this process. Residents will have opportunities to provide comment during Select Board meetings and through other engagement opportunities as the review continues.

**Q11. How does this relate to other tax options, such as split tax rates?**

The Town is taking a broad and thoughtful approach to understanding property tax policy tools available under state law. The current focus is on learning from communities that have implemented the RTE, while remaining informed about other options as part of the overall policy discussion.

**Q12. Where can I learn more?**

The town's dedicated webpage [www.townofgbma.gov/617/Residential-Tax-Exemption](http://www.townofgbma.gov/617/Residential-Tax-Exemption) will be updated with presentations, background materials, and additional information as the review progresses. Residents are encouraged to check back regularly and attend Select Board meetings where this topic is discussed.

Select Board meeting dates can be found at [www.townofgbma.gov/362/Selectboard](http://www.townofgbma.gov/362/Selectboard), and meeting agendas are posted online at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.