

## Renters' Rebate Fact Sheet

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has used his line item veto to eliminate all \$191 million of funding for the Senior Citizens Property Tax Assistance Program from the California state budget. This was the governor's single biggest line-item veto. The Governor did not seek any public input before making this drastic and unexpected cut. The line-item veto takes \$150 million from low-income renters and \$41 million from low-income homeowners.

### ***What are Renters Rebates and Who Gets Them?***

The Senior Citizens Property Tax Assistance program, also known as the renters' rebate, has been in effect for decades. Under the program, qualified low-income seniors, blind, and disabled renters are entitled to a once-a-year payment if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Must be a senior (62 years or older), blind, or disabled
- Must have lived in a qualified rented residence subject to property tax and paid \$50 or more per month rent
- Must have total household income of \$44,096 or less

Renters begin applying for the rebate each year in July. Eligibility is based on the prior tax year. Many renters had already submitted claims for the rebate this year before the governor vetoed funding for the program. These renters were shocked to receive letters in October informing them that rebates would not be paid.

The renters' rebate program assists a large number of California's low-income renter households. Last year, 467,000 renter households received payments under the program. The average payment was \$316 per household. The following table shows the renter rebates paid in 2005, 2006 and 2007, broken down between senior claimants and disabled/blind claimants.

Claim Year	Disabled/Blind Renter Claims Paid	Amount	Senior Renter Claims Paid	Amount
2005	179,375	\$59,086,929	272,862	\$83,329,651
2006	179,352	59,123,092	274,521	83,874,326
2007	183,482	60,563,550	274,310	84,043,748

Although the bulk of the tax assistance payments are directed to renters, the program also provides \$41 million in rebates to low-income homeowners who are senior, blind or disabled. The Governor's veto eliminated all of the homeowner funds, impacting California's struggling homeowners.

### ***Reaction to the Elimination of Renters Rebates***

The governor's elimination of all funds for renters' rebates was met with immediate opposition from a broad coalition of tenant, senior, and disabled advocacy organizations. On October 31, 2008, thirty organizations co-signed a letter to the governor objecting to the cut and urging that the program be fully funded.

A coalition of groups has vowed to take action to restore the rebates. On November 19, 2008, renters, seniors and persons with disabilities across the state are participating in a statewide day of action to save the rebates. The goal is to bring increased attention to the issue and to demand full funding for the rebate program.

For more information about the rebate program, contact Tenants Together at 415.495.8100 or visit our renters' rebate page at [www.tenantstogether.org](http://www.tenantstogether.org).