

# The Coloradoan

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## We like property tax workoff idea

It's a good deal.

Senior citizens can pay their property taxes with time and talent instead of money.

Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins are accepting applications from seniors this month. The Poudre R-1 School District expects to be ready with its program soon.

Each program has different requirements, but the same intent. Each believes senior citizens may be short on cash, but long on talent. They will give you a job, and your pay will be applied to your tax bill.

"It's real work," said Lorrie Wolfe, volunteer director for the county Department of Human Development. "It's not a make-work proposition by any means."

Don't worry about being sent out to work with a road crew. The county tries to match jobs with your skills.

"We really do try to make it a match," Wolfe said.

Last year, 14 people worked off county property taxes. This year, the county has received more than 30 applications so far, Wolfe said. Some of the applicants are repeaters.

At least 25 jobs are available, Wolfe said last week. As more funds can be found, more seniors may be accepted in the program.

People in the programs work for minimum wage, minus social

Security tax payments.

It took an average of about 22 hours last year to work off city property taxes, said Gail Woods, coordinator of volunteers.

"The caliber of work is terrific," Woods said.

The city has received 32 applications so far. Many are repeaters.

Seniors aren't the only repeaters. Woods said some city departments have requested help again this year from the senior who worked with them last year. That is a reflection of the program.

The range of jobs available or done in the past offer challenges and capitalize on skills: computer work, microfilming, filing, painting, refinishing picnic tables, courier duty, clerical work, carpentry and other trade skills.

Wolfe described the program as a "real good deal" for both the county and the seniors.

"We get all those years of experience," she said. And seniors ease the demand on their money.

Here's how to apply:

For the county program, you or your spouse must be 60 or older. Bring your 1982 property tax notice, personal identification and proof of age to the north lobby of the Larimer County Courthouse any Monday this month between 9 a.m. and noon. The north lobby is near the commissioners' office.

There is no income requirement; you don't have to be retired.

For the city program, you or your spouse must be 65 and you must own a home inside the city limits. Go to the personnel office upstairs (there is an elevator) in the new City Hall any weekday this month between 9 a.m. and noon.

Again, there is no income requirement. Some applicants are near poverty and others have incomes of \$30,000, Woods said.

Watch for the school district program announcement later. The district will take 20 seniors and give each 40 hours work.

There is nothing in the rules that prohibits qualified seniors from working off taxes in all three programs, Woods said.

That makes this good deal three times better. Take advantage of it.

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

### January - Groundwork

Get support of Senior Board, Office on Aging.  
Present idea to local leaders.

### February - Meet with Taxing entities

### March - Meet with Finance and Treasurer's Office

Develop payment process.

### April - Assign Staff

Set up program eligibility guidelines and scope.  
Design forms and marketing strategy.

### May through June - Submit budget for following year

Promote to departments.

### September through December - Develop Jobs

Contact department heads individually.

### January

7 Tax notices sent out.  
15-31 Recruit participants.  
15 Begin placing participants in available jobs.  
31 Catalog skills and market list to departments.

### February - Begin Evaluations and Placements

### March 1 - First Half of Taxes Due

Remind all applicants to pay first half of taxes.  
Pay taxes for those who have worked.

### April 1 - Taxes Due if Paying Total in One Payment

### June 1

Remind department heads of remaining applicants.  
Remind Seniors to pay second half of taxes.

### July 1 - Taxes Due if Paying Second Half

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