

This rule was adopted on January 29, 2009 and becomes effective March 1, 2009. It may be used to determine tax liability on and after the effective date, until the codified version is available from the code reviser's office.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 02-15-020, filed 7/8/02, effective 8/8/02)

**WAC 458-16-560 Housing for very low-income households.**

(1) **Introduction.** This rule explains the exemption that may be claimed by nonprofit entities providing rental housing or lots for mobile homes within a mobile home park for occupancy by a very low-income household in accordance with RCW 84.36.560.

(2) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this rule, the following definitions apply:

(a) "CTED" means the state department of community, trade, and economic development or its successor agency;

(b) "Department" means the state department of revenue;

(c) "Group home" means a single-family dwelling financed, in whole or in part, by the state department of community, trade, and economic development or by an affordable housing levy under RCW 84.52.105. A "group home" has multiple units occupied on a twenty-four-hour basis by persons who are not related by birth or marriage and who are not dependent upon each other financially. Residents of a "group home" typically receive financial assistance from the federal or state government, such as Social Security benefits or supplementary security insurance;

(d) "Mobile home lot" or "mobile home park" means the same as these terms are defined in RCW 59.20.030;

(e) "Occupied dwelling unit" means a living unit that is occupied by an individual or household as of December 31st of the first assessment year the rental housing or mobile home park becomes operational or is occupied by an individual or household on January 1st of each subsequent assessment year in which the claim for exemption is submitted;

(f) "Rental housing" means a residential housing facility or group home that is occupied, but not owned, by very low-income households;

(g) "Very low-income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose income is at or below fifty percent of the median income adjusted for family size as most recently determined by the federal department of housing and urban development for the county in which the rental housing or mobile home park is located. The median income level is that which is in effect as of January 1st of the year the application for exemption is submitted; and

(h) "Nonprofit entity" means a:

(i) Nonprofit as defined in RCW 84.36.800 that is exempt from income tax under section 501(c) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, as amended;

(ii) Limited partnership in which a general partner is a nonprofit as defined in RCW 84.36.800 that is exempt from income tax under section 501(c) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, as amended, a public corporation established under RCW 35.21.660, 35.21.670, or 35.21.730, a housing authority created under RCW 35.82.030 or 35.82.300, or a housing authority meeting the definition in RCW 35.82.210 (2)(a); or

(iii) Limited liability company in which a managing member is a nonprofit as defined in RCW 84.36.800 that is exempt from income tax under section 501(c) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, as amended, a public corporation established under RCW 35.21.660, 35.21.670, or 35.21.730, a housing authority established under RCW 35.82.030 or 35.82.300, or a housing authority meeting the definition in RCW 35.82.210 (2)(a).

(3) **Total exemption - Requirements for rental housing or lot(s) for a mobile home.** Real and personal property is exempt from all property taxes if:

(a) The property is owned or used by a nonprofit entity in providing rental housing for very low-income households or used to provide a lot of land upon which a mobile home for a very low-income household will be placed in a mobile home park;

(b) The benefit of the exemption is received by the nonprofit entity. That is, if the property is leased to or used by, but not owned by, a nonprofit entity, the reduction in property taxes due to the exemption is passed on to the nonprofit user either through a reduction in rent, reimbursement of rent, or property tax paid;

(c) At least seventy-five percent of the occupied dwelling units in the rental housing or lots in the mobile home park are occupied by very low-income households; and

(d) The rental housing or lots in the mobile home park are insured, financed, or assisted, in whole or in part, through one or more of the following sources:

(i) A federal or state housing program administered by CTED; ((~~or~~))

(ii) A federal housing program administered by a city or county government;

(iii) An affordable housing levy authorized under RCW 84.52.105; or

(iv) The surcharges authorized by RCW 36.22.178 and 36.22.179 and any of the surcharges authorized in chapter 43.185C RCW.

(4) **Partial exemption - Determination of the amount of exemption.** If less than seventy-five percent of the occupied dwelling units within the rental housing or lots in the mobile

home park are occupied by very low-income households, the rental housing or mobile home park is eligible for a partial exemption on the real property and a total exemption on the housing's or park's personal property. The property must be owned or used by a nonprofit entity in providing rental housing for very low-income households or used to provide a lot upon which a mobile home for a very low-income household will be placed in a mobile home park.

(a) A partial exemption will be allowed for each dwelling unit in the rental housing or for each lot in the mobile home park occupied by a very low-income household; and

(b) The amount of the real property exemption will be calculated by multiplying the assessed value of the property reasonably necessary to provide the rental housing or to operate the mobile home park by a fraction. The formula for determining the fraction is as follows:

(i) The numerator of the fraction is the number of dwelling units or lots occupied by very low-income households as of December 31st of the first assessment year in which the rental housing facility or mobile home park becomes operational or on January 1st of each subsequent assessment year in which the claim for exemption is submitted; and

(ii) The denominator of the fraction is the total number of dwelling units or lots occupied as of December 31st of the first assessment year in which the rental housing facility or mobile home park becomes operational or on January 1st of each subsequent assessment year in which the claim for exemption is submitted.

(5) **Exempt facility with only three or less units or mobile home park with only three or less lots with vacancy on January 1st - Size of exemption.** If the rental housing or mobile home park is comprised of **only** three or less dwelling units or lots and there are any unoccupied dwelling units or lots on January 1st after receipt of a property tax exemption, the department will determine the size of the exemption based on the number of occupied dwelling units or lots on May 1st of the assessment year in which a claim for exemption is submitted. For example, if one-half of an exempt duplex is vacant on January 1st, which is the duplex's third year of operation, the department will determine the size of the exemption based on the number of occupied units on May 1st of that assessment year.

(6) **Facilities with ten or less units or mobile home parks with ten or less lots - Allowance for income growth.** Because the occupants of rental housing and mobile home parks granted an exemption under RCW 84.36.560 are generally attempting to improve their financial situation, the income of the household is likely to fluctuate during the time they occupy the housing unit or lot in the mobile home park.

(a) In an attempt to assist these households in improving

their circumstances, the exemption will continue for specific rental units or mobile home lots when the household's income rises above fifty percent of median income under the following conditions:

(i) The currently exempt rental housing unit in a facility with ten units or fewer or mobile home lot in a mobile home park with ten lots or fewer was occupied by a very low-income household at the time the exemption was granted;

(ii) The household's income rises above fifty percent of the median income but remains at or below eighty percent of median income adjusted for family size as most recently determined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development for the county in which the rental housing or mobile home park is located; and

(iii) The rental housing or mobile home park continues to meet the certification requirements of a very low-income housing program (~~(administered by CTED or the affordable housing levy under RCW 84.52.105)~~) listed in subsection (3)(d) of this section; and

(b) If a dwelling unit or mobile home lot receiving an exemption under this exception becomes vacant and is subsequently rerented, the income of the household moving into the unit or onto the mobile home lot must be at or below fifty percent of the median income adjusted for family size as most recently determined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development for the county in which the rental housing or mobile home park is located to remain exempt from property tax.

(c) Example. If a unit is occupied by a household whose income rises up to sixty percent of median income, the unit will retain its exempt status as long as the household continues to occupy the unit and the household's income remains below eighty percent of median income. If the residents of this unit move out on June 1st and the unit is subsequently rented to a household whose income is at or below fifty percent of median income, the unit will retain its exempt status. Conversely, if the unit is rented to a household whose income is above fifty percent of median income, the unit becomes ineligible for exemption as of January 1st of the following year.

(7) **Group homes - Income of residents.** The income of the individual residents of a group home, as defined in subsection (2) of this rule, will not be combined so as to constitute the income of a single household. Each resident will be considered an independent household occupying a separate dwelling unit. In other words, the income of the residents of a group home will not be aggregated when the department determines the size of the exemption the group home is entitled to receive. For example, if there are six residents in a group home, the department will process the application for exemption as if there were six separate dwelling units and determine the size of the exemption

on that basis. If three of the residents have income at or below fifty percent of median income, the home will receive a fifty percent reduction in the property taxes due on the home.

**(8) Eligibility of property unoccupied at the time of initial application or at any time after the exemption is granted.** Property that is unoccupied at the time of application or on January 1 of any subsequent year is still eligible for exemption if certain conditions are met. If the property is currently taxable, it may receive exempt status as of the assessment year in which the claim for exemption is submitted. If the property is currently exempt but the exempt use will cease or will be reduced because of renovations or repairs, the exempt status of the property may be continued for taxes payable the next year. The following conditions must be satisfied to receive an exemption under either of these circumstances:

(a) The rental housing or mobile home park will be used for the exempt purpose stated in RCW 84.36.560 within two assessment years;

(b) The nonprofit entity applying for or receiving the exemption has obtained a commitment for financing, in whole or in part, to acquire, construct, remodel, renovate, or otherwise convert the property to provide housing for very low-income households from(~~(+~~

~~(i) A federal or state housing program administered by CTED; or~~

~~(ii) An affordable housing levy authorized under RCW 84.52.105)) one or more of the sources listed in subsection (3)(d) of this section;~~

(c) The nonprofit entity has manifested its intent in writing to construct, remodel, renovate, or otherwise convert the rental housing or mobile home park to housing for very low-income households; and

(d) If less than the entire facility or mobile home park will be used to provide rental housing or mobile home lots for very low-income households, only that portion that will be so used is entitled to an exemption under this subsection.

**(9) Exclusive use required.** To be exempt under RCW 84.36.560, the property must be exclusively used to provide rental housing or mobile home lots for very low-income households, except as provided in RCW 84.36.805.

**(10) Payments in-lieu of property tax will be accepted.** Any nonprofit entity that qualifies for a property tax exemption under RCW 84.36.560 may agree to make payments to the city, county, or other political subdivision for the improvements, services, and facilities furnished by the city, county, or political subdivision for the benefit of the exempt rental housing facility or mobile home lots. However, these payments may not exceed the amount of property tax last levied as the annual tax by the city, county, or political subdivision upon

the property prior to the time the exemption was effective.