

New York State

Office of Information Technology Services

Digital Services: Government to Citizens

Homeowner Benefit Portal

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Executive Summary

The Homeowner Benefit Portal (HBP) is an authenticated Homeowner Registration web application that went into production May 2024. NYS Property owners can access the application through their NYS Online Services (OLS) account, data can be retrieved and validated against existing registrations, assessment roll information and income. The single application is a 'one stop shop' that provides multiple options for property owners to receive and manage the property tax benefits they are eligible for. The Homeowner Benefit Portal enables property owners to register for the School Tax Relief (STAR) benefit, enroll in STAR credit direct deposit and check the status of their property tax registrations. HBP also allows property owners to view, edit, and close their registrations. HBP provides real-time validations enabling property owners to act by resolving issues with their registration that can delay their timely receipt of the benefit they are entitled. This user-friendly web application has greatly improved the customer experience by increasing efficiency for NYS property owners; the application is a true accomplishment for NYS.

Project Description

Idea

New York's School Tax Relief (STAR) program was initiated in 2000. It was established to assist property owners with paying their school tax bills. Property owners could apply for a STAR exemption which would reduce their school tax bill. In 2016, the STAR exemption was removed for new homeowners but remained available to existing STAR exemption recipients. Instead, new homeowners could enroll for a STAR benefit which resulted in a STAR credit check being sent to the property owner prior to their school tax bill being due.

In 2006, the NYS Office of Information Technology Services (OITS) and NYS Department of Taxation and Finance - Office of Real Property Tax Services (ORPTS) worked together to design, develop, and implement the STAR Registration web application. The main objective of this web application was to make STAR credit registration easy for property owners. There are more than 2.7 million NYS properties; due to the vast number of properties, the STAR Registration web application was made available to the public without a secured login. In turn, the information collected through the application was limited and resulted in exceptions that needed to be manually worked by ORPTS staff. Many resolutions required outreach to the property owner.

To continue providing customer service to property owners, three additional property tax web applications were developed. In 2014, the Credit Lookup application went into production which allowed property owners to view the status of their property tax credits. In 2016, the secured Income Worksheet application was implemented. Enabling property owners to provide household income, age, and relationship which determined eligibility for the STAR credit. In 2023, the STAR Credit Direct Deposit web application was implemented. This application allowed property owners to provide their bank

account information so their STAR credit could be direct deposited into their banking account.

With the agency's goal to continually improve and enhance the taxpayer's experience, there was a desire to create a more user-friendly application for NYS property owners. The Home Benefit Portal was the solution: Bring STAR registration web app, STAR Credit Direct Deposit, the STAR Credit Lookup, and Income Worksheet applications together in one application to make an Individual Online Services application so it's secure and allows the Department to share information back with the taxpayers, rather than just collecting it.

Implementation

The Homeowner Benefit Portal was successfully implemented in May 2024. A new application like HBP could take years to develop, but with the support of Tax-ORPTS, ITS was able to implement that portal within seven months. The technology behind the HBP application relies on microservices architecture and asynchronous messaging to achieve a seamless integration of monolithic legacy COBOL software components, Java SOA services and modernized microservices together to create business value. Microservices are developed in Java and deployed as Docker containers in OpenShift Container Platform using continuous integration and deployment pipelines. The HBP was developed with technology which allows it to be easily upgradeable as new technologies emerge and are adapted by the department.

The HBP application is secured, the only way to access HBP is through the Tax Department's Online Services (OLS). If a property owner does not have an OLS account, they can easily create one. Creation of an OLS account requires providing specific information to verify the identity of the individual. This ensures that only authorized individuals will be given visibility to the information stored on each property's registration.

From a solution standpoint, HBP combines the features of four web applications that were developed through the years. These features include:

- register for STAR
- enroll in STAR Credit Direct Deposit
- check the status of property tax registrations
- switch to the STAR credit
- view, edit or close registrations
- provide household income
- ensure information is accurate and complete
- take action to resolve issues.

The project is a demonstration of integration capabilities, agile development, and continuous delivery.

The HBP dashboard was designed and developed with a user-friendly interface which allows for easy navigation and interactions with the application. The application has increased efficiency by streamlining and combining multiple applications into one, allowing property owners to complete tasks quickly and accurately.

Department of Taxation and Finance Arpita Besta Get Support

Homeowner Benefit Portal

Taxpayer ID: Taxpayer name:

Registration
For general information about the STAR credit and STAR exemption programs, see the [STAR Resource Center](#).

To learn more about a particular field

Registrations on file

Below is a list of current registrations we have on file. To view, edit, or close a registration, or to resolve errors, select **Actions** and choose the appropriate action from the drop-down menu.

If the status of your registration is *Action required*, select **Actions** and choose *Edit Registration* from the drop-down menu.

To switch from the STAR exemption to the STAR credit, select **Actions** and choose *Switch to Credit* from the drop-down menu.

Status	Property address	Mailing address	Owners/relationships	Benefit type	Benefit year	Direct deposit enrollment	Property key	Confirmation number	
ACTION REQUIRED	2574 BAINBRIDGE AVENUE NY 10458	2574 BAINBRIDGE AVE BRONX, NY 10458-4602 US	PHILOMENE DUCTAN DELCO DUCTAN	BASIC EXEMPTION	2024	NOT ENROLLED	UA2B26W	PTRR0407221445662	Actions

Register

You should register your property in the *Homeowner Benefit Portal* if you own your home and it is your primary residence. We will use this registration to determine your eligibility for STAR and any future New York State property tax benefit programs that may become available to homeowners.

Once you have registered your property, do not register the same property again.

Register

Accessibility Disclaimer Privacy Security EmailPhishing

To access the [Homeowner Benefit Portal](#), Homeowners with existing Tax Department Individual Online Services accounts can now find the Homeowner Benefit Portal under *Real Property Tax* after they [log in](#). Other homeowners will be prompted to create an [Individual Online Services account](#) to get started.

Impact

The Homeowner Benefit Portal has greatly impacted NYS property owners and the Tax Department. The portal broadly allows new and existing STAR credit registrants to submit and revisit their submitted registrations and make modifications as needed moving forward. This web application gives current and new STAR credit program recipients a better user experience in providing their information to the department and provides real-time validation thus lessening exceptions to be resolved. The HBP will reduce the delay of processing STAR credit registrations and promptly send approximately 1 million STAR credits. Approximately 900,000 STAR credits were issued in 2023 and the program grows by 100,000-125,000 recipients each year.

Within one month of implementation the Homeowner Benefit Portal is proving to be a huge success with 52,715 visitors and 15,245 HBP registrations to date.

The Homeowner Benefit Portal is a one stop shop for property owners. The HBP provides property owners with the ability to:

- register for STAR
- enroll in STAR Credit Direct Deposit
- check the status of their property tax registrations
- switch to the STAR credit
- view, edit, or close their registrations
- ensure their information is accurate and complete

The Homeowner Benefit Portal has reduced outreach to property owners. In 2023, there was 106,932 letters sent out requesting individual income, 39,029 exemption letters and 67,903 credit letters. It is anticipated that the need for these letters will be significantly reduced due to HBP.

The need for the department to provide outreach to property owners to resolve issues with their registration has vastly reduced since property owners can now resolve registration issues within HBP. The total number of 2023 exceptions that have potential to be impacted by HBP for 2024 is 834,883.

The delivery of credit checks continues to reduce as property owners can now establish direct deposit within HBP. To date nearly 47,000 property owners have enrolled in direct deposit. In 2023, the dollar amount of STAR credits was nearly \$743 million in checks and nearly \$3.5 million in direct deposit.

In 2023 there was a total of 1,059 emails sent to taxpayers obtain further information related to their direct deposit enrollments. HBP direct deposit functionality has eliminated the need for the department to send such emails to NYS property owners.

HBP will also reduce the number of property owners inadvertently registering for STAR credit. In 2023 approximately 165,000 property owners created duplicate registrations for the STAR Credit; this number factors in property owners that register for the same property and/or register for the STAR credit but have an existing registration for the STAR exemption. These duplicate registration exceptions require manual resolution by ORPTS staff and may delay credit issuance. HBP will no longer allow this. Property owners will see from the dashboard that they have an existing open registration with no need to create a new one.

The Homeowner Benefit Portal has greatly impacted NYS property owners and the department. HBP has eliminated and/or greatly improved numerous business processes for the department. The Homeowner Benefit Portal has enhanced the overall user experience, increased customer satisfaction, improved efficiencies, accessibility, and engagement for property owners.