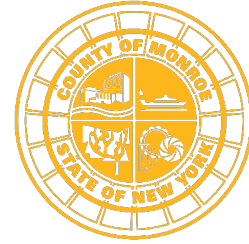




News from the Office of
Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive



For immediate release:
Friday, February 18, 2022

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES PROPERTY TAX BREAK FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND AMBULANCE PERSONNEL

New local law provides volunteers with partial tax exemptions of 10% of the value of their homes; applications due March 1 for 2022 tax year

ROCHESTER, NY — Under a local law signed today by Monroe County Executive Adam Bello, volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel are now eligible for a county property tax exemption that reduces the assessed value of their home by 10%.

“Our volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel selflessly serve our community every day, sacrificing time with their own families and often putting their own lives at risk to help keep others safer and healthier,” said County Executive Bello. *“Honoring their generosity and public spirit with this exemption is the right thing to do. I encourage all municipalities and taxing entities in Monroe County to follow suit and acknowledge the service of the brave volunteer first responders we rely on.”*

The local law was passed by the Monroe County Legislature on Feb. 8. **To receive the exemption for the 2022 tax year, eligible first responders must apply by March 1.** Applications are available here: https://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/orpts/rp466k_fill_in.pdf and should be returned to your local assessor’s office.

The exemption is available to members of incorporated volunteer fire companies, fire departments or incorporated voluntary ambulance services who are certified as being enrolled members for at least two years. Additionally, any enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service who accrues more than 20 years of active service is eligible for a lifetime 10% exemption for a primary residence within Monroe County.

The exemption was made possible by legislation put forward by State Sen. Samra Brouk and Assemblymember Jen Lunsford and signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul in December that allows entities within Monroe County that collect property tax (the City of Rochester, towns and villages, school districts, special districts, fire districts and the County) to enact their own local laws to provide the exemption to members of volunteer fire companies, fire districts, and ambulance services. The exemption provided by Monroe County applies only to Monroe County property tax.

“Our volunteer first responders have been on the front line of the pandemic, providing 24/7 emergency response despite the danger posed to themselves and their families, which is why I’m so proud to have championed this bill in the Senate and to see it implemented today by the County,” said state Sen. Samra Brouk. *“This tax exemption is about giving back to our heroic volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel, recognizing their lifesaving contributions to our community and promoting further long-term volunteer first-response in Monroe County.”*

"Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers go above and beyond — despite not receiving compensation — to provide emergency care for our communities and often put themselves in harm's way to help others," said Assemblymember Jen Lunsford. "These organizations are an essential part of our emergency response infrastructure and it's important to support them in any way that we can. That's why I sponsored and passed a law empowering Monroe County to provide volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers with a 10% real property tax exemption off the assessed value of their homes. I'll continue working with my Assembly colleagues to help improve volunteer recruitment and retention, and safeguard the communities we call home."

"In Monroe County, our volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel are the backbone of our local fire and ambulance organizations. Providing this tax exemption to our selfless first-responders will improve our County's retention, growth, and respect of those who sacrifice to protect us each and every day," said Monroe County Legislator Paul Dondorfer. "I am truly grateful to all who helped in making this legislation a reality. We must continue to do all we can to protect these vital services and support the individuals who provide them - I look forward to building upon this important progress."

"When we support recruiting and retention for volunteer fire and ambulance service, we honor selfless heroes, save taxpayers money, and preserve cornerstone civic and cultural institutions," said Monroe County Legislator John Baynes

"While the actual cost to each local agency for offering this exemption will be minimal, it's extremely important that all municipalities buy into the plan," said Michael Lapinski, president of the Monroe County Volunteer Firefighters Association. "Volunteer fire and EMS services save taxpayers money by not having paid personnel to answer alarms. But these men and women train just as hard as paid personnel and don't get paid. Any recruitment and retention tool the volunteer fire and EMS agencies can add to their toolbox is necessary to ensure the safety of residents everywhere."

—30—

Media inquiries:

Gary Walker, Director of Communications
GaryWalker@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 753-1064

Meaghan M. McDermott, Deputy Director of
Communications
MeaghanMcDermott@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 469-4365