

**BEFORE THE TAX COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO**

In the Matter of the Protest of )  
[Redacted], ) DOCKET NO. 39285  
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 )  
Petitioner. ) DECISION  
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\_\_\_\_\_ )

This case arises from a timely protest of a State Tax Commission (Commission) staff’s decision adjusting a property tax reduction benefit for taxable year 2013. This matter was submitted for a decision based on the documents in the file. The Commission has reviewed the file and makes its decision based on the contents in the file.

All property within the jurisdiction of this state is subject to property tax. A property tax reduction benefit is available to certain qualifying individuals. The benefit is in the form of a payment of all, or a portion, of the claimant’s property tax on the dwelling the claimant owns and occupies. The payment is funded by state sales tax. The amount of the property tax reduction depends on income—the greater the income, the smaller the benefit.

[Redacted] (claimant) filed an application for a 2013 property tax reduction benefit with [Redacted] County. The application was approved and the claimant received a benefit for payment of the property tax on her homestead.

During review of the application submitted by the claimant for taxable year 2013, the staff became aware of income that had not been included in the claimant’s application. The omitted income was from a retirement benefit paid on a 1099-R as a result of her daughter’s death.

Idaho Code §§ 63-707 and 63-708 provide for an audit of all claims and the recovery of benefits that have been paid in error. Once the additional income was discovered, a Notice of

Deficiency Determination (NODD) was issued on March 30, 2015, and the claimant was asked to repay a portion of the 2013 benefit received plus interest.

In response to the NODD, the claimant submitted an appeal letter and questioned why the the death benefit should be included in income for property tax reduction benefit purposes. The claimant's file was transferred to the Legal/Tax Policy Division for administrative review. The claimant was sent a letter explaining the methods available for redetermining a protested Notice of Deficiency Determination. There was no response.

Income for property tax reduction benefit purposes is defined in Idaho Code § 63-701(5):

(5) "Income" means the sum of federal adjusted gross income as defined in the Internal Revenue Code, as defined in section 63-3004, Idaho Code, and to the extent not already included in federal adjusted gross income:

- (a) Alimony;
- (b) Support money;
- (c) Nontaxable strike benefits;
- (d) **The nontaxable amount of any individual retirement account, pension or annuity**, (including railroad retirement benefits, all payments received under the federal social security act except the social security death benefit as specified in this subsection, state unemployment insurance laws, and veterans disability pensions and compensation, excluding any return of principal paid by the recipient of an annuity and excluding rollovers as provided in section 402 or 403 of the Internal Revenue Code);
- (e) Nontaxable interest received from the federal government or any of its instrumentalities or a state government or any of its instrumentalities;
- (f) Worker's compensation; and
- (g) The gross amount of loss of earnings insurance.

It does not include gifts from nongovernmental sources or inheritances. To the extent not reimbursed, the cost of medical care as defined in section 213(d) of the Internal Revenue Code, incurred or paid by the claimant and, if married, the claimant's spouse, may be deducted from income. To the extent not reimbursed, personal funeral expenses, including prepaid funeral expenses and premiums on funeral insurance, of the claimant and claimant's spouse only, may be deducted from income up to an annual maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per claim. "Income" does not include veterans disability pensions received by a person described in subsection (1)(e) who is a claimant or a claimant's spouse if the disability pension is received pursuant to a service-connected disability of a degree of forty percent (40%) or more. "Income" does not include dependency and indemnity compensation or death benefits paid to a person described in subsection (1) of this section by the United States department of veterans affairs

and arising from a service-connected death or disability. “Income” does not include lump sum death benefits made by the social security administration pursuant to 42 U.S.C. section 402(i). Documentation of medical expenses may be required by the county assessor, board of equalization and state tax commission in such form as the county assessor, board of equalization or state tax commission shall determine. “Income” shall be that received in the calendar year immediately preceding the year in which a claim is filed. Where a claimant and/or the claimant’s spouse does not file a federal tax return, the claimant’s and/or the claimant’s spouse’s federal adjusted gross income, for purposes of this section, shall be an income equivalent to federal adjusted gross income had the claimant and/or the claimant’s spouse filed a federal tax return, as determined by the county assessor. The county assessor, board of equalization or state tax commission may require documentation of income in such form as each shall determine, including, but not limited to: copies of federal or state tax returns and any attachments thereto; and income reporting forms such as the W2 and 1099. (Emphasis added.)

The calculation of income starts with [Redacted] adjusted gross income and, thereafter, makes certain additions and deductions. The property tax reduction benefit is not [Redacted] or state income tax – it is payment of property tax based on certain qualifying factors, including income. Pursuant to the definition of income, as stated in Idaho Code § 63-701(5), both the taxable and nontaxable portion of annuities, pensions, and retirement accounts is required to be included in income to determine the benefit amount a qualified claimant receives. The only exceptions are if the annuities are determined to be qualified as “return of principal paid by the recipient of an annuity” or “rollovers as provided in section 402 or 403 of the Internal Revenue Code.”

In the present case, the claimant’s 2013 application included social security income of \$18,059 and [Redacted] adjusted gross income of \$4,914. The Commission learned the claimant received income from a 1099-R retirement income distribution of \$2,904 that was not included in the application for 2013.

When the \$2,904 of retirement income is included in the 2013 application and medical expenses of \$2,484 are deducted, the claimant’s net income for property tax reduction benefit

purposes was \$23,393. The claimant should have received a benefit of \$450 instead of the \$636.74 that was paid.

THEREFORE, the Notice of Deficiency Determination dated March 30, 2015, is hereby AFFIRMED and MADE FINAL.

IT IS ORDERED that the claimant pay the following tax and interest:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>AMOUNT DUE</u>	<u>INTEREST</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2013	\$186.74	\$10.55	\$197.29

DEMAND for immediate payment of the foregoing amount is hereby made and given.

An explanation of the claimant's right to appeal this decision is enclosed.

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2015.

IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMMISSIONER

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2015, a copy of the within and foregoing DECISION was served by sending the same by United States mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to:

[Redacted]

Receipt No.  
  
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