



2026 POVERTY EXEMPTION GUIDELINES

Section 211.7u(1) of the Michigan General Property Tax Act authorizes a property tax exemption for homeowners who, in the judgment of the Board of Review, are unable to fully contribute to the property tax burden on their principal residence due to financial hardship.

The City of St. Joseph recognizes that the granting of any poverty exemption results in a shift of property taxes to other taxpayers within the community. Therefore, all applications must be reviewed with care and must meet the income and asset standards adopted by the City Commission.

Required Documentation

Applicants requesting a Poverty (Hardship) Exemption must submit the following to the Assessing Office. Documentation is required for all persons age 18 or older residing in the principal residence.

- 1. Fully completed Poverty Exemption Application (Form 5737)**
- 2. Income verification for all household members, including:**
 - W-2s
 - 1099s
 - Social Security Statements (SSA-1099)
 - Pension/retirement statements
 - Unemployment statements
 - Any other proof of income for tax year 2025
- 3. 2025 Federal Income Tax Return** (completed and signed), if required to file
- 4. 2025 State of Michigan Income Tax Return** (completed and signed), if required to file
- 5. Affidavit Indicating Not Required to File (Form 4988)** for any household member not required to file federal or state income tax returns (as allowed under MCL 211.7u).
- 6. Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit Claim (MI-1040CR)** for the most recent tax year
- 7. Asset documentation, including:**
 - Current bank statements for all household members over age 18
 - Statements for 401k, IRA, pension, or investment accounts
 - Documentation for any additional real estate owned aside from the homestead
- 8. Valid driver's license or state identification card** (if requested)
- 9. Proof of property ownership** (if requested)

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for a Poverty Exemption, applicants must meet the following standards:

1. Income and Asset Standards

Applicants must meet the poverty income guidelines and asset test established by the St. Joseph City Commission (attached).

2. Ownership and Occupancy

Applicants must own and occupy the property as their principal residence (as defined in MCL 211.7c).

Vacant, unplatte, or contiguous parcels not occupied as the principal residence do not qualify.

3. Application Filing Requirements

Applicants must submit:

- A completed Poverty Exemption Application (Form 5737)
- A Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit Claim (MI-1040CR)
- Required Federal/State tax returns or Form 4988
- All supporting income documents for every person residing in the household

4. Identification and Ownership Verification

Applicants must provide:

- A valid driver's license or state ID
- Proof of ownership when requested by the Assessor or Board of Review

5. Review Schedule

Applications will be forwarded to one of the following Board of Review sessions:

- March Board of Review – March 9 and 10
- July Board of Review – July 21
- December Board of Review – December 15

6. Filing Deadline

Completed applications and all supporting documents must be submitted at least 5 days prior to the scheduled Board of Review meeting.

For assistance, contact the Assessing Department at 269-983-1231.

CITY OF ST. JOSEPH
MICHIGAN
2026 POVERTY INCOME GUIDELINES

The following income limits are used to determine eligibility for a 2026 poverty exemption:

Size of Family Unit	Poverty Guidelines
1	\$15,650
2	\$21,150
3	\$26,650
4	\$32,150
5	\$37,650
6	\$43,150
7	\$48,650
8	\$54,150
For each additional person	\$5,500

Asset Test (Required by PA 390 of 1994)

Michigan law requires all local poverty exemption guidelines to include an asset test.

Allowable Assets (Excluded from the limit)

- The owner-occupied dwelling
- Reasonable household furnishings
- One motor vehicle

Maximum Allowable Assets

All other assets including but not limited to:

- Additional vehicles
- Financial accounts
- Cash savings
- Real estate other than the homestead
- Stocks, bonds, investments, cryptocurrency
- Any asset that can be converted to cash

These assets may not exceed \$10,000 in total.

Asset limits apply to all persons residing in the household.