



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1. Who can apply for the Utility Franchise Fee Refund Program or the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program?
  - *You must file and receive a refund on your Kansas Homestead Claim Form, K40-H or receive the SAFE SENIOR ("Kansas Property Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors" refund.*
  - *For Electric and Gas account holders, **you must live within the city limits of Topeka.***
  - *For Water/Wastewater (Sewer) account holders, City and County residents are eligible **IF** you are a customer of the City of Topeka who receives water and/or wastewater utility services provided by the City of Topeka.*
  
2. What is the difference between the Utility Franchise Fee Refund Program and the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program?
  - *For qualifying individuals, the Utility Franchise Fee Refund Program offers refunds of electric and gas franchise fees paid by the ratepayer for property located within the City. For qualifying individuals, the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program offers a credit to your account of the increase in the minimum monthly rate for water and wastewater rates paid by the residential utility customer for property located within the City. Both programs are based on the same criteria for the State of Kansas Homestead Refund Program, which provides for rebates of property taxes for certain eligible low income residents of Kansas.*
  
3. Where do I get an application form?
  - *Application forms are available on the City's Web site at [www.topeka.org](http://www.topeka.org). Click on "Utility Franchise Fee Refund/Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Program". Forms are also available at:*
    - Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging
    - Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR), Taxpayer Assistance
    - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (Jan – April ONLY)
    - Topeka & SNCO Public Library
    - Shawnee County Clerks Office
    - City of Topeka (Lobby)

4. What do we mean by a "complete" application?

- *Application must be filled out by the Kansas Homestead tax payer.*
- *Homestead tax payer must fill out and sign the W-9.*
- *Utility releases must be filled out by the utility account holder and account holder must be listed on the Kansas Homestead Claim, Form K40-H.*
- *A full copy of the Kansas Homestead Claim, Form K40-H for the claim year must be included.*
- *All signature lines must be signed by applicant, however for the:*
  - **Utility Franchise Fee Refund Program (electric and gas)** – *if the utilities are not in the applicant's name, the account holder must be listed on the Kansas Homestead Claim, Form K40-H as a member of the household and all utility release forms must be signed by the utility account holder.*
  - **Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program** – *if the City utilities are not in the applicant's name, the application will be rejected. The customer name indicated on the City utility account (the individual who established the account) is the only individual who can apply for this Refund; the customer's name on the City utility account must match the individual who received the Kansas Homestead Refund.*
- *Proof of Kansas Homestead Refund needs to be included. A copy of the refund check is acceptable; however if you have cashed your check and are unable to obtain a copy of the check from your financial institution, your refund can be obtained from the ksrevenue.org website.*
  - *Go to [www.ksrevenue.org](http://www.ksrevenue.org)*
  - *Click on the Your Personal button*
  - *Click on Homestead (about half way down on the page)*
  - *Click on Homestead Refund Information (located at the very bottom of the next page)*
  - *Type in your Social Security Number and amount of refund and choose the Homestead button THEN you must print this page before you hit the submit button.*
  - *Click on the submit button, the acceptable proof of payment information shows, when the Kansas Homestead Claim was processed and the amount of your refund. Print this page and send BOTH pages.*

4. (Continued) What do we mean by a "complete" application?

*If the second page does not show the amount of your refund and the date your refund check was sent, **THIS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AS PROOF OF REFUND.** You will need to contact the Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR) to obtain a letter directly from them stating that you did apply for and receive a refund for the Kansas Homestead Claim program. Then BOTH pages must be submitted with your application to show Proof of Refund.*

- *Don't miss the signature line on the W9. It is located in the center part of the form.*

5. What do you mean by "claim year"?

- *The claim year is the prior year. If you are applying for a refund/credit in 2011, the Utility Franchise Fee Refund Program claim year will be for those who claimed and received a Kansas Homestead refund in 2010.*

6. How long does it take to process my application?

- *Upon receipt of a complete application the applicant's information is sent to the utility companies for account information. This process could take a few weeks to obtain applicant's information for electric and gas. **After account information is received for Westar and Kansas Gas**, it will take approximately 30 days to process your application. Total estimated time from submission of application is 6 weeks.*

7. What is the application deadline for these programs?

- *The deadline for the Utility Franchise Fee Refund Program, and the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program is September 5th of each year. If deadline falls on a weekend and/or holiday, the deadline is the following work day. The Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program does not go into effect until January 1, 2011. Since the qualifications for both programs are based on the State of Kansas Homestead Program, you will need to file your taxes and receive a Homestead refund before you can apply for either of the City's refund/credit programs.*

8. Why do you need the W-9?

- *We are required by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) to have on record a W-9 for each person or business before we are able to process payments.*

9. What do I fill in on the W-9?

- *Name*
- *Address – City – State – Zip*
- *Social Security Number (located on the right hand side of the form)*
- *Sign and Date (located in the center of the form. This part is easy to overlook and your application will be returned if you don't have this signed)*

10. I owe money on my City utility account. Will I still receive a refund check?

- *The refund will be applied as a credit to your account. If you closed your utility account and have no delinquent or unpaid charges to the City of Topeka, then a check may be issued.*

11. What if I have moved during the claim year?

- *Provide your previous address on the space provided on the front page of the application.*
- *Provide account numbers for your current **AND** previous address on the utility release forms.*

12. What if my utility accounts are still in my deceased spouse's name?

- **For Electric and Gas:** *You must provide a copy of the deceased spouse's Death Certificate with your application.*
- **For Water and Wastewater:** *Unless the widowed spouse's name is also listed on the customer account, the widow will not be eligible.*

13. I live outside the City limits. May I apply for the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program?

- *Yes, the program applies to both inside and outside City customers.*

14. My relative has a **City utility account**, but I pay the bills on their behalf. Will I receive the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund since I pay the bills on that account?

- *No. The customer name indicated on the City utility account (the individual who established the account) is the only individual who*

*can apply for this Refund; the customer's name on the City utility account must match the individual who received the Kansas Homestead Refund.*

15. The refund states it is for water and wastewater. I only have wastewater service provided by the City so can I apply for a refund for just wastewater?
  - *Yes, just simply select the Wastewater option on the application form.*
  
16. I am a Sherwood Sewer customer and am billed by the City for my County Wastewater. Can I apply for the Water and Wastewater Utility Rate Refund Program?
  - *Yes, but only for the water service portion of the bill. The program is only applicable to customers who receive water and/or wastewater utility services provided by the City of Topeka. The City does administer the billing for Shawnee County wastewater and refuse but does not provide the actual wastewater or refuse service. Shawnee County sets their own rates for Sherwood Sewer District and for refuse.*
  
17. My relative has an **Electric/Gas utility account**, but I pay the bills on their behalf. Will I receive the Franchise Fee Refund since I pay the bills on that account?
  - *If the utility account holders name is listed on the Kansas Homestead Claim Form as living in the household, the utility holder would be eligible for the Electric and/or Gas refund.*
  
18. Why is the amount of my refund different than my friend/neighbor?
  - *The amount of Franchise Fees (electric and gas only) are based on a % of the utility usage of each applicant and will vary from applicant to applicant.*
  
19. Where can I learn more about these programs?
  - *The programs were established and more information is available on the City's Web site at [www.topeka.org](http://www.topeka.org). Click the Municipal Codebook link on the bottom left side of the Web page. Refer to Code Section 146-17 and 146-18.*
  
20. I don't have a computer so I prefer to talk with someone about these programs. Who do I contact?

- *Call the City's Public Works Response Center at 785-368-3111 (option 6) or Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging at 785-235-1367 a representative will be happy to assist you with any questions you may have.*