

Washington State Legislature Significantly Amends Homestead Law Effective May 12, 2021

The Washington State legislature has enacted significant changes to the Washington homestead statute. The legislation amends RCW 6.13.010, 6.13.030, 6.13.060, 6.13.070, 6.13.080, and 6.13.100, effective May 12, 2021.

In general, the law provides for increases in potential homestead exemptions based on “the county median sale price of a single-family home in the preceding year.”

The Washington State homestead amount is applicable in bankruptcy cases when debtors have elected to use it instead of the federal exemption. As of January 13, 2021, the federal homestead exemption amount is \$25,150, while the Washington State homestead exemption amount is now “the greater of \$125,000 or the county median sale price of a single-family home in the preceding calendar year.” (Please note that 11 U.S.C. § 522(p) may limit the maximum amount of the state homestead when property is acquired by a debtor less than 1,215 days before bankruptcy.)

These amounts will change annually, but for 2021, the county-by-county homestead exemption values for the Eastern District of Washington are as follows:¹

- Adams: \$216,900
- Asotin: \$216,900
- Benton: \$329,500
- Chelan: \$418,600
- Columbia: \$214,700
- Douglas: \$373,200
- Ferry: \$172,900
- Franklin: \$329,500
- Garfield: \$216,900
- Grant: \$258,500
- Kittitas: \$411,000
- Klickitat: \$370,800
- Lincoln: \$202,100
- Okanogan: \$254,500
- Pend Oreille: \$242,000
- Spokane: \$318,200
- Stevens: \$242,000
- Walla Walla: \$305,500
- Whitman: \$291,300
- Yakima: \$281,500.

¹ These amounts are based on the 2020 Median Home Price and will be updated annually once county median sale prices for the prior year are published. The court assumes no obligation to provide current information or updates, and parties and counsel should always conduct their own analysis to confirm the amounts applicable in any particular case. County median sale price data is currently derived from the Washington Center for Real Estate Research (or if the center no longer provides data, a successor entity designated by the Office of Financial Management). This data can be found under the “Annual Median Price” tab here: <https://wcrer.be.uw.edu/archived-reports/>. Also, exemptions are determined as of the date of filing, so be sure to verify the exemption amount based on the applicable year.