

ORANGEBURG COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Local Option Sales Tax | Fact Sheet

VOTE	RATE	TAX BEGINS
November 3, 2026	1 penny per dollar	July 1, 2027

What It Is

A one percent county sales tax. Most of the money must come back to taxpayers as a credit on their property tax bills. The rest funds county and city services. Voters decide.

Of every dollar collected: **71% must be used to lower property tax bills** (the County keeps 67% of that, the 17 cities and towns share 33% by population). The remaining **29%** goes to the County and municipalities for any lawful purpose.

What Is Taxed

	Capital Project Sales Tax (collected today)	Local Option Sales Tax (on the ballot)
Groceries (unprepared food)	Not taxed	Taxed at 1%
General retail purchases	Taxed at 1%	Taxed at 1%
Cars, boats, campers	Not taxed	Not taxed
Prescription drugs	Not taxed	Not taxed

The tax the County collects today exempts groceries by law. This new one does not, and only the state legislature can change that.

What a Property Owner Saves

The credit is a rate set each year, multiplied by the value the assessor puts on your property. A home inside a city or town gets two credits on the same bill, one from the County and one from the town.

Property	Appraised Value	If you live outside a town	If you live in the City of Orangeburg
Home	\$100,000	\$115.03	\$301.13
Home	\$150,000	\$172.55	\$451.69
Home	\$250,000	\$287.58	\$752.82
Car or truck	\$20,000	\$23.01	\$60.23
Small business building	\$500,000	\$575.16	\$1,505.65

ESTIMATES ONLY. Based on \$14 million in annual collections and preliminary property values. Final figures will be published in the newspaper by October 20, 2026.

What it costs: a penny per dollar at the register. A typical household pays roughly \$160 a year, counting groceries.

What the Ballot Will Say

"Must a one percent (1%) sales and use tax be levied in Orangeburg County for the purpose of allowing a credit against a taxpayer's county and municipal ad valorem tax liability and for the purpose of funding county and municipal operations in the Orangeburg County area?" Voters mark YES or NO.

When the Credit Appears

House, land, business property	Tax bill mailed in fall 2027
Cars and trucks	Tags renewing January 2028, then by renewal month through 2028

Orangeburg County

Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) Property Tax Credit

A Guide for Municipal Finance Offices

To: City and Town Finance Offices in Orangeburg County

From: Orangeburg County Administration

Date: September 24, 2026

What Is This Tax Credit?

In November 2026, Orangeburg County voters will decide whether to approve a new 1% sales tax in the county. If voters approve it, state law requires that part of the money from that new sales tax be used to lower property tax bills, both for the county and for each city and town.

Because this will change property tax bills in your city or town, we need some information from your finance office. That information lets us calculate exactly how much lower those bills will be for the people and businesses in your community. This guide explains, in plain terms, how the credit is calculated and exactly what we need from you.

How the Credit Is Calculated

The math behind this credit has four basic steps. Here is how it works, followed by a simple example with round numbers.

1. The state splits the new sales tax money collected countywide into two pots. One pot, 71% of the money, is set aside for property tax relief. The other pot, 29%, goes to the county and cities and towns for general use, such as roads or other services.
2. The property tax relief pot is then divided between the county and all the cities and towns. By law, the county keeps 67% of that pot. The remaining 33% is shared among all the cities and towns in the county, based on population. A city with a larger share of the total population of all cities and towns gets a larger share of that 33%.
3. Once we know your city's or town's dollar share of the relief pot, we divide it by the total value of all taxable property in your city or town. This gives us a "credit rate," a small number used to calculate the credit on each individual property.
4. To find the credit on any one property, we multiply that credit rate by the property's value. The result is a dollar amount that gets subtracted from that property's tax bill.

A Simple Example

The numbers below are made up, round numbers used only to show how the math works. They are not real Orangeburg County figures.

Step	Amount
Total new sales tax collected countywide this year	\$1,000,000
Property tax relief pot (71% of total)	\$710,000
County's share of the relief pot (67%)	\$475,700
Share for all cities and towns together (33%)	\$234,300
Town of Example's share, based on its population	\$30,000

Local Option Sales Tax – FAQs

What is a Local Option Sales Tax?

- A Local Option Sales Tax is a one-cent county sales tax that's primarily meant to fund property tax relief.

Is it already approved? What has the county council voted on?

- The Local Option Sales Tax is not currently in effect, nor has it been approved. On August 17, the Orangeburg County Council voted to place a referendum on the November 3 ballot which will give voters the option to approve or deny the tax. This decision will be made by the voters of Orangeburg County, not by county council.

What will be on the ballot?

- "Must a one percent (1%) sales and use tax be levied in Orangeburg County for the purpose of allowing a credit against a taxpayer's county and municipal ad valorem tax liability and for the purpose of funding county and municipal operations in the Orangeburg County area?"

What is the purpose of the tax?

- The point of the tax is to shift part of the cost of local government off property owners and onto everyone who shops in the county. Most of what comes in must be given back to taxpayers as a credit on their property tax bills. The rest pays for county and city services.

What things would be taxed?

- The tax would apply to the following items:
 - Groceries and other unprepared food
 - Ordinary retail purchases, from clothing to hardware to restaurant meals
 - Taxable services, including some utility service
 - Items bought elsewhere and first used or stored here, through the use tax
- The following items would be excluded from this tax:
 - Cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, campers and other titled property that carry a capped State sales tax
 - Prescription drugs and the other standard State sales tax exemptions
 - Farm machinery, feed, seed, fertilizer and livestock bought by a farmer holding a SCATE card
 - Materials delivered under a construction contract signed before the start date, if filed with the Department of Revenue within six months

Who would pay for this tax?

- Anyone who shops in Orangeburg County – including residents and non-residents. As Orangeburg County serves as a major thoroughfare between Charleston and

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Columbia, this would allow the county to collect tax revenue from visitors to the county.

How would this change the sales tax rate residents and shoppers pay?

- This would add an additional 1% sales tax to the existing 6% state sales tax and the 1% Capital Projects Sales Tax already levied by the county.

When would this go into effect?

- If approved by voters in November, this tax would go into effect on July 1, 2027.

How would this affect my property taxes?

- The goal of this tax is to save property owners money on their property taxes by better distributing the tax burden among those who live in Orangeburg County and those who are simply traveling through.
- Based on the estimated revenue generated, a \$150,000 homeowner in unincorporated Orangeburg County would receive \$172 off of their tax bill, through a property tax credit. A homeowner within the city, at the same price, would receive a \$451 credit towards their property tax bill.
- For owners of vehicles that appraised at \$20,000, would receive a \$23 credit outside of city limits and a \$37 credit within city limits. A small business building appraised at \$500,000 could expect a \$575 credit outside of city limits and a \$930 credit inside of city limits.
- The majority of the revenue generated from the tax would be used to fund property tax credits. Roughly 30% would be used for general county use. A more detailed explanation of how the money is used can be found below.

How would the revenue generated from this tax be used?

- The majority of the revenue (71%) goes to the Property Tax Credit Fund. The other 29% goes to a county/municipal revenue fund.
- Of the 71% that goes towards property tax credits, the county keeps 67% for property tax relief and 33% is shared with the county's various municipalities, split up based on population, for additional tax relief. The Property Tax Credit Fund can only be used one way, to lower property tax bills. Council has no discretion over it.
- The other 29% can be used as general funding for the county and its municipalities. It's divided up based on both municipal populations and location of sale.