

## Question: Outside of Cook County, how does the assessment process work?

In Illinois, real estate is taxed on its market value. The higher the market value, the higher the tax. And, the lower the market value, the lower the tax.

The process begins with the Assessor valuing property for tax purposes. That value is called the assessment. Taxpayers have the right to contest their assessment by filing a tax appeal. If the taxpayer wins its appeal, the tax bill they receive in the future (before exemptions) will be smaller than the bill they would have received had no appeal been filed. If the taxpayer has already paid its tax, then they will receive a tax refund.

Outside of Cook County, property is effectively assessed every year. Each year, the Assessor adjusts assessments up or down to reflect changes in property values in the local community. These adjustments are called "factors".

In a general reassessment year, called a quadrennial year, the Assessor may independently value all property in the township, or he/she may simply apply a factor. General reassessments occur every fourth year and are also called quadrennial reassessment years.

Each year, the Assessor will mail a notice to the taxpayer indicating what he proposes the new assessment to be. The taxpayer will then have thirty days to contest that assessment by filing an appeal with the County Board of Review.

Boards of Review typically hear tax appeal cases from August to January of each year. The Board may announce its decision at the tax appeal hearing; however, whether they announce their decision, or not, they will issue a formal writing decision in February or March of the following year. In the collar counties surrounding Cook County, tax bills are then due in June and September of that year.

If the taxpayer wins an appeal at the Board of Review, the next tax bill that will issue will be smaller than it would have been had no appeal been filed.

In most cases, assessment reductions carry forward from year to year as the reduced assessment – rather than the original (higher) one – is adjusted up or down by a factor.

