

UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENTS

What is an assessment?

Assessments are a percentage of estimated fair cash value (market value). In Illinois the required level mandated by statute (law) is 33.33% of the full value of the property. In other words, the full value of the property divided by 3 is the **assessed value** of the property for tax purposes. Assessments for all residential property are based on the sales of residential properties. Assessments apportion the tax burden among property owners so that the tax burden is fair and equitable among all property owners. This means that all property owners are paying their fair share of taxes according to the value of their property.

Every four years is a general or quadrennial reassessment year in which all properties should be reviewed by the assessors. Assessments may be revised and corrected any year. The Illinois property tax is an "ad valorem" tax.

What is "ad valorem"?

Ad valorem is Latin and means according to value. Real property is taxed according to its market value. Property taxes are not based on ability to pay.

What is Real Property?

Real property includes land and all structures affixed to the land. Any structures that cannot be easily moved with little effort are also considered real property.

What is market value?

Market value is determined by the actions of buyers and sellers in the market place. Market value for properties that have not sold is based on the prices being paid for properties that have sold in the open market. Properties sold in the open market are advertised for sale and are available for anyone to purchase. Properties sold on the open market are considered fair or good sales and are included in the sales ratio study.

What is the sales ratio study?

A sales ratio study is used to determine if the proper level of assessment (33.33%) exists. The study examines the relationship between assessed values and sale prices or market values. Sales information is sent to the State of Illinois Department of Revenue (DOR). Based on this information,

the DOR, using the good sales, compares the sale prices to the prior year's assessed value and determines the level of assessment for each sale. The level of assessment for each multi-township district is also calculated along with the level of assessment for the entire county. The level of assessment is based on a 3-year average. It is then the job of the assessors of each multi-township district and the Supervisor of Assessments for the county to adjust the assessments of all properties to the statutory level (33.33%). If the assessors and the Supervisor of Assessments do not do their jobs, the DOR will apply a multiplier to the county to adjust the level of assessments.

What is a multiplier?

The multiplier is not the tax rate. Ford County has had a multiplier of 1.000 every year since 1984. The multiplier is a factor calculated by the Illinois Department of Revenue (DOR) to adjust a County's assessed valuation to the statutory level (33.33%). This is done at the state level only if the assessors and the Supervisor of Assessments have not made the proper adjustments to the assessments at the local level based on the sales of properties. If the multiplier is 1.000, that means that the assessors and the Supervisor of Assessments have done their jobs in getting the assessments to the statutory level and therefore the DOR does not have to intervene and apply the multiplier to the entire county.

What is a multi-township district?

There are four multi-township districts in Ford County, each with their own assessor. Rogers, Mona, Pella and Brenton are in District # 1. Lyman, Wall, Peach Orchard and Sullivant make up District # 2. Drummer and Dix are District # 3 and Patton and Button are District # 4.

What do I do if I feel my assessment is unfair?

It depends on the time of year. Tax bills are from the previous assessment year. By the time you receive your tax bill it is too late to appeal your assessment from the previous year. If you believe your property is not assessed correctly or your assessment is not equitable (fair) in relationship to other properties, you should request a reassessment of your property by your assessor for the next tax bill. Once your assessor turns in his/her work for the current assessment year, assessment notices will be mailed and assessments published. At that time you have 30 days to appeal your assessment with the Board of Review.