



Cook County Board of Review

ANNUAL REPORT

Assessment Year 2012 • Fiscal Year 2013

COMMISSIONER LARRY R. ROGERS, JR. • COMMISSIONER DAN PATLAK • COMMISSIONER MICHAEL M. CABONARGI



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Cook County Board of Review Responsibilities

The Cook County Board of Review (formerly the Board of Tax Appeals) was created by the 89th General Assembly under statutory changes that established a three member Board of Commissioners elected from three electoral districts.

The Cook County Board of Review (hereinafter "BOR") is vested with quasi-judicial powers to adjudicate taxpayer complaints or recommend exempt status of real property, which includes: residential, commercial, industrial, condominium property, and vacant land. Powers granted to the BOR include the following:

1. Correct factual mistakes;
2. Review certificates of error;
3. Order the Assessor to revise and correct the assessed value of property;
4. Recommend property for tax exempt status; and
5. Defend assessment decisions for properties appealed at the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB).

The BOR deals only with assessed valuations before equalization, not with the tax rate or the amount of the tax bill.

Letter from Commissioners Rogers, Patlak & Cabonargi

The 2012 Assessment year was a time of continuing success for the Board of Review. For the second year in a row, the Board completed the adjudication of all appeals by April 19, which allows ample time for the Assessor, Treasurer, Clerk and Illinois Department of Revenue to perform the necessary steps to meet the statutory deadline for second installment property tax bills due on Aug 1. The result is savings for property taxpayers because their taxing districts will not need to dip into their reserves or issue tax anticipation warrants in order to finance their day-to-day operations. In cooperation with the Cook County President's office and the other revenue offices, a new norm has been established for the timing of tax bills. Now commercial and residential property owners alike can count on a regular and predictable second installment tax due date to calculate their budgets.

The 2012 Assessment year resulted in the adjudication of 422,713 parcels which was the second highest number of parcels appealed in Board history. Only in 2009, when the change in assessment levels occurred, did the Board adjudicate more appeals. However, that year, the Board did not certify its assessments until September. By improving our processes and adding on-line appeals, we have made significant strides in accelerating our review procedures. In 2012, eighty six percent of complaints were filed on-line reducing paperwork and man hours devoted to data entry. In addition, an incremental improvement occurred in our on-line system allowing the filing of appeals prior to the opening of the township. This relieved taxpayers from the need to constantly check for the opening of their township in order to file a timely complaint. It also helped the Board by allowing us to anticipate the total volume of appeals prior to the opening of any particular township.

The Board has embarked on an ambitious plan to completely revamp our review system by digitizing the Board so that evidence and decisions can be submitted, distributed, accessed, and saved electronically. Our long term goal is to reduce costs by improving our efficiency and our ability to adjudicate higher volumes of appeals within the allotted time. The Board has begun the procurement process to achieve these goals. We expect to have a phased-in approach for this project that will be spread over the next several years. We are grateful to the President's office, the Bureau of Technology, the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer and the Cook County Board for their encouragement and cooperation in this project.

The Board has made key improvements to communication and transparency by allowing attorneys who practice before the Board to receive the information about their hearing dates and times by e-mail. Also, our website now includes an improved database that can be used to search appeal results for the past five years by Property Index Number, address, complaint number, property owner name or attorney name. This has resulted in fewer FOIA requests and thus more time for our staff to focus on their primary task of adjudicating appeals.

We are committed to continuing to improve our operations and our service to the taxpayers of Cook County.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Larry R. Rogers, Jr.
Commissioner Dan Patlak
Commissioner Michael Cabonargi



LARRY R. ROGERS, JR.
COMMISSIONER



DAN PATLAK
COMMISSIONER



MICHAEL M. CABONARGI
COMMISSIONER

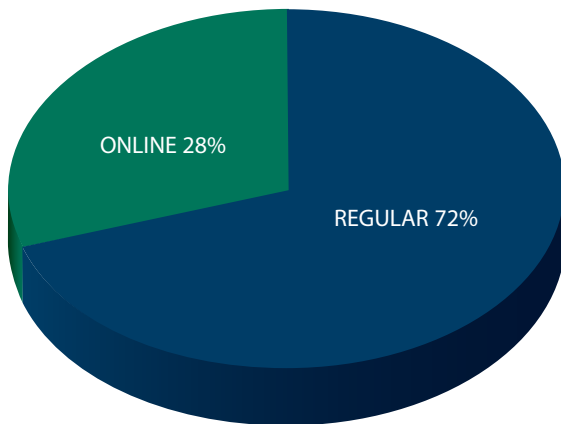
Major Accomplishments

Online Filing

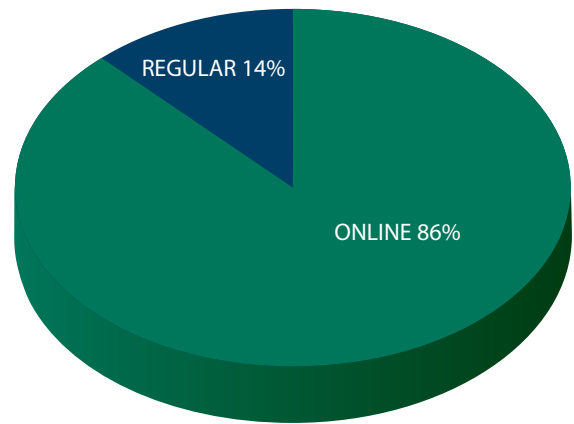
This year, we made significant improvements to the online filing system that was introduced for the very first time last year. Enhancements include being able to file an appeal prior to the township opening and receiving a complaint number right away. The usefulness of the system is abundantly apparent from the significant increase in users over the last two years.

In the 2012 assessment year, 357,448 parcels appealed online.

REGULAR VS. ONLINE APPEALS 2011



REGULAR VS. ONLINE APPEALS 2012



Note: Percentage calculated on net PINs appealed.

Timely Closing of the BOR

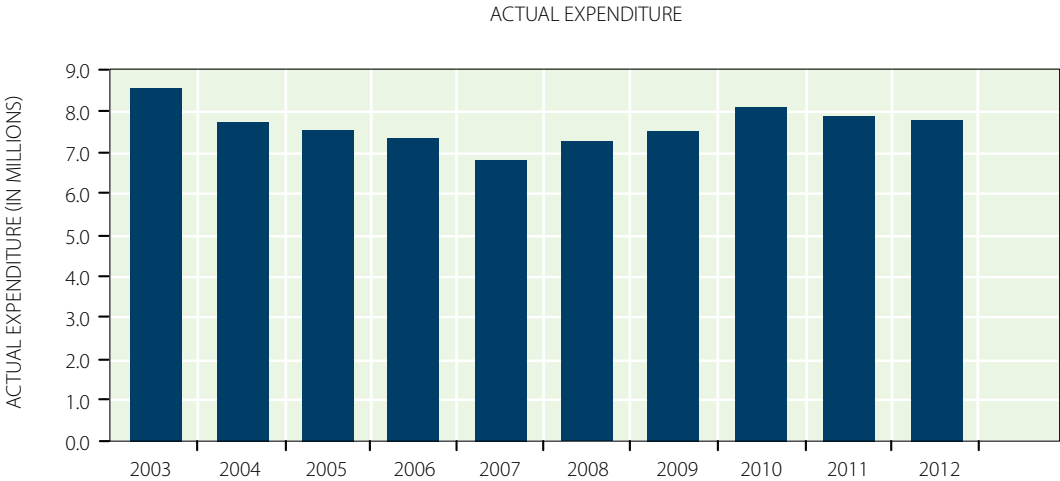
On April 19th 2013, the Commissioners of the Cook County Board of Review certified the Board's 2012 assessment year decisions, which included the reassessment of all real estate in the city of Chicago. Because of the Board's timely closing, the Cook County property tax system is on track to meet its statutory deadline for second installment property tax bills due on August 1st for the second year in row and only the second time in 35 years. Issuing tax bills on time can save residents of Cook County an estimated \$3 million a month because late tax bills force schools, libraries and other essential government services to borrow money to bridge the funding gap caused by the delay in the collection of tax revenues.

Ethics Manual

In 2012, the Commissioners of the Board of Review created comprehensive ethics rules and policies to be adopted by the Board of Review. The Code of Conduct passed by the Board in 2012 imposes a gift ban, strictly regulates political activity, explicitly prohibits conflict of interest, protects whistle blowers, requires regular ethics education by board staff and regulates other issues which may arise in the unique functions of the Board of Review. The new Code of Conduct provides assurances that the public's interests are served and the work of the Board of Review is open and fair to all who appeal.

Budget Highlights

BOR Actual Expenditure

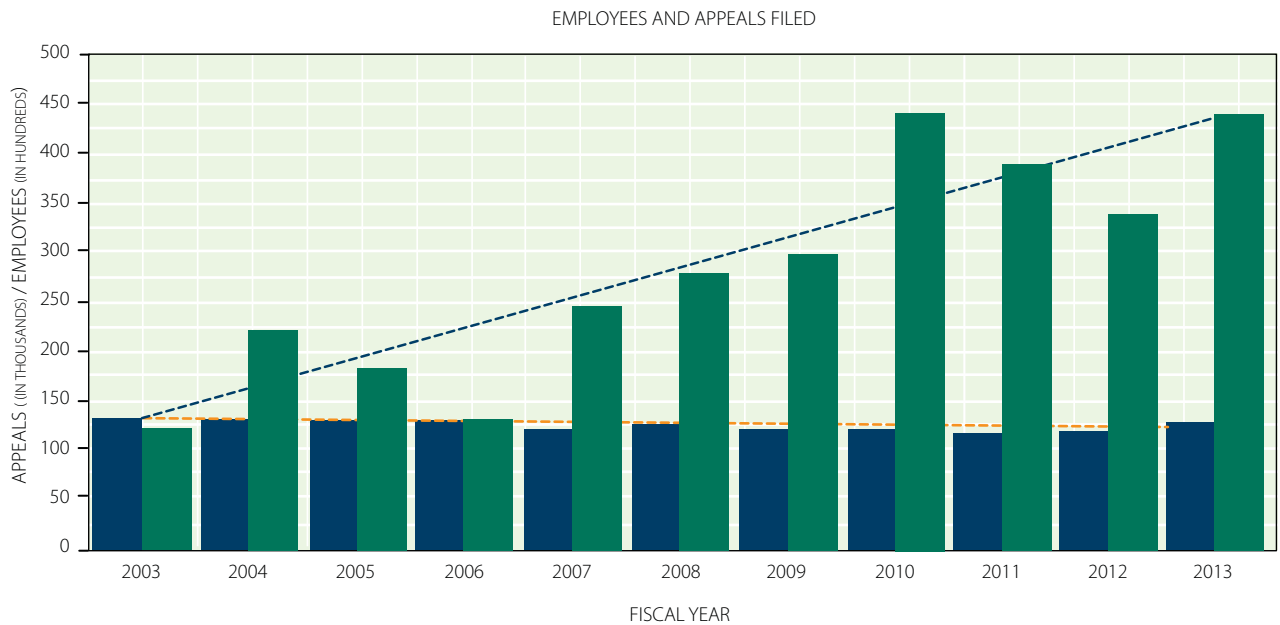


FISCAL YEAR	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE (\$ MILLION)
2003	8.6
2004	7.8
2005	7.6
2006	7.4
2007	6.8
2008	7.3
2009	7.5
2010	8.1
2011	7.9
2012	7.8
2013	N/A

The BOR is an essential part of the property tax system. Recognizing its importance within this cycle, the BOR continually looks for ways to streamline its processes and reduce overhead.

Note: The 2012 assessment year corresponds to the later part of the 2012 fiscal year and the beginning portion of the 2013 fiscal year. The BOR fiscal year runs from Dec 01 thru Nov 30.

Employees and Appeals



ASSESSMENT YEAR	FISCAL YEAR	EMPLOYEES	PINs APPEALED (IN THOUSANDS)
2002	2003	130	121
2003	2004	130	220
2004	2005	129	182
2005	2006	130	130
2006	2007	122	247
2007	2008	126	277
2008	2009	123	295
2009	2010	122	439
2010	2011	118	386
2011	2012	119	342
2012	2013	124	423

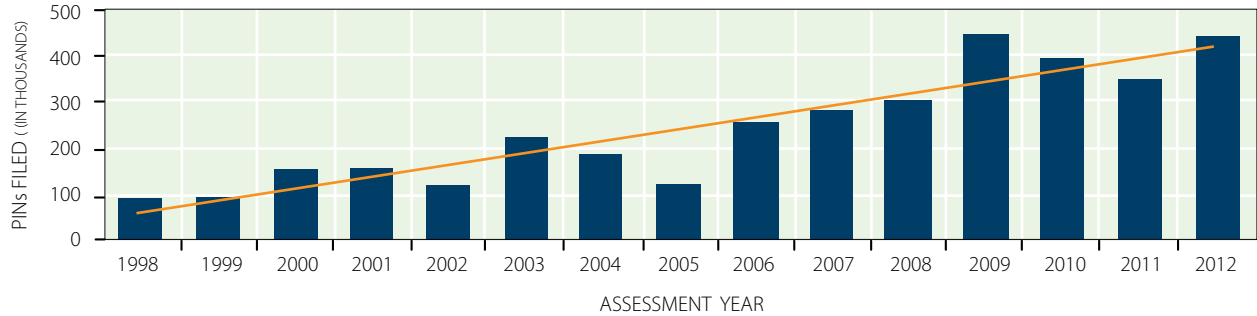


Employees at the BOR continue to do more with less. Process re-engineering efforts and technology have helped to keep headcount low. In the 2013 budget year, the BOR has successfully adjudicated and closed all 422,713 appeals for assessment year 2012.

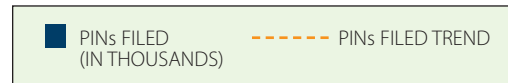
Operational Highlights

Total PINs Filed Assessment Years 1998–2012

TOTAL PARCELS FILED BY YEAR (IN '000'S)

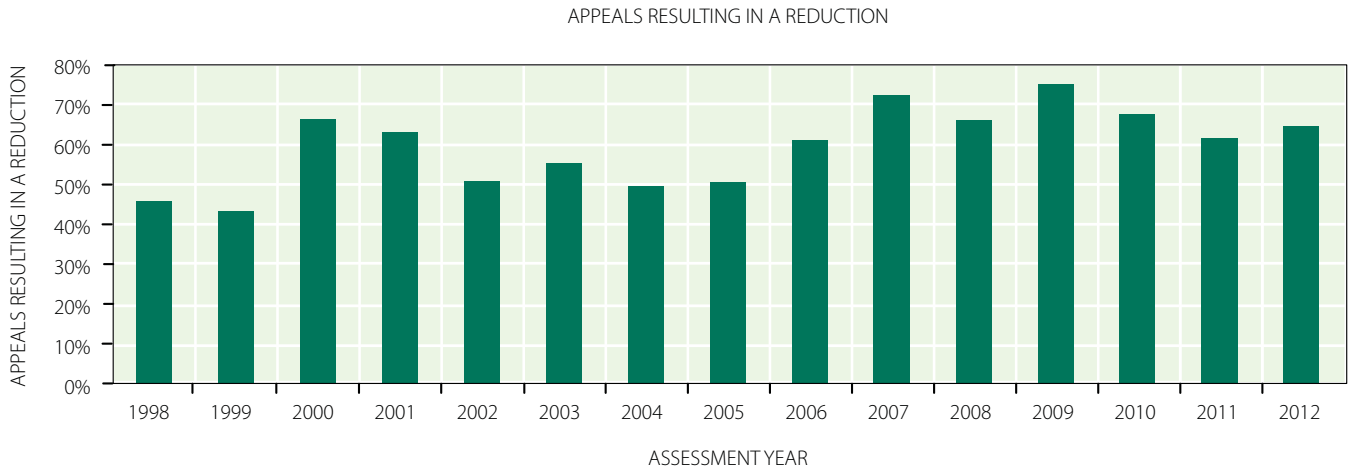


ASSESSMENT YEAR	PINs FILED IN THOUSANDS	REASSESSMENT TRIENNIAL
1998	94	NORTH SUBURBAN
1999	82	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2000	154	CITY
2001	151	NORTH SUBURBAN
2002	121	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2003	220	CITY
2004	182	NORTH SUBURBAN
2005	130	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2006	247	CITY
2007	277	NORTH SUBURBAN
2008	295	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2009	439	CITY
2010	386	NORTH SUBURBAN
2011	342	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2012	423	CITY

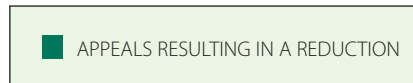


The BOR adjudicated 422,713 property appeals for tax year 2012.

Appeals Resulting in a Reduction Assessment Years 1998–2012



ASSESSMENT YEAR	APPEALS RESULTING IN A REDUCTION
1998	45.3%
1999	43.2%
2000	67.0%
2001	61.8%
2002	50.7%
2003	56.4%
2004	49.1%
2005	50.6%
2006	61.1%
2007	72.6%
2008	65.8%
2009	75.6%
2010	67.3%
2011	61.7%
2012	64.4%



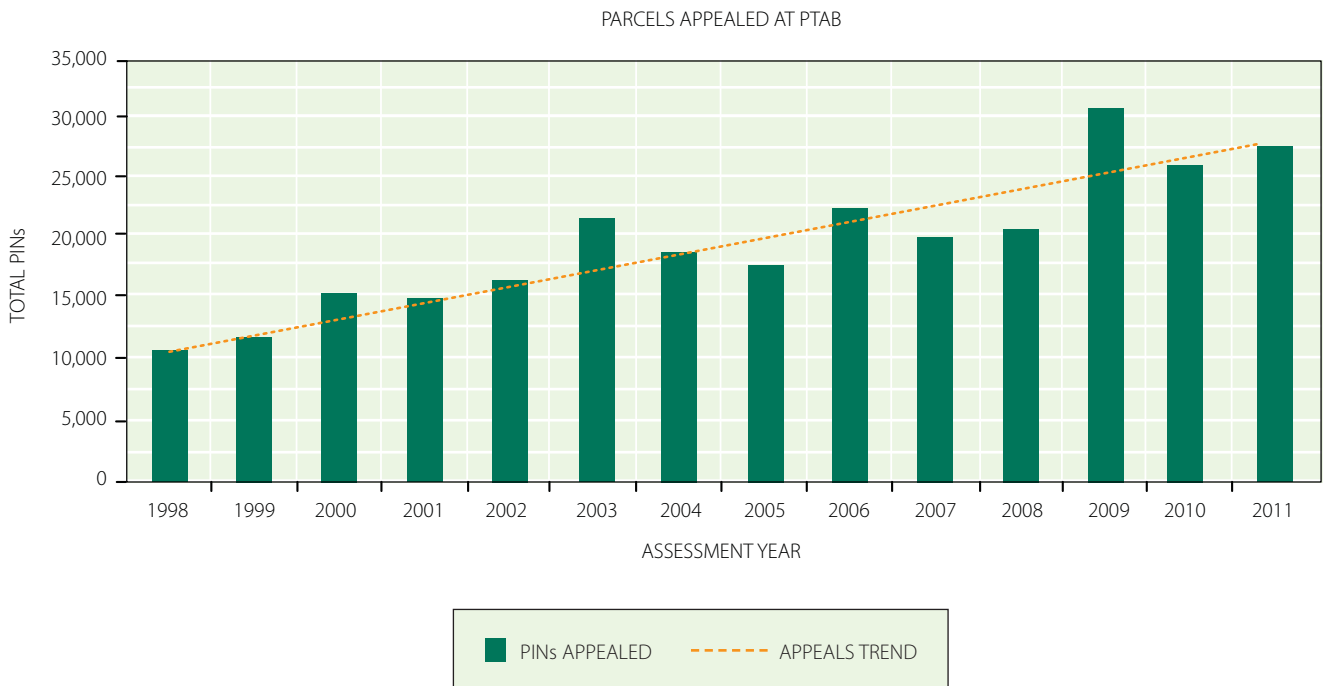
The Cook County Board of Review reviews all assessment appeals presented to it by property owners. Many factors go into the Board's decisions, including the evidence presented by the taxpayer to the Board. The number of reductions fluctuates from year to year based on these factors.

PTAB Appeals

The BOR and Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB) share a symbiotic relationship. The mandate of each entity is to provide taxpayers with an unbiased forum for appealing assessments at no cost to the property owner. However, before taxpayers can appeal to PTAB, they must appeal to the BOR. Once an appeal is filed with PTAB, the BOR assumes the responsibility of defending its earlier decision. Both the appealing taxpayer and the BOR are required to submit written evidence to support their respective positions. Either party may request an oral hearing. If neither party requests an oral hearing, then the PTAB makes its decision based solely on the written evidence.

Local taxing bodies, such as school districts, have a significant financial interest when large industrial or commercial property owners appeal their assessments because large reductions in assessed value can affect revenue and result in large refunds from the taxing body to the property owner. Therefore, these local taxing bodies are granted intervener status if they want to present evidence to influence PTAB's decision. There is no limit to the number of interveners who can present evidence in a particular case.

Prior to 1996, Cook County taxpayers were the only taxpayers in Illinois who were not allowed to appeal at PTAB. Since 1996, the number of pins appealed at PTAB has risen dramatically.



ASSESSMENT YEAR	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TOTAL PINS	10,691	11,608	15,290	14,593	16,523	21,416	18,338	17,390	22,089	19,807	20,870	30,887	25,332	27,382

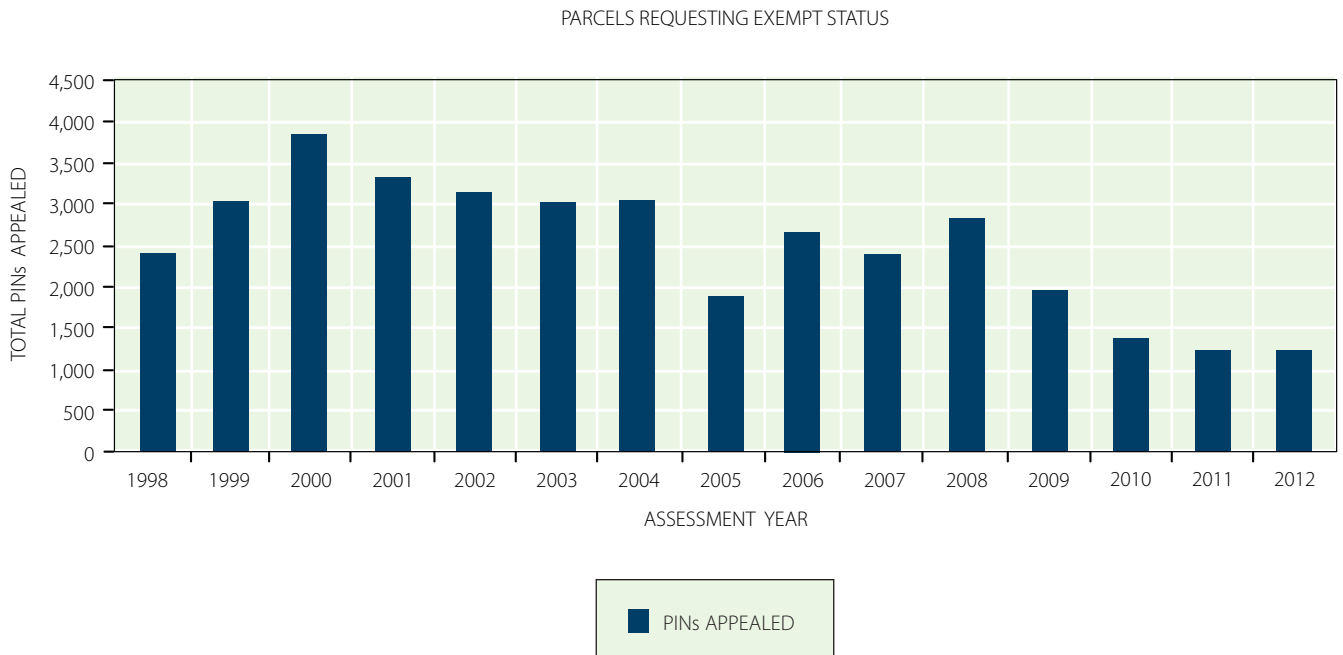
Note: Data as of 05/2013

Exempt Properties & the BOR

The BOR examines applications from governmental, charitable and religious organizations that believe that they meet the qualifications for exempt status on their properties. The requirements for exempt status can vary. The BOR examines each case to determine whether the property is specifically exempt by statute and whether the property owner has met the required burden of proof. The BOR may hold a hearing in cases involving a question of law or an incomplete file.

In addition, the BOR may also elect to hold a hearing when a taxing body objects to an application. In either case, petitioners are notified by mail of their hearing date. Following the hearing, a recommendation on exempt status is sent to the Illinois Department of Revenue.

While the BOR makes a recommendation, only the State of Illinois can remove property from the property tax roll. In assessment year 2012, the BOR processed 1,246 exempt parcels requesting exempt status.



ASSESSMENT YEAR	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
TOTAL PINs	2,419	3,007	3,869	3,350	3,130	3,012	3,059	1,869	2,654	2,404	2,807	1,946	1,367	1,276	1,246

2012 Tax Year Outreach Efforts

Through the BOR's community outreach programs, the BOR brings assessed valuation complaint services to the community. During the 2012 assessment year, our offices conducted 163 outreach events and serviced thousands of taxpayers throughout Cook County. The BOR's outreach programs' main focuses are to educate and inform taxpayers of the BOR's services and explain the assessed valuation appeal process. Our outreach programs have proven to be a viable and effective way to provide the community with

important information and to provide access to this agency.

The BOR is fortunate to have the continued support for our respective outreach initiatives from elected officials and community organizations throughout Cook County. The BOR has partnered with several elected officials and community organizations whose support has played an integral role in making the BOR more accessible to taxpayers.

Did You Know?

- Cook County was created on January 15, 1831 out of Putnam County by an act of the Illinois General Assembly.
- Cook County is the second most populous county in the United States (first is Orange County, CA).
- Cook County has 5,194,675 residents per the 2011 census.
- Cook County's population is larger than that of 29 individual States and the combined populations of the seven smallest States.
- The BOR was called the Board of Tax Appeals prior to 1998.
- There are approximately 1.8 million parcels of property in Cook County.
- The BOR processed 422,713 PINs in assessment year 2012.
- 2012 tax year is expected to be the second time since tax year 1977 that the second installment tax bills will be mailed out on time.
- In assessment year 2012, out of the 422,713 PINs appealed, 268,128 PINs received some sort of reduction in their Assessed Value.
- The BOR is administered by three Commissioners who are elected from individual districts.
- The chairmanship of the BOR is rotated between the three Commissioners every year.
- In assessment year 2012, the BOR conducted 163 outreaches throughout Cook County.
- The BOR is especially well equipped to assist taxpayers because of the multilingual staff and documentation. We are currently able to assist taxpayers in Spanish, Polish, Hindi, Punjabi, Greek, Italian, French, Korean and German.

Map & Satellite Offices

1. Main Office

County Building Room 601
118 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60602
Ph: 312/603-5542

2. Bridgeview Satellite Office

10200 S. 76th Ave.
Room 237
Bridgeview, IL 60455
Ph: 708/974-6074

3. Markham Satellite Office

16501 Kedzie Ave.
Room 237
Markham, IL 60426
Ph: 708/232-4258

4. Maywood Satellite Office

1500 S. Maybrook Dr.
Room 082
Maywood, IL 60153
Ph: 708/865-5508

5. Rolling Meadows Satellite Office

2121 Euclid Ave.
Room 237
Rolling Meadows, IL 60098
Ph: 847/818-2067

6. Skokie Satellite Office

5600 Old Orchard Rd.
Room 155
Skokie, IL 60076
Ph: 847/470-7522

