



OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR
COOK COUNTY ILLINOIS
CHICAGO 60602

JOSEPH BERRIOS
ASSESSOR

October 21, 2013

I am pleased to inform you that since taking office on December 6, 2010 I have made marked improvements to the Assessor's Office, while maintaining a high level of fiscal responsibility. My administration is focused on and committed to the continuous development of forward thinking and proactive programs and initiatives.

Over my tenure I have made sweeping changes within the Assessor's Office. These changes have allowed me to refine the assessment cycle, upgrade the office's technological capabilities, and advance a legislative agenda that has proved to be of great benefit to taxpayers, Cook County, and numerous other taxing bodies.

We have decreased spending at the Assessor's Office, while increasing productivity and the quality of customer service thanks to the hard work of my staff. I remain highly committed to providing the public with accessible and efficient service whether virtually, over the phone, or in person.

My office's collaboration with different branches and municipalities in government, educational institutions, civic groups, and non-governmental organizations is a key component in my effort to bring new and innovative ideas to the property tax arena. Thus, I have tasked my staff with the development and strengthening of such partnerships. These partnerships will continue to be a priority to my administration and I am confident that they will continue to benefit the residents of Cook County and the State of Illinois.

In the first full year of this administration (tax year 2011) the assessment process was successfully accelerated so that the 2011 second installment tax bills were issued by the statutory due date for the first time in thirty-four years. Similarly the 2012 second installment tax bills went out on-time.

My office has managed to achieve these strides with a decreased and relatively stable budget. You will find included with this letter a detailed breakdown of my office's recent accomplishments.

I would like to thank you for your past support, without which my job would have been much more difficult, and I hope to continue to have your support in the future.

Sincerely,



Joseph Berrios

Cook County Assessor



Cook County Assessor's Office

Research Department



Assessor's Budget (2010-2014)

2010 Budget- \$27,209,441.00

2011 Budget- \$22,170,253.00

2012 Budget- \$21,852,137.00

2013 Budget-\$22,737,234.00

2014 Budget-\$24,624,799.00

*Includes \$3,019,018.00 for exemption fraud unit

AccountDescription	General			Exemption Unit			Total	
	Adjusted 2013	New	Difference	Adjusted 2013	New	Difference		New
110/501010 Sal & Wgs Of Reg Employees	\$22,017,914	\$21,593,825	\$(424,089)		\$1,521,070	\$1,521,070		\$23,114,895
108/501035 Furlough Day Adjustment	\$(79,278)	\$(89,311)	\$(10,033)		\$(6,000)	\$(6,000)		\$(95,311)
109/501030 Turnover Adjustment	\$(1,455,156)	\$(1,105,499)	\$349,657		\$(626,052)	\$(626,052)		\$(1,731,551)
120/501210 Overtime Compensation	\$8,871	\$100,000	\$91,129		\$25,000	\$25,000		\$125,000
170/501510 Mandatory Medicare Cost	-	-	-		-	-		-
185/501810 Prof & Tech Membership Fees	\$35,000	\$35,000	-		\$10,000	\$10,000		\$45,000
186/501860 Training Programs for Staff Persnl	\$30,000	\$100,000	\$70,000		\$25,000	\$25,000		\$125,000
190/501970 Transpt & Other Travel Exp.-Emps	\$70,000	\$75,000	\$5,000		\$30,000	\$30,000		\$105,000
220/520150 Communication Services	\$33,950	\$35,000	\$1,050		-	-		\$35,000
225/520260 Postage	\$733,500	\$600,000	\$(133,500)		\$500,000	\$500,000		\$1,100,000
228/520280 Delivery Services	\$970	\$1,000	\$30		-	-		\$1,000
240/520490 Ext. Graphics and Repro Services	\$727,500	\$800,000	\$72,500		\$75,000	\$75,000		\$875,000
241/520491 Int. Graphics and Repro Services	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$10,000		\$25,000	\$25,000		\$50,000
242/520550 Surveys, Operations & Reports	\$4,550	\$20,000	\$15,450		\$5,000	\$5,000		\$25,000
245/520610 Advertising For Specific Purposes	\$776,000	\$900,000	\$124,000		\$75,000	\$75,000		\$975,000
246/520650 Imaging & Microfilming Records	\$2,425	\$2,500	\$75		-	-		\$2,500
260/520830 Professional & Mgrl Services	\$378,000	\$400,000	\$22,000		\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000		\$1,700,000
350/530600 Office Supplies	\$104,125	\$150,000	\$45,875		\$35,000	\$35,000		\$185,000
353/530640 Bks, Periodcls, Publcits & Data Svcs	\$150,000	\$175,000	\$25,000		-	-		\$175,000
388/531650 Computer Operation Supplies	\$34,920	\$135,000	\$100,080		\$25,000	\$25,000		\$160,000
440/540130 Maint & Repair of Office Equip	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$2,500		-	-		\$5,000
441/540170 Maint & Repair of Data Prong Equip	\$177,277	\$130,000	\$(47,277)		-	-		\$130,000
444/540250 Operation,Maint & Rep of Auto Equip	\$970	\$1,000	\$30		-	-		\$1,000
445/540290 Operation of Auto Equip	\$9,700	\$20,000	\$10,300		-	-		\$20,000
461/540370 Maintenance of Facilities	\$970	\$1,000	\$30		-	-		\$1,000
630/550010 Office Equipment Rental	\$243,326	\$60,000	\$(183,326)		-	-		\$60,000
630/550018 County Wide Photocopier Lease	-	\$74,771	\$74,771		-	-		\$74,771
660/550130 Facilities Rental	\$2,000	\$2,000	-		-	-		\$2,000
579/560450 Computer Equipment	\$5,000	-	\$(5,000)		-	-		-
819/580420 Approp Trans For Rembsmt Frm Desgmtd Fnd	\$(1,140,505)	\$(1,140,505)	-		\$(1,500,000)	\$(1,500,000)		\$(2,640,505)
	\$22,889,529	\$23,105,781	\$216,252		\$1,519,018	\$1,519,018		\$24,624,799

Cook County Assessor's Office



Assessor Joseph Berrios Accomplishments: 2010-Present

1. Assessment Cycle/Triennial

- a. Closed assessment cycle on time for the first time in 34 years.
 - i. The Assessor's staff was reduced by 13% and still closed on the statutory date.
 - ii. The on-time closure of the assessment cycle has been beneficial to the taxing bodies. Tax anticipation notes have not been needed because the assessment was closed on the statutory date.

2. Website/Tech

- a. Redesigned website: The efficient design allows for greater accessibility by the tax payer.
- b. Website video tutorial: This project was planned and executed in collaboration with Columbia College students and faculty to address the most frequently asked questions about the Assessor's Office.
- c. Website hits: The Assessor's website receives 2.65 million annual hits with over 1 million hits alone during the month of July (tax bill season).

3. Legislative agenda

- a. Proposed and passed legislation to stop erroneous homestead claims.
 - i. Currently billed over one million dollars in erroneous exemptions during the amnesty period.
- b. Supported legislation to increase the Homestead Exemption amount to 7,000.
- c. Supported legislation to increase the Senior Exemption amount to 5,000.
- d. Initiated the Emergency Flood Revaluation and Outreach Program for taxpayers affected by the spring floods.
- e. Collaborated with the Cook County Tax Portal for the efficient and harmonious sharing of data and resources between offices.
- f. Collaborated with the village of Tinley Park and Roosevelt University (Marshall Bennett Institute of Real Estate) to expand the scope of the Class 8 incentive. Provided research and outreach for support and eventual passage by the Cook County Board.
- g. Class 9 affordable housing program: Worked in conjunction with the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) and the Community Investment Corporation (CIC) to address concerns regarding the structure of the Class 9 program.
 - i. 2014 policy implementation of a new Affordable Housing/Class 9 program.
- h. Enthusiastically cooperated with the Bureau of Technology to assist in mainframe upgrade.
- i. Worked with the CHA to procure \$7.5 million in funds due to Cook County and additional taxing bodies from the PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) program. This is the first time in the programs history PILOT funds have been calculated and paid.

Cook County Assessor's Office



Tax Appeal Complaints

2007 compared to 2010 North Tri appeals:

2007 Residential Appeals: 170,647
2007 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 34,886
2007 Total Appeals: 205,533

2010 Residential Appeals: 209,964
2010 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 48,391
2010 Total Appeals: 258,355

Percentage increase in total appeals: 26%

2008 compared to 2011 South Tri appeals:

2008 Residential Appeals: 155,272
2008 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 41,341
2008 Total Appeals: 196,613

2011 Residential Appeals: 164,314
2011 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 52,085
2011 Total Appeals: 216,399

Percentage increase in total appeals: 10%

2009 compared to 2012 City Tri appeals:

2009 Residential Appeals: 294,919
2009 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 67,880
2009 Total Appeals: 362,799

2012 Residential Appeals: 331,814
2012 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 65,963
2012 Total Appeals: 397,777

Percentage increase in total appeals: 10%

2010 compared to 2013 North Tri appeals:

2010 Residential Appeals: 209,964
2010 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 48,391
2010 Total Appeals: 258,355

2013 Residential Appeals: 281,896
2013 Industrial/Commercial Appeals: 49,902
2013 Total Appeals: 331,798

Percentage increase in total appeals: 28%

1 The increase in appeals is attributed to Assessor Berrios's extensive outreach program.