

CCAO Budget FY 25: Building capacity and efficiency

Fritz Kaegi
Cook County Assessor



FY2024 Assessor's Office Accomplishments

☑ Reassessment of City of Chicago

- 52% of all PINs in Cook County reassessed in 2024
- Proactive outreach program to homeowners, business owners, local elected officials, and organizations

☑ Hiring and process changes in valuations and data integrity

- Permit processing and field inspectors
- Appeal analysts
- Spanish-language-proficient outreach staff

FY2024 Assessor's Office Accomplishments

- ☑ Launch of officewide, multi-year strategic plan
- ☑ Redesigned assessment notice with multilingual access
- ☑ Municipal-led residential incentive legislation to spur tax base growth in South and West suburbs

The collage displays three versions of the Cook County Assessor's Office assessment notice, designed for multilingual accessibility. The top-left notice is in English, the top-right in Polish, and the bottom section in Chinese. Each notice provides essential information for property owners, including the office's location (118 North Clark St., Room 320, Chicago, IL 60602), contact details (312.443.7550, cookcountyassessor.com), and a QR code for more information. The notices explain the assessment process, the importance of staying current with property values, and the steps for filing an appeal. The Chinese notice also includes a graph showing the trend of property values from 2019 to 2023, highlighting the impact of the pandemic and the current market conditions.

FY2024 Assessor's Office Accomplishments

☑ More than 225 outreach events assisting property owners with assessments, exemptions, and property taxes, including discussions with Assessor Kaegi:

- Market Investor Day
- Advancing Latino Homeownership
- “Black Tax” panel on real estate and equity
- South Suburban town halls
- Appearances at organizations serving homeowners, small businesses, and commercial real estate



FY2024 Awards and Recognition

National Association of Counties awards

Affordable Housing Special Assessment Program (AHSAP), which just registered its 1000th parcel

The CCAO's employee retention and recruitment programs, which have reduced turnover and shrunk time-to-hire



FY2025 Assessor's Office Priorities

☑ Reassessment of North Suburbs



☑ Property tax relief legislation

- Circuit breaker
- Senior freeze auto-renewal
- Renewal of affordable housing program



Senior
Freeze
Exemption



FY2025 Assessor's Office Priorities

☑ Expanded application period for exemptions

- Late January/early February mailings
- Expanded outreach to seniors



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at cookcountyassessor.com



☑ Customer service strategic planning and implementation

- In-office visit digital ticketing system
- Tracking taxpayer inquiries throughout the office



FY2025 Non-Personnel Spending

External Graphics, Postage, and Advertising

- State statute requires the CCAO to provide printed notice of any changes to assessed value
- Notices are sent to individual property owners and published in local newspapers.
- Costs are based on existing contracts
- Utilizing the 2024 surplus in our Salary/Wages account, we pre-funded our postage budget, which reduced our 2025 budget request by \$1 million

<u>VENDOR</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>FY2022 COST</u>	<u>FY2025 REQUEST</u>
Adlexx Corporation / Sebis*	Printing/Processing of 2024 Reassessment Notices & Homestead Exemptions	\$483,000	\$400,000
Accredited Chicago Newspapers/Cook County Suburban Publishers	2022 Publication of the Triennial Assessment of the North Suburbs/ Non-Triennial City of Chicago & South Suburbs	\$825,224	\$912,000
USPS	Mailings done via Adlexx / Sebis (Reassessment Notices/Homestead Exemptions)	\$600,000	\$0

FY2025 Non-Personnel Spending

Professional Services

Data improvements and reporting

- Vendors have increased costs on existing contracts
- High-quality data is a must-have as it leads to more accurate assessments
- Making more information available to the public creates a more transparent office

More training and education

- Ensures consistent and uniform approaches to assessment by staff
- Allows for professional licensure that keeps staff up-to-date with industry standards

Post-mainframe technology upgrades

With the transition off the mainframe, we are investing in IT staff, hardware, and data pipelines to increase our ability to create accurate assessments

FY2025: Filling remaining vacancies

Since our mid-year budget hearing, we have filled 24 vacancies

Our time to hire is now approximately 50-60 days

By the end of FY24, we will have only 43 vacancies

- Approximately 14% of our office staff
- All previous vacant and new FTES to be filled in FY 25



FY2025: Overtime Concerns

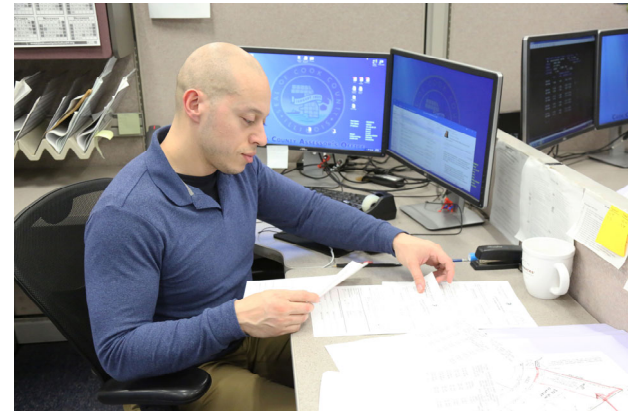
In 2024, we have focused our hiring in areas of the office mostly likely to incur overtime

The main areas of overtime spending have been in:

- Taxpayer services, which handles exemptions and office visits / phone calls
 - In 2024, the CCAO hired 19 taxpayer services specialists
- Valuations, which processes appeals
 - In 2024, we hired 11 new residential analysts which will reduce overtime in valuations
 - Our 2025 budget request contains 10 new employees, with 90% in valuations

FY2025 Personnel

- Our 2025 hiring plan turns to gaps in our Valuations area, specifically field inspectors and valuation analysts.
- For FY 25, we are asking for 10 additional full-time positions:
 - Commercial Valuations Analyst (3)
 - Commercial Field Inspectors (3)
 - Residential Valuations Analyst (3)
 - Junior IT Network Admin (1)



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FY2025 Personnel

- The CCAO spends less per parcel and processes two to three times more parcels per FTE than other large jurisdictions.
- Adequately staffing the Assessor's Office will make it a better and more efficient place to work while also reducing burnout from a reliance on overtime
- The CCAO's turnover rate in 2024 was 17%, which is higher than other County offices, due to an older workforce. Staff departures / retirements created 19 vacancies in 2024.
- Our 2025 hiring plan will allow us to fill vacancies, reduce overtime, and improve the work of the office



Questions

