

Assessor's Office

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the assessor's office do?

The primary duty of the assessor's office is to **discover, list, classify** and **value** all taxable real and personal property in the county. The assessor's goal is to produce a tax warrant reflecting fair and equalized values. **The assessor's office does not:** set the mill levy or tax rate, collect taxes, or increase values arbitrarily.

What is real property?

Real property is land and those items affixed to it. As a rule real property is immovable and includes the space below and above the soil.

How does the assessor come to an actual value?

First, all property located in Colorado as of the January 1st assessment date is taxable unless excluded by the Constitution or state statutes. (**Article X, Section 3, Colorado Constitution and 39-1-102 (16) Colorado Revised Statutes.**)

Most property in Colorado is valued using the three approaches to value; cost, income or market. The TABOR amendment restricts the assessor to using only the market approach for valuing residential real property. Agricultural and natural resource lands are valued based on their productive capacity.

A property and/or improvement's value is based on the prices paid for similar properties and/or improvements in similar economic areas within a defined time frame. The assessor works with sales data collected over an 18 month period from January 1st of the preceding year to June 30th of the year prior to the reappraisal year. The assessor and her staff then work to verify all the "arm's length" transactions and those that qualify are then used in the sales sample. Just to recap; *actual values are set using sales prices paid for real property of like types from similar areas.*

What is the difference between "actual" and "assessed" value?

The actual value for residential properties is established through a mass appraisal process utilizing market sales, as prescribed by state statute, to establish values. The state legislature determines what percentage of the actual value is taxable, this represents the assessed value. Currently the assessment rate of residential land and improvements stands at 7.96% and the rate for vacant land at 29%. So, if your home and land have a combined actual value of \$126,000 your assessed value will be \$10,030 or 7.96% of your actual value (126,000 x 0.0796). **Colorado Revised Statutes, 39-1-104 (1) (1.5)**

What does "arm's length transaction" mean?

Basically it's when a buyer and seller engage in a transaction where one has no undue dominance or influence over the other. This concept is best defined by a buyer and seller, acting

out of self interest, having no relationship or connection to one another. Arm's length transactions comprise the qualified sales from which our market data is derived.

Why does the tax appraiser want to inspect my home?

We do physical inspections because we want to be fair and accurate in our valuations. After remodels, renovations, new construction or sales we physically inspect properties so that we have an accurate profile of the improvements. This is important because state law allows only market sales to be used to establish values for residential property.

The assessor's office values personal property does that mean the things in my home?

No. For our purposes personal property means items that are used in commercial or industrial operations. These items are typically moveable and can be such things as equipment and machinery. Personal property can also refer to intangible items such as trade names, copyrights and patents.

So, how do I find out the actual value the assessor has placed on my property?

State law requires that the assessor's office send real property owners a "notice of valuation," or NOV, on an annual basis. The NOV must be sent no later than May 1st and includes a protest form to be used should you feel your valuation is in error. Don't forget, we work for you so, should you need information regarding your valuation, please feel free to call us; our office hours are 8-4, Monday through Friday.

Why is there an improvement value on my "Notice of Valuation" when I haven't made any upgrades to my home?

Improvements are not upgrades or remodels, but rather, those structures and items permanently affixed to the land.

Is there a deadline for protests?

The month of May is the "formal" protest period when the assessor and her staff sit to hear protests of valuation. Please feel free to notify the assessor's office anytime you have concerns or questions.

What is the process after I file a protest?

All formal protests are filed in the month of May. The assessor's office then spends the month of June addressing each protest. During June each protested property is reappraised and, if possible, physically inspected. Adjustments, if warranted, are made and a "notice of determination" (**NOD**) is sent to the taxpayer before the last working day in June.

Okay, what's an NOD?

An NOD is a "notice of determination." This notice is sent after a taxpayer files a protest and the investigative process has been completed (no later than the last working day in June).

This notice informs the property owner as to what the assessor's office has discovered and what value changes, if any, will be recorded.

Can I appeal my NOD?

Yes. The taxpayer may appeal the assessor's decision to the **CBOE** or County Board of Equalization. The CBOE is comprised of the county commissioners who review appeals during the month of July and part of August. During the hearing the taxpayer and a representative from the assessor's office present their cases and the board makes its findings based on a preponderance of the evidence. It should be noted; *there is no presumption in favor of the assessor!*

Can I protest the amount of taxes I pay?

NO! The assessor only hears protests on valuation as set by the assessor. The assessor has nothing to do with either the mill levy or the assessment rate. ***The assessor does not assign taxes!***