



Common Misconceptions

My value increased by 15%; won't my taxes increase by 15% also?

NO! House bill 920 provides a credit to prevent this from happening. The average increase in taxes for someone who has a 15% increase in value will be about 2%. This increase is on the inside millage only.

I didn't vote for the last tax levy. Why should I have to pay for it?

This is another instance of majority rule. By Ohio law, taxes must be levied uniformly throughout a taxing district.

For more information, please contact:

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Real Estate Tax Rates

Under law, the County Auditor cannot raise or lower property taxes. Tax rates are determined by the budgetary requests of each governmental unit, as authorized by the vote of the people, and are computed in strict accordance with procedures required by the Division of Tax Equalization, Ohio Department of Taxation.

If you are concerned about rising taxes, you should:

- ✓ Attend budget hearings
- ✓ Call or write taxing authorities
- ✓ Decide whether you are willing to do without services to keep taxes low
- ✓ Work for efficient government



Valuation

Buyers and sellers in the market
CREATE VALUE

The Auditor's Office studies the market and collects information about properties to *ESTIMATE VALUE*

The Auditor's Office has
no control over tax rates.



Your Home. Your Value.

Understanding Your Property Valuation



Ralph T. Meacham, CPA
Mahoning County Auditor



What is the purpose of the Mahoning County revaluation program?

The primary purpose of any revaluation program is to provide equalization between all property owners as well as between all classes of property. Ohio law requires revaluation to be completed every six years for all real property in Mahoning County. The program is not intended to increase revenue, but only to equalize values as each property is compared to others.

Why should properties be equalized?

Since ad valorem taxes are based on value, it is imperative to have all property valued periodically on a uniform basis, using a modern system of valuation. Market value appraisals become the foundation for assessments, and equalized values create equalized and uniform taxes. This process also assures the taxpayers in Mahoning County that each is paying only his or her fair share.

What causes property values to change?

A property's valuation can change for many reasons, including industries moving in or out of a community, a shortage of detached housing in a desirable neighborhood for example, or recession. Of course, when a property itself changes, through the addition of a room, garage, or in-ground swimming pool, or through destruction by flood, fire, or demolition, its value will be affected accordingly.

How is may property value determined?

An inventory of all property is contained in the county property data file. These data characteristics (size, age, story height, style, etc.) are verified by professional appraisers during an interior physical inspection of new construction properties and an external physical inspection of all properties every six years for the revaluation. The professional appraisers then analyze the updated data along with market conditions and establish the estimated fair market value.

What is fair market value?

Fair market value is the price a willing seller would receive from a willing buyer. Please understand that appraisers do not "set" value; they simply research the values being set by buyers and sellers in the local market. The appraisers then apply their experience and knowledge of the local real estate market using proven methods and procedures for analyzing comparable properties and the many factors affecting value.

Your property should appraise at the price of comparable properties on the market, plus or minus adjustments for differing factors.

What will happen to tax bills?

Generally, as a result of a revaluation, some taxes will go up, some will go down, and some will stay the same. The new values simply establish equalization, many other facets of assessment procedures determine tax bills. In Ohio, by law assessed valuations are determined by taking 35% of the market value appraisals, then local tax rates are applied to each tax bill. Typically, many of these rates are adjusted after a revaluation to prevent a community-wide inflation of values from causing a large-scale inflation in tax bills.

Is tax relief available? YES!

Rollbacks. There are several property tax reductions that real property owners receive. For instance, there is a non-business rollback for all agricultural and residential properties, and a owner occupy rollback for all owner occupied agricultural and residential properties. No application is required for the non-business rollback; however, property owners must apply for the owner occupy rollback if they are not currently receiving it.

House Bill 920. Passed into law in 1976. House Bill 920 provides a credit against all voted tax millage. As property values increase due to reappraisals, additional "credits" are applied to voted tax levies so that property owners are not paying more than the amount of taxes the levy was originally voted to collect. The only increased revenue taxing districts receive from voted levies is from the added value of new construction.

Homestead Exemption. Homeowners 65 or older, or those who are permanently and totally disabled, and meet the income threshold as determined by the Tax Commissioner may be eligible. This program reduces the taxable value of the property, thereby reducing the taxes owed. Applications may be filed with the county Auditor on or before Dec. 31.

Current Agricultural Use Value. To be eligible for this relief, agricultural properties must be 10 acres or more or have produced an average annual gross income of \$2,500. Applications for CAUV are accepted between the first Monday in January and the first Monday in March at the Mahoning County Auditor's Office.

Forestry. The Ohio Tax Forest Law reduces the value by 50% on any forest tract of 10 acres or more, excluding the homesite, which has been certified as forest land by the State. Forestry certificates received by the Auditor's Office by October 1 will receive credit for the current tax year.

If I believe my property has been unfairly or inaccurately valued, can I appeal?

You may appeal when you can prove at least one of two things: 1. Items that affect value are incorrect on your property record (i.e. you have one bathroom not two, or you have a carport, not a garage); or 2. The estimated market value is too high (i.e. you have evidence that similar properties in your neighborhood have sold for less than the estimated market value of your home).

Remember you will not win an appeal simply because you think your taxes are too high. You must prove that your property has been unfairly or inaccurately assessed. However, you may be eligible for tax relief or exemption as described previously.

Taxpayers will be given the opportunity to discuss their new valuations with appropriate officials at a time to be announced. If, after these informal meetings you are still not satisfied that your property is valued correctly, a more formal appeal process is available to you after you receive your first half tax bill. At that time, you can contact the Auditor's Office for a Board of Revision Complaint Form.



If you believe the estimated value of your property is incorrect, you will want to know:

- ✓ How the Auditor's Office valued the properties
- ✓ How to gather information about your property and similar properties
- ✓ How the appeals process works and what the deadlines are