



Cook County Board of Review

ANNUAL REPORT

Assessment Year 2011 • Fiscal Year 2012

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 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 Cook County Board of Review is pleased to present its second Annual Report.

The 2011 Assessment Year was one of significant progress and great achievement for the Board. With the cooperation of other county offices, the Board finished its work earlier than in recent memory so that the Treasurer, the Clerk, the Assessor and the Illinois Department of Revenue could complete their responsibilities on time. As a result, tax bills were issued on time to meet the statutorily required date of July 1 with a due date of August 1 for the first time in 34 years. Timely tax bill issuance and collection allows local taxing bodies like schools, park districts and libraries to operate more efficiently because they do not need to borrow money from reserves or issue tax anticipation warrants to continue their operations. The combined efforts of our offices has now put us in a position where we can duplicate what we did for the 2011 assessment year on a regular basis so that tax bills can be issued on the same dates every year as required by law as long as our office is properly funded. Individuals and businesses will benefit by being able to accurately anticipate their upcoming tax bills. Also, local governments will be able to rely on a steady stream of revenue and avoid fiscal emergencies such as occurred in 2010 when tax bills were not due until December 15.

The Board's record closing date came as the result of a plan created by our office shortly after the closing of the 2010 assessment year and executed through the hard work of every staff member at the Cook County Board of Review. We were aided by the County Assessor's office which accelerated its operations in order to get township assessments certified for review by the Board at earlier dates than in the past. The Board succeeded in the 2011 assessment year in a challenging budget environment where we shared in Cook County's financial sacrifice.

All of this was accomplished while adjudicating 341,688 property parcels, a record high for a south suburban triennial reassessment year and the third highest number of appeals in the history of the Board. Budget constraints have been a constant concern and were addressed this year by implementing furlough days and unpaid holidays for all Board employees and keeping close track of all other expenses.

The 2011 Assessment Year was the first year taxpayers had the opportunity to appeal their assessments online at the Cook County Board of Review. The online appeal program was utilized for 25 percent of all property parcels appealed. This saved the Board the cost of paper complaint forms and also reduced overtime costs that would have been associated with data entry for those complaints. We expect utilization of online appeals to grow as more taxpayers become aware they can appeal from the comfort of their homes or offices. This is the first step towards modernizing the Board's technology and eventually moving to a totally digitalized system.

Transparency is important to all three Commissioners and that is why we issued the first board-wide Annual Report following the 2010 Assessment Year. This past year, we worked with the President's office to furnish information for the STAR Report which allows county offices to set consistent measurables and provide the public with understanding of how we are performing from year to year.

In addition, we worked with elected officials from other county offices to create a one stop shop website called the Cook County Property Tax Portal (www.cookcountypropertyinfo.com). This portal has increased accessibility for the public to property related information by allowing residents to find data provided by the Cook County Board of Review, Assessor, Treasurer, Clerk and Recorder of Deeds all at one website location. This benefits the public by providing quick and easy access to information.

The mission of the Board is to fairly review property assessment appeals so that property owners do not pay more than their fair share of taxes. As your three elected commissioners at the Board, we are constantly striving to upgrade service, improve our work product and increase efficiency. Thank you for the opportunity to work on your behalf to make the Cook County Property Tax system work better for every taxpayer.

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

Timely Closing of the BOR

Property tax is a major source of revenue for local governments and taxing districts. It is used to fund schools, parks, libraries and other essential functions of government. This tax is collected in two installments. The last time Cook County met the statutory second installment due date of August 1 was during tax year 1977. This delay in collection has had significant impact on the cash flow of the already cash strapped taxing districts as they have to borrow money to make up for the late tax revenue.

Between the increased cost of interest on borrowed funds and pre-emptive increase in levies by taxing bodies to cover an anticipated cash crunch, it is the Cook County taxpayer who is stuck paying for the inefficiencies created by the late bills. This cost is estimated to be at a minimum \$3M per month in Cook County.

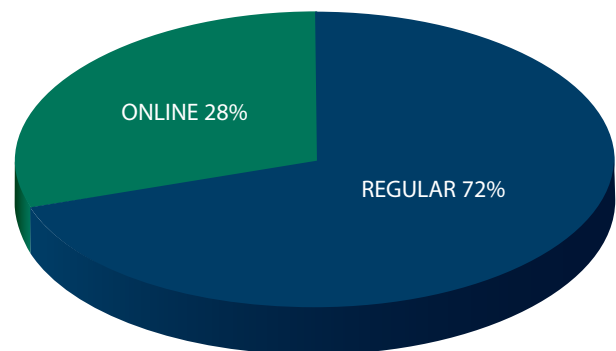
The Commissioners at the BOR made getting these bills out on time a priority during the current tax year, thereby saving taxpayers any additional costs associated with late bills.

Efficiency and Accessibility

The BOR introduced a new online appeals filing system that allows taxpayers to appeal their property tax assessment via the Internet. This online system has made incredible strides in creating a more open and convenient process for taxpayers. The BOR accomplished this goal by collaborating with the Assessor and the Bureau of Technology in an effort to leverage internal resources and keep costs low.

In tax year 2011, there were 91,807 parcels appealed online.

REGULAR VS. ONLINE APPEALS



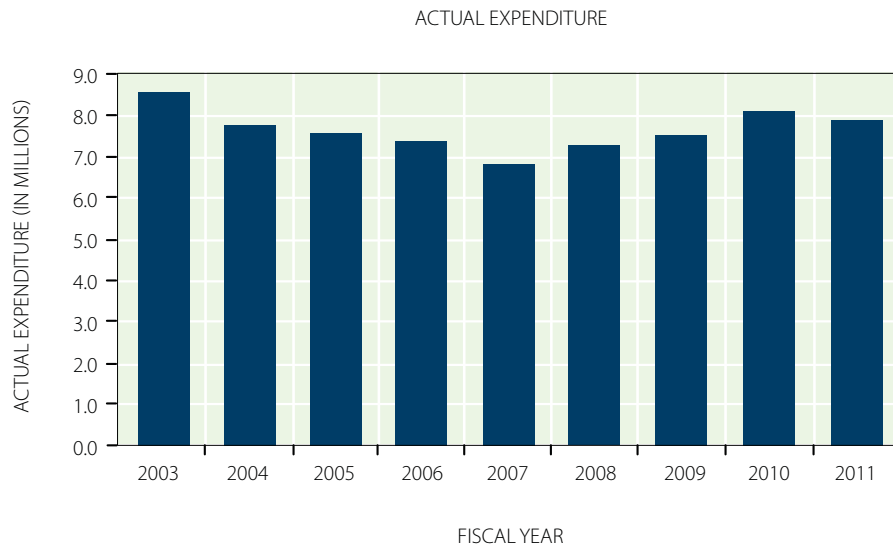
Transparency

Commissioners Rogers, Patlak and Cabonargi are committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness at the BOR. The goal of this initiative is to promote accountability and provide information to citizens about what their government is doing.

This year, the BOR made huge strides toward this end by implementing a number of important initiatives. This is the second year that the BOR has published a collaborative Annual Report. The Annual Report provides a comprehensive look at the financial and operational work conducted at the BOR. The STAR Report initiative introduced by President Preckwinkle aims to create a culture of transparency and continuous improvement by setting measurable targets and achieving results. The BOR has been an active participant in this initiative from the get go. The BOR also collaborated with other Cook County Agencies to bring meaningful transparency reform through the Open Data website (<http://data.cookcountyil.gov>). This website combines over 75 data sets from 40 departments. Lastly, the Property Tax Portal (<http://www.cookcountypropertyinfo.com>) is the result of collaboration among the elected officials that take part in the property tax system. This website provides a crucial one stop shop for all information pertaining to every parcel of property in Cook County.

Budget Highlights

BOR Actual Expenditure



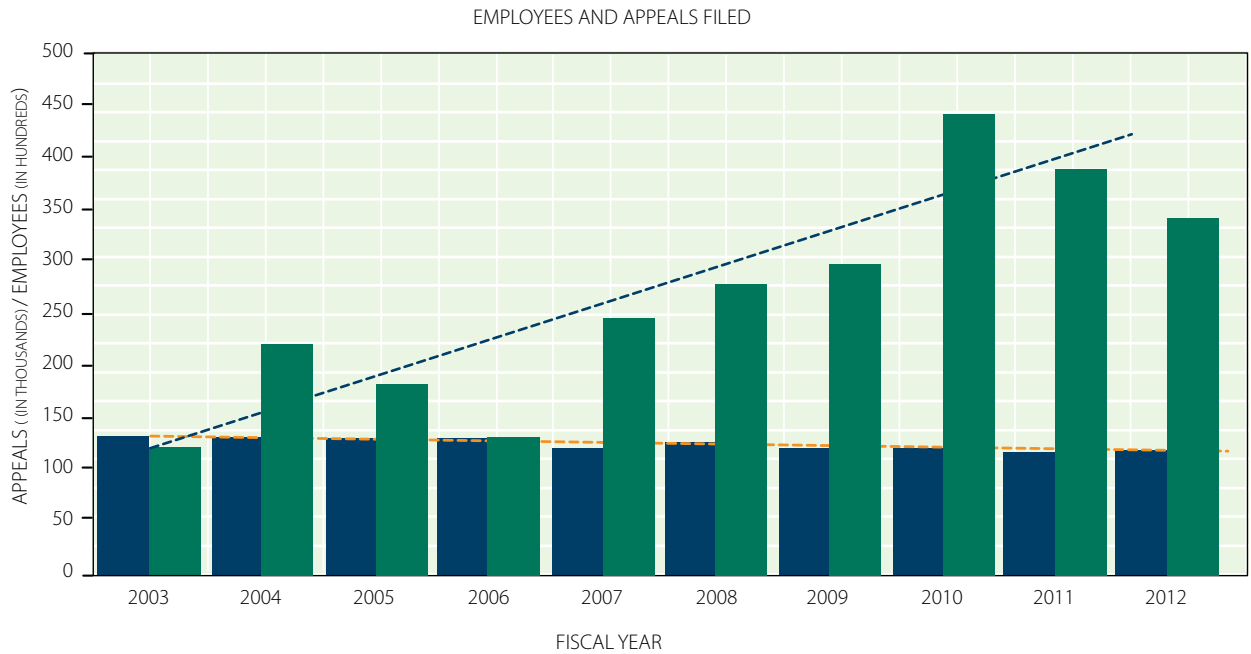
FISCAL YEAR	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE (\$ MILLION)
2003	8.6
2004	7.8
2005	7.6
2006	7.4
2007	6.8
2008	7.3
2009	7.5
2010	8.1
2011	7.9*
2012	N/A

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, all while adjudicating the ever increasing numbers of complaints.

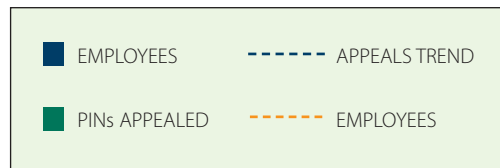
*This number includes the cost of 35 funded positions remaining vacant between 1 and 8 pay periods due to the transition of 2 new Commissioners. This number also includes the unfunded expenses for compensatory time/overtime.

Note: The property tax cycle is a 2 year process. The 2012 Fiscal Year corresponds to the 2011 Assessment Year and the beginning of the 2012 Assessment Year.

Employees and Appeals



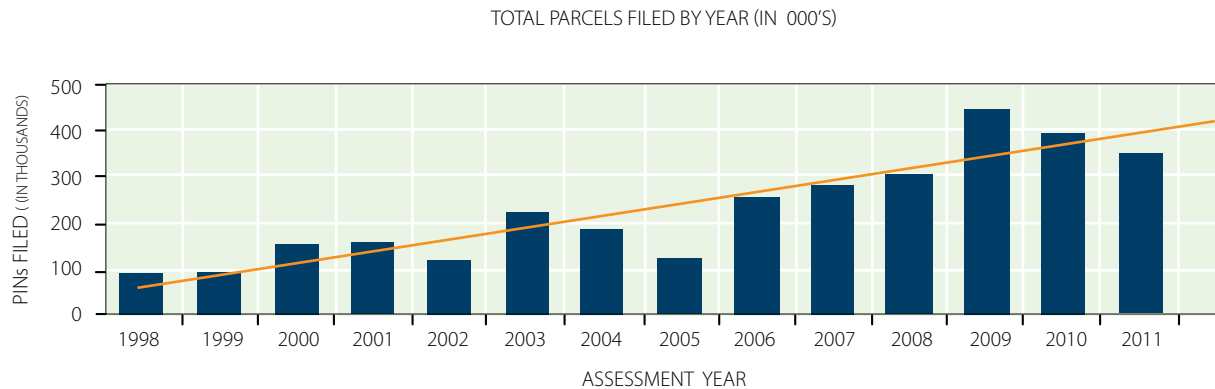
ASSESSMENT YEAR	FISCAL YEAR	EMPLOYEES	PINs APPEALED (IN THOUSANDS)
2002	2003	130	121
2003	2004	130	220
2004	2005	129	182
2005	2006	130	130
2006	2007	122	247
2007	2008	126	277
2008	2009	123	295
2009	2010	122	439
2010	2011	118	386
2011	2012	119	342



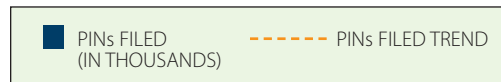
Employees at the BOR continue to do more with less. Process re-engineering efforts and technology have helped to keep headcount low. In the 2012 budget year, the BOR has successfully adjudicated and closed all 341,688 appeals for assessment year 2011.

Operational Highlights

Total PINs Filed Assessment Years 1998–2011

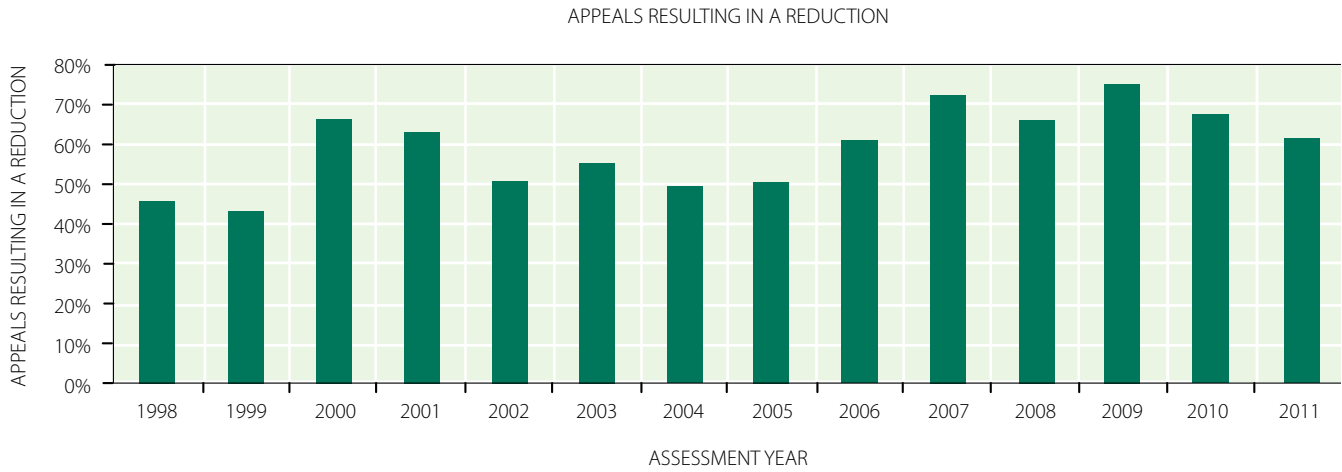


ASSESSMENT YEAR	PINs FILED IN THOUSANDS	REASSESSMENT TRIENNIAL
1998	94	NORTH SUBURBAN
1999	82	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2000	154	CITY
2001	151	NORTH SUBURBAN
2002	121	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2003	220	CITY
2004	182	NORTH SUBURBAN
2005	130	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2006	247	CITY
2007	277	NORTH SUBURBAN
2008	295	SOUTH SUBURBAN
2009	439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

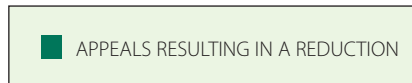


The BOR adjudicated 341,688 property appeals for tax year 2011 which was a record for a south suburban triennial reassessment year.

Appeals Resulting in a Reduction Assessment Years 1998–2011



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%



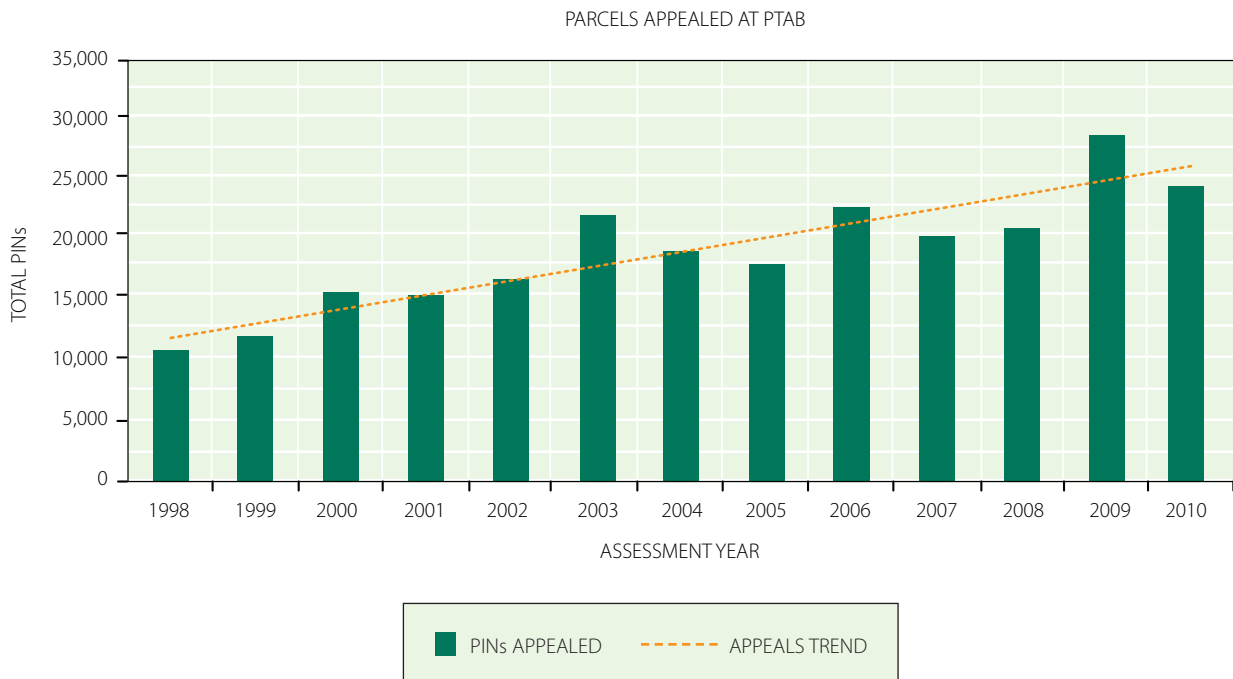
The Cook County Board of Review reviews all assessment appeals presented to it by property owners. Many factors go into the Board's decisions, including the Assessor's level of assessment and the evidence presented by the taxpayer to the Board and the number of reductions fluctuates from year to year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

PTAB Appealed

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. Therefore, these local taxing bodies are granted “intervener” status if they want to present evidence to persuade 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.



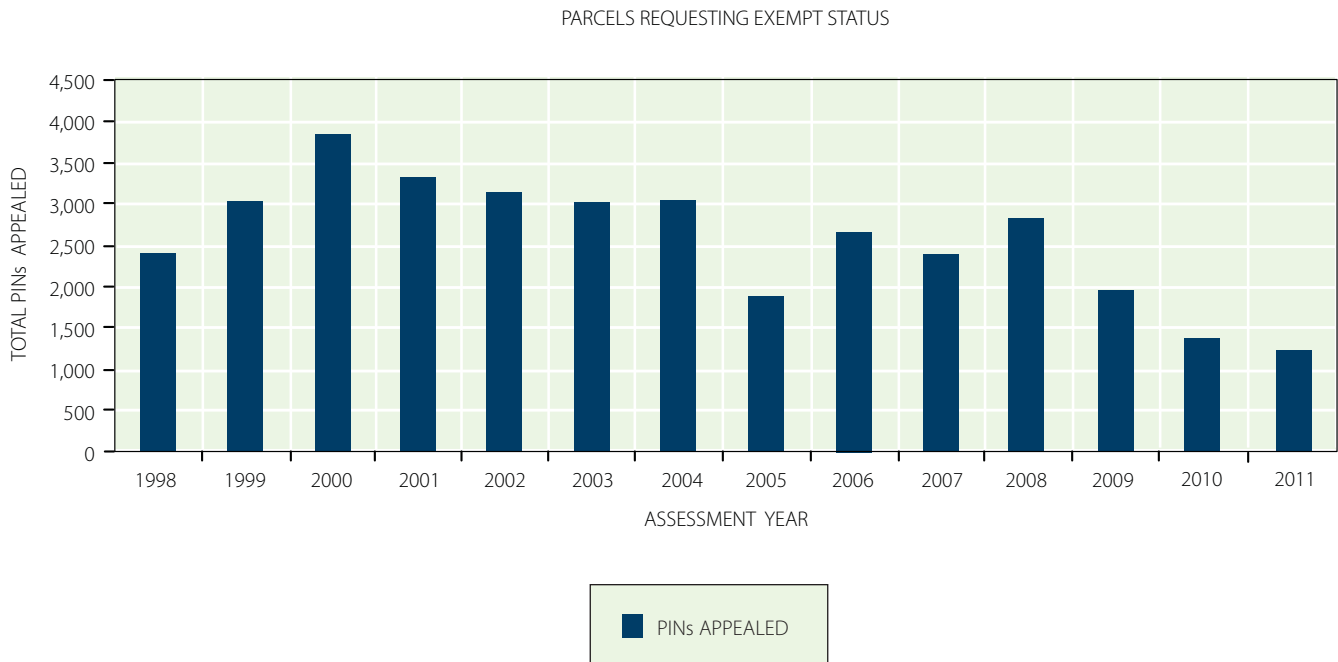
ASSESSMENT YEAR	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TOTAL PINs	10,691	11,608	15,207	14,584	16,512	21,413	18,337	17,387	22,067	19,734	20,391	30,734	24,830	N/A

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 2011, the BOR processed 1,276 exempt parcels requesting exempt status.



ASSESSMENT YEAR	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
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

2010 Tax Year Outreach Efforts

Through the BOR's community outreach programs, the BOR brings assessed valuation complaint services to the community. During the 2011 assessment year, our offices conducted 167 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 341,688 PINs in assessment year 2011.
- 2011 tax year is the first time since tax year 1977 that the second installment tax bills were mailed out on time.
- In assessment year 2011, out of the 341,688 PINs appealed, 205,229 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 2011, the BOR conducted 167 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, Arabic, 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

