

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON TAX REVALUATION

### Q. What is meant by revaluation?

A. The revaluation program involves the reappraisal of all real estate in the city in order to bring about uniformity in property valuations and to assure that all property owners are paying only their fair share of the cost of essential community services. The equalization of property values is not intended to raise revenues; its purpose is to value all properties by the same standard at the same point in time.

### Q. Why is an equalization needed?

A. The last complete revaluation of all real estate in the city was done in 1988. Since then changes in economic conditions have caused inequities to develop. The only solution to this problem is to equalize all real estate and bring assessments up to date with current market value.

### Q. Will property values change?

A. Most likely, yes. However, not all property values will change at the same rate. Market value may have increased more for some neighborhoods and property types than for others. Some neighborhoods and property types may have decreased in value and others may have remained the same. One purpose of a revaluation is to make sure that the assessed values reflect the changes that have occurred in the real estate market.

### Q. What is fair market value?

A. Market value is determined by people, by the activity in the real estate market and the general economy. It is the legal standard defined by the courts as the price established between a willing buyer and a willing seller, taking into consideration all of the uses to which the property is adapted.

### Q. Who determines the value of my property?

A. People do. You and the person who sold it to you, and the person who is willing to buy it from you. People make the market. It is the Assessor's job to research and analyze the values in any particular area or neighborhood. In effect, he does what you do to determine the selling price when putting your property up for sale. Certain factors that are examined for each property are: location, size, quality of construction, age of improvements, topography, utilities, and zoning restrictions.

### Q. Isn't fair market value what I paid for my property?

A. Not always. Some people will pay more than fair market value for their property. Others may have bought their property at a bargain price and others may have purchased years ago when prices were generally lower. The true test is what your property is worth now in comparison with similar properties.

### Q. Nobody inspected the inside of my home, so how could you reassess it?

A. The Assessor's office maintains a record for each property. Information is kept current through building permits, inspections, sales, questionnaires, revaluation data verification surveys, periodic re-inspections and exterior reviews/photos. Our records are available for your review. This information is used to develop the new assessments.

### Q. Will the revaluation increase my tax bill?

A. It depends on the rate of market value appreciation for your property since the last equalization program. Taxpayers whose current assessments are 65% of market value should see no change in their taxes. Taxpayers whose current assessments are below 65% of market value will see their taxes increase. If your assessment is greater than 65% of market value, you can expect a decrease.

### Q. How will I know if my assessment is equitable?

A. There are two ways of determining this. First, compare your property to similar properties that sold in the previous year. Your value should be in line with these sale prices. Second, if no recent sales are available, compare your assessment to other similar properties in your area using information available in the Assessor's office. Your value should be in line with these similar properties.

### Q. How will I be notified?

A. In the near future, every homeowner will receive a notice of their proposed assessment. If a homeowner has a question or concern about the proposed assessment they are asked to contact the Assessor's office and a date and time to meet will be set to discuss the process and answer any questions the homeowner may have.

### Q. If I disagree with my assessment, what are my options?

A. If the property owner believes the assessment on their property is in excess of its fair market value, they should first notify the Assessor's office. They may then appeal before the Augusta Board of Assessment Review. The Board will review the case and make a determination as to the disposition of the appeal. Should the property owner still feel the assessment is incorrect, they may appeal to Superior Court.

### Q. What is the Maine Residents Property Tax Refund program?

A. The State of Maine offers property tax refunds to homeowners whose taxes exceed more than 4% of their household income. The Maine Residents Property Tax Refund program provides property tax refunds to owners who apply and meet the household income qualifications. For a single person, the income limit is \$ 74,500 and \$ 99,500 for families. Currently more than 200,000 Maine households now qualify for this program. Maine Residents Property Tax Refund application forms are available at City Center and online at [www.maine.gov/revenue](http://www.maine.gov/revenue)

**MAINE RESIDENTS PROPERTY TAX  
REFUND PROGRAM**

In 2005 the State of Maine significantly enhanced the **Maine Residents Property Tax Refund Program** as part of a comprehensive property tax relief program.

The following are examples of how the program works;

1). The average assessed value of a residential property in fiscal year 2006 is \$ 75,000 with a tax rate of \$ 26.00. The property taxes were \$ 1,950. The **Property Tax Refund** for this property with a household income of \$ 25,000 is \$ 475. The **Property Tax Refund** for a household income of \$ 45,000 is \$ 75.

2). For property assessed at \$ 150,000 the current taxes are \$ 3,900. The **Property Tax Refund** for this property with a household income of \$ 25,000 is \$ 2,000. The refund would be \$ 1,200 for a household with \$ 45,000 of income and \$ 650 for a household with \$ 65,000 of income.

As you can see, the **Property Tax Refund** program can be of substantial benefit to any family earning less than \$ 100,000 per year. **It is not welfare, but a broad based property tax relief plan for Maine.**

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
ASSESSOR'S BUREAU**

The Bureau of Assessors is responsible for determining the value of real and personal property that is subject to municipal taxation. The ongoing administrative duties involve the maintenance of assessment data on 8,249 real estate and 988 personal property accounts. Specific records include legal information regarding ownership, tax maps, property tax cards, building permit information and sales information.

**GENERAL OFFICE INFORMATION**

Office hours: 7:45 AM-4:30 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Telephone: (207) 626-2320  
Fax: (207) 626-2304  
Email: [assessor@ci.augusta.me.us](mailto:assessor@ci.augusta.me.us)  
Mailing Address: City Center Plaza  
16 Cony St.  
Augusta, ME 04330

**ONLINE ASSESSMENT DATABASE**

Shortly after all taxpayers have been notified of their proposed assessments, the Assessor's online assessment database will be updated with the new parcel information. Taxpayers are encouraged to visit the website to review parcel information and to utilize the sales search feature. To access the website;

[www.ci.augusta.me.us](http://www.ci.augusta.me.us)

This will bring you to the **City of Augusta website**.

On the first page on the left side you would click on City departments.

On the next page, click on Assessors.

Scroll down to **ONLINE DATABASE**;  
You can then apply for a free registered user ID by clicking on that. You can search by location, name or map and lot #. You would put the map# under map and the lot # under the block section. You can also do sales searches of similar properties to yours.

**CITY OF AUGUSTA  
TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE**



«OWNER»  
«COOWNER»  
«MAIL 1»  
«MAIL 2»  
«CITY» «ST» «ZIP»

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