



For Immediate Release
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Cook County Assessor's Office Releases Civic Consulting Alliance Study

Chicago – Initial findings of the Civic Consulting Alliance (CCA) analysis of the Cook County residential property tax system were released today. The findings reflect the first two phases of a five-phase project.

In July 2017, President Toni Preckwinkle and Assessor Joseph Berrios asked CCA, a non-partisan, non-profit consulting firm, to conduct an independent, pro bono evaluation of Cook County's property tax assessment system with a focus on residential properties.

The goal of the evaluation was not only to assess, but to work alongside the employees in the Assessor's office and Board of Review to understand the details of the entire assessment process – from data gathering through appeals to the Board of Review -- so that necessary changes could be identified and, ultimately, implemented.

Over the past months, Josh Myers, a national expert in statistical analysis and assessment processes, has spent hundreds of hours reviewing the data and researching the best practices across the country.

The project consists of a five-phase approach, which includes:

- Phase 1: Scoping (completed): Defining the goals and associated measures of the assessment process, including industry standard target ranges that indicate whether the process is meeting those goals.
- Phase 2: Diagnostic (completed): Analyze the outcomes produced by the current end-to-end process for one triennial assessment cycle cover the three-year period, 2014-2016.
- Phase 3: Solutions developed (now under way): For each area with improvement potential, develop a tactical solution through cross-functional teams with external expertise and staff from the Assessor's office and the Board of Review.
- Phase 4: Planning: Develop an implementation plan for all changes by sequencing initiatives appropriately, ensuring adequate resources and development oversight, and public reporting structures to ensure progress.
- Phase 5: Implementation: Implement initiatives and monitor outcomes, likely over multiple years.

CCA's findings coincide with what Assessor Joseph Berrios has been saying since taking office – that systematic problems have existed in the assessment system going back to 40 years. Additionally, Cook County is investing heavily in upgrading technology for the property tax stakeholder agencies to modernize the existing 40-year-old system.

"As I have said from the start of the process, my priority is to ensure that the assessment system is fair and equitable for every Cook County resident," said Assessor Berrios. "I am committed to implementing all of the solutions identified as part of the analysis."

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Some of the CCA's findings include:

- The residential assessment system is more variable and more regressive than agreed-upon industry standards
- The system appears to be in compliance with the requirement that residential assessments are at 10% of market value
- Bringing the system into compliance with industry standards will require fundamental changes in modeling, review process, data collection, and a shift away from reliance on appeals

A copy of the full report can be found at:

<http://sub.cookcountyassessor.com/assets/forms/CivicConsultingAllianceStudyResults.pdf>