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Cook County Assessor's Office Wins Public Information Award Awarded at the 2021 IAAO Annual Conference in Chicago



Chicago – The Cook County Assessor's Office (Assessor's Office) was recognized with the Public Information Award for its program titled "Communication during a Global Pandemic." The prestigious award was given by the [International Association of Assessing Officers](#) (IAAO) on September 1st during their annual conference that took place in the City of Chicago.

The IAAO is an international agency that sets the industry standard in the field of property assessment. Since taking office in 2018, Assessor Fritz Kaegi has utilized the IAAO to assist with comprehensive planning and to develop solutions that improve critical functions of the office.

"We launched both the online appeal and exemption systems just prior to Illinois' Stay at Home order due to COVID-19," said Assessor Kaegi. "The communications team was tasked with teaching the public how to conduct business with the office in an entirely different way at the height of the pandemic."

While all of the office's digital tools went live to the public, the communications team had to create a public information strategy to explain how to use the new online tools.



For the first time, the communications team hosted virtual outreach seminars live on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and via Zoom. This was a huge undertaking, as the team had to create a new way of communicating with taxpayers. During the summer of 2020, 75 digital outreach sessions took place. They can be viewed on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

The communications team also collaborated with local elected officials to host 35 socially distanced and in-person events during the height of the property tax season in the summer of 2020. This was especially important when working with some hard-to-reach communities.

Lastly, a separate newsletter was created exclusively for partner agencies that includes updates from the office and digital toolkits to disseminate information to more property owners in Cook



County. The digital toolkits contain downloadable social graphics, videos, and content for various communication platforms.

“The office closure forced an early and unprecedented launch that employees and the public had to become accustomed to overnight. The communications team proved to be resilient, flexible, and innovative during this time by continuously creating new ways to engage with homeowners, business owners, and partner agencies,” said Assessor Kaegi.

To view a list of upcoming in-person and digital events hosted by the Assessor’s Office and partner agencies, visit www.cookcountyassessor.com/event-list.

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