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Christian Belanger, Director of Press Relations
Cook County Assessor's Office
773-343-9050 | christian.belanger@cookcountyil.gov

National Association of Counties passes Cook County Assessor's proposal for federal property characteristics data

CCAO wins three 2025 NACo awards



Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi (center) stands with Maricopa County Assessor Eddie Cook (left) and Philadelphia Chief Assessment Officer James "AJ" Aros (right) at the annual conference of the National Association of Counties, July 11, 2025.

The Board of Directors of the National Association of Counties (NACo) called for the release of property characteristics data from the federal government last week, supporting a policy proposal by the Cook County Assessor's Office to improve assessment accuracy.

This is the first time that NACo has passed a property assessment-related policy proposal. The resolution was approved unanimously during NACo's annual conference.

The resolution, sponsored by Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi and Maricopa County Assessor Eddie Cook, calls for the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) to release its dataset of millions of property appraisals to 16 of the largest assessment offices in the country.

Without incurring any extra cost, this data would provide assessors with a more accurate snapshot of residential property characteristics.



Nationwide, property assessments tend to be regressive. This means that less valuable homes are overvalued, while expensive homes are undervalued.

The effect of this can be that working-class homeowners end up paying more than their fair share in property taxes, particularly compared to the wealthiest homeowners.

More accurate property data could help alleviate this regressivity, which researchers have suggested is due to a lack of information about homes.

The FHFA, a federal agency that oversees Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, maintains a Uniform Appraisal Dataset with millions of home appraisal records from across the country.

“Property assessments in Cook County have become much more accurate over the last seven years, helping to make our property tax system fairer for everybody,” said Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi. “But for us to continue improving, access to this data from the FHFA is crucial.”

CCAO wins three NACo awards for 2024

The Cook County Assessor's Office also won three 2025 Achievement Awards from the National Association for Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for home and business owners in Cook County.

The CCAO won for the following initiatives:

Explaining the property tax system using plain language and inclusive communication strategies

The CCAO began a project to use more plain language when communicating with the public, particularly for non-English speakers. Over several years, the office redesigned many of its forms and mailings. It also translated them into English, Spanish, Polish, Arabic, and Simplified Chinese.

Empowering homeowners through community engagement and trust

The CCAO's six-member Residential Outreach team travels throughout Cook County to share information about assessments and the property tax system with homeowners. In 2024, they attended 217 events, a new record.

Building partnerships with the local business community and commercial industry

The CCAO launched a robust outreach campaign to reach commercial property owners and the local business community. The CCAO also began to publish extensive data on its website that explains the methodology used in commercial assessments.