



# Under the Radar: Five years of reforms at the CCAO

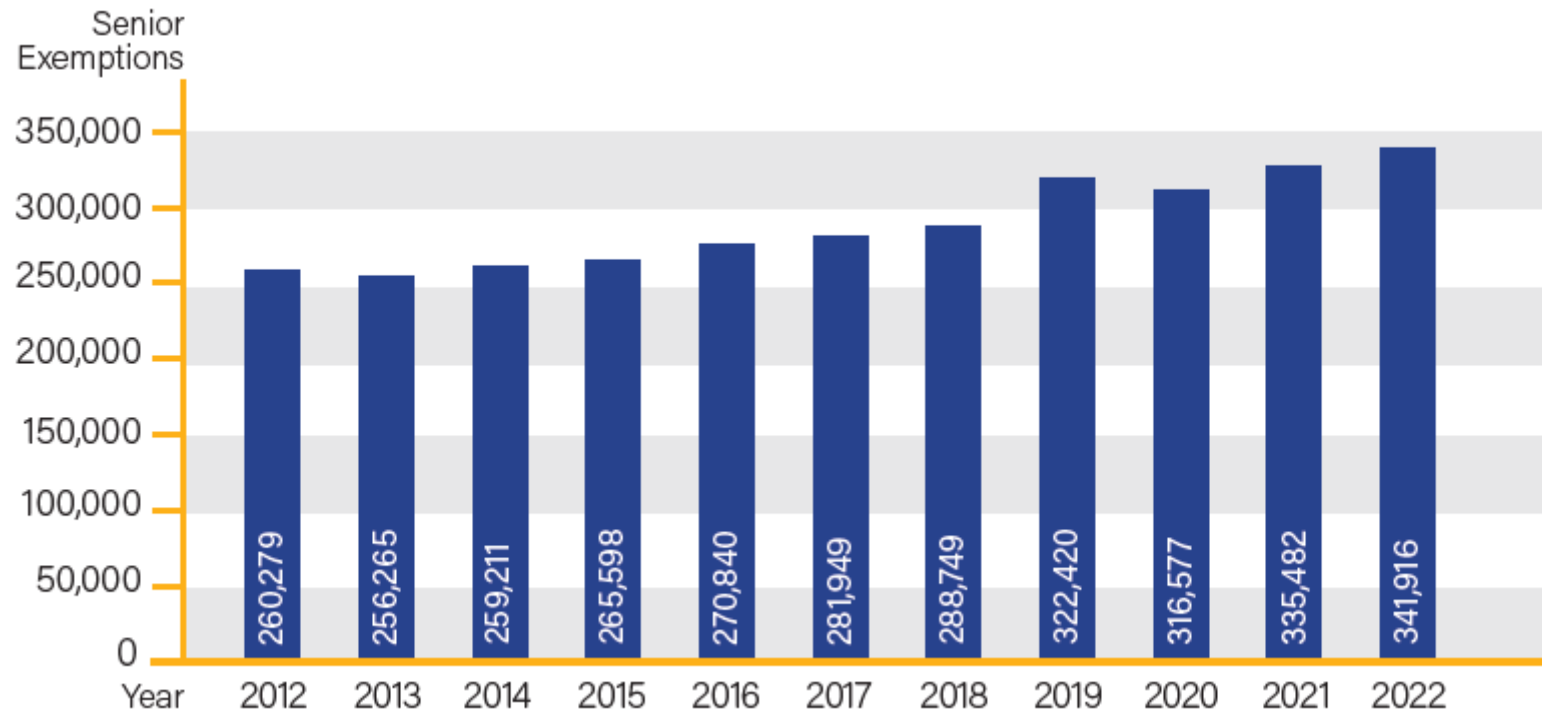
JULY 17, 2024

Fritz Kaegi  
Cook County Assessor



# Improved exemptions access

- With auto-renewal, Senior Exemption enrollment increased 20% from 2018 to 2022.
- Have reduced paperwork and application requirements for “Senior Freeze,” Veterans with Disabilities.
- Target outreach efforts at areas where many residents are missing Homestead and other exemptions.



# Consistent decrease in appeals

- Due largely to more accurate residential assessments, we've seen fewer appeals with our office
- Comparing tri-to-tri, 28% – 35% decline in appeals from pre-2019 to now.

Tax Year	Number of appeals
2016	451,081
2017	373,975
2018	534,179
2019	391,240
2020	238,030
2021	373,911
2022	302,651
2023	268,925

# New policy: Affordable housing and growing the base

- The Affordable Housing Special Assessment Program, signed into law in 2021, cuts assessments for providers who create and maintain affordable housing.
  - Anticipate 1000<sup>th</sup> property will join the program later this year.
- The Southland Reactivation Act and new municipal-built homes exemption both provide incentives for municipalities that support the development of vacant land.
  - Initiatives like this are especially targeted at the south suburbs, where a low tax base drives up the tax rate for everybody.

BUSINESS

## New property tax incentive could remake Fulton Market and other neighborhoods into havens for affordable housing



Bill Williams, owner of apartments he rehabbed in the West Humboldt Park neighborhood.

Last year, after Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi established the Affordable Housing Special Assessment Program, Williams applied and was approved for the 35% cut. He said he now looks forward to years of lighter property taxes.

# Greater transparency across the office

- Significantly reduced FOIA backlog.
- Created first-ever public vacancy policy for the office, limiting endless cuts and promoting development.
- Update and publish our Data team's work, including the code that we use for the residential assessment model.
- Release commercial methodology worksheets, showing our assumptions for commercial property we assess.

PINs	Address	Property Class	Property Type	Age	Land S.	Bldg. S.	Size Tie	Loc Ratin	Investment Rating	Adj. Rent \$/SF
13-25-101-001-0000	3135 W BELMONT AVE	593	DISTRIBUTION	66	50957	16559	B		3 B	\$ 9
13-25-102-037-0000	3143 N ALBANY AVE	593	WAREHOUSE	112	2200	2100	A		3 C	\$ 12
13-25-103-014-0000	2923 W BELMONT AVE	593	MANUFACTURING	79	3000	1680	A		3 B	\$ 12
13-25-107-022-0000	3037 W FLETCHER ST	593	WAREHOUSE	69	47089	25000	B		3 B	\$ 9
13-25-127-006-0000	2945 N MOZART ST	593	WAREHOUSE	102	14559	17348	B		3 C	\$ 9
13-25-127-014-0000015016022	2930 N CALIFORNIA AVE	593	MANUFACTURING	4	13639	11834	A		3 A	\$ 12
13-25-200-037-0000	3163 N ELSTON AVE	593	MANUFACTURING	117	8815	9665	A		3 C	\$ 12
13-25-201-005-0000	2621 W BELMONT AVE	593	MANUFACTURING	84	6250	13556	A		3 C	\$ 12
13-25-201-018-0000Thru 13-25-201-020-0000	2628-32 W FLETCHER ST	593	MANUFACTURING	79	8250	10500	A		3 B	\$ 12
13-25-201-021-0000	2624 W FLETCHER ST	593	MANUFACTURING	90	5500	5500	A		3 C	\$ 12
13-25-201-022-0000Thru 13-25-201-025-0000	2612-20 W FLETCHER ST	593	MANUFACTURING	83	10990	20992	B		3 C	\$ 9
13-25-202-015-0000	2501 W BELMONT AVE	593	MANUFACTURING	25	146974	28332	B		3 A	\$ 9
13-25-203-001-0000Thru 13-25-203-003-0000	2445-51 W BELMONT AVE	593	DISTRIBUTION	60	10650	9117	A		3 B	\$ 12
13-25-203-043-0000	3140 N WESTERN AVE	593	WAREHOUSE	60	8100	4500	A		3 B	\$ 12
13-25-205-018-0000	3139 N ELSTON AVE	593	MANUFACTURING	60	6785	5891	A		3 B	\$ 12
13-25-206-008-0000	2635 W FLETCHER AVE	593	AUTO REPAIR	60	2500	2350	A		3 B	\$ 12
13-25-206-009-0000	2635 W FLETCHER AVE	593	AUTO REPAIR	93	7500	8125	A		3 C	\$ 12
13-25-206-012-0000	3118 N ROCKWELL ST	593	MANUFACTURING	91	5450	4500	A		3 C	\$ 12

# Greater equity in residential assessments

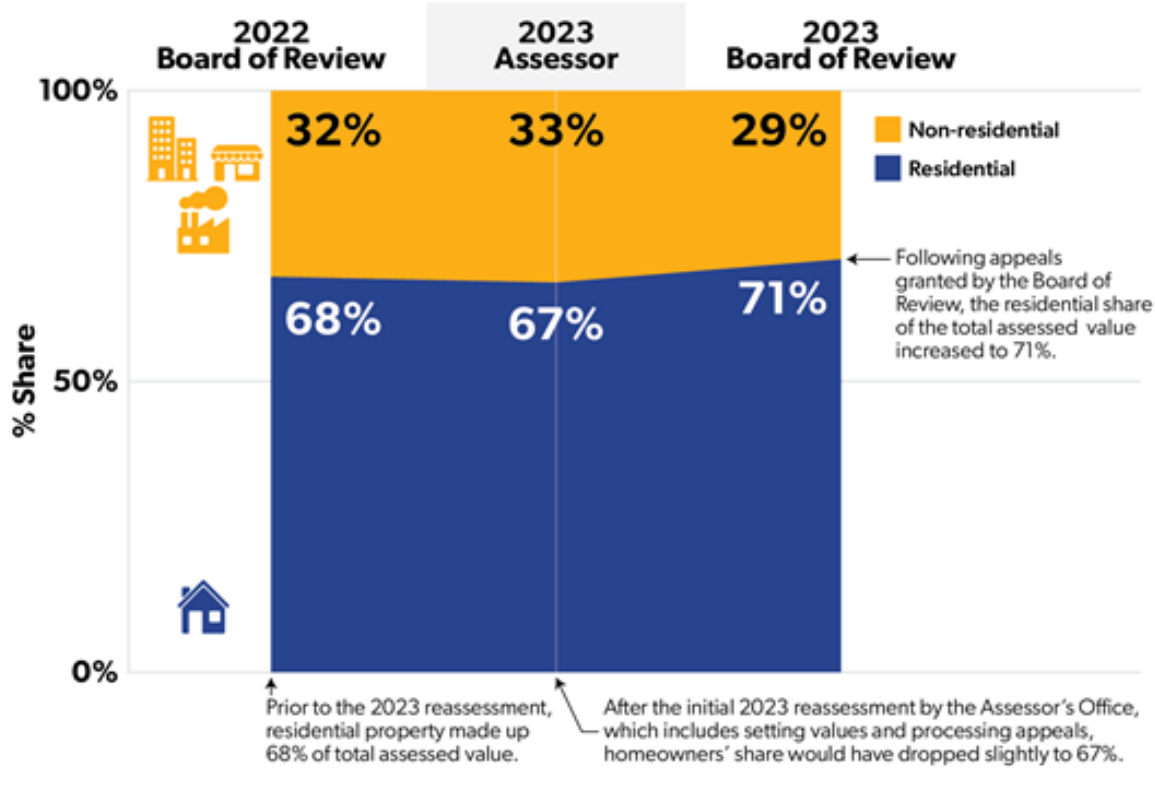
EXHIBIT 6 | ASSESSMENT RATIOS BEFORE AND AFTER REFORMS IN COOK COUNTY



- Forthcoming report from Chris Berry shows that we have made tremendous progress since 2019 in achieving residential assessment equity.
- This shows we are much better at assessing low-income homeowners.
- Under our assessments, homeowners in the south and west suburbs would have seen their burden decrease. But...

# What's left to do: Reversing shifts from Board of Review

## 2023 Reassessments in the South and West Suburbs



- During the 2023 reassessment, commercial appeal reductions from BoR resulted in 4 percentage points of burden shifted onto homeowners.
- Part of a longstanding trend – residential assessments barely shift, while commercial ones fall dramatically.
- How can we resolve this disagreement over how best to value commercial properties? Let's put our assessments to the test.
  - County's property tax reform working group also researching this issue.

# What's left to do: Better property characteristics

- Access to the Uniform Appraisal Dataset from the federal government.
  - We know very little about internal characteristics – this would help us tell apart Tuscan kitchen from granite countertops.
- State legislation that would require commercial owners to share information about their properties with us.
- Creative ways to improve permit data collection.
  - Recently created API to ingest and clean up City of Chicago permit data.





# What's left to do: Growing and improving operations

- Continue optimizing after move from legacy system to modern one.
- Keep staffing up across office, everything from field inspectors to front-line staff engaging with taxpayers.
- Creating SOPs to ensure that our operations are standardized across the office.

