

Property Tax Oversight Program

PTO

Florida taxpayers paid over \$30 billion in property tax in 2006, making property tax the largest single source of public revenue within the State of Florida. Property tax is a mainstay for local governments, financing vital public services such as public schools, police forces, fire departments, etc. Fairness, uniformity, and accuracy are critical to appropriate enforcement of this tax.

To ensure that property is assessed in accordance with law, DOR uses a blend of sophisticated computer-assisted analysis and expert on-site appraisal of property to review tax rolls. By reviewing computerized sales data on hundreds of thousands of property purchases statewide, DOR analysts can determine how the market values property.

Because sales are not evenly spread throughout all property, DOR now supplements the analyses of sales data by sending DOR experts to conduct on-site appraisals of sample properties. DOR then compares its estimates of market value of sample properties with the property appraiser's assessments for the same properties. DOR staff confers at least three times with property appraisers to ensure that the tax roll review proceeds as required. State law requires DOR to perform this in-depth study on each county's tax roll at least once every two years.

With the enhancement of the state's property tax roll review process, Floridians can have greater confidence than ever before that the burden of property taxes has been fairly, accurately, and uniformly distributed.

1 Valuation Systems

DOR studies previous year's tax roll to identify the number of properties required for an adequate test sample.

Property appraiser studies changes in base rates of property value in county, determines depreciation rates, adjusts property values for property characteristics, and reviews market-area variations in value.



2 Data Collection and Analysis

DOR experts conduct on-site appraisals of random sample of selected properties. Other DOR staff review data on over 700,000 sales to analyze property value trends.

Meanwhile, property appraiser updates records using data from on-site inspections, building permits, sales, and market indicators.



3 Initial Assessed Value

Using a blend of sales data and on-site appraisals, DOR develops estimates of market value for sample properties in each county.

Meanwhile, property appraiser determines initial assessed values for all properties in the county.



4 Comparison of Sample Values

DOR field staff shares information with property appraisers and staffers in each county.

Property appraiser reviews accuracy of assessment roll data based on available information, including DOR comments.



7 Finalize Assessment Roll

DOR shares its findings with property appraiser, explaining results of evaluation.

If property appraiser chooses, he or she may revise and resubmit assessment roll.

6 DOR Evaluation of Property Appraiser's Roll

DOR compares values of properties in its sample to property appraiser's assessments for the same properties. DOR uses this comparison to evaluate assessment roll for accuracy, fairness, uniformity, and compliance.



July 1

Property appraiser submits property assessment roll to DOR.

5 Finalize Values

DOR field staff and property appraiser's staff meet to identify and share sample values.



8 DOR Action

DOR Executive Director approves assessment rolls that comply with state law. If assessment roll is disapproved, county uses previous year's assessment roll until proposed roll meets standards.

DOR may require property appraiser to correct certain problems in next year's assessment roll through administrative order.

The Florida Department of Education uses the prior year DOR study data to fine-tune required school property tax rates to improve uniformity and fairness.



9 TRIM Process

The Truth in Millage (TRIM) law requires that taxing authorities advertise public hearings about tax rates to give taxpayers a chance to have input. Before local governments adopt budgets and property tax rates, taxpayers receive a TRIM notice informing them about potential taxes based on the prior year's tax rate or any proposed change.



10 Value Adjustment Board (VAB)

A property owner may appeal the assessed value (included on TRIM notice) of his or her property to the VAB composed of 2 school board members and 3 county commissioners. The VAB may change the assessed value upon successful administrative appeal.



Once all taxing authorities in the county have adopted budgets and millage rates, the county tax collector sends a property tax bill to all property owners with discounts for early payment through February of the following year. County uses tax dollars to support schools and other services.



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