

## Real Estate Tax 2019: New Assessor, New Policies

---

Tuesday, February 19, 2019

### Big Changes to Come for Commercial and Industrial Property Owners

For the first time since the 2011 assessment year, Joe Berrios will not be overseeing the release of Cook County property tax assessments or appeals to the assessor's office. After 30 years of making and reviewing Cook County assessments, Berrios was ousted in favor of political newcomer Fritz Kaegi. Kaegi comes to the office without prior assessment experience, but with a mandate for change.

The new assessor has made it clear that he intends to answer the call for change with reforms in both how initial assessments are determined and how appeals are adjudicated. While this is welcomed by many, it creates uncertainty for taxpayers as changes are on the horizon. Property owners need to be prepared for these changes in 2019 and beyond.

The anticipated reforms are especially relevant for those with property in north suburban townships. Those properties are scheduled to be reassessed in 2019 and represent Kaegi's first opportunity to implement changes. [The tentative schedule for the mailing of 2019 assessment notices is available online.](#)

Besides modernizing the office and bringing transparency to the process, Kaegi has stated that he intends to "mark to market" so that Cook County assessments accurately reflect market values. While that may seem straightforward, it represents a sea change if it comes to pass. Based on Illinois Department of Revenue studies, Cook County property assessments have consistently lagged behind actual market values. A mark-to-market approach would negatively affect many property owners in Cook County, especially those in high-market-value areas (e.g., north shore suburbs and commercial areas in Schaumburg and the O'Hare industrial corridor). Many properties in those areas have been routinely assessed at 75 percent to 80 percent of actual market value. If Kaegi's mark-to-market approach is installed, those properties could see assessment increases in excess of 20 percent in 2019.

Kaegi has also expressed a desire to put an end to vacancy relief for individual properties. Owners of multi-tenant residential, commercial and industrial properties have long depended on vacancy relief to lighten their tax burdens in difficult times. (The assessor has routinely granted relief to those owners in the form of a reduced improvement assessment for properties that were less than 80 percent occupied for the assessment year.) Abolishing vacancy relief introduces a new level of uncertainty in the property tax assessment process for multi-tenant property owners.

A mark-to-market approach and the end of vacancy relief are only two of the notable changes that the new assessor will likely implement. There will surely be more to come as Kaegi puts his stamp on the office.

© 2019 Much Shelist, P.C.

**Source URL:** <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/real-estate-tax-2019-new-assessor-new-policies>



Article By [Much Shelist, P.C.](#)  
[Nicholas T. McIntyreNews & Insights](#)

[Real Estate](#)  
[Tax](#)  
[Illinois](#)