



2023 New Values Set and Taxes Calculated FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PROPERTY VALUES

Why was this triennial update conducted?

Per Ohio law, the Ohio Tax Commissioner requires County Auditors to reappraise all real property every six years and requires a reassessment in the third calendar year following the completion of the reappraisal, called a triennial update. The purpose of the reappraisal is to equalize the value of each property as it compares to similar ones. The purpose of a triennial update is to move property values closer to market value based on more recent sales. Butler County conducted its triennial update in 2023.

What is market value?

This is the value your property would be expected to sell for in an arms-length transaction between a willing seller and a willing buyer. Market value does not include bankruptcy, foreclosure transfers, or sales between related parties. It is the intent of the County Auditor that your full value for tax purposes remains below the true market value following a full reappraisal or triennial update.

What are the key elements of determining value?

The key elements of value are land size, grade/quality, condition, living area, and basement living area. Rarely are homes 100% identical, and there are value fluctuations, even in subdivisions that appear to have a similar housing stock.

My home has never been for sale and we have no plans of selling. Why did my value change based on my neighbors selling their home(s)?

The Auditor's Office is required to set a fair market value for each property in the county every three years. Real estate values change over time due to supply and demand. The data for the past 3 years indicates an unprecedented increase in sale prices for real estate throughout the county and the best indicator of value is based on sales of similar properties.

How do I know if my value is accurate?

Using 2022 sales data, ratios were determined to make supported "mass" market adjustments. Individually, an owner should consider the following questions:

- Is the value a fair representation of what you recently paid for your home?
- Is the value a fair representation of what your home recently appraised for on a refinance loan?
- Does the value seem fair compared to what similar properties in your neighborhood have recently sold for?
- Does the value seem fair when compared to current list prices of similar homes in your neighborhood?

Why did my property value increase more than my neighbors?

There could be several different reasons for this. Your property data for your house may have changed. This may have been due to new construction on your property or changes made to your property data if you recently purchased your property. As no two properties are identical, we would need to look at the different property characteristics and compare to give an in-depth answer. You may contact an appraiser by calling the Auditor's Office at 513-887-3154.

What if I disagree with my value?

If you disagree with your value you may file an appeal with the Board of Revision. Complete the DTE Form 1 and submit it to the BOR by April 1. The form, along with complete instructions, is available on the Auditor's website here butlercountyauditor.org/Real-Estate/Board-of-Revision

PROPERTY TAXES

Where do my property taxes go?

Nearly two-thirds of most tax bills go to your local school district. All revenues remain local. Your tax bill will break down where the money goes and there is also a breakdown on the Auditor's website when you look up a specific property.

How will the change in my new 2023 value affect my tax bill?

Specific bills are available to search on the Auditor's website. Generally speaking, it depends on the tax rate in your particular taxing district that will adjust along with the new values.

While House Bill 920 was passed in 1976 to prevent inflation from increasing voted taxes, the law specifies that the application of the tax reduction factors cannot cause a school district's effective current expense millage rate to fall below 20 mills. When a district reaches the 20 mill floor, the millage will not decrease any further, which causes a school district to see additional funding for all increases in valuation that occur after reaching the 20-mill floor. This results in increases in property taxes to residents in those districts. Only Fairfield and Lakota are not at the 20-mill floor.

The tax impact on a 37 percent value increase (Butler County's median increase amount ordered by the State Tax Commissioner) for those residing in the Lakota and Fairfield school districts is between 4.6 and 5.4 percent. In the other districts, the tax impact on a 37 percent value increase is between 18 and 24 percent (excepting those areas that passed new levies). Those areas passing new levies can expect tax bill increases between 24 and 28 percent on a 37 percent value increase.

Why are Fairfield and Lakota school districts not at the 20-mill floor?

Both Lakota and Fairfield have passed more current expense levies in recent years than the other school districts (Fairfield 8, Lakota 9). They both also have much larger inside millage amounts than the other school districts. Together, this has kept those two districts collecting more than 20 mills. However, as values increase and effective tax rates decline, those districts have been moving closer to the floor.

The property across the street looks just like mine. Why are the taxes on that property much lower than mine?

Taxes can sometimes vary considerably between similar homes due to the Homestead program tax credit, which is based on age and income, permanent disability, or Veteran disability. To find out if you qualify for the Homestead program, please contact our office at 513-887-3154.

Another scenario, for example, may be due to interior improvements being reported on one property, but not the other, such as a finished basement.

In some cases, the home across the street is in a different school district that may have a lower tax rate.

APPEALING PROPERTY VALUATION

How do I appeal my value?

If you disagree with your value you may file an appeal with the Board of Revision, which consists of representatives from the Auditor's Office, Board of County Commissioners, and the Treasurer's Office. It's important to remember that taxes cannot be appealed, only the property value. Complete the DTE Form 1 and submit it to the BOR by April 1. The form, along with complete instructions, is available on the Butler County Auditor's web site here butlercountyauditor.org/Real-Estate/Board-of-Revision

What should I provide as evidence to the Board of Revision?

Evidence generally accepted by the Board of Revision includes:

- Evidence of a recent arms-length open market sale of the property
- Recent independent credible appraisal
- A real estate agent's comparative market analysis of recent similar arms-length sales within the same neighborhood
- Evidence of significant property damage and/or needed repairs

My property value increased more than my neighbors. Can I appeal that scenario?

No. Evidence the board cannot accept includes:

- The county assessed value of other properties
- The amount of property taxes of other properties
- The percentage of increase or dollar amount of increase of your property value vs. other properties

Think of the Board of Revision as an opportunity for an owner to turn the focus directly on his/her property. Auditor appraisers use a mass appraisal process in order to appraise properties in a timely and cost-effective way for the taxpayers. A Board of Revision hearing is not a forum to determine whether the Auditor's mass appraisal techniques are resulting in equitable values, although that is the Auditor's goal. The Board of Revision offers an opportunity for an owner to show specific evidence of value that may lead to a different value determination than what was reached by the Auditor. That is why recent sales and appraisals are important. Those items are tangible evidence of market value. Without such evidence, the Board of Revision presumes the Auditor's value is correct.

What if I disagree with the BOR decision?

The BOR has 90 days to issue a decision by mail or email to all parties involved. If a complainant is not satisfied with the decision issued, there are two options to appeal. A complainant or counter complainant may appeal to the Board of Tax Appeals within 30 days of the BOR sending the decision letter. Appeal forms may be found on the Auditor's website or the BTA website at bta.ohio.gov. The complainant may also decide to appeal to the Butler County Common Pleas Court.

HOMESTEAD

I receive the Homestead Exemption and noticed the amount went down. Why is that?

The Homestead reduction amounts did go down because the effective tax rates went down. Despite the incremental increase in Homestead due to inflation (from \$25,000/\$50,000 to \$26,200/\$52,300 for Veterans), their actual reduction amount will be lower. This is because the tax amount on \$26,200 or \$52,300 is less for the 2023 tax year than it was in 2022 on \$25,000 or \$50,000.

Owner Occupancy on the other hand, may be slightly higher in some cases due to the rise in value, despite the effective tax rates going down.

Do Social Security benefits count in determining eligibility for Homestead?

Generally, Social Security benefits do not count as income for the Homestead reduction. We look at line 3 on the Ohio 1040 form - the Ohio adjusted gross income – and add any business income reported on Line 11 of the Ohio Individual Income Tax Schedule A. Together, this is known as the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI).

TAX SAVINGS PROGRAMS

What tax relief is available?

Non-Business Credit - This is a credit for all non-business parcels up to 10 percent.

Owner Occupancy Credit - To receive up to a 2.5% tax reduction on an owner-occupied home in Ohio, you must own and occupy that home as your principal place of residence on January 1 of the year you file for the reduction. A homeowner and spouse are entitled to this credit on only one home.

Homestead Exemption -

- Homeowners 65 and older or permanently disabled. The maximum allowable income for those eligible the 2023 tax year is \$36,100. It increases to \$38,600 for the 2024 tax year.
- Regardless of income, an honorably discharged U.S. Veteran with a 100% disability rating, or a 100% total disability rating based on individual unemployability for a service-connected disability, or combination of service-connected disabilities from the VA, would also be eligible.
- This program reduces the taxable value of the property, thereby reducing the taxes owed. A provision recently enacted would annually tie the homestead exemption benefit to the rate of inflation.
- Applications are available at our office or online and may be filed by Dec. 31 of the year you become eligible.

Current Agricultural Use Value - Eligible agricultural properties must be used for an agricultural purpose and be 10 acres or more or have produced an average annual gross income of \$2,500. Applications are accepted between the first Monday in January and the first Monday in March each year in our office. While CAUV values increased substantially in 2023, the program still offers substantial savings compared to market value.

CAUV VALUES

What is CAUV (Current Agricultural Use Value)?

The CAUV program helps farmers as those in the program are taxed on the agricultural use value of their land instead of fair market value. There are about 130,000 acres in Butler County enrolled in the CAUV program administered by the County Auditor's Office.

CAUV affects only agricultural “values.” Once CAUV values are determined, tax calculations mirror the calculations of residential properties.

Why is my CAUV value so much higher in 2023?

The CAUV values are determined by the Ohio Department of Tax Equalization (DTE) based upon data they receive from United States Department of Agriculture and The Ohio State University. Unlike fair market values where sales from a three-year period are studied (with emphasis on the third year), CAUV values are based on a study of seven years of crop income and expense data with the highest year and lowest year being dropped from the analysis.

A state-mandated reappraisal or triennial update was conducted in 41 Ohio counties in 2023. Agricultural values are adjusted by the state during a county’s reappraisal or triennial update cycle based on the income and expense data. The average CAUV soil value increased statewide by 116 percent. In Butler County, the average value for 2020 was \$790 per acre. It increased here in 2023 to \$1,690 per acre (114 percent).

Can I appeal my CAUV value to the Board of Revision?

The appeal process for CAUV is different than residential or commercial property. The Ohio Supreme Court ruled in 2017 that landowners could challenge CAUV values established by Ohio’s tax commissioner by appealing the values to the state Board of Tax Appeals. Landowners may appeal the values as soon as the Ohio tax commissioner releases them to the Board of Tax Appeals, not the Board of Revision.

LEGISLATION

I thought the state legislature was going to address these escalating values and taxes?

State Rep. Thomas Hall (R-Madison Twp.) and State Sen George Lang (R-West Chester) did introduce legislation that would have reduced 2023 property values. Hall was able to push through HB 187 in its original form as it was passed by the full House in early October. However, the legislation was heavily amended in the Senate, so when it passed in early December it focused on providing tax relief to senior citizens. Both chambers adjourned the legislative session without a single bill to send to the governor so the efforts failed.

Will legislative efforts resume in 2024?

Yes, they will. The 2023 budget bill included a provision that established a Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform. State Sen. George Lang (R-West Chester) is on this 10-member committee. The committee’s first meeting was scheduled for Jan. 10.

What is the Auditor’s Office doing to help?

The Butler County Auditor’s Office has:

- Stood up against value increases imposed by the state tax commissioner; first in 2020 with an unprecedented appeal and in 2023 by opposing the tax commissioner’s original 42 percent value hike and getting it reduced to a median of 37 percent.
- Provided legislators suggestions on how to provide homeowner relief such as modifying the 20-mill floor, re-introducing rollbacks/credits, expanding the Homestead exemption and eligibility, or capping the amount of value increase that can be taxed.

- Testified in support of HB 187 in opposition to the County Auditor’s Association’s advocacy efforts to defeat the bill.
- Will be working closely with State Sen. George Lang (R-West Chester) to assist his legislative efforts within the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform.
- Will continue to educate taxpayers on levies and their impact on tax bills.

Can I contact our legislators directly?

Our Butler County State Senators and State Representatives make themselves available to the public. See office contact information below:

- State Sen. George Lang: 614-466-8072; email: Lang@ohiosenate.gov
- State Sen. Stephen Huffman: 614-466-6247; email: Huffman@ohiosenate.gov
- State Rep. Rodney Creech: 614-466-2960; email: rep40@ohiohouse.gov
- State Rep. Jennifer Gross: 614-466-8550; email: rep45@ohiohouse.gov
- State Rep. Thomas Hall: 614-644-5094; email: rep46@ohiohouse.gov
- State Rep. Sara Carruthers: 614-644-6721; email: rep47@ohiohouse.gov

OTHER AUDITOR TOPICS

Why am I just now hearing about these increased values and taxes?

Butler County Auditor Nancy Nix has been warning of higher values and taxes since April 2023. There have been numerous articles in the local media, on the Auditor’s website, and on the Auditor’s Facebook page throughout 2023. Additionally, the Auditor held a series of six town halls across the county to specifically speak about the triennial update and the associated increase in values and taxes. We also held two informational neighborhood forums at the request of residents – in Hamilton and Monroe.

How can I arrange for a speaker from the Butler County Auditor’s Office?

The Butler County Auditor's Office is pleased to provide speakers and presentations on a variety of topics, including the Homestead Exemption program, the real estate taxation process, weights and measures, and any other aspect of the office. Contact Communications Manager David Brown at 513-887-3159 or email browndp@butlercountyohio.org to seek assistance in scheduling.

PAYING MY TAX BILL

When will the bill come due and how do I pay?

The Butler County Treasurer’s Office collects property taxes and mails out the tax bills. That office also sets the tax due dates. The due date for the First Half 2023 (pay 2024) tax bills is Feb. 29. Bills should be received by the end of January.

How do I pay?

- Payment Options: Online, over the phone (dial 5 to use automated payment system), in person, at our dropbox, or by mail
- Payment Methods: Cash, checks, e checks, debit, or credit
- Contact the Treasurer’s Office for more details at 513-887-3181 or visit their website at butlercountytreasurer.org/

How can I update the tax bill mailing address on my property?

Since the Butler County Treasurer's Office is responsible for issuing property tax bills and collecting property tax payments, tax bill mailing address changes must be submitted to the Treasurer's Office. The change of address form is available on their website under Forms and Applications. Complete it and follow the return instructions.

What if I cannot pay on time?

You will want to contact the Treasurer's Office directly for payment issues. A late penalty of 5% is added to past due current year taxes, provided that the balance due is paid in full within 10 days of the due date. Otherwise, a full 10% penalty is added. Payment plan information is available from the Treasurer.

If you have other questions or concerns please contact the Auditor's Office at 513-887-3154. Our staff would be pleased to speak with you. Additional questions about payments should be directed to the Treasurer's Office at 513-887-3181.