

## Newark's Property Tax Revaluation

### What's Happening:

If you are a property owner in the City of Newark, you should have received a postcard from the City informing you of your new property tax assessment. The City filed the new assessments with the Essex County Tax Board on [DATE].

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: My assessment went up significantly; will my taxes increase?**

**A:** Not necessarily. Two numbers - your assessment and the tax rate established by the City - determine your tax bill. Because assessments have increased substantially, **the City tax rate will drop.** The City has not announced this year's tax rate, so it's impossible to know how much you owe in taxes at this time. However, the amount you owe in taxes may not increase significantly over prior years. In fact, your tax bill may actually decrease.

**Q: I think my tax assessment is wrong. What should I do?**

**A:** First, you must remember that assessments increased because the last assessment was completed over 40 years ago! However, if you think that your tax assessment is wrong, you should try to figure out the value of your property. To do this, you may want to look at sale prices of similar property in your neighborhood. You can also contact an appraiser, or compare your assessment with the assessments of similar properties. You can obtain information about other assessments using the Street Listing of Values from the

Assessor's Office. The phone number for the Assessor's Office is 973-733-3950.

If you still to feel that your assessment is inaccurate, you should file a petition of appeal with the Essex County Tax Board. **The deadline to file an appeal is April 15.**

**Q: How do I appeal my tax assessment?**

**A:** If you decide to appeal your assessment, you need to file a petition of appeal with the Essex County Tax Board by April 15, 2003. If you miss this deadline, you can file an appeal next year by April 1. The cost to file the petition depends on the assessed value of the property. It is \$5.00 for properties assessed at \$150,000 or less, and increases for properties assessed at higher values. You can get the petition form from the Essex County Tax Board (973-395-8525) or online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation>

After you file a petition of appeal, you will be assigned a hearing date with the County Tax Commissioners.

**Q: How do I prepare for my hearing?**

**A:** In the hearing, you must tell the Tax Commissioners what you think is the market value of your property and you must support that conclusion with credible evidence. The burden of proof is on you to show that your assessment is unreasonable. The assessment is assumed to be accurate, and you must overcome that assumption in order to be successful in your appeal. **You must attend your hearing or your case will be dismissed.**

If you do not want to hire an appraiser or an attorney, it is possible to prepare for the hearing on your own. If you do so, you should compare your property with similar properties that have been sold recently. You should identify those properties that are most similar to your own. For each similar property, adjust

the sale price up if it has characteristics that are superior to your home, and down if the property has characteristics that are inferior to your home. When looking for properties that are similar to your own, you should consider such characteristics as neighborhood's condition, total square footage of living space, number of rooms (rooms, bedrooms and baths), age of the house, quality of construction, etc.

If you aren't comfortable performing this task yourself, you may want to pay a qualified appraiser. An appraiser will cost anywhere from [\$120 to 350]. Additionally, there will be an additional cost [\$200-\$700] for the appraiser to attend your hearing. You can also hire an attorney to speak on your behalf at the hearing. While you can have a real estate professional provide you with a free appraisal, you should be aware that the Tax Board often considers such appraisals unreliable.

**Q: What happens after the hearing?**

**A:** You should receive a notification of the Tax Board's decision by November 15. If you are dissatisfied with the judgment of the County Tax Board, you can file a further appeal with the New Jersey Tax Court.

**Q: I heard that there is a relief program to help residents with increased property taxes; how will it work?**

**A:** The State Legislature passed an Act authorizing the City of Newark to phase-in revaluations over five years to lessen the "fiscal shock" to property owners facing immediate increases in property tax bills resulting from the revaluation. It will spread the tax impact over five years through a series of revaluation relief abatements for

eligible property owners. The specifics of this program are currently unclear. Relief will be provided to those property owners whose taxes increased at a rate greater than the average increase for the entire city.

There are statewide property tax programs, not connected to the Revaluation, for which you may be eligible. The programs are summarized below.

### Eligibility for NJ Property Tax Programs

**NJ Saver Rebate:** Residents who owned and paid property taxes on a home that was their principal residence on 10/1. You must meet established income restrictions apply. Call 1-877-658-2972. Deadline: June 30

**Homestead Rebate:** Homeowners and tenants who pay property taxes on their principal residence, either directly or through rent. You must meet established income restrictions. Complete Form HR-1040 or Homestead Rebate Application section of Form NJ-1040EZ, which is your part of your New Jersey income tax form. Deadline: April 15

**Property Tax Reimbursement:** Homeowners, age 65 or older or receiving Federal Social Security disability benefits, who paid property taxes on their principal residence. Complete Form PTR-1 or Form PTR-2. Deadline: March 15

**Senior Citizens' Annual Property Tax Deduction:** Homeowners 65 or older or disabled who meet income and residency requirements. Administered by local municipality.

**Veterans Deduction:** Qualified war veterans and their unmarried surviving spouses. Administered by local municipality.



### Important Contact Information:

**Essex County Tax Board:**

Tony L. George  
Tax Administrator  
50 South Clinton Street, Suite 5200  
East Orange, NJ 07018  
973-395-8525

**City of Newark Tax Assessor:**

Evelyn Laccitiello  
Tax Assessor  
City Hall  
920 Broad Street, Room 101  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-733-3950

**New Jersey Automated Tax Information System:** 1-800-323-4400

**New Jersey Taxpayer Customer Service Center:** 609-292-6400

**New Jersey Division of Taxation Website:**  
<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/index.html>

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

I received my new tax assessment,

What's Next?

A guide for residential property owners in Newark

March 2003