

REASSESSMENT FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why did my property go up so much compared to my current assessment?

A: The reason for the change in your assessment is due to a Countywide Reassessment. These are done incrementally to set assessments at a fair market value so the tax base is fair based on current market conditions. The new reassessment is effective for 2018. Every property in the County will be receiving a new assessed value.

Your current assessment was based on values with an effective year of 2005. Based on current sales, the 2005 reassessment values were about 75% of what current market values reflect which is why it was so much lower.

The 2018 assessment notice should reflect a value around what you would expect the home to be worth if you put it up for sale today. If you do not feel that is a fair market value, then you can certainly appeal. You would need to bring in recent sales in your neighborhood of similar homes in order to prove that you could not get that value for your house on the open market.

2. When will I know what my new taxes will be based on this reassessment value?

A: The reassessment value will go into effect for the 2018 tax year.

The millage rates for the 2018 County/Muni taxes will be determined towards the end of this December. The millage rates for the 2018-2019 school year will be determined in June of 2018. This reassessment notice will not affect your 2017-2018 School taxes.

3. Can you send me (or someone else) another copy of my (or someone else's) preliminary notice?

A: No, we are not sending additional copies of the preliminary notice. All the information on the notice is also on our website. You can go to our search site at <http://lancasterpa.devnetwedge.com/> to view or print out the 2018 reassessment information that is included on the notice.

4. Property taxes are unfair because renters do not pay property taxes.

A: Actually, renters do pay property taxes, just indirectly. The rental industry is not a non-profit industry, so landlords must cover all of their expenses, including property taxes, in the rent they charge their tenant and allow for a margin of profit in the end. Although renters are not directly paying property taxes to the taxing body, they are paying the taxes to their landlord through their monthly rent.

5. Can I file an appeal now? What is the deadline to file an appeal?

A: Yes, you can file an appeal now. You can get an appeal form on our website at <http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/7524>. For your appeal, please bring in recent sales in your area of similar homes that prove that you could not get a purchase price close to the new assessed value. (Assessed values of neighboring homes are not relevant for an appeal.) You will have 40 days from the date listed on the final notice, which will be mailed in early June, to file your appeal. All appeals must be postmarked by the 40th day after the date of the notice.

6. I believe that some information you have on my property is incorrect. How do I have this corrected?

A: You can call our office at 717-390-7742 and speak to someone about the issue or you can send an email to PAQuestions@co.lancaster.pa.us. Depending on the complexity of the issue, we may be able to fix the information for you immediately, or a field check may be required.

7. If you have corrected my information, when will I see a change in my assessment?

A: If the change to your property produced a change in value, that will be reflected in your final assessment notice that will be mailed in early June.

8. I am a senior citizen. Is there any type of property tax relief for me?

A: You may qualify for the PA Property Tax or Rent Rebate Program. You can contact the Department of Revenue at 1-888-222-9190 or www.revenue.pa.gov. You could also contact the Office of Aging at (717) 299-7979.

9. I am a disabled veteran. Is there any type of property tax relief for me?

A: You can contact the PA Department of Military and Veteran Affairs at 1-800-547-2838 or www.dmva.pa.gov to see if you qualify for property tax relief.

10. My assessment went up. Does that mean my property taxes will go up also?

A: Not necessarily. The taxing bodies will have to adjust their millage rates down when they set their new budgets, beginning with the 2018 County/Muni taxes and the 2018-2019 School taxes. The millage rate set at that time will determine the amount of taxes that you will pay.

11. I don't have any children in school. Why should I have to pay property taxes?

A: One of the founding principles of our Country guarantees a free education to all. In order for that to happen, everyone must participate. An educated population is an essential benefit for our society.

12. How was the value on my property determined?

A: For residential properties, we used valid, arms length sales of properties from 2012-2014 by neighborhood or area (for rural properties) to determine estimates of value for the surrounding properties. Data such as acreage, square footage, amenities (porches, garages, bathrooms etc) have a value attributed to them and then those values are adjusted by comparing them to similar sales in your area by ratios for each neighborhood to generate a probable market value. For Commercial/Industrial properties, a combination of sales, rents and incomes were used to determine value.

This is just a brief overview of the process – obviously much more went into it. If you would like to speak with someone further about the process, please call our office at (717) 390-7742.

13. I have not yet received my preliminary notice. How can I see my new assessment?

A: You can go to our property search site at <http://lanasterpa.devnetwedge.com/>. You can enter your name or your address and search for your information. You will be able to see all of the reassessment information, in addition to all of your property data on that site. If you wish, you can also print out the information if you would like a copy for your records. If you find that your mailing address is incorrect, please email us the correct information at PAQuestions@co.lanaster.pa.us. If you have recently purchased your property, we may not have had that information at the time of printing.

14. My neighbor did renovations, added an addition etc without a building permit and you do not have those changes picked up. How can I get you to pick up those improvements so they are paying their fair share in taxes?

A: We cannot go out to pick up improvements without a building permit issued for the property by your local municipality. Each municipality has different standards as to what requires a building permit. If you feel your neighbor has added something without a permit, please contact your local municipality. We will not go out and pick up improvements based on a call from a neighbor. They need to go through the appropriate channels.

15. How did you determine my land value?

A: In areas that had sales of vacant lots, we used those sales to determine the base value of land in that area. For established areas that do not have vacant lot sales to reference to determine land values, we use an industry standard percentage for land and building values depending on the desirability of the area, which would explain why certain areas increase or decrease.

16. I own a vacant lot which the Township will not let me build on. Is there any way to reduce the assessment of that lot?

A: It is possible to have an adjustment in value if your lot is unbuildable. You will need to provide us with documentation from the Municipality stating that you cannot build on that lot due to their restrictions. You can submit that information to our office, provide it at Park City or file an appeal and our assessors will review it and make any necessary adjustments.

17. My property is in a flood plain. Can my value be reduced to reflect that?

A: Possibly. You can submit the documentation relating to the flood plain to our office, provide it at Park City or file an appeal. Our assessors will review the documentation and make a determination if the flood plain impacts the value of your property and adjust it accordingly.

18. How do I use your Property Search site?

A: We have instructions for how to use the site posted on our website. The direct link to the instructions is <http://www.co.lanaster.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/7587>.