



REALTORS® Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh

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Reassessment Fiction Vs. Fact

FICTION: Stopping the reassessment will prevent a tax increase.

- **FACT:** Reassessment freezes haven't prevented municipalities and school districts from raising millages over the past decade. It's actually in the year of a reassessment that there are limits placed on how much a municipality can raise their millage.

FICTION: My assessed value went up by 50%, so I will pay 50% more in property taxes.

- **FACT:** Not true. According to noted economist Chris Briem from the University of Pittsburgh, two-thirds of Pittsburgh homeowners will pay *less* as a result of the reassessment:
 - 65% of Pittsburgh homeowners will see a tax decrease
 - 25% of Pittsburghers will see a tax increase of 10% or more

FICTION: No other county in Pennsylvania has undergone reassessment in recent years.

- **FACT:** Adams, Bedford, Clinton, Luzerne, and Perry Counties have done a countywide reassessment since 2009. The counties surrounding Allegheny County have not undergone a reassessment, and are operating under the following base years:
 - Beaver = 1982
 - Butler = 1969
 - Washington = 1985* (but under court order to conduct a reassessment)
 - Westmoreland = 1972

FICTION: State law prohibits my assessment from rising more than 5% in the same year as reassessment.

- **FACT:** Act 71 of 2005 amends the Second Class County Code to require Allegheny County and political subdivisions within the County to adjust millage rates in the year following a reassessment to remain revenue-neutral compared to the previous year. Each taxing jurisdiction may then make a separate decision to raise taxes, with the millage rate set not to exceed 105% of the total property tax revenue received by that jurisdiction in the preceding year. In addition, a property owner appealing an assessment must pay taxes based on the amount being appealed.
 - *There are two steps to this:*
 1. Municipalities, after a reassessment, are to change the millage by an amount that will hold property tax revenue at the previous year's level
 2. Then "by a separate and specific vote" they can increase the millage up to 5% above what was collected the previous year. If a municipality wants to exceed that 5%, they have to petition Common Pleas Court to do so.

Remember it's revenue-neutral or 5% above OVERALL, *not* for each individual property owner!



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Reassessment Fiction Vs. Fact

FICTION: School districts will seize this as an opportunity to raise property taxes.

- **FACT:** They can try. However, School Districts have the automatic ability to raise their taxes by a percentage determined by an inflationary index calculated by the state each year. It differs by school district. The 2012 ranges are from 1.7 – 2.8%. To exceed their inflationary index amount a school district must apply for approval from the Department of Education, based on a pre-determined list of criteria. If a district is denied permission, they must either stay under the indexed amount, or put the increase up for a voter referendum for approval.

*****UPDATED...**

FICTION: The property characteristics I received are incorrect. I heard the informal reviews have been cancelled. Am I out of luck?

- **FACT:** The deadline to file for an informal review for properties in the City of Pittsburgh, Mount Oliver, and eastern suburb property owners was February 15th. Southern suburban property owners have until March 7th. A deadline for western and north suburban property owners has not yet been set.
 - [You can request an informal review online by clicking here \(have your parcel number ready!\)](#)
 - [Click here for County guidance on disagreement with your property's characteristics](#)
 - [Need some clarification on the difference between an Informal Review and a Formal Appeal? Try clicking here.](#)

FICTION: It's like a speeding ticket. Just appeal it and it will be reduced.

- **FACT:** Allegheny County has put together several resources to help you prepare for an assessment appeal hearing, and you are encouraged to thoroughly review them:
 - Click here for [Tips for Assessment Appeal Hearings](#)
 - [Click here for the 2013 Assessment Appeals Form \(NOTE: This form is to file to appeal assessed value that would take effect for 2013. Filing deadline is April 2, 2012\).](#)
 - [Click here for Allegheny County Court-Ordered Reassessment FAQ's](#)
 - Click here to appeal for form to file appeal for 2012 assessment value (**NOTE: This form is to appeal the assessed value for 2012, also with filing deadline of April 2, 2012.**)