

# Assessing your township's assessing

The questions haven't stopped since a major property assessing reform became law. With the passage of Public Act 660 of 2018 in late December, township officials want to know how they can prepare for the changes heading their way for this key township responsibility.

The sweeping legislation was designed to increase assessing expertise throughout Michigan, with the final bill establishing clear, specific processes that include an improved due process for local units rather than seizure of the tax roll. While most of the reforms don't take effect until 2022, township officials don't want to wait. They're asking the State Tax Commission (STC) what they can do now to make sure their township meets state standards.

Each time she talks with local officials, Heather Frick, former STC executive director and now director for the Bureau of Local Government and School Services, points back to the AMAR, or the Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements. By striving to meet each standard—now codified in PA 660—your township will be well-positioned to thrive under the new assessing law.

But this responsibility doesn't just fall to your township's assessor. The township board is entrusted with final oversight

of your township's assessing. That means when its assessing isn't up to state standards, the board is ultimately responsible.

Township officials cannot afford to take a hands-off approach when it comes to property tax assessment. They aren't expected to know how to calculate economic condition factors or land values. Assessing is a complicated, detailed job that requires extensive training and experience that most board members don't have. But every board member should understand assessing enough to answer two basic questions: What is required of our assessing department? And are those requirements being met?

"The AMAR actually is a review of the local unit," Frick said. "The local unit is taking oversight and responsibility, and the assessor is one of the staff members or contractors working on this, but really the oversight falls on the local officials. Having an understanding of what that looks like is critically important to their success."



## What's in the assessing reform?

The comprehensive assessing reform under PA 660 is meant to provide a statutory framework to ensure proper, high-quality assessing for all taxpayers and local units. Requirements already outlined in the AMAR are cemented in statute as the determining factors for a local unit to be in substantial compliance with the General Property Tax Act. Land value maps, which were required under the previous version of the AMAR, are now optional. Timetables for audits, as well as follow-up audits, are included in the reform, along with a specific process for bringing a local unit into compliance if it remains noncompliant after a follow-up review.

Currently, local units that fail to correct their noncompliance within a certain period of time have their tax roll seized by the STC. PA 660 does away with this process. Instead, the STC may require the taxing entity to contract with a designated assessor in their county, which would be determined through an agreement with a majority of assessing entities within the county, a majority of the county board of commissioners, and the individual assessor. The designated assessor may stay in control of the entity's assessing for at least five years or upon STC approval to resume assessing.

Additionally, under PA 660, local assessing units must employ an assessor of record who oversees and administers an annual assessment of all property. They must also use a computer-assisted mass appraisal system approved by the STC as having sufficient software capabilities and that stores and backs up necessary data. In an effort to be more transparent and accessible, online information is required if the township office has broadband access, and the local unit must provide information on how property owners may contact the assessor, as well as an approximate response time.

The act also mandates training for local boards of review and allows for local units to combine boards of review for efficiency purposes. A village located within two assessing districts may request that the assessment of property be completed within one of the districts.

The STC is required to develop implementation guidelines, including minimum standards and model policies for compliance, as well as identify technical deficiencies and noncompliance deficiencies. Any policies or compliance guidelines identified by the STC prior to 2022 are anticipated to be implemented in the next cycle of AMAR audits starting in 2022.

The new standards provide correction earlier in the process, bringing a deficient local unit's assessing up to quality standards sooner. That's not just better for the local unit, Frick said—it's good for the taxpayer. The entire process is more transparent—laying out the audit provisions and the next steps that could occur in case of a deficiency. Local units have clearly defined steps they may take to correct their assessing deficiencies before their assessing is given to a designated assessor who can bring them into compliance.

Now in its seventh year, the AMAR is seeing more local units meeting compliance standards as they're audited a second time. Some local units even manage perfect

This continuing education article and accompanying self-assessment are worth 2.0 elective credits in MTA's Township Governance Academy. See page 27 for details.



### OBJECTIVE

To outline the basic components of property tax assessment, and the township board's responsibility and role in oversight.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

- Aware of financial matters affecting the township
- Demonstrates knowledge about township government responsibilities, functions and powers
- Understands how to objectively monitor administrative actions for compliance with existing policy and law, and to ensure that policies and practices serve the public well

# cover story

scores—and they're recognized for the achievement. By codifying the AMAR provisions, townships that are doing a good job will be successful in 2022.

*(The February 2019 issue of Township Focus explained the PA 660 assessing reform in detail. You can read the full article on the members-only side of [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org); click on "Publications," then "Township Focus" after logging in.)*

## What do township boards need to know now?

Most of the reform provisions don't take effect for nearly three years, with a few exceptions. Land value maps were moved to the informational section of the AMAR and are no longer required. Additionally, the provision allowing boards of review to combine went into effect this year, allowing townships or cities that are contiguous and meet statutory provisions regarding size, composition and manner of appointment to combine their boards of review now.

While the transparency requirements aren't yet in effect, townships may also choose to post their information online now and take steps toward future compliance.

Through the process, the STC must provide guidance and interpretation of the law. This involves looking at the best forms that should be adopted to move the new statutory requirements forward. For now, the STC is meeting with MTA and other stakeholders to continue the conversation and gather information. "We don't want to come up with guidance or tools that aren't useful in helping this be successful in moving it forward," Frick said.

Starting this month, the STC will have a dedicated links on its website with tips and guidance, including a timeline of the audit process, one-pagers and recommendations for taxing units from 2019 to 2022. A dedicated email address, [AssessingReformQuestions@michigan.gov](mailto:AssessingReformQuestions@michigan.gov), was also established for questions regarding the reform.

One common misunderstanding is about the "designated assessor," which is a brand-new concept to Michigan. Frick clarified that this provision does not mandate that all assessors be an advanced or master level assessor, and it does not require countywide assessing. The STC plans to address this issue in one of its first information overviews.

## What should townships do?

Since the reform was passed last year, assessors have flooded Mecosta County Equalization Director Shila Kiander—who teaches assessing topics and *Board of Review Training* for MTA—with questions. They want to know how their jobs will change this year, and if they're expected to meet new requirements. For now, Kiander's answer is always the same: wait and see.

Essentially, assessors' responsibilities haven't changed. They're still tasked with meeting the requirements of the AMAR and assessing properties fairly and accurately. They're still required to complete a corrective action plan if they're deficient in any areas.



**Assessing is one of the three statutory duties required of townships, in addition to tax collection and election administration. Doing this job well is paramount to the success of townships—and to serving residents.**

Debby Ring, who is an assessor and *Board of Review Training* instructor for MTA and the coordinator of instructor and curriculum development for the Michigan Assessors Association, doesn't anticipate the reform package having a major impact on assessors already doing their job well. For new assessors without much experience, the margin for error could be slim, she said. Boards can help to support them by making sure they're connected with a more experienced assessor, who can act as a mentor.

Experts say now is the time for township boards to get their house in order. The best way to prepare for the new assessing reform is to get back to the basics of the AMAR, line by line. The STC's online AMAR review sheet (available at [www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission](http://www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission)) includes hyperlinks to laws, STC bulletins and other documents that dive further into what the STC is looking for. Preparing for your township's AMAR review isn't a guessing game. Everything you need to know is online, Frick said.

While the assessor is the one appraising properties and calculating taxable values, the township board is ultimately responsible. When the STC reviews your township's assessing, the board—not the assessor—will be held accountable.

"Part of passing the AMAR has nothing to do with the assessor," said Kiander. "It has everything to do with the township board, their policies and procedures, and the board of review."

## Assessing matters

Assessing is one of the three statutory duties required of townships, in addition to tax collection and election administration. Doing this job well is paramount to the success of townships—and to serving residents.

Your public's trust in many ways hinges upon quality assessing. If your township's properties aren't assessed accurately, the obligation to pay taxes that support schools and local services falls unfairly on some taxpayers while allowing others to skirt their responsibilities. Missing and under-assessed properties put pressure on policymakers to try to seek millage increases and other revenue sources to maintain quality education and services—or make budget cuts.

Getting an assessment wrong is downright expensive, too. When taxpayers appeal, the cost of defending the assessment isn't cheap, Ring said. The goal is to get it right, based on good sound market measures of what value is.

"The assessing process is the foundation of the income stream for most of our jurisdictions across the state," Ring said. "If we do the job wrong, if we don't get the assessments right and we don't get the taxable values right, because of Proposal A, it's a long time before we can actually repair some of those errors. We need to do it right, and we need to do it right every year."

If assessing deficiencies aren't corrected, there are consequences under PA 660. As is the current practice, the new statute provides for an initial AMAR and a corrective action plan to be approved by the STC. PA 660 then provides for a follow-up review to be conducted in accordance with the approved corrective action plan. If the local unit still is not compliant after the follow-up review, it has two options—it can employ a new assessor of record at the advanced or master level, or it can contract with the designated assessor for the county to serve as the assessor of record.

While most assessors do their jobs well and take pride in quality assessing, many were flagged for deficiencies in the STC's first five years of the AMAR, and the STC was forced to assume jurisdiction of some rolls. PA 660 was born from a need for greater consistency and quality throughout Michigan. Legislation may address some of these issues, but experts agree—the primary solution is for board members to hold their assessing departments accountable.

"Fairness and uniformity must be the cornerstone of a good property tax, so that taxpayers have faith in the system and we can ensure equitable and uniform assessments statewide," Frick said.

## Property taxes 101

Township officials don't need to know every nuance of the assessing process—and there are many. But they should at least have a basic understanding of the process. The assessor's four basic duties are:

- To inventory and list all property within the assessment jurisdiction.

- To equitably evaluate every item of taxable property.
- To calculate the taxable value for every taxable property.
- To prepare an assessment roll with all taxable property listed in an orderly fashion by parcel number or legal description.

To understand a property tax bill, you should understand three values—true cash value, assessed value and taxable value. The true cash value is the market price a property would likely receive if it was sold. By law, the assessed value must be 50 percent of the property's true cash value after equalization. These two values may change when they're evaluated through a sales study, which compare them to similar properties.

The taxable value is the number used to determine property taxes. It's calculated using the previous year's taxable value and multiplying it by the inflation rate multiplier or 5 percent, whichever is less, and adding or subtracting for any losses or additions to the property. Most homeowners who have owned their home for several years have a taxable value that is lower than their assessed value.

The only time a taxable value can increase beyond the state limit is when the property is sold or transferred in some way. Once this happens, the property is "uncapped," meaning the taxable value will be equal to the assessed value in the first tax year after the transfer. Then, the cap applies going forward.

## Assessor review checklist

- Completed continuing education credits?
- Recertification fee paid?
- Certified at proper level? Overcertified?
- Certification of roll signed and delivered to board of review timely?
- Certified post-board of review certificate and delivered roll and database to equalization timely?
- Required State Tax Commission and equalization forms submitted timely?
- Verified accuracy of assessment roll?
- Verified roll has not been factored by classification?
- 20 percent of properties physically inspected?
- Verified accuracy of record cards?
- Appraisal methods in line with uniform standards and manuals?
- Tax maps available?
- Land value maps available?
- Economic condition factor available?
- Mathew Gast Act improvements tracked?
- Attended board meetings?
- Provided written report to board?
- Met with property owners as necessary?

## The State Tax Commission shares some commonly asked AMAR questions

### 1. Why can't our township just use the county information?

County information can be reviewed and analyzed and if that analysis supports the same economic condition factors or land value as determined by the county, it can be used. However, it is not appropriate to simply use the county information without analysis. Assessing is done at the local—not county—level, and the county values may not reflect what is appropriate for your local unit.

### 2. What if we don't know how to complete our township's corrective action plan (CAP) or if we don't complete one at all?

State Tax Commission staff can explain how to complete a CAP and provide assistance. Contact (517) 335-3429 for assistance. If the township does not complete a CAP, the STC will provide one notice that it has not received the township's plan. If it is still not received, the township will be notified that it has 21 days to respond or the STC will assume jurisdiction of the assessment roll.

### 3. What happens if the township has not fixed anything by the follow-up review?

Currently, a local unit is given one additional opportunity to make the corrections. This will change with Public Act 660 of 2018 assessing reform. The local unit develops the CAP and proposes a timetable, and as such, there is no reason items should not be corrected by the follow-up review.

### 4. What if our assessor needs help?

The STC can provide assistance, and be reached at (517) 335-3429. Additional resources are also available at [www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission](http://www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission).

A property owner's property tax bill is determined by multiplying two factors—the local millage rate from all taxing entities and the property's taxable value. A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 of taxable value, meaning that a homeowner with a \$100,000 taxable value and a millage rate of 30 mills would pay \$3,000 in property taxes.

Assessors are required to certify each year when they turn their assessment roll over to the board of review that they have met the requirements outlined in the STC's document "Supervising Preparation of the Assessment Roll" (available on the STC's website). This document is the basis for the AMAR review and should be reviewed by all township board members.

## All about the AMAR

The AMAR review is conducted in every local unit once every five years. Reviews are conducted on an entire county at a time, with all the local units in the county being reviewed at once. Tax Management Associates (TMA), which the state has contracted to conduct the reviews, sends the units a list of each item they'll need for the AMAR. Then, TMA gets a copy of the local unit's assessment database to analyze that information. Once the database analysis is complete, TMA schedules a time to meet with the assessors in person.

**Allan Berg, Belknap Township** (Presque Isle Co.) supervisor, assesses for a total of 17 local units—including his own. He's received multiple perfect AMAR scores for the variety of local units on his docket over the past several years. The answer to how, he says, is simple. A perfect score requires the time and attention to detail that just isn't possible for someone trying to assess 500 parcels on nights and weekends. The job is far too complicated and should be treated as such.

By now, every township in Michigan has been through an AMAR review at least once. However, your township doesn't have to wait for the STC to schedule its next review—the score sheet is online and available for anyone to use at any time. Kiander recommends printing out the review sheet and regularly using it as a checkup for your township's assessing department.

First, the board must understand who is responsible for each question on the AMAR score sheet. While many fall on the assessor, several are under the board's authority or other township officials. (*See article on page 25 for further details.*)

"I don't expect township officials to be assessors," Kiander said. "They're not going to understand unless they take the class and become a certified assessor. The question you need to ask is, did you get it done? Not *how* you got it done. That's something the assessor is trained to do."

Local units that don't meet one or more standards must submit a corrective action plan explaining in detail how they plan to fix the mistake. The corrective action plan must state how and when the local unit will fix these issues. Board





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members can't leave this corrective action plan up to the assessor—they need to be involved in its development.

"This will be particularly important as we move forward with implementation of assessing reform," Frick said.

A follow-up review will be conducted in accordance with the approved corrective action plan. Follow-up reviews are conducted beginning in May each year. TMA will write to the township supervisor and assessor asking for a copy of the database, as well as supporting documentation for any deficiency on the original review. Because there's no in-person review, it's crucial that the assessor provides all necessary supporting documentation to prove they've corrected the deficiency.

### **What should board members do?**

Officials must first make sure that their township employs an assessor who is certified at the proper level for their unit. Assessors must be certified through the STC and can achieve three levels: Michigan certified assessing officer, Michigan advanced assessing officer and Michigan master assessing officer. The STC requires townships to have assessors at a certain level, based on the state equalized value of their real and personal property tax roll. Specific information regarding those levels is available on the STC website.

When choosing an assessor, the candidate's credentials must be the top consideration. Berg doesn't bid for jobs—he sits down with officials to discuss their needs and how he can help. Hiring the lowest bidder isn't likely to result in quality assessing.

"It's so complicated. I akin ourselves to a CPA or an attorney," Berg said. "You would never do that for a CPA or an attorney. You're going to evaluate their qualifications. I don't know if all townships get that."

Some assessors work for multiple townships. While this is a common practice, especially in rural townships, board members should monitor how many units their assessors are assessing. Even if they are within the state's limits for units they can assess, boards must ensure their township receives the highest quality work from their assessor. Quality, thorough work must be the priority in hiring an assessor, not the price.

Once the assessor is employed, boards should make sure the department has all of the tools and funding necessary. A township board should budget for continuing education and resources to meet all state requirements, as well as a salary high enough to keep a quality assessor.

Township boards need a relationship with their assessor based on open communication. From the moment the assessor is hired, the board should set expectations for how they'll communicate with one another, how often and what information must be reported. Healthy communication might look different for every township, and assessors have a wide variety of preferences. Some assessors provide regular updates at board meetings, while others keep their boards up to speed with monthly emails. Whatever method you choose, the board should stay apprised of the property tax calendar and what the assessor is up to, as well as any legislative changes.

As the township employer, boards should set annual benchmarks with their assessors and make sure they're being met. Officials should ask questions, such as whether the assessor visited 20 percent of the township's properties this year or if the assessment roll was certified on time. One way to do this is setting aside time at board meetings regularly to get reports from the assessor. Boards should review with their assessor the "Supervising Preparation of the Assessment Roll" STC document to ensure the requirements are being met. Boards should also review the AMAR document with their assessor prior to the audit to ensure all requirements are being met.

In its workshops on assessing, MTA recommends creating an annual checklist and meeting with the assessor to review it (*see page 21*). The checklist includes duties assessors are

### **MTA's June workshop explores how to *Hang on to Your Township's Assessing***

Assessment administration is one of only three mandated functions that townships are required to perform. **To keep this key function at the local level, your board simply cannot take a hands-off approach.** But we know that not everyone "speaks assessing"—how do you know what to ask and what to look for? **MTA can help.**

This month, we're heading to six locations around the state for an evening workshop, *Hang on to Your Township's Assessing*, where **MTA Member Information Services Liaison Cindy Dodge—a certified assessor—will identify steps you can take to ensure your assessing functions are running smoothly.**

Turn to page 28 for a registration form and to learn more. You can also register online at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org).

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expected to complete, such as earning their continuing education credits, turning in forms in a timely manner, certifying the assessment roll and handing it over to the board of review.

A township board that has concerns regarding its assessor's compliance with state requirements can take further steps to check the quality of the assessor's work. Possibilities include directing the supervisor or another knowledgeable board member to pull building permits to ascertain that the new construction has been added to the assessment roll and look at property cards to make sure they are actively updated. MTA workshops have suggested calling the county equalization director and the chair of your township's board of review and asking them questions about your assessor's performance.

If your township's elected officials are unfamiliar with the assessing process, invite your assessor to give a presentation at a board meeting, which will help the board gain insights that are valuable to their work for the township. Board members should also be able to meet with the assessor one-on-one to ask questions and get a better feel for how assessing works.

The fact is, assessors won't make everyone happy. Some taxpayers won't like their assessment, and complaints are par

for the course. No matter how heated a taxpayer might get, Kiander cautions board members to back up their assessor, without automatically siding with the resident. Don't play the middle man—have the resident talk directly to the assessor. If you want to be part of the conversation, ask to be copied on their emails.

## Take action today

Property assessment is a core responsibility for Michigan townships, and all townships must focus on excellence in this area. Make this important function a priority, commit to learning all you can about the process and take steps to help your assessor succeed. Ensuring that your local assessing is done accurately and fairly can reap benefits for your township's bottom line—and its reputation with its residents.



**Bethany Mauger**, MTA Staff Writer

With contributions from Michigan State Tax Commission staff

Candidates in MTA's Township Governance Academy can earn 2.0 elective credits by completing the Continuing Education Self-Assessment on page 27. To learn more about the Academy, visit [www.michigantownships.org/members/tga.asp](http://www.michigantownships.org/members/tga.asp).

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## What's in the AMAR?

**H**ere's an inside look at the questions asked in the state Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements (AMAR)—and what it's really asking your township.

*After collecting basic information, the AMAR asks several questions designed to help the local unit look at its policies and procedures and to provide statistical information to the STC.*

**What is the residential coefficient of dispersion for the local unit?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* This statistic tells your assessor how close your township's properties are to the standard of 50 percent true cash value. If you don't know what the statistic is, and you don't know it means to your roll, Mecosta County Equalization Director Shila Kiander recommends taking a statistics class.

**What is the residential price-related differential for the local unit?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* This statistic tells you if your township's high-value properties are being undervalued, and if lower-valued properties are being overvalued.

**Does the Form L-4022 in possession of the local unit match the L-4022 in possession of the county equalization director and the information uploaded on the L-4023 on the e-file site?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* These are the totals for each class that the assessor signs after the board of review. The assessor should make sure that if a form is revised, the corrected forms get to the proper hands.

*The following are informational items for the STC.*

**Was Form 4142 completed and submitted to the state Department of Treasury by a county or township when the state's portion of principal residence exemption (PRE) denial interest is remitted?** *This is the township and/or county*

*treasurer's responsibility.* If a PRE is denied by the township, county or state Department of Treasury, the property is charged interest each month. Whoever denies the PRE receives 70 percent of the interest. In the case of a denial, the local treasurer must send Form 4142 and the amount of interest that should be received to Treasury, the county and the township.

**Does the local unit have written procedures, including audit procedures, for determining how to grant real property exemptions or remove real property exemptions when the property no longer qualifies for the exemption?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* Michigan statute states that every property is taxable unless expressly exempted by law. Exemptions are either under the umbrella of real property, with no statutory application or procedure, and program exemptions, such as principal residence exemptions, air pollution control exemptions, disabled veterans exemptions and poverty exemptions. This question is meant to determine whether your township has procedures in place to determine if the applying property truly qualifies for the exemption.

**Does the local unit have land value maps?** *This is assessor's responsibility.* While this portion is now for informational purposes only, the STC recommends having land value maps as a good assessing practice.

*The next few items have not changed from previous AMAR reviews.*

**Does the local unit have properly calculated and documented economic condition factors (ECFs)?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* An ECF adjusts the assessor's use of the *Assessors Manual* to the local market, helping to ensure uniformity of assessments. Assessors are required to determine

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and use an ECF in all cost appraisal situations where the *Assessors Manual* is used. The assessor must support their ECF with documentation and must use the ECF as calculated. This is the most common finding in Phase II of the AMAR, according to former STC Executive Director Heather Frick.

**Does the local unit have properly calculated and documented land values?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* The assessor must develop a land value for every taxable parcel of property that is valued using the cost approach, according to the STC. In developing land values, an assessor must consider the general forces (economic, social, environmental or physical), and governmental (or legal) that affect the parcels' use, utility, and ultimately its value as well. Again, assessors can show the board their land value analysis and an example from the database to show it was properly applied.

**Does the true cash value on the roll agree with the true cash value on the record cards?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* This is a measurement of the assessor's use of overrides, which are only to be used for unique properties or situations without a prescribed method of appraisal, such as a dam or a sports stadium—and when it's used, it should always be backed up with data. To make sure overrides aren't happening, township boards could ask the assessor for a report asking how many properties in the township's database have an override value.

*The next several questions zero in on the township's policies and procedures. While the assessor plays a role in some of these questions, most of them are the board's responsibility.*

**Does the local unit conduct an annual personal property canvass as required by the *Supervising Preparation of the Assessment Roll* guidance document?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* This is to ensure all personal property is accounted for on the assessment roll. Kiander recommends assessors document their canvassing with a checklist.

**Did the local unit grant any exemptions under the small business taxpayer exemption? And if so, does a sampling indicate the local unit properly processed the exemption?** *This is the assessor's responsibility.* Townships need procedures in place to ensure all exemptions were granted properly, including eligibility for the exemption and timely received. An audit program should also be in place to determine a property's continued eligibility.

**Did the local unit grant any poverty exemption guidelines?** *This is the board's and board of review's responsibility.* These guidelines require a board vote and are not under the assessor's authority. Does the local unit have poverty exemption guidelines and an asset test? Both are required by statute. Does a sampling of the exemptions granted indicate the statutory requirements were met and the guidelines followed? While boards may deviate from the guidelines, they must have a documented and compelling reason to do so.

**Does a sample of the July and December board of review actions indicate the board met the requirements of MCL 211.53b and considered only those items over which they**

**have statutory authority?** *This is the assessor's and board of review's responsibility, as the assessor sets the board of review's agenda.* If a taxpayer brings an issue to the board of review that does not fall under its authority, board of review members must be aware of their authority and direct improper issues to the correct official. The township board must encourage board of review members to receive at least the minimum training, which MTA provides each year.

**Does the local unit follow the requirement under MCL 211.27b to levy the interest and penalty for failure to file a property transfer affidavit? If waived, did the local unit waive the interest and penalty by resolution, and is that resolution kept on file?** *This is the board's and assessor's responsibility.* If the purchaser does not file the affidavit within 45 days, the township is required to bill that person a dollar amount per day, up to a certain amount. Unless the township has a resolution waiving the fee, state statute requires them to charge it. It's the board's responsibility to have the resolution waiving that fee on file (*a sample resolution is available at [www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission](http://www.michigan.gov/statetaxcommission), under the "Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements" section*). The assessor, in turn, must date stamp documents as they're processed in order to prove an affidavit is or is not timely filed. Then, the board needs a procedure for how property owners are billed.



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# Continuing Education Self-Assessment

Participants enrolled in the Township Governance Academy (TGA), MTA's credentialing program, may obtain 2 elective credits for successful completion of this quiz. To obtain credit, participants must answer the following 10 multiple-choice questions by circling the correct answer and receive a minimum passing score of 70 percent. The questions are based on content from the article, "Assessing your township's assessing". There is no charge for MTA members to take the quiz or to obtain TGA credit.

Completed quizzes should be faxed to (517) 321-8908 or mailed to: MTA, 512 Westshire Dr., Lansing, MI 48917. MTA will notify you of your results within two weeks after receiving your quiz. **IMPORTANT:** Please keep a copy of your completed quiz in your TGA binder. For information about TGA, call (517) 321-6467, email [tga@michigantownships.org](mailto:tga@michigantownships.org), or visit [www.michigantownships.org/learning/tga/](http://www.michigantownships.org/learning/tga/).

## TGA Continuing Education Assessing your township's assessing

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TOWNSHIP & COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Assessing:**
  - a. Is performed by townships only.
  - b. Is a core responsibility for townships.
  - c. Is not a statutory requirement but is often performed by townships.
  - d. Is a job that could easily be performed well at the county level.
2. **Who is responsible for making sure the township's assessing meets state requirements?**
  - a. The assessor
  - b. The supervisor
  - c. The township board
  - d. The board of review
3. **Which value is used to determine a property owner's property taxes?**
  - a. Taxable value
  - b. True cash value
  - c. Assessed value
  - d. Capped value
4. **When can a property's taxable value increase?**
  - a. When the property is reassessed
  - b. When the real estate market increases
  - c. When the owner updates the property
  - d. When the property is sold or transferred
5. **The assessor can make changes to the assessment roll:**
  - a. Before it is certified.
  - b. Once it is certified and delivered to the board of review.
  - c. After the board of review has heard appeals from taxpayers.
  - d. At any time in the process.
6. **To properly supervise your assessor, board members should have a deep enough understanding to:**
  - a. Know the required tasks and ask if they were completed.
  - b. Check the assessor's calculations of taxable values.
  - c. Correct values that don't seem quite right.
  - d. Know the required tasks and how they should be completed.
7. **The state's Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements (AMAR):**
  - a. Scores assessing units on a point scale.
  - b. Does not include an in-person review.
  - c. Asks assessing units a series of "yes" or "no" questions.
  - d. Is a test that townships either pass or fail.
8. **When it comes to economic condition factors and land values, townships:**
  - a. Must develop their own.
  - b. May use values from their county.
  - c. Must use values outlined in their assessor manual.
  - d. Don't need to worry about them as they don't impact assessments.
9. **Your township's AMAR corrective action plan:**
  - a. Is a general description of how your township will fix the problem.
  - b. Includes specific steps and dates.
  - c. Is optional, but not required by the State Tax Commission.
  - d. Can be completed by making a quick phone call to the STC.
10. **Township boards are responsible for all of the following except:**
  - a. Hiring an assessor certified at the appropriate level.
  - b. Budgeting for continuing education and resources to meet state standards.
  - c. Ensuring the assessor is doing quality work.
  - d. Visiting 20 percent of the township's properties.