

# NEW CASTLE COUNTY PROPERTY REASSESSMENT

## Frequently Asked Questions

**WHO IS CONDUCTING THE REASSESSMENT?** New Castle County has engaged Tyler Technologies to conduct the Reassessment project. Tyler has more than 80 years of experience and is North America's premier national appraisal services company. Tyler has completed reassessment programs in nearly every state and has appraised more than 33 million parcels since 1938. Tyler's team includes expert appraisers, highly skilled computer programmers and analysts experienced in residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural mass appraisal.

**WHY DID THE COUNTY REASSESS?** Because property values have changed so much over the years, the property tax system has been found to be inequitable by the Delaware Court of Chancery. As a result of these inequities, some property owners may be paying more than their share of the property tax and others may be paying less. The reassessment is conducted to address these inequities and ensure that each property owner pays only their fair share of the tax burden; no more, no less.

**WILL I KNOW WHEN DATA COLLECTORS WILL BE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?** You may see notices in the local newspaper or on the County website, [www.nccde.org](http://www.nccde.org). Data collectors will measure buildings and talk with property owners. All Tyler staff will wear photo ID badges and vests identifying them as part of the project. Local police and officials will also receive advance schedules listing the areas where Tyler staff will be working.

**DO I HAVE TO LET THE DATA COLLECTOR INSIDE?** No. Data collectors will ask questions at the door and then measure building exteriors. Characteristics will be estimated if they cannot be observed or provided by the owner or occupant. Data collectors will verify items such as:

- *year house was built*
- *general construction & materials*
- *physical condition of the exterior & interior*
- *number of bedrooms*
- *number of bathrooms*
- *types of heating and cooling systems*

Please note that personal items such as furniture or décor do not influence the value of a house; they will not be part of the data collection process. All information collected will be handled professionally and according to local project procedures.

**WHAT IF I'M NOT HOME?** If no one is home, the data collector will complete an exterior inspection, including exterior measurements and an estimate of interior data. The collector will leave a document asking the occupant to provide interior information.

**WILL I RECEIVE DETAILS ABOUT MY PROPERTY?** After data collection, property owners will receive a parcel inventory mailer listing the characteristics on file for their property. This is an opportunity for owners to make any needed corrections to the data. After Tyler has visited your neighborhood, you will receive a mailer that lists the information on file for your property. When you receive it, please carefully review this information.

**WHAT ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY?** Tyler's photographers will take pictures of properties throughout New Castle County from the public right of way. Data collectors will need to take photographs of the outside of properties where images were not collected. These images will become part of the County's assessment computer database.

**WILL YOU VISIT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES?** Yes. Much of the data collection process is the same as residential collection and will begin later in 2021. Naturally, factors will differ from those affecting a house. Information, such as building income, expenses, and vacancy rates will be gathered in addition to physical characteristics.

**WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?** After data collection is complete, Tyler will perform valuation analysis using computer-assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) techniques. During this process, Tyler appraisers will analyze local building costs, property sales, commercial income and expense information, and other valuation factors to establish preliminary market values. These initial values are then reviewed to check for accuracy and consistency. Appraisers then make any necessary changes.

**HOW IS MY PROPERTY'S VALUE DETERMINED?** The market value of your property is determined by using the property data being collected by Tyler. Digital photos will be taken of all improved properties (parcels with structures), and then data mailers will be sent to ask you to verify that the collected data is correct. Tyler analyzes recent sales of similar properties, and considers construction costs and income and expense information, where appropriate. In September 2022, Tyler will begin submitting the preliminary values to the New Castle County Office of Assessment for review and approval.\*

**WHEN WILL PROPERTY OWNERS BE NOTIFIED OF NEW VALUES?** This information will be mailed to all owners beginning in November 2022.\* These values will first be used to calculate new tax bills starting with the 2023 tax year.\*

**WHAT IS MARKET VALUE?** There are several long explanations of market value, but simply put, it is the most probable price a willing buyer would pay a willing seller for a property on the open market if neither party is under pressure to buy or sell.

**WILL THE COUNTY, SCHOOLS, AND MUNICIPALITIES COLLECT MORE TAXES AS A RESULT OF REASSESSMENT?** Not directly. A reassessment does not increase or decrease tax revenue; it only redistributes the total tax burden more fairly. As property values go up, the tax rate goes down. New Castle County has already committed to not raising property taxes as a result of reassessment. School districts and municipalities have authority under Delaware law to raise taxes following a reassessment, and New Castle County has no control over those decisions. Concerns about property tax increases by school districts and municipalities should be raised with your school board or municipal governing body (e.g. city council).

**HOW CAN I TELL IF MY NEW VALUE IS CORRECT?** You should ask yourself, could I or would I sell my property for the amount listed as my new assessment. You can check this against sales of similar properties in your neighborhood. To help you compare, listings of preliminary values and other data for all properties in the County will be available for comparison on the internet on the County's website. Properties currently for sale can be found on the internet at various real estate sites.

**SHOULD THE PRELIMINARY ASSESSED VALUE BE THE SAME AS THE PURCHASE PRICE FOR MY PROPERTY?** If you purchased your house within the past year and if the purchase was on the open market and had no unusual conditions, the appraised value on your notice should be reasonably close to the sale price, but probably will not be the exact amount. Just because one person is willing to pay a certain amount for a property

doesn't mean that the majority of buyers would be willing to pay the same price. During the valuation process, each property is compared to up to five similar properties to determine the most probable selling price.

While sale prices may vary slightly, even for identical properties, the assessor must be equitable in his or her valuations. Therefore, similar properties will have similar appraised values, even if they might sell for a little more or less than the appraised value. Along the same lines, even if you appealed your value (assessment) in a prior year to the Board of Assessment Review, and the value was adjusted, the revaluation appraises each property as if it had not been valued before. Any prior changes are not considered since those changes were based on the old, outdated system. The new value you receive should be a reasonable estimate of market value and equitable with surrounding properties of a similar type.

**ARE EXEMPTIONS INCLUDED IN THIS PRELIMINARY VALUE?** Any existing exemptions are not included in your preliminary value but will be in the taxable value you receive from the County after the reassessment in 2023 (taxable value equals the assessed value less any exemptions that may be applicable).\* Questions concerning exemptions must be directed to the Office of Assessment.

**HOW WILL REASSESSMENT AFFECT MY TAXES?** By itself, a reassessment is revenue neutral, although it will cause tax burden shifts among properties. Some owners will see increases while others will see decreases, and yet others will remain approximately the same.

**WHAT IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE NEW VALUE?** Informal value review meetings will be conducted by Tyler from November 2022 to February of 2023.\* If a property owner is not satisfied with the results of an informal review, a formal appeal may be filed with the County Office of Assessment.

**WHEN WILL I LEARN THE RESULTS OF THE INFORMAL REVIEW?** No value changes will be made at the informal review, but all information you supply will be reviewed.

**WHAT IF I AM STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH MY ASSESSMENT?** If you disagree with the results of the informal review, your next step would be to file a formal appeal with the Board of Assessment Review. The deadline for filing an appeal is March 15<sup>th</sup> of the tax year for which you are filing an appeal.

**\* The project dates contained in this FAQ are subject to change. \***