

# The Property Tax System



## January 1

### *Date of Assessment*

Property appraisers, who are governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes, determine the assessed value of each parcel of property.



## March 1

### *Exemption Applications Due*

Property owners may be eligible for exemptions or classifications that can reduce their property taxes. All applications and documentation are due to the property appraiser no later than March 1.

## June 1

### *Estimate of Tax Base*

Property appraisers report the estimated total taxable value of all properties in the county to local taxing authorities, who are governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes.



## July 1

### *Certification of Taxable Value*

Property appraisers certify total taxable value of all properties in the county. This begins the Truth in Millage (TRIM) process. Property appraisers must approve or deny exemption and classification applications by July 1.

## Mid-July

### *Certification of School Taxable Values*

Once the tax rolls submitted by the property appraisers are reviewed and determined complete, the Department of Revenue certifies taxable values to the Department of Education.



## Before August 5

### *Proposed Millage Rates*

Local taxing authorities report their proposed millage rates and rolled-back millage rates to the property appraiser for use in preparing the TRIM notice.



## Before August 25

### *TRIM Notice Mailed*

Property appraisers mail the TRIM notice to property owners. Meeting information for each taxing authority's public hearing is included on the notice.



## September

### *Public Hearings*

Local taxing authorities hold a public meeting to adopt a tentative budget and millage rate. School districts hold final hearings.

## September/October

### *Public Notice*

Local taxing authorities advertise their intent to adopt a final millage rate and budget.



## Before October 9

### *Final Hearing*

Local taxing authorities hold a hearing two to five days after the advertisement appears to adopt the final millage rate and budget.



## November

### *Tax Bills Mailed*

Tax collectors, who are governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes, mail property owners their tax bills. Full payment is due by March 31.



## Year-round

### *Funding Distribution*

Tax collectors distribute funds to taxing authorities monthly throughout the year.



## September-June

### *Appeals Process*

Property owners may request an informal conference with the property appraiser to discuss assessed value. Through the value adjustment board (VAB), property owners can appeal assessments of property value; denials of exemptions, classifications, and tax deferrals; portability decisions; and changes of ownership or control.

## November-March 31

### *Property Tax Payments*

Property owners pay property tax bills. A lienholder who has collected estimated property taxes from the property owner and held the funds in an escrow account may pay the bill. Property owners may receive a discount of up to 4% for early payment (payment is due by March 31).

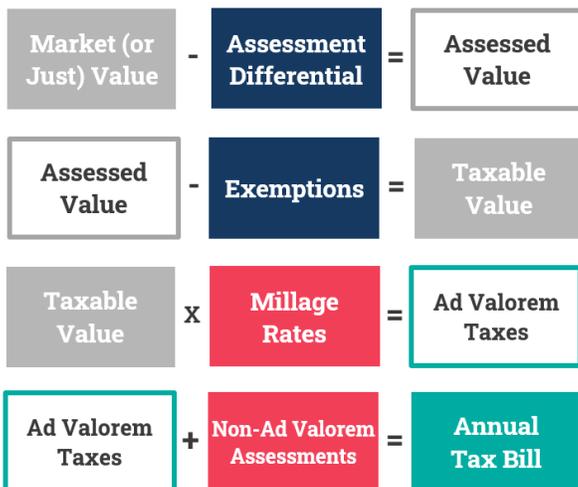
Contact information for local county officials is available at: [floridarevenue.com/CountyOfficials](http://floridarevenue.com/CountyOfficials)

# FLORIDA'S PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM

## Who Is Involved?

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|---|--|
|  <p><b>OWNER</b></p> | <p><b>Property Owner/Taxpayer:</b> A person or other legal entity who owns property which is assessed annually for property taxes</p>  |
|  <p><b>PA</b></p>    | <p><b>Property Appraiser:</b> A county official, governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes, responsible for determining the value of all property within the county</p>  |
|  <p><b>TA</b></p>    | <p><b>Taxing Authority:</b> A unit of government, governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes, that adopts a budget and levies a millage rate to fund the budget. Some examples of taxing authorities are county governments, school boards, water management districts, special districts and municipalities within a county.</p> |
|  <p><b>TC</b></p>   | <p><b>Tax Collector:</b> A county official, governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes, responsible for the collection and distribution of all property taxes that are established by taxing authorities within the county</p>  |
|  <p><b>VAB</b></p>  | <p><b>Value Adjustment Board (VAB):</b> Each county has a value adjustment board. The VAB has five members: two from the board of county commissioners, one from the county's school board and two citizens.</p>   |

## How Is a Tax Bill Calculated?



## What Does That Mean?

**Market (or Just) Value:** The property appraiser determines the market value of a parcel based on market activity prior to the assessment date.

**Assessment Differential:** The property appraiser ensures that annual value caps, established in the Florida Constitution, are applied to the market value (no more than 3% increase for homestead residential property and 10% for commercial properties).

**Assessed Value:** The property's market value with assessment differential for annual value caps applied

**Exemptions:** Reductions in property tax owed based on applying and qualifying for the exemption (e.g., homestead, military/veteran, etc.)

**Taxable Value:** The property's assessed value with exemptions applied

**Millage Rates:** Each taxing authority adopts a budget and levies a millage rate to fund the budget.

**Ad Valorem Taxes:** The tax collector applies the millage rate set by taxing authorities to the taxable value provided by the property appraiser.

**Non-Ad Valorem Assessments:** Taxing authorities determine the non-ad valorem assessments (e.g., fire service, solid waste service, mosquito control, etc.).

**Annual Tax Bill:** The tax collector sends the tax bills and collects the annual ad valorem property taxes and non-ad valorem assessments due from property owners.

# FLORIDA'S PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM: The Assessment Year

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|---|--|
| <b>January 1</b><br>   | <p>In Florida, the date of assessment, or valuation, is <b>January 1</b>. The property appraiser determines property values based on the previous year's market activities. The valuation includes applicable assessment caps. This amount is called the assessed value.</p>   |
| <b>March 1</b><br>   | <p>Many property owners may be eligible for exemptions or classifications that can reduce their property taxes. Property owners must submit all exemption and classified use applications and documentation to the property appraiser in the county where the property is located <b>no later than March 1</b>.</p>  |
| <b>June 1</b><br>   | <p>Each property appraiser reports the estimated total taxable value of all properties in the county to the taxing authorities. Taxing authorities include cities, counties, school boards, and independent districts. Taxing authorities use this estimated taxable value to calculate the proposed millage rate and prepare a budget.</p>  |
| <b>July 1</b><br>   | <p>Property appraisers formally certify the total taxable value of all properties in the county to the taxing authorities. This is called the county tax roll, and it is the beginning of the Truth in Millage (TRIM) process. Property appraisers must approve or deny property owners' exemption and classification applications <b>by July 1</b>.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Property owners who wish to challenge the denial of the exemption or classification must file a petition to the value adjustment board (VAB) <b>within 30 days</b> after the property appraiser mails the denial notice.</p>  |
| <b>Mid/Late July</b><br>    | <p>Once the Department of Revenue (Department) reviews and determines the county tax roll is complete, the Department certifies the taxable value to the Department of Education for their work in setting school millage rates and computing the required local effort. This process is called equalization, and it ensures all school systems receive equal per-pupil funding regardless of the county's tax base. In mid to late July, school districts advertise their first public hearings to adopt tentative millage rates.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Property owners can attend and provide input at the public hearings.</p>  |
| <b>Before August 5</b><br>   | <p>Each taxing authority reports its prior year millage rate, current year proposed millage rate, the rolled-back millage rate, meeting location and schedule to the county property appraiser for use on the <i>Notice of Proposed Property Taxes</i> (known as the TRIM notice).</p>   |
| <b>Before August 25</b><br>   | <p>Property appraisers mail the TRIM notice to property owners. This notice includes the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property appraiser's January 1 taxable value, classification, exemptions, assessment limitation/cap</li> <li>• Proposed budget and millage rate to fund the budget for each taxing authority and the amount of property taxes the property owner would owe if adopted by the taxing authority</li> <li>• Rolled-back millage rate, which is the amount of property taxes the property owner would owe if there is no change to the taxing authority's budget</li> <li>• Non-ad valorem assessments (if applicable)</li> <li>• Meeting date, time, and location for each taxing authority's public hearing</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Property owners may request an informal conference with the property appraiser to discuss assessed value. Property owners who wish to challenge their property's assessment must file a petition with the VAB <b>within 25 days</b> of receiving their TRIM notice.</p>  |
| <b>September - October 9</b><br>    | <p>Taxing authorities hold public hearings to adopt a budget and levy a millage rate to fund the budget. At their first hearing (also called the tentative hearing), taxing authorities may amend their tentative budget and recalculate the millage rate. Additionally, at this hearing, the taxing authority must publicly announce the percentage (if any) by which the recalculated rate exceeds the rolled-back millage rate. If the first public hearing does not result in an adopted tentative budget and millage rate to fund the budget, taxing authorities recess the hearing and notify the public of the continued hearing date(s). The hearing continuation process may repeat until the tentative budget and millage rate are adopted. Next, taxing authorities hold final hearings to approve the budget and levy a millage rate to fund the budget two to five days after their public advertisement appears. The approval threshold for the taxing authority varies. The requirements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A simple majority for millage rates equal to the rolled-back millage rate</li> <li>• 2/3 approval for millage rates up to 110% above the rolled-back rate</li> <li>• Unanimous approval or a referendum for millage rates that exceed statutory maximum millage limits</li> </ul> <p>The final adopted millage rate cannot be higher than the tentatively adopted millage rate.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Property owners can attend and provide input at the public hearings.</p> |
| <b>October - November</b><br>  | <p>The tax collector applies each taxing authority's final millage rate to the property's taxable value to calculate the amount of ad valorem tax a property owner owes. Tax collectors mail tax bills to property owners. Tax bills detail the property's assessed value, taxable value, and exemptions, as well as the millage rate and tax owed for each taxing authority. The total is the amount the taxpayer must pay by March 31 of the next year.</p>  |
| <b>November - March 31</b><br>   | <p>Property owners pay property tax bills. A lienholder who has collected estimated property taxes from the property owner and held the funds in an escrow account may pay the bill. Property owners may receive a discount of up to 4% for early payment (payment is due <b>by March 31</b>).</p>   |
| <b>September - June</b><br>  | <p>Value adjustment boards (VAB) meet. VABs hear and make final decisions on appeals regarding property value assessments, denials of exemptions or classifications, denials of tax deferrals, portability decisions, and changes of ownership or control.</p>   |
| <b>Year-round</b><br>  | <p>County tax collectors distribute funds to the county taxing authorities monthly throughout the year.</p>  |

# A Florida Homeowner's Guide: Millage



## Who Sets Millage Rates?

**Taxing authorities.** Taxing authorities are governed by the Florida Constitution and Statutes. They include county governments, school boards, water management districts, special districts and municipalities within a county. Taxing authorities adopt a budget and levy millage rates to fund that budget.



## When are Millage Rates Set?

Taxing authorities typically begin developing their budget in June. The official start is July 1 when they receive the total taxable value for their jurisdiction from the property appraiser. **Tentative millage rates** for taxing authorities other than school districts are set before August 5. **Final millage rates** for those taxing authorities are adopted in September. School districts follow an earlier schedule with their final millage rate being adopted in July.

## Can a taxing authority adopt a lower millage rate?

**Yes.** There are no state-wide restrictions related to millage rate decreases; a millage rate reduction can be approved with a simple majority vote.

## If a millage rate is lowered will my property tax bill decrease?

**Not necessarily.** There are several factors which can cause your tax bill to increase even if a taxing authority decreases its millage rate. If your taxable value has increased, it may offset any millage rate decrease. If other taxing authorities raise their millage rates, your overall tax bill may increase. Deferred value, as a result of your homestead exemption, can increase your taxable value even during periods of slow growth or market downturns.

## How do I know what will happen with my property taxes?

Florida's Constitution and Statutes ensure taxpayers are informed about the annual property tax process. This is primarily done through the **Notice of Proposed Property Taxes** (also called the **Truth In Millage (TRIM) Notice**). Using information from the taxing authorities, property appraisers prepare the **TRIM Notice** and mail it to property owners. This notice includes the:

- Property appraiser's January 1 taxable value, classification, exemptions, assessment limitation/cap
- Proposed budget and millage rate to fund the budget for each taxing authority and the amount of property taxes the property owner would owe if adopted by the taxing authority
- Rolled-back millage rate, which is generally the amount of property taxes the property owner would owe if there were no change to the taxing authority's budget
- Non-ad valorem assessments (if applicable)
- Meeting date, time, and location for each taxing authority's public hearing

Taxing authorities are also required to place advertisements notifying the public of scheduled meetings and millage rate information.

## What is Millage?

Millage is a tax rate defined as the dollars assessed for each \$1,000 of value; one mill is one dollar per \$1,000 of assessed value. Mathematically the equation is: **Taxable value ÷ 1,000 × millage rate = Property Tax Owed.** Examples of how millage rates affect a homeowner's tax bill are provided on the next page.

## Are there limits to how much millage rates can increase each year?

**Yes.** Under the Florida Constitution and Statute, taxing authorities have approval requirements that escalate depending on how much the millage rate is and the amount of increase over the prior year's millage rate. Details on the approval requirements can be found on our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage. Once a taxing authority sets the tentative millage rate, they cannot adopt a higher millage rate without restarting the process, but they can adopt a lower millage rate. The vote to adopt the final budget and millage rate is at a duly advertised meeting in which the public may participate. In addition to the higher voting thresholds that are state-wide requirements, some Florida counties have passed local ordinances that limit millage rate increases.



## At what point can taxpayers get involved in millage determinations?

Taxpayers can take part in **public hearings** that take place in September when taxing authorities present and discuss tentative budgets and millage. Initial public hearing dates, times, and locations are provided on the *TRIM Notice* that each county property appraiser sends before August 25. Final public hearing dates, times, and locations are advertised to the public by each taxing authority.

## What is the role of my county's property appraiser?

The property appraiser determines the taxable value of each property in the county and provides the total taxable value to each taxing authority. Property appraisers approve and maintain records for exemptions and property classification. They are also responsible for preparing and mailing the *TRIM Notice*. **Property appraisers do not set millage rates.**



## How does millage affect my tax bill?

Using the equation of: **Taxable value ÷ 1,000 × millage rate = Property Tax Owed**, the following examples show how millage is applied to a property tax bill.

**Basic example:** The owner of a property that has a taxable value of \$100,000 and is subject to a millage rate of 5.2 would owe \$520 in property tax.

$$\begin{aligned} \$100,000 \text{ taxable value} \div 1,000 &= 100 \text{ mills} \\ 100 \times 5.2 \text{ millage rate} &= \$520 \text{ property tax} \end{aligned}$$

Most residential properties in Florida are subject to millage rates from multiple taxing authorities.

**Multiple millage rate example:** The owner of a property that has a taxable value of \$100,000 and is subject to a millage rate of 5.2 for county services, 1.7 for city services, and .05 for their water district would owe \$695 in property tax.

$$\begin{aligned} \$100,000 \text{ taxable value} \div 1,000 &= 100 \text{ mills} \\ 100 \times 5.2 \text{ county rate} &= \$520 \\ 100 \times 1.7 \text{ city rate} &= \$170 \\ 100 \times .05 \text{ water district rate} &= \$5 \\ \$520 + \$170 + \$5 &= \$695 \text{ property tax} \end{aligned}$$

Most residential properties in Florida receive an additional \$25,000 homestead exemption which does not apply to property taxes for school districts.

**Multiple millage rate example with school district:** The owner of a property that has a non-school (NS) taxable value of \$100,000 and school taxable value of \$125,000 and is subject to a millage rate of 5.2 for county services, 1.7 for city services, .05 for their water district, and 2.2 for their school district would owe \$970 in property tax.

$$\begin{aligned} \$100,000 \text{ NS taxable value} \div 1,000 &= 100 \text{ mills} \\ 100 \times 5.2 \text{ county rate} &= \$520 \\ 100 \times 1.7 \text{ city rate} &= \$170 \\ 100 \times .05 \text{ water district rate} &= \$5 \\ \$125,000 \text{ school taxable value} \div 1,000 &= 125 \text{ mills} \\ 125 \times 2.2 \text{ school district rate} &= \$275 \\ \$520 + \$170 + \$5 + \$275 &= \$970 \text{ property tax} \end{aligned}$$

## How do exemptions help limit increases in my property tax bill?

The 1995 "Save our Homes" amendment to the Florida Constitution ensures that the assessed value of property with a homestead exemption **cannot increase more than 3%** or the percent change in the [Consumer Price Index](#) (CPI), whichever is less. In the ten years from 2013 to 2022, the CPI change ranged from 0.7% to 7.0%, with 9 years falling below the 3% value limit. In addition to the "Save our Homes" provisions, Florida homeowners may qualify for other exemptions that can lower their property taxes. Information on exemptions can be found on our [exemptions webpage](#).