

Fulton County May Receive Temporary Property Tax Bills Due to Assessment Delays

O'Connor discusses how Fulton County may receive temporary property tax bills due to assessment delays.

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

As the heart of the Atlanta area, Fulton County has some of the most in-demand real estate in the nation. The value of both homes and businesses has steadily increased in the past decade, with many longtime residents finding it hard to pay their bills. Fulton County taxpayers are getting an unexpected surprise in August, as several delays have led to a funding shortfall. This has resulted in an emergency funding measure and the possibility of additional tax bills or refunds later in the year.

Computer Issues Delay Assessment

For most homeowners and businesses in Fulton County, notices of assessment were sent out in June. These notices are sent out by the Fulton Board of Tax Assessors (BTA) every year, and they are a vital document for every property owner to both receive and understand. They have a complete breakdown of how the BTA values the property, what exemptions are applied, and when the clock starts for filing property tax appeals. Taxpayers in Georgia typically have 45 days from when the notice was mailed to appeal, which meant that most taxpayers in Fulton County had until July 31 to appeal.

However, several blocks of properties were not able to get their assessments on time due to a computer glitch. Fulton County has been working to modernize its systems, which sometimes

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have growing pains. Chicago has experienced similar problems, albeit to a lesser degree. These errors are mostly tied to mapping errors. Because the assessment being incomplete, the Fulton BTA cannot certify the tax digest, which is a collection of values for the entire county. This delayed certification means that taxes cannot be sent or collected on time.

The Problems with Late Property Tax Bills

While getting a temporary reprieve from property taxes may initially seem beneficial, it can be incredibly devastating to local government. While sales and income taxes help, the majority of funding for local government is done through property taxes. This is why legislation focused on property tax relief has become so important. The property tax system works on a set schedule and has many moving parts. If assessed values cannot be registered, then millage rates cannot be applied, which means bills are late. Since local government depends on taxes going in on time for their budgets, a significant delay can mean funding shortfalls.

This is particularly significant for school districts, as they are the biggest recipients of property taxes. With the school year set to start across Fulton County, a lack of funds to begin the year mean teachers may not get paid and that schools would have to close their doors. With tax bills typically going out in August, the school districts can usually expect consistent funding. However, with these issues in the assessment and the tax digest, there is a large funding gap that needs to be addressed.

Fulton County Goes to Court

There are options in this situation, and Fulton County was quick to act. The Fulton County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to take action. This order was also approved by a Fulton County Superior Court judge, who issued a temporary court order. The court order allows the issuance of property tax bills without a completed assessment or tax digest. The goal is to ensure that property tax bills are sent out on August 15, 2026, so that payments can be collected and provided to schools, emergency services, and countless other government entities across Fulton County. While funding is currently in place, it is quite finite and would provide only a month or two of operation.

Property Tax Bills Set for August 15

There will be several wrinkles in this next set of tax bills. For starters, these bills will use 2026 assessment data but 2025 millage rates. This is because the property tax process is skipping several steps, and accurate accounting may not be possible. This strange combination of assessment values and millage rates will result in unusual bills. These bills may not be final, however, and taxpayers could see additional property tax bills later in the year after the assessment and tax digest are officially certified. The one bright side is that taxpayers may also get a tax refund instead of an additional bill, depending on how everything shakes out. It is believed that second-round tax bills and refunds will be sent in October, though this could

depend on other changes in the coming months.

The Impact on Schools

While all aspects of Fulton County government could be affected, it is school districts that have the most at stake. Without the emergency tax bills and collection, 60% of school district budgets will be unfunded. This is the primary reason for the court order and why such unprecedented actions are being taken. There should be no danger of Fulton County schools failing to open when the school year starts, as there is still some runway left with savings, so parents should not need to worry about a delayed start. In addition, the emergency funding will prevent furloughs or layoffs impacting teachers and staff.

Will Fulton County Taxes be Lower or Higher in 2026?

While this is probably the biggest question, it is yet to be determined. Property taxes in Georgia are calculated by determining the market value, applying the assessment ratio, and then applying millage rates. With millage rates and the assessment still up in the air, time will tell if property taxes in Fulton County will increase or decrease. There has been a trend toward increases in the past decade, which is why recent legislation was passed in Georgia to help curtail rising assessments and taxes. The full picture may not be known for months, so taxpayers should be prepared for both outcomes.

Georgia Taxes Continue to be Unpredictable

Fulton County has seen some unpredictability in property taxes in recent years. This includes previous assessment delays, homestead exemption changes, and legislative changes. With the Atlanta area as a whole experiencing rapid growth, the tax situation in Fulton County could get even more complicated in the coming years. This has been a growing trend across America, as debate over property taxes reigns. One consistent option available to property owners across the nation, including those in Georgia, is property tax appeals.

Property tax appeals allow property owners to dispute the value of their home or business as it was determined by the Fulton BTA. Appeals can be used to question inaccurate market value, unequal assessment, or incorrect information on the assessment, such as the wrong owner's name. It can also be used to get another chance at an exemption if one was previously rejected. Since property values are used to calculate tax bills, lowering them usually results in significant decreases in taxes. In addition, a successful appeal in Georgia results in an assessment freeze, which locks in the assessed value of a home or business for three years. Appeals can help give certainty to an otherwise unpredictable scenario.

Fulton Property Tax Bills and Appeals

While the deadline to file appeals in Fulton County has passed for most property owners,

appeals that were filed could have an impact on this unique tax situation. The effects of appeals may not be felt until later in the year, once the tax digest is completed. This means that those who appealed before the deadline will most likely see refunds sent out later in the year. Typically, a successful appeal means that the tax bill itself is reduced, so getting a refund instead will be a change of pace. However, this demonstrates the versatility of appeals and why they are necessary in an ever-changing situation.

About O'Connor:

O'Connor is one of the largest property tax consulting firms, representing 185,000 clients in 49 states and Canada, handling about 295,000 protests in 2024, with residential property tax reduction services in Texas, Illinois, Georgia, and New York. O'Connor's possesses the resources and market expertise in the areas of property tax, cost segregation, commercial and residential real estate appraisals. The firm was founded in 1974 and employs a team of 1,000 worldwide. O'Connor's core focus is enriching the lives of property owners through cost effective tax reduction.

Property owners interested in assistance appealing their assessment can enroll in O'Connor's Property Tax Protection Program™. There is no upfront fee, or any fee unless we reduce your property taxes, and easy online enrollment only takes 2 to 3 minutes.

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