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Cook County Assessor's Office Wins Five National Awards

The Cook County Assessor's Office (CCAO) has been recognized with five 2026 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

"I'm extremely proud of my staff for the work that they do each day – these awards are a reflection of their achievements, expertise and creativity in solving problems to help ensure we serve Cook County taxpayers to the best of our ability," said **Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi**.

Each year, NACo's Achievement Awards recognize outstanding programming in 18 categories aligned with the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, libraries, management, information technology, health, civic engagement and more. Launched in 1970, the program is designed to celebrate innovation in county government.

The CCAO received awards for the following five initiatives.

Targeted Campaign to Reach Homeowners Experiencing a Property Tax Spike

In anticipation of TY 2024 property tax bills, the CCAO identified a critical issue: rising property values would cause thousands of previously exempt homeowners to incur property tax liabilities for the first time in years. To support 5,000 affected homeowners, the CCAO conducted a targeted outreach initiative. The program included strategic advertising, direct mail campaigns, and community workshops in impacted areas. Homeowners were able to apply for exemptions that saved them property taxes.

Kiosks and Callbacks: Using Better Technology for More Efficient, Informed Public Service

The CCAO modernized taxpayer services by adopting public-facing intake kiosks, redesigning its exemption application forms, and implementing a callback system to improve access and service delivery. These improvements enable managers and frontline employees to better manage high-volume periods by optimizing time and resource allocation across service channels.

New IT Helpdesk Centralizes Technical Support Services

In January of 2025, the IT Department at the CCAO implemented a centralized helpdesk portal to standardize technical support services. The portal replaced informal requests and issue reporting with a structured service management platform that serves employees, township assessors, and partnered county agencies.



Internship Program Builds a Talent Pipeline

The goal of the CCAO's internship program is to foster interest in the office while expanding participants' knowledge of its functions and impact. The internship program builds a talent pipeline by creating engaging, hands-on opportunities for students. It creates a learning environment focused on developing professional experience and job readiness through skill development, industry exposure, and networking opportunities.

Leading with Digital Data Integrity

As frontline professionals, field inspectors at the CCAO must conduct precise, rigorous site assessments of homes and businesses to ensure data is accurately collected. During his time in office, Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi created the Data Integrity Department to ensure this data is correctly captured to improve the efficiency of property characteristic updates.