

CONNECTICUT CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

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A New Way for Connecticut Residents to Help Shape Solutions

Property taxes touch every Connecticut resident: whether you own a home, rent an apartment, operate a business, or rely on local services. Yet despite decades of discussion, Connecticut's property tax system remains one of the most heavily relied upon sources of local government funding in the nation.

The Connecticut Citizens' Assembly on Property Taxes brings together a diverse group of residents from across the state to study the issue, learn from experts, deliberate with one another, and develop recommendations for policymakers and the public.

This is not a political campaign. It is not a legislative committee. It is a citizen-led process designed to ensure everyday Connecticut residents have a meaningful voice in one of the state's most important public policy challenges.

What Is a Citizens' Assembly?

A Citizens' Assembly is a group of residents selected through a civic lottery process to reflect the diversity of a community.

Participants are brought together to:

- Learn about a complex issue from experts and stakeholders with differing perspectives.
- Ask questions and examine evidence.
- Discuss solutions with fellow residents.
- Develop recommendations based on informed deliberation.

Citizens' Assemblies have been used successfully around the world to address difficult public policy issues by creating space for thoughtful, informed discussion beyond traditional political debate.

Why use a Citizens' Assembly?

Complex issues often benefit from informed public deliberation. Citizens' Assemblies create opportunities for residents to learn, discuss, and recommend solutions in a structured and balanced environment.

Why Property Taxes?

Connecticut's property tax system plays a vital role in funding local services, including:


- Public education
- Police and fire protection
- Road maintenance
- Public health services
- Libraries, parks, and recreation
- Senior and community services

At the same time, many residents and policymakers agree the current system faces significant challenges.

The Facts

- Connecticut relies more heavily on local property taxes than most states.
- Property taxes are the primary revenue source for cities and towns.
- Communities with different property values often have vastly different abilities to raise revenue.
- Rising housing costs and inflation have increased financial pressures on many households.
- Local governments face growing costs while working to maintain essential services.

These realities have fueled a long-standing



conversation about fairness, affordability, sustainability, and how Connecticut funds local services.

How the Assembly Was Selected

To ensure the Assembly reflects Connecticut's population, hundreds of thousands of households across the state received invitations to participate.

Residents who responded were entered into a civic lottery process.

Working with experts in democratic innovation and public participation, a final group of participants was selected to mirror Connecticut's diversity across factors such as:

- Region of the state
- Whether residents own or rent their home
- Whether there are children in the household
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Household income
- The balance of urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Political affiliation

The result is a group of Connecticut residents who collectively represent a broad cross-section of the state.

What Will Participants Do?

Over a series of meetings, Assembly members will:

- **Learn**
Hear from experts, practitioners, researchers, community leaders, and individuals directly affected by Connecticut's property tax system.
- **Deliberate**
Discuss information in small groups facilitated by trained moderators who ensure all voices are heard.

- **Evaluate Options**

Consider a range of potential approaches and reforms.

- **Develop Recommendations**

Work together to identify ideas and recommendations they believe deserve consideration by policymakers and the public.

Who Is Leading the Initiative?

The Connecticut Citizens' Assembly on Property Taxes is a collaborative effort involving:

- Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)
- Yale University
- University of Connecticut (UConn)
- Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller

Together, these partners are committed to creating a transparent, nonpartisan, and evidence-based process.

Why This Matters

Property taxes affect nearly every aspect of life in Connecticut.

The challenge is complex, with no single solution that satisfies every concern. That is precisely why informed public deliberation is so important.

The Citizens' Assembly provides an opportunity for residents from different backgrounds and viewpoints to work together, learn from one another, and identify areas of common ground.

Its recommendations will help inform ongoing discussions about the future of property taxation in Connecticut.

Follow the Process

The Citizens' Assembly is committed to transparency and public engagement.

Throughout the process, this page will provide:

- Assembly updates
- Educational resources

- Social Media Campaign messaging
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Final recommendations

Check back regularly as Connecticut residents come together to tackle one of the state’s most important challenges.

Understanding Property Taxes in Connecticut

Property taxes are the financial foundation of local government in Connecticut.

Unlike many states, Connecticut municipalities have very limited authority to generate revenue. Cities and towns cannot create local sales taxes or local income taxes. As a result, the property tax is the primary local revenue source used to fund essential community services.

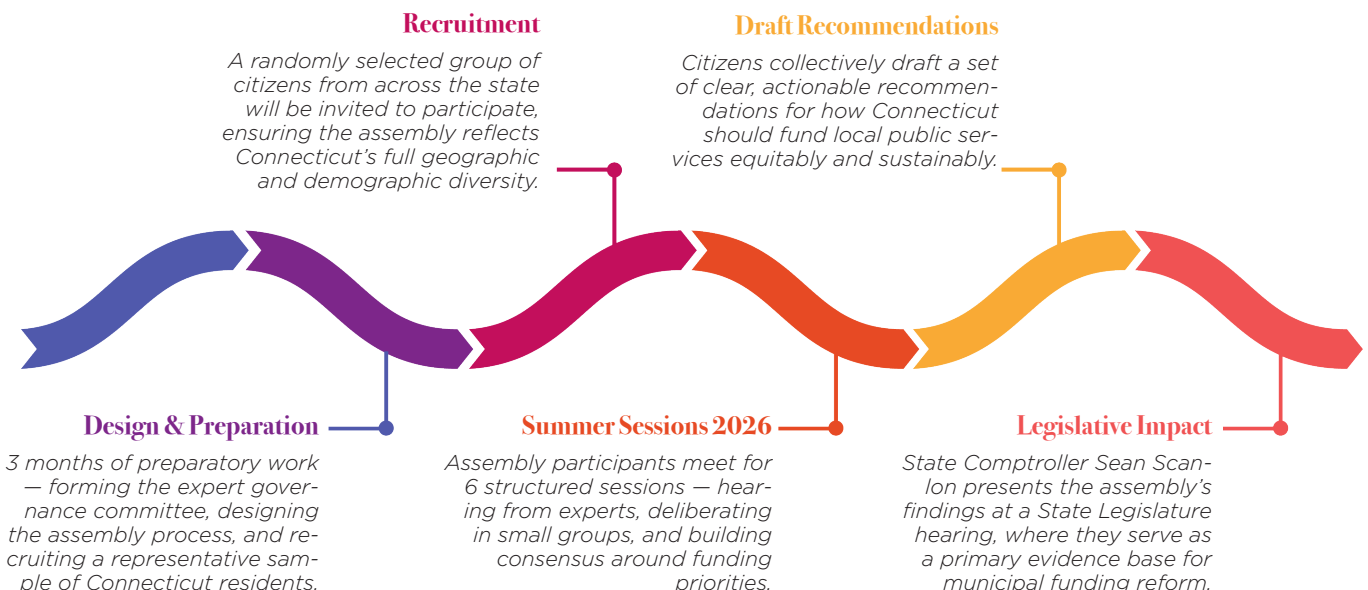
Simply put, when communities need to maintain services, invest in infrastructure, or meet rising costs, property taxes are often the only local funding tool available.

What Do Property Taxes Fund?

Property tax revenue helps cities and towns provide the services residents rely on every day, including:

- Public schools and educational programs
- Police protection and public safety
- Fire and emergency medical services
- Road maintenance and snow removal
- Parks, recreation, and community programs
- Libraries and cultural resources
- Public health services
- Senior services
- Planning, zoning, and economic development
- Waste collection and recycling
- Municipal buildings and facilities

While every municipality is different, education and public safety typically account for the largest portions of local budgets.



Why Are Property Taxes Such An Important Issue?

The cost of providing local services continues to rise due to inflation, labor costs, infrastructure needs, and increasing demand for services.

At the same time, municipalities have limited options to generate additional revenue. This creates ongoing pressure on local budgets and often places property taxes at the center of discussions about affordability and community investment.

The Impact of Unfunded Mandates

Connecticut municipalities are required to comply with numerous state and federal laws, regulations, and program requirements.

When these requirements are imposed without sufficient funding to cover the associated costs, they are commonly referred to as “unfunded mandates.”

Examples can include requirements related to:

- Colleges and Universities
- Health Care Facilities
- Public safety
- Environmental compliance
- Labor and employment regulations
- Reporting and administrative requirements
- Infrastructure and facility improvements

While many mandates serve important public purposes, municipalities must still pay for implementation.

Because local governments have limited revenue options, the costs associated with unfunded mandates often become part of municipal budgets and can increase pressure on local property taxpayers.

Why This Conversation Matters

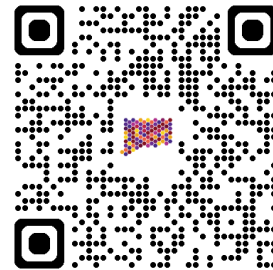
Connecticut residents consistently express concerns about property tax affordability while also expecting high-quality local services.

The challenge facing policymakers, municipal leaders, taxpayers, businesses, and residents is determining how Connecticut can continue funding critical services while ensuring a system that remains fair, sustainable, and affordable.

The Connecticut Citizens’ Assembly on Property Taxes was created to help residents better understand these challenges and contribute informed recommendations about the future of property taxes in our state.

Can the public follow the Assembly’s work?

Yes. Information, updates, and resources will be shared throughout the process at CCM-CT.org and www.CT-Citizens-Assembly.org



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