

Careers in City Government

City Assessor

Ann Berg, Park River, ND

Population: 1,403

What are your duties and responsibilities as Assessor of your city?

Assessors are charged with discovering & assessing all taxable property in the jurisdiction. They must determine taxability and value of properties, using methods such as field inspection, structural measurement, calculation, sales analysis, market trend studies, and income and expense analysis. They inspect new construction and major improvements to existing structures in order to determine values. They explain assessed values to property owners and defend appealed assessments at public hearings. They inspect properties, considering factors such as market value, location, and building or replacement costs to determine appraisal value. And, they prepare and maintain current data on each parcel assessed, including maps of boundaries, inventories of land and structures, property characteristics, and any applicable exemptions.

What type of education and/or training is required for your position?

The State of ND requires Assessors to complete a total of 80 hours of training with 40 hours on-line at your own pace with IAAO, 10 hours (PDF file) through the St Tax Commissioner's Office on Ag Valuation & 30 hours 3-4 week on-line class with IAAO (be prepared to devote a lot of your time to this session). All three sessions include testing and upon passing all tests you will receive your Class II Assessor certification. I suggest becoming a member of the North Dakota Association of Assessing Officers as there is a wealth of information available. I have to add there are many things that are not included in the training but other assessors are willing to help you so just ask one of them for help. I know I have!

What is the most rewarding aspect of your position?

Getting to spend one-on-one time with the property owners in our City; I have been catching up with many who I have known most of my life & introducing myself to those that have recently joined our community. I have also been explaining why on-site visits are conducted and what the visit entails so they realize assessor visits are not a scary thing. At this point my job is a big one as on-site visits have not been conducted since 1986 but I have always loved a challenge!

What advice would you give someone that is interested in working in city government?

Just do it! Start early in life by volunteering with committees or organizations and take an active interest in the City Council meetings. Speak with City staff, a Councilmember or Mayor if you have questions. Working for the City has been the most hectic, enjoyable, frustrating, exciting, rewarding and most interesting job I have had in my life. I can honestly say I have never been bored at work as every day brings new questions, problems, challenges and rewards. And just when you think you have all your ducks in a row the state or federal government adds more legislation to follow or changes everything so you will always be learning new things. In closing I have to say the people from across the state that I have met who work in City government are dedicated, passionate, hard-working individuals who are all doing the same thing - taking great care of their Cities.

The BEST government is LOCAL government!