

Assessment Bulletin

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EQUALIZED ASSESSMENT PANEL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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REPORTING PROPERTY ASSESSMENT AND TAX DATA ON THE ASSET SYSTEM

Attention: Municipal chief administrative officers

As you know, municipalities are making the transition to the ASSET (Assessment Shared Services Environment) system for the annual reporting of their property assessment and tax information to the province. The ASSET system has been developed as a partnership initiative of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C), and Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Each municipality will submit its 2003 assessment and tax data to Alberta Municipal Affairs through the ASSET system by September 30, 2003. (This ASSET submission for 2003 is in addition to the equalized assessment and audit returns that municipalities were asked to provide to the department earlier this summer.) Each municipality will submit its 2004 assessment and tax data through the ASSET system by January 31, 2004.

This reporting task will be carried out by each municipality's appointed assessor. However, the chief administrative officer (CAO) also has an important role to play in overseeing and monitoring the reporting process, including the transition to ASSET, in his or her municipality. Under the Municipal Government Act, the CAO is responsible for seeing that the municipal assessment function is carried out properly. This includes ensuring that assessment and tax information is properly reported to Alberta Municipal Affairs.

As chief administrative officer, there are a number of ways you can help ensure your municipality is making a smooth transition to the ASSET reporting process.

It is important, for example, to make sure your municipality is taking the steps necessary to provide tax-related information (referred to as "liability code" data) to your assessor. To meet this requirement, the computer system that contains your municipal assessment roll (usually a municipality's financial system) will need to be able to exchange data with the assessor's computer system.

Most municipalities will need to have their financial systems modified for this purpose. Municipal administrators therefore need to ensure that their financial system provider is working with their assessor's system provider to allow for this exchange of data.

Most municipalities, after their financial systems are modified, will be able to provide the liability code data directly from their financial computer systems to their assessors' computer systems. Some smaller municipalities may not be able to transfer the data electronically. This may be the case in municipalities that use paper ledgers, off-the-shelf financial packages or smaller financial systems. However, it will be possible to enter the data manually into the assessor's computer, and this should not be an overly time-consuming task in smaller municipalities. The municipal CAO will need to ensure that this task is completed.

In all cases, municipalities will need to work out the flow of information with their assessors to ensure that the liability code data is reported correctly and in a timely manner.

In overseeing the transition to the ASSET system, municipal CAOs need to be proactive. A few suggestions:

- Meet with your appointed assessor (contract or municipal) to discuss matters related to meeting the immediate timelines and ongoing requirements for reporting your assessment data to Alberta Municipal Affairs.
- Contact your municipality's financial system provider and/or the assessor's system provider. Confirm that they are aware of – and working to meet – your municipality's needs in relation to the liability code requirements.
- The ASSET project team at Alberta Municipal Affairs is also monitoring the status of this transitional activity. If you would like to speak with an ASSET contact from the Assessment Services Branch, please call John Scott at 780-422-8415 (e-mail: john.scott@gov.ab.ca) or Grant Lloyd at 780-427-3170 (e-mail: grant.lloyd@gov.ab.ca).

The ASSET system is a key initiative for bringing several recommendations of the municipal-provincial Equalized Assessment Panel into effect. Once the system is fully implemented, for example, each municipality's current assessment data (rather than previous-year data) will be used to prepare the municipal equalized assessments.

This bulletin has been prepared on the advice of the Equalized Assessment Panel (EAP) Technical Committee, a stakeholders' group of technical experts in property assessment. The committee provides advice in implementing ASSET and other recommendations of the panel. It is composed of two representatives each from the AUMA, AAMD&C, Alberta Assessors' Association and Alberta Municipal Affairs, and one member each from the cities of Calgary and Edmonton.