



2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

*An Update to
the Community*



www.franklincountyauditor.com

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The Franklin County Auditor's Office is a leader in public service and provides quality, cost-effective information and services to all Franklin County residents.

The Auditor's office handles a wide variety of important responsibilities that affect all of Franklin County's residents and businesses. The office licenses our dogs; assesses property values; and helps older adults, veterans, and people with disabilities get tax relief.

The Auditor's office also oversees all of the county's weights and measures, ensuring consumers get what they pay for at gas pumps and retail store scanners. The Auditor also serves as the county's chief fiscal officer, safeguarding county money with innovative ideas and initiatives that protect the residents of Franklin County.

The Auditor's office strives to be accessible, transparent and accountable to the people of Franklin County. It provides accurate information and services in a timely, cost-effective manner to residents, businesses and government agencies across the county.

LETTER FROM YOUR FRANKLIN COUNTY AUDITOR

The past year has been one of progress at your Franklin County Auditor's Office, and I am proud to continue to lead an organization that strives to be second to none in being transparent, accessible and accountable for the residents and businesses of Franklin County.

Throughout the office, we are continuing to offer outstanding public service, protect taxpayer dollars and utilize modern technology to serve the needs of the county.

One of the office's signature achievements this past year was the release of a report examining the impact of race in the home appraisal process, for which the office partnered with The Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. **I am committed to ensuring an equitable, fair and accurate appraisal process, and the study helped identify where the office can improve the process.**



Numerous initiatives have been implemented to ensure homeowners in every neighborhood get **fair and equitable appraisals and that they have the opportunity to challenge their home value with the Board of Revision.**

There have been many other significant accomplishments. As part of the office's **commitment to fiscal responsibility, the Auditor's office returned more than \$5 million in 2021** to Franklin County schools, municipalities and public agencies. It also launched an enhanced, award-winning website that details county finances and unclaimed funds.

The office launched the **Tax Incentive Hub**, an intuitive all-in-one online app that shows detailed information on every incentive in use in Franklin County. It also shows the financial impact of incentives on agencies that depend on taxes for their funding. The Hub uses advanced GIS mapping technology to display where the incentives are being used and can break down the information by municipality or school district.

With support from Franklin County Commissioners President Erica Crawley and Commissioners John O'Grady and Kevin Boyce, the **Property Tax Assistance Program (PTAP) was expanded to help more older, lower-income homeowners** with one-time emergency assistance in paying property taxes. Commissioners approved \$80,000 in funding for PTAP over two years, for a program that previously was funded entirely by donations.

The Auditor's office instituted a new e-Alerts system, a free service that notifies homeowners of any changes to their property information to help prevent fraud and home title theft. Property owners can sign up on the Auditor's office website.

The Auditor's office once again partnered with County Commissioners to **extend the dog license renewal season by two**

Auditor Stinziano and the Weights & Measures Team certifying scales at Oakland Nursery ahead of the 2021 Pumpkin Contest.



months. The extension gives dog owners more time to purchase licenses and is intended to increase the rate of licensing in the county. The office also expanded its presence at pet-related events across the county, offering licensing services for owners. Licenses can also always be purchased online at doglicense.franklincountyohio.gov.

And across Franklin County, Weights and Measures staff were inspecting scales, scanners and gas pumps to ensure accuracy and protect consumers. **In 2021 Weights and Measures performed 14,157 inspections, including 5,755 fuel meters.** They also checked gas pumps for credit card skimmers to prevent credit card fraud.

The Auditor's office made significant progress in 2021 as it serves the residents and business of Franklin County with unparalleled service. **As your Franklin County Auditor, I look forward to another year of great accomplishments and serving the people of Franklin County.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Stinziano".

Michael Stinziano
Franklin County Auditor

The Franklin County Auditor's Office is here to serve you. If you have any questions or concerns, please call (614) 525-HOME or email auditorstinziano@franklincountyohio.gov.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Bringing the Office to Your Neighborhood

Your Franklin County Auditor's Office held in-person and virtual community hours in every city, village, township, and municipality in Franklin County.



Constituent Engagement

✔ **605 COMMUNITY HOURS MEETINGS** held in every city, township, and village in Franklin County since Auditor Stinziano took public office.

165 COMMUNITY MEETINGS held as your Franklin County Auditor.

30 SMALL BUSINESSES highlighted during community hours.

✔ **53,383 CONSTITUENT CALLS** received and handled through 525-HOME.

Average hold time of only 48 SECONDS.

Average call length of 3 MINUTES AND 12 SECONDS.

✔ **3,946 CONSTITUENT EMAILS** received and engaged.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS

Weights and Measures

Auditor Stinziano serves as the Sealer of Weights & Measures for businesses in Franklin County, excluding those located in the City of Columbus, and is responsible for the enforcement of all Ohio laws relating to weights and measures. Weights & Measures inspectors protect consumers by checking any weighing or measuring device that is used in commercial transactions at least once annually, including gas station pumps, grocery store scanners and scales, taxi meters, firewood and more.



- 1,761 SCALES INSPECTED.**
- 9,579 GAS METERS INSPECTED.**
- 3,387 GAS PUMPS, CASH REGISTERS, AND SCALES INSPECTED.**
- 1,217 ESTABLISHMENTS CHECKED.**
- 23,698 PRICES VERIFIED**, including:
 - 112 incorrect overcharges.
 - 40 incorrect undercharges.
- 1,224 CARD READERS CHECKED** for skimmers.



True Transaction Award

The True Transactions Award is a recognition presented by Auditor Michael Stinziano to business in Franklin County that have a flawless record of using accurate scanners and scales and have been verified by the Auditor's office Weights and Measures inspectors. Since taking office in March 2019, Auditor Stinziano has given out 37 True Transaction Awards to businesses throughout the county.



*Yasmin International Market
— Blendon Township*



*Kuhlwein's Farm Market
& Deli — Brown Township*



*Columbus Asian Market
— Hilliard*



*Honey Baked Ham
— Gahanna*

Consumer Services

The Consumer Services Division is responsible for licensing dogs and vendors in Franklin County, including retail cigarette dealers.



- 187 LICENSES ISSUED** to vendors.
- 30 SMALL BUSINESSES HIGHLIGHTED** through weekly community hours.
- 12 LOCAL BUSINESSES RECOGNIZED** for outstanding accuracy in weights and measures through the True Transaction Award.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS

eAlerts

Your Franklin County Auditor's Office is dedicated to maintaining accurate and complete property records for the residents and businesses of Franklin County. The office is also committed to helping property owners better understand and provide feedback related to their property records.

As part of this effort, the Auditor's office offers a Property eAlerts tool through which a property owner can sign up to receive an automated email alert whenever a change is made to their property record (e.g., change in property owner, change in owner address, change in value). This free tool is designed to allow property owners to easily monitor changes made to their property records.

Property eAlerts notification system

🏠 Sign up to be notified of a change in your property record

🏠 Free, convenient, and easy to use

☎ (614) 525-HOME (4663)
✉ AuditorStinziano@franklincountyohio.gov

Icons: padlock, house, house with padlock

Board of Revision

The Franklin County Board of Revision (BOR) hears complaints on the market value of your property and can adjust the value based on presented evidence.

1,485
REAL ESTATE REVIEW
HEARINGS HELD

1,385
REAL ESTATE REVIEW
MEDIATIONS HELD

Protecting Our Pets

- 🐾 **90,604 TOTAL LICENSED DOGS** utilizing website, digital outreach, direct mail program, and educational videos.
- 🐾 Released the 2022 "Me & My Pal" calendar featuring art from K-6 students across Franklin County.
- 🐾 Enhanced partnerships with veterinary offices, dog-related businesses, and nonprofit organizations.

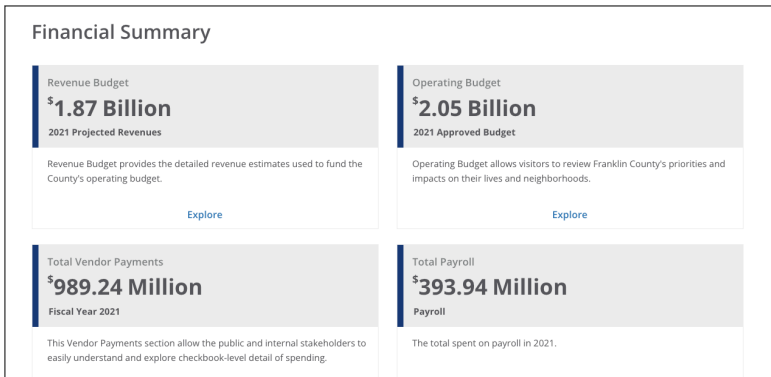


SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1 April Fool's Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APRIL 2022

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Chief Fiscal Officer



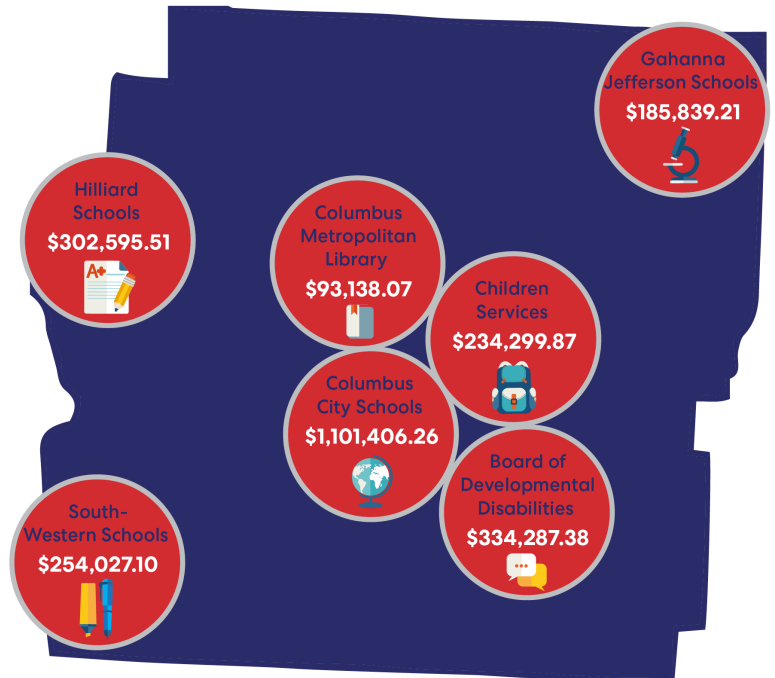
The Franklin County Auditor serves as the Chief Fiscal Officer of the county and is responsible for maintaining accurate records of all money received by and paid out of the county treasury. The auditor's fiscal staff processes revenue, budgetary, accounts payable and payroll transactions. The sufficiency of cash balances to cover expenditures is closely monitored. Franklin County's financial transparency site provides the public with easy access to Franklin County's expenditure, revenue, and budget information for the current fiscal year and the last four fiscal years.

Fiscal Responsibility

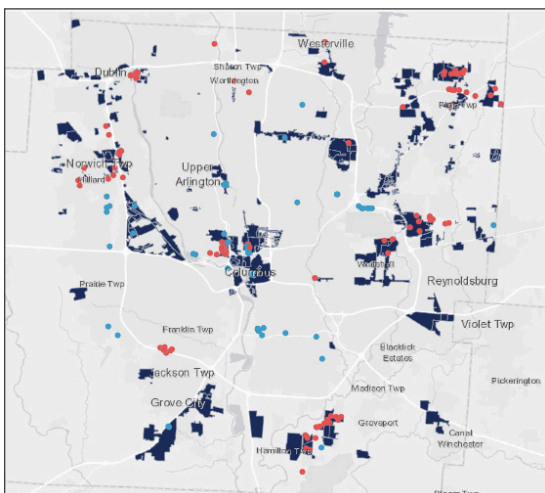
As part of Auditor Stinziano's ongoing commitment to strong fiscal stewardship, your Franklin County Auditor's Office has returned over \$15.5 million to cities, townships, schools, and public agencies, including \$5 million in 2021.



After prudent fiscal management, your Franklin County Auditor's Office was able to return \$5 million to schools and local governments from the real estate assessment fund.



Tax Incentive Review Council



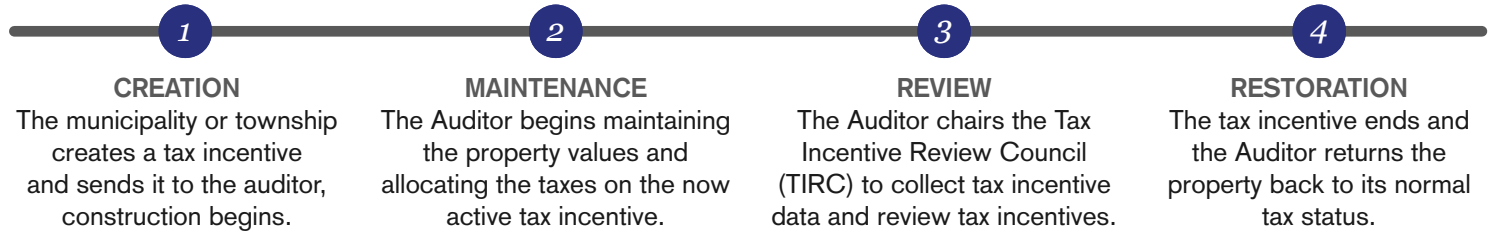
The Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) is a way to make tax incentives more transparent to taxpayers. Franklin County Auditor Michael Stinziano serves as chair of the Tax Incentive Review Council.

- ✔ **294** projects reviewed
- ✔ **242** TIF projects reviewed
- ✔ **41,391** jobs created or retained
- ✔ **\$1,838,580,379** reported payroll
- ✔ **\$2,033,998,821** reported real estate investment
- ✔ **\$64,824,352** forgone tax
- ✔ **\$108,441,057** diverted TIF tax

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Tax Incentive Hub

Your Franklin County Auditor's Office administers the tax incentives created by municipalities and townships and chairs the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) that monitors the tax incentives each year. The goal of the Franklin County Auditor is to ensure each incentive and its ongoing status are transparent and providing the benefits promised to our communities — and if not, having a record of why.



Know Your Value

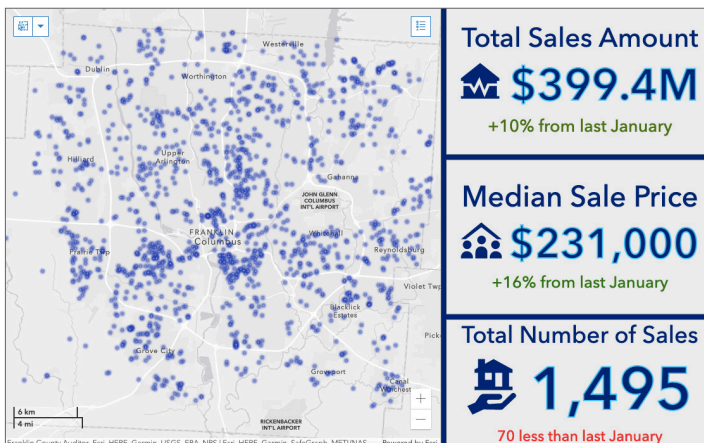
The Auditor's office is responsible for updating values for every property in the county to keep them in line with the current real estate market.

- ✔ **278,951** properties receive the owner-occupancy tax exemption.
- ✔ **49,409** properties receive the homestead exemption.
- ✔ **71,994** properties registered as rentals.
- ✔ **1,436** owner-occupancy tax exemption applications processed.
- ✔ **\$41,633,322.14** in property tax refunded, including:
 - \$5,968.97 for 47 manufactured homes, and
 - \$41,627,353.17 for 6,809 parcels.
- ✔ **\$34,579,506.47** in special assessment charges on 65,000 parcels.



There are 435,777 properties in Franklin County with a total real estate market value of \$144,738,233,270 .	In 2021, 114 properties were granted valuation deduction for destroyed or damaged property and 9,764 value certificates were processed.
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Real Estate Review



The Auditor's office maintains the most comprehensive real estate records in Franklin County and is responsible for appraising more than 435,777 parcels. Each month the office updates the Real Estate Dashboard, a highly localized web app that shows recent home sales on a GIS map. The tool can display sales data by municipality, school district, or area commission, giving homeowners key information on sales activity in their neighborhoods.

- ✔ **60,539** property transfers, splits, and combinations processed.
- ✔ **19,915** rental registration applications processed.
- ✔ **3,450** homestead exemption applications processed.
- ✔ **\$54,300** generated from 9 parcels sold at the Auditor's Sale.

The Franklin Auditor's Office updated rental registration procedures to improve compliance and decrease fines for property owners.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Legislative Advocacy

Your Auditor's office frequently advocates on behalf of residents and businesses of Franklin County to local, state, and federal elected officials about important issue that impact their lives.

2022 POLICY PRIORITIES



PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

- ✔ Property tax is an important revenue stream but can be an excessive burden on residents.
- ✔ Value change and new levies can cause spikes in property tax that are difficult, particularly for those with fixed incomes.
- ✔ The FCAO seeks legislation that provides relief for burdened homeowners and residents while maintaining critical support for local government.
- ✔ Action for property tax relief can also include expanding the homestead exemption to help older adults age in the right place.



RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TAX'S TAX EQUALIZATION DIVISION (DTE)

- ✔ DTE does not have the resources and tools to timely and accurately analyze property values for residential and, particularly, commercial and industrial property.
- ✔ The division's over-reliance on hard copies of records and out-of-date technology undermines confidence in their approval or disapproval of county-appraised values.
- ✔ Current appropriation levels are at approximately 50% of just a few years ago. The operating budget is the best opportunity to address this issue.



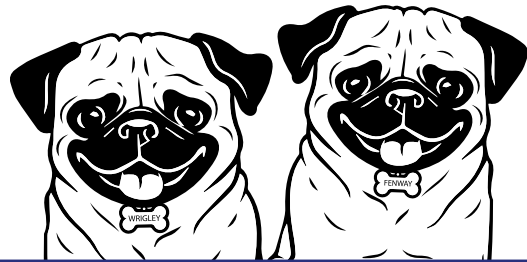
TAX INCENTIVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- ✔ Abatements and tax increment financing can be useful for economic development when targeted well and not simply used as a means to avoid taxation or fund projects that would occur regardless.
- ✔ The FCAO joins the County Commissioners Association of Ohio in its request for more local control for approval of larger incentives, including at the county level.
- ✔ Maintain and support incentives that actually contribute to the community as promised.
- ✔ Tax Incentive Review Committees need better tools and enforcement options to hold accountable those who benefit from incentives.



FLEXIBLE AND COMPASSIONATE DOG LICENSING LAWS

- ✔ Counties should have the flexibility to create alternate licensing fees and license issuing for lower-income pet owners.
- ✔ Updates and clarifications are warranted regarding the licensure of service and rescue group animals.



PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PTAP)

Franklin County Commissioners partnered with Auditor Michael Stinziano to approve \$80,000 in additional funding for the Property Tax Assistance Program (PTAP), which provides emergency one-time property tax assistance to low-income homeowners age 60 and older. This was previously a nonprofit entity funded solely through donations.

PTAP applications are reviewed by a board that includes the Franklin County Auditor's Office, Franklin County Treasurer's Office, Franklin County Office on Aging, and Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging.

HOMEOWNERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP)

As part of Auditor Stinziano's efforts to increase the accessibility of the Board of Revision (BOR) complaint-filing process, the office is partnering with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus for a second year to present the Homeowner Assistance Program, which is designed to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners file a complaint against the appraised value of their owner-occupied home through the Franklin County Board of Revision. This program is available to Franklin County homeowners with gross annual incomes below \$75,000 and involves connecting homeowners with volunteer legal and real estate experts who will assist them in navigating the BOR process.

VISION, MISSION, & CORE COMPETENCIES

Vision Statement

The Franklin County Auditor's Office will serve the residents and businesses of Franklin County by protecting consumers, providing fair and equitable real estate assessments, and ensuring fiscal integrity.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to deliver superior 21st-century services to the residents and businesses of Franklin County, serve as the principal monitor of county funds, and be a primary resource for information regarding Franklin County.

Core Competencies

ACCESSIBILITY: ensuring all our functions are available to all residents and businesses, both digitally and physically.

ACCOUNTABILITY: taking responsibility for the quality and timeliness of providing information and results to the residents and businesses.

CONSTITUENT SERVICE: respond in an accurate and timely manner to residents and businesses and anticipate their needs.

COMMUNICATION: inform and educate regarding the responsibilities and functions of county government and, specifically, of the County Auditor.

INNOVATION: remain proactive in implementing new technologies to provide 21st-century services.

PROFESSIONALISM: perform our work with integrity, compassion, and empathy.

