

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

****If You Lost Your Home for Non-payment of Property Taxes in Cook County After
December 15, 2020, You May Be Part of this Class Action Lawsuit Seeking Monetary
Compensation Against Cook County and its Treasurer****

**A federal court has certified a class action that may affect your rights.
PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

Why did I get this notice?

The federal court in Chicago recently certified a class of former Cook County, Illinois residential real property owners in a lawsuit challenging Cook County's tax sale procedures. The Court has ordered that potential class members be provided notice of this lawsuit, as it may affect their individual rights and responsibilities.

Cook County records show that you may have previously owned residential real estate in Cook County, Illinois, which was subject to a tax deed issued on or after December 15, 2020 and not withdrawn. What this means is that property records show you may have owned residential property in Cook County, Illinois; that you did not pay all property taxes, late fees, and other related penalties associated with that property; that the delinquent tax debt associated with that property was purchased by a third-party "tax buyer" at Cook County's annual tax sale; and that ownership of that property was transferred to a third party who bought your tax debt at the Cook County annual tax sale and the third-party tax buyer later applied for and received a "tax deed" to the property by a court order, and the court order was not later set aside.

A federal district court has certified a class of former property owners who are suing Cook County and its Treasurer to be paid for the "taking" of their homes, alleging that the transfer of property to third-party tax buyers through the tax sale process amounts to an unconstitutional "taking" without just compensation. The Court has ordered that you be notified and other potential class members be provided notice of this lawsuit, as it may affect your rights and responsibilities.

What is this lawsuit about?

The lawsuit is called *Kidd v. Pappas, et al.*, No. 22-cv-7061, and it is pending in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, in Chicago. The lawsuit involves a constitutional challenge to Cook County's "tax sale" procedures. The Cook County Treasurer, Maria Pappas, conducts annual tax sales in an effort to recover delinquent property taxes. During these tax sales, property tax debts are auctioned off to third-party "tax buyers." If a tax buyer purchases the tax debt, the original property owner has 30 months to repay all delinquent property taxes (plus any tax penalties, interest and costs) to maintain ownership of their property. If the property owner does not repay the delinquent property taxes within this redemption period, the tax buyer may petition for a "tax deed," and a court may then grant the tax buyer ownership of the property.

What are the claims and defenses?

The lawsuit alleges that Cook County and Treasurer Pappas, violated the Fifth and Eighth Amendments to the United States Constitution by taking peoples' homes and similar properties through the County's annual property tax sale without paying those owners the value of the home in excess of the taxes, penalties and interest that were owed. More details about the lawsuit are available on this website: www.strategicclaims.net/CookTaxSaleLawsuit.

The Defendants deny any wrongdoing and deny owing compensation. The Court has not ruled on whether the Defendants owe compensation or otherwise engaged in any wrongdoing and has not otherwise decided who will "win" the lawsuit. No money is available now to you or any other potential class member.

However, your legal rights are affected by this lawsuit, and you have a choice to make now about whether to remain involved in the lawsuit as a class member or exclude yourself from the proceedings. That option is explained further below.

What is a class action and who is involved?

In a class action lawsuit, one or more people called "Class Representatives" (here, Michelle Kidd and Goyce Rates) sue on behalf of other people who have similar claims. The people together are called a "Class," and the individuals, the "Class Members." The people who bring the suit are also called the Plaintiffs. The people they sue (Cook County and Maria Pappas, the Cook County Treasurer) are called the Defendants. Generally speaking, the purpose of a class action, is to efficiently resolve issues which are common to everyone in the Class in one lawsuit. Unless an individual chooses to exclude themselves from the Class, the individual will remain a "Class Member" and be bound by the court's final judgment.

Who is included in the Class?

The Court has certified a Class defined as all persons or entities:

1. Who owned or were the beneficial owners of residential real property in Cook County, Illinois (Residential Assessment Classes Major Class 2 and 3);
2. Whose properties' were sold in the Cook County annual tax sale;
3. Whose properties were subject to a tax deed that was issued to the purchaser of such property at any time on or after December 15, 2020, and that was not withdrawn; and
4. Whose property was assessed by the Cook County's Assessor's Office as having a Fair Cash Value as of the time the tax deed was issued that exceeded the total amount of taxes, fees, and interest owed at the end of the redemption period.

If you meet all four criteria, you are a member of the Class. Note that “residential real property” means real estate where people live, as opposed to real estate used for industrial or commercial purposes, which are not included.

How do I know if I’m a Class member?

The Class is defined above. If you are receiving this notice, it is believed that you are a Class member whose property was ultimately transferred to a tax buyer by means of a tax deed, and additionally, that your property was assessed by the Cook County Assessor’s Office as having a greater value than the total amount of delinquent taxes, penalties, and interest owed on the date a tax deed was issued to a tax buyer. If you are unsure about whether you are a Class member, you can contact the Notice Administrator using the contact information provided below.

Do I have a lawyer in the case?

Yes. The Court has appointed the following attorneys to represent the entire Class:

- John Bouman, Lawrence Wood, and Daniel Schneider – all of Legal Action Chicago;
- Charles Watkins and David Guin – both of Guin & Evans, LLC; and
- Brian Roche – of Reed Smith LLP

These lawyers are called “Class Counsel.” The Court has appointed them to represent the entire Class, including you if you do not request to be excluded from the Class. You do not need to pay them directly; however, the Court may approve an award of fees and expenses out of any money they may recover for you and the Class through a court judgment or settlement, or order the Defendants to pay Class Counsel’s fees and expenses. You may hire your own lawyer if you choose, but that will be at your own cost.

What happens next?

Class Counsel will continue to pursue the lawsuit on behalf of all Class members. To reiterate, the Court has not determined that Defendants are liable for any wrongdoing, or that Defendants owe the Class any money. However, should this lawsuit proceed to resolution and money or other benefits become available, if you have not opted out of the Class, you will receive another notice explaining how to claim the benefits or otherwise proceed.

If your address or contact information changes, please let the Notice Administrator know so that they know how to reach you with any updates.

YOUR RIGHTS AND OPTIONS

You have the following two options at this time:

Option 1: Stay in the Class by doing nothing at this time.

You can stay in the Class if you choose. If you do nothing, you will remain in the Class. If you stay in the Class, you will be bound by the outcome of the case, whether it results in a settlement, judgment, or dismissal, and regardless of whether the outcome is favorable or unfavorable. If there is money awarded in the future through a judgment or settlement, you may be eligible to claim some of it. You will not be able to bring your own, separate lawsuit claiming Constitutional violations if you remain in the Class.

Option 2: Ask to be excluded from the Class

If you do not want to be part of the Class, you must ask to be excluded by October 31, 2025. This is the only option that allows you to keep your right to bring your own lawsuit claiming Constitutional violations. To exclude yourself from the Class, you must send a written request for exclusion to the Notice Administrator, postmarked by October 31, 2025, stating your full name, your current residence address, your email address if you have one, the street address of the property you lost for non-payment of taxes and a statement that you wish to exclude yourself from the *Kidd v. Pappas* litigation. If you do not exclude yourself, you will remain in the Class. The mailing address for the Notice Administrator is provided in the section below entitled “How do I get more information?”

If you exclude yourself and there is a later court judgment or settlement—including one that results in an award of money—you will not be allowed to participate, but you will not be bound by that judgment or settlement if it is unfavorable.

How do I get more information?

For more details and future updates, visit:
www.strategicclaims.net/CookTaxSaleLawsuit

Or, contact the Notice Administrator at:
Cook Tax Sale Lawsuit
c/o Strategic Claims Services
600 N. Jackson St., Ste 205
Media, PA 19063
Toll-Free: (855) 285-5405
info@strategicclaims.net

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE COURT, THE CLERK’S OFFICE, COOK COUNTY, OR THE COOK COUNTY TREASURER ABOUT THIS NOTICE. THEY CANNOT GIVE YOU LEGAL ADVICE AND DO NOT REPRESENT YOU.