

## Syracuse Webinar Series on Property Tax Administration and Design

The property tax has been a key component of the tax system in many countries for a long time. As a direct tax with its levy on the stock of accumulated housing wealth, the property tax has great potential for redistribution in financing public services. Moreover, as the mainstay of local own-source revenues, this tax helps to secure taxpayer voice in local budgeting, meeting the preferences of local residents, and holding local government officials accountable. On the other hand, the administration of this tax demands accurate and updated information on the value of each property, a requirement that is sometimes dubbed its “Achilles’ heel.” In addition, the property tax can be designed to meet many different objectives other than revenue raising. Despite these challenges, however, the property tax is here to stay, and scholars have an important role to play in shedding light on issues of property tax administration and design.

A large literature on property taxation exists in public economics and urban economics, financial administration, and policy analysis. Topics include the capitalization of property taxes into house values, property tax salience and compliance, and local government revenue. Nevertheless, many topics in **property tax administration and design** require more attention. With advances in technology, the administration of the property tax has been improving nationwide, but many aspects of the tax are still poorly understood. These topics include overdue reassessments of property values, fragmentation of tax assessing units, extensive exemptions from the tax base, and conflicting views on property tax design between local officials and state legislatures. These topics raise fundamental questions about the ability and willingness of homeowners to pay the tax and about the tax’s equity, efficiency, and adequacy.

To address the above issues and to help fill gaps in the literature, we are launching an *Initiative on the Study of Property Tax Administration and Design* (ISPTAD), of which this webinar series is a component. The goal of the webinar series is to gather insight and scholarship through domestic and international comparative studies with common threads to help reform and improve property tax administration and design in the US and other countries facing similar problems. We invite prominent and promising scholars with cutting edge research on property tax administration and design, including (but not limited to) the following:

- a. new explorations in the theory of property taxation;

- b. empirical (and theoretical) study of property assessment cycle;
- c. empirical (and theoretical) study of optimal size of property assessing units;
- d. analytical frameworks of statutory exemptions of property value;
- e. state-local jurisdiction in property taxation;
- f. impact of changes in federal deduction of local taxes on the ability and willingness of property owners to pay the property tax.

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