



# COOK COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

JAMES M. HOULIHAN, ASSESSOR

118 NORTH CLARK STREET, CHICAGO, IL 60602

PHONE: 312.443.7550 WEBSITE: WWW.COOKCOUNTYASSESSOR.COM

## CLASS 6B ELIGIBILITY BULLETIN

### ***Cook County Living Wage Ordinance***

Please be advised that every applicant for this incentive will be required to provide an affidavit to the Assessor's Office to confirm compliance with the Cook County Living Wage Ordinance. The Cook County Assessor will not grant any request for incentive classification until it receives the required affidavit.

### ***Incentive Benefits***

The Class 6b classification is designed to encourage industrial development throughout Cook County by offering a real estate tax incentive for the development of new industrial facilities, the rehabilitation of existing industrial structures, and the industrial reutilization of abandoned buildings. The goal of Class 6b is to attract new industry, stimulate expansion and retention of existing industry and increase employment opportunities.

Under the incentive provided by Class 6b, qualifying industrial real estate would be eligible for the Class 6b level of assessment from the date that new construction or substantial rehabilitation is completed and initially assessed or, in the case of abandoned property, from the date of substantial re-occupancy. Properties receiving Class 6b will be assessed at 10% of market value for the first 10 years, 15% in the 11th year and 20% in the 12th year. This constitutes a substantial reduction in the level of assessment and results in significant tax savings. In the absence of this incentive, industrial real estate would normally be assessed at 25% of its market value.

Where buildings or other structures qualify for the incentive as new construction or as abandoned property as defined below, the reduced level of assessment under Class 6b will apply to those structures in their entirety as well as to the land upon which they are situated. Where there is substantial rehabilitation of an existing structure which has not been abandoned, the reduced incentive level of assessment is applicable to the additional market value attributable to the rehabilitation, including qualified land related to the rehabilitation. ***(Please note that the additional value attributable to the rehabilitation for assessment purposes is likely to be lower than the actual amount spent on the rehabilitation.)*** Land qualifies when the rehabilitation adds vertical or horizontal square footage to the improvements. The amount of land eligible for the incentive shall be in such proportion as the square footage added by the rehabilitation bears to the total square footage of the improvements on the parcel.

## ***Eligibility Requirements***

Real estate is eligible for Class 6b status under the following conditions:

1. The real estate is used primarily for "industrial purposes".
2. There is either (a) new construction, (b) substantial rehabilitation, or (c) substantial re-occupancy of "abandoned" property.
3. An Eligibility Application and supporting documents have been timely filed with the Office of the Assessor according to deadlines as set forth in the "What Must Be Filed" and "Time for Filing" sections of this Bulletin.
4. The municipality in which such real estate is located (or the County Board, if the real estate is located in an unincorporated area) must, by lawful resolution or ordinance, expressly state that it supports and consents to the filing of a Class 6b Application and that it finds Class 6b necessary for development to occur on the subject property.

The following definitions, as set forth in the Cook County Real Property Assessment Classification Ordinance, pertain to the Class 6b incentive provision:

***Industrial purposes:*** "Any real estate used primarily in manufacturing ... or in the extraction or processing of raw materials unserviceable in their natural state to create new physical products or materials, or in the processing of materials for recycling, or in the transportation or storage of raw materials or finished or partially finished physical goods in the wholesale distribution of such materials or goods for sale or leasing."

***Manufacturing:*** "The material staging and production of goods used in procedures commonly regarded as manufacturing, processing, fabrication, or assembling which changes existing material into new shapes, new qualities, or new combinations and including research and development associated with the production of goods."

***Abandoned property:*** "Buildings and other structures that, after having been vacant and unused for at least 24 continuous months, are purchased for value by a purchaser in whom the seller has no direct financial interest." An exception to this definition shall be, "if the municipality or the Board of Commissioners, as the case may be, finds that special circumstances justify finding that the property is 'abandoned' for the purpose of Class 6b."

The finding of abandonment, along with the specification of the special circumstances, shall be included in the resolution or ordinance supporting and consenting to the incentive application. Notwithstanding the foregoing, special circumstances may not be determined to justify finding that a property is deemed "abandoned" where:

- A. There has been a purchase for value and the buildings and other structures have not been vacant and unused prior to such purchase; or
- B. There has been no purchase for value and the buildings and other structures have been vacant and unused for less than 24 continuous months.

If the ordinance or resolution containing a finding of "special circumstances" is that of a municipality, the approval of the County Board of Commissioners is required to validate such a finding that the property is deemed "abandoned" for purposes of the incentive, and a resolution to that effect shall be included with the eligibility application.

## **What Must Be Filed**

An applicant seeking the reclassification of real estate to Class 6b is required to file a "Class 6b Eligibility Application" with the Office of the Assessor. At the time of filing the application, a filing fee of \$500.00 must be paid. In addition, an applicant may submit, at the same time, a certified copy of an ordinance or resolution adopted by the municipality in which the real estate is located (or the County Board, if the real estate is located in an unincorporated area) expressly stating that it supports and consents to the filing of a Class 6b Application and that it finds Class 6b necessary for development to occur on the subject property. If the resolution is not filed at the time the Eligibility Application is submitted to the Assessor, the applicant must file, at that time, a letter from the municipality or the County Board confirming that a resolution or ordinance supporting the incentive has been requested. If the applicant is seeking to apply based on the reoccupation of abandoned property and will be seeking a finding of "special circumstances" from the municipality, in addition to obtaining a letter from the municipality confirming that a resolution or ordinance supporting the incentive has been requested, the applicant must also file a letter from the County Board confirming that a resolution validating a municipal finding of special circumstances has been requested.

Should the municipality or the County Board, at a later date, deny the applicant's request for a resolution or ordinance, whether or not construction or re-occupancy has begun, the applicant will be deemed ineligible for reclassification to Class 6b. Any information that is not known or any supporting documents that are not available at the time of the initial filing must be submitted as a supplement to the Application.

After the construction or re-occupancy has taken place, an applicant must also file an "Incentives Appeal Form" requesting that the real estate be reclassified to Class 6b. At the time of filing the appeal, an appeal fee of \$100.00 must be paid. If a resolution from the municipality where the property is located, or the Cook County Board of Commissioners if located in an unincorporated area, was not filed with the Eligibility Application, the applicant must file a certified copy of the resolution or ordinance supporting the incentive at this time. No final action on a request for reclassification to Class 6b will be taken until an Appeal and an Eligibility Application, along with the required documentation as described therein, are completed and filed with the Office of the Assessor.

In addition, during the term of the incentive, the Class 6b recipient must file a triennial affidavit attesting to the use of the property and the number of workers employed at the Class 6b site. The Assessor will mail Class 6b recipients the affidavit forms at the time of their triennial reassessments. The affidavit must be signed, notarized and returned to the Assessor within three weeks. Failure to file the triennial affidavits within that time will result in the loss of the incentive.

## **Time for Filing**

The Eligibility Application along with the appropriate resolution or letter confirming that a resolution has been requested *must be filed* with the Assessor *prior to*, but no earlier than one year before, *commencement of new construction* (excluding demolition, if any) *or substantial rehabilitation*. With respect to abandoned property, the eligibility application must be made to the Assessor ***prior to the commencement of the reoccupation of the vacant and unused property.***

Where reoccupation of "abandoned" property and subsequent substantial rehabilitation is planned, a single Eligibility Application and resolution, ordinance, or letter confirming that a resolution has been requested, may be filed for both situations, provided that the Application is filed prior to the commencement of reoccupation and such rehabilitation.

To finalize the classification change, a "Real Estate Assessed Valuation Appeal" must be filed after the construction or re-occupancy has taken place. In instances where a certified copy of an ordinance or resolution expressly stating that the municipality or County Board supports and consents to filing of a Class 6b Application has not yet been filed, it must be filed at this time. For the purpose of certifying final assessments on a timely basis to the Board of Appeals, deadlines for filing Appeals are established on a township basis. Check with the Office of the Assessor to determine when the deadline occurs for a particular township.

The 6b classification may be renewed during the last year in which a property is entitled to a 10% assessment level or when the incentive is still applied at the 15% or 20% assessment level, by filing a renewal application and a certified copy of a resolution or ordinance adopted by the municipality in which the real estate is located, or by the County Board, if located in an unincorporated area of Cook County, expressly stating that it supports and consents to the renewal of the Class 6b incentive and that it has determined that the industrial use of the property is necessary and beneficial to the local economy. The notice of intent to request renewal will be forwarded by the Assessor's Office to the Cook County Board. The owners must notify the Assessor's Office of their intent to request renewal at the time they request a resolution or ordinance agreeing to the renewal from the municipality or County Board. The number of renewal period requests is not limited.

**Questions regarding Class 6b may be directed to the Development Incentives Department of the Office of the Cook County Assessor, Room 301, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602, (312) 603-7529.**