



FREEPORT TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR and ASSESSOR'S OFFICE SO WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY DO?

As a taxing body, the Freeport Township derives its funding from property taxes. Receiving 4 cents per every dollar, making the Township the 3rd lowest tax collecting body. With those 4 cents, we have done and are doing some amazing things. The information below shows all that the Supervisor's office does and how those things result in taxpayer dollars being reinvested back into the community where they belong. It also displays what the Assessor's office does to help and educate Freeport residents. Always ready to help residents understand the assessing process and help guide them on how to file appeals.

General Assistance - is a locally administered welfare program that provides monthly financial assistance as a vendor payment for persons who meet all eligibility requirements and do not have adequate income or resources to provide for their basic maintenance needs. The legislature statutorily mandates Freeport Township to administer general assistance to eligible township residents. Freeport Township's general assistance serves an average of 25 people per month, with every person mandated to earn their assistance before receiving it.

I Earned It Community Work and Training Program - the "I earned it!" community work and training program is a collaborative effort between the town of Freeport and partners citywide. Our mission is clear...township recipients will be required to earn their assistance by providing meaningful services to the community. Thus, reinforcing the Township's message of "*Empowerment, Not Entitlement.*"

Smart Renters Education and Preparation Program - has been designed to help renters make good choices when seeking places to rent. An informational brochure will be made available for renters to take with them when viewing properties; within this brochure, renters will find a listing of City Code Violations to look out for. Through the education of renters, Freeport Township will help to level the playing field between landlords and renters and help the City of Freeport rid itself of neglectful landlords.

Also provided through this program are classes such as Fire Prevention, Home Safety, and the importance of renters insurance.

The Red Flag Initiative - is the procedural process to ensure that our clients live in safe homes and that local tax dollars are wisely spent. In conjunction with the Assessor's office, the Township of Freeport has spearheaded this project.

Adult Basic Literacy Program - has been designed to combat adult literacy in Freeport Township. Adequate reading skills, such as fluency and comprehension, are some of the skills that will be covered in this program.

Reading is the type of soft skill that will help clients become more employable and open new opportunities where none may have existed previously. The Adult Basic Literacy program is an ongoing reading prep and mastery course.

Smart Money Makes Cents Budgeting Program -To help teach township clients and citizens clever ways to take control of spending, minimizing expenses while maximizing savings.

Learn, Equip, Apply, and Develop (L.E.A.D.) - is a Freeport Township original program that teaches leadership skills to individuals with a two-fold outcome; 1) to develop the leader, 2) to teach leaders to develop others. This will create an increasingly productive, efficient, creative, and positive workforce within a company to increase the bottom line.

Right Direction - is a Freeport Township original program designed to assist Township clients 18 years of age and older in getting on track and staying on track. Right Direction program is open to all individuals in Freeport looking to make a fresh start in life, individuals referred by outside agencies, or just ordinary people seeking a better quality of life.

This multi-tiered program addresses everything from thinking processes to sustained self-sufficiency to discovering one's purpose. The workshops offered to stimulate minds, cause thought-provoking dialogue, and encourage self-reflection, all the while sharpening the skills of those who participate.

SPARK PROGRAM - To equip mothers with the tools needed to strengthen them to build a solid parenting structure in the home from which to operate a successful family.

Lighthouse Program - Allows grandparents as caregivers to join a social support system, necessary when facing today's youth's ever-changing world and moods.

Keeping up with today's youth requires a working knowledge of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, which can be a mystery to some grandparents.

Get Rid Of It Program – Created by the Freeport Township to help get illegal guns off of the streets. A secured drop box was positioned where violent crime occurs more often. The purpose of the secured box is for people who find illegal guns on the street or parents who find them in their homes can discard them discreetly. Local Law enforcement has keys to the box to retrieve any discarded weapons.

FREEPORT TOWNSHIP COVID-19 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE PROGRAMS

Freeport Township Cares Program - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, your Freeport Township has been working diligently to upgrade its programming services. These upgrades include a new process for implementing and delivering specific emergency assistance programs. Our goal is to provide some emergency relief to our residents in these unprecedented times while remaining vigilant and efficient using tax dollars.

Emergency Water Assistance Program (E.W.A.)- Launched as a pilot program in February 2019, the E.W.A. program was developed to assist working-class, elderly, and disabled Township residents with the rising costs of city water and sewer services. Since its inception, the program has successfully assisted 74 eligible applicants, totaling \$19,000 paid directly to the City of Freeport's water and sewer department. At the time, no other agency in the city of Freeport assisted with water and sewer costs, so the E.W.A. program was truly one of a kind. This program was suspended because the City of Freeport refused to sign an intergovernmental agreement with the Township specifying that 100% of the funds collected through the program had to be used to repair our failing water infrastructure.

Essential Products for COVID-19 Aftermath Program - The Freeport Township and United Presbyterian Church purchased cleaning supplies and various items in bulk and stored them at the Freeport Township office, which served as an intake and distribution point. Items came to the Township for intake and then disseminated to other city distribution points, such as The Senior Resource Center, The Veteran's Assistance Commission, and other agencies citywide. Adding various distribution points helped alleviate potential bottlenecks in service, which could transpire with an inundation of people requesting this service.

Two hundred forty unduplicated individuals were serviced through this program.

GRANTS 2020-2023

Remember that your Township doesn't give grants just to be giving them. We know that every dime we have is your money, and we pride ourselves on being mindful of your tax dollars. These grants are given to help organizations meet the needs of individuals outside the Township agency's reach. Organizations such as these are critical to not only the helping of those in need but also the strengthening of our community as a whole.

Daycare Assistance Grants – In 2020, the Freeport Township provided \$15,000 in grant funding to be equally distributed between 3 local daycare providers to service local families. To help struggling families with the cost of Daycare, the following funds were provided to local Daycare Providers. These funds were to be provided to families that were struggling with the costs of daycare during COVID-19

- Amity Society's Daycare
- First Church of the Open Bible Daycare
- Y.M.C.A. Daycare

Senior Resource Center Grant - In our efforts to further assist our home owning Senior population of Freeport, IL, the FREEPORT TOWNSHIP in collaboration with the SENIOR RESOURCE CENTER, has established the **SENIOR HOME MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**.

This program has been designed to assist Senior residents of Freeport Township by focusing on three potentially problematic areas of home maintenance for seniors.

- Landscaping
- Gutter Cleaning
- Leaf and Snow removal
- Fans/Air Conditioners
- Tree Removal/Trimming

With the rising medication costs for our seniors on fixed incomes, the Freeport Township further collaborated with the Senior Resource Center to develop and implement the **SENIOR MEDICATION PURCHASE AND PICK-UP PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM**.

Veteran's Assistance Commission – To help ensure that our VETERAN'S ASSISTANCE COMMISSION has enough funding to continue providing its top-notch medical transportation services to our Veterans, the Freeport Township has partnered with them and provided funds to assist.

The Children's Dyslexia Center of Northwest Illinois – The Freeport Township provided \$5,000 in grant funding to help ensure the continuation of the services provided by the Dyslexia Center. These funds were crucial in helping families with children struggling with dyslexia. By helping to offset some of the cost to parents, and alleviating some of their financial burdens, all while helping our most precious resources, our children.

St. Vincent DePaul – The Freeport Township provided \$20,000 in grant funding to St. Vincent DePaul. SVDP-awarded grant funds are used to assist families and individuals and families located within Freeport Township who fall outside of Township mandated duties, reaching over 150 families per year.

Boys and Girls Club – The Freeport Township provided \$30,000 in grant funding to the Boys & Girls Club in collaboration with other community sponsors to initiate the “Ready to Work” program.

This program provides skill training in the trade industry and helps keep our area youth busy and off the streets.

Voices – In 2021, the Freeport Township provided VOICES \$30,000 in grant funding. To help purchase the old Sojourn House building on Turner Avenue in Freeport. They are in the process of Renovations to turn the property into a Survivor’s Shelter for victims fleeing domestic violence. This is the only shelter of its kind in our city, and they need help finishing their renovations. This shelter will help the citizens of Freeport, singles, and families who require such services.

Freeport Arts Center– The Freeport Township provided \$30,000 in grant funding to help ensure the continuation of the SMART program provided through the Freeport Arts Center. The program began as a pilot program in 2016 aimed at supplementing the after-school programs at the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA with high-quality arts activities and reaches youth who do not have regular access to arts and cultural programming. For many years, the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA have administered valuable after-school programs at their facilities that focus on core subjects such as math, reading, science, technology, and engineering to assist youth in increasing their academic performance and test scores. However, they struggled to provide consistent arts activities that are proven to reinforce learning goals and are shown to be effective in responding to individual growth and development needs.

The Children’s Hands-on Museum – The Freeport Township provided \$30,000 in grant funding to help ensure the continuation of the services provided by CHOM. Designed to provide youth with a diverse creative center for hands-on learning through permanent and changing exhibits that stimulate intellectual curiosity and exploration in children of all types and backgrounds.

Rebuilding Together Stephenson County – The Freeport Township provided \$30,000 in grant funding to help ensure the continuation of the services provided by Rebuilding Together Stephenson County. Working to end blight, beautify the community, and build closer relationships that unite us as a stronger, more inclusive society while providing.

FREEPORT TOWNSHIP – ASSESSOR’S OFFICE

The Freeport Township Assessor's Office provides many services to the township's taxpayers/property owners and residents. These services include duties dictated by the Illinois State Constitution and Illinois Compiled Statutes. We also pride ourselves on going above and beyond these mandated duties by providing helpful information to the public.

The State of Illinois governed duties of this office require the Assessor and their staff to value properties at 1/3 of fair market value (based on the prior three years of arms-length sales) while maintaining equitable assessments between like properties. The Freeport Township Assessor and Staff take these duties seriously by monitoring and analyzing Sales, Property Characteristics, and how properties compare to other properties in similar locations, styles, amenities, etc... This is a lengthy and time-consuming process, but one that is necessary to ensure we not only provide assessed values based on market value but also fair and equitable assessments to the taxpayers of Freeport Township.

Other services the Assessor's office provides the public, but are not required to do so, include, but are not limited to:

- When a new property purchase occurs within the Township, the Assessor's Office mails a letter that includes the current Assessed Value and how it translates into Fair Market Value, Information on Property Exemptions, and How to Calculate a Tax Bill.
- If a property sells well below the fair market value as indicated by its assessed value, a letter is sent to the owner inquiring if there may be conditional issues to consider when valuing the property. Likewise, suppose a property sells well above the value indicated by the assessment. In that case, attempts are made to determine if the property has been updated or new improvements added since it was last assessed.
- Besides physically viewing properties (exterior and sometimes interior), we work with realtors and owners to ensure our property data is correct.
- Website - Freeport Township Assessor provides most property data via our website, allowing the public to view property data for most properties within the township. Information provided for most properties includes current assessed values, property data including land and building information, and in most cases, a sketch of the structures on the property.

- Once the Township has turned the assessed values over to the Chief County Assessment Office and the County publishes values, we also provide the public (upon request or via our website) a List of Arms- Length Property Sales occurring over the past 3+ years. This list assists property owners in comparing the value of their property with other properties that have sold.
- Board of Review (BOR) and/or Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB) - Even though our role in the Township Assessor's Office is to defend the assessed values to the BOR or PTAB, we encourage property owners to contact us if they have any questions or concerns involving the assessed values, property data or sales information. If they choose to appeal their assessment and need assistance in filling out the form or acquiring data to submit as evidence for their appeal, we will surely help them.
- Assessor and Staff encourage anyone with questions concerning the assessed values, property data, or appeal process to contact us. The Township Assessor's staff will gladly assist anyone in understanding these processes.

Most of these additional services the Freeport Township Assessor's Office provides are not provided by any other entity.

As you can see, Freeport Township is a good steward of taxpayer dollars and genuinely care for all Freeport residents' safety and overall well-being. Your Freeport Township is good government run by good people.

