

May 2012

Using Technology to Improve Services: Assessing Department

Required personal property information from businesses now can be submitted online

An important commitment in the Mayor's recommended FY13 operating budget is the investment in technology to increase efficiencies and deliver improved services. The Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) is responsible for overall planning and implementation in collaboration with the individual departments involved. A few examples of what can be expected through this investment in technology will be highlighted in this and subsequent *Bureau Updates* starting with the Assessing Department.

All owners of tangible personal property are required by Massachusetts law (Ch.9, s.29) to complete and file annually a true list of all taxable personal property located in the City of Boston. This requirement primarily affects businesses since most personal property owned by individuals is exempt. The personal property in Boston of utility, telecommunication and wireless companies represents approximately \$2.5B or 55.5% of the total \$4.5B in FY12.

Beginning on January 1, 2012 for FY13, Boston business owners are able to file online their Form of-List/State Tax Form 2 listing personal property. Users will be able to enter, review and edit data until ready to make the final submission. This new feature will facilitate filing in future years since asset information previously filed will carry over to the next year and businesses will only need to update their personal property information.

The reports must be filed with the Assessing Department by March 1 unless filed electronically in which case the deadline is March 31. To date, 2,385 Form 2 reports have been submitted online, 52% of the total.

Personal property consists of any tangible assets owned by an individual, a business or an organization which are not real estate and which are not permanently affixed to a particular building. [More explanation.](#)

Who Must File Reports

The Form-of-List/State Tax Form 2 must be filed by all partnerships, associations, trusts, corporations and limited liability companies and some individuals. Small businesses with personal property valued at less than \$10,000 must file but are eligible for a full exemption. Tax-exempt institutions, except religious institutions, that are entitled to an exemption must file the state 3ABC form annually or will be subject to taxation. Individuals must file state tax form 2HF for personal property not located at their domicile on January 1.

Upcoming improvements of Assessing Department services through online submission include the 38D Return (Ch.59, s.38D) used to collect income and expense information from owners of commercial and apartment properties which is expected to be available in FY14 and the filing of the 3ABC reports by tax-exempt institutions in FY15.