

How These Proposals Could Affect CareerTech, Public Education, and Local Services

In 2026, Oklahoma voters may consider two ballot measures that would change how property taxes work across the state:

- **State Question 843** would gradually eliminate property taxes on owner-occupied homes.
- **State Question 847** would limit how quickly the taxable value of property can increase each year.

OkACTE believes voters should understand how these proposals could affect local schools, CareerTech centers, and essential community services.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are ad valorem (property) taxes?

Ad valorem taxes are local property taxes paid on real estate. Unlike state income or sales taxes, this money stays in the local community where it is collected.

Property taxes help pay for:

- Public schools
- Oklahoma CareerTech centers
- County government services
- Libraries
- Public health departments
- Emergency medical services
- Roads, courts, and elections

Why is OkACTE concerned about these state questions?

CareerTech centers rely heavily on local property tax revenue. This funding supports:

- Workforce training programs
- Modern equipment and facilities
- Career and technical education for students and adults

Reducing property tax revenue could limit the resources available for CareerTech and other local services.

What would State Question 843 do?

State Question 843 would phase out property taxes on owner-occupied homes over three years:

- **2027:** 33% exemption
- **2028:** 66% exemption
- **2029:** 100% exemption

Property taxes would still apply to commercial property, rental property, and most non-homestead property.

What would State Question 847 do?

State Question 847 would slow the annual increase in taxable property values.

Supporters say this would protect property owners from sharp increases. Critics note that slower growth in property values would also slow the growth of funding for local schools and services.

Are property taxes a state tax?

No. Property taxes are a local revenue source.

Local voters approve many of the tax rates, and the money generally stays in the community where it is collected. Property taxes are one of the few ways local residents directly control funding for local services.

Where does property tax revenue go?

Local property taxes fund essential services, including:

- Public schools
- CareerTech districts
- County governments
- Libraries
- Public health services
- Emergency medical services
- Roads, bridges, courts, and elections

These services depend on stable, predictable local funding.

If property taxes are reduced, won't governments just spend less?

Not necessarily. The cost of operating schools, CareerTech centers, and emergency services does not disappear when revenue declines.

Communities generally face three choices:

- Reduce services
- Shift costs to other taxpayers
- Seek replacement funding from the state

No dedicated replacement funding source has been identified. Critics estimate State Question 843 could reduce local revenue by about **\$1.2 billion per year** once fully implemented.

Could CareerTech programs be affected?

Yes. CareerTech districts use property tax revenue to support:

- Workforce and industry training
- Skilled trades education
- Equipment and technology upgrades
- Adult education programs

Reduced funding could limit program growth and workforce development efforts.

Could local schools be affected?

Yes. Property taxes are a major source of local school funding.

Education leaders warn that significant revenue losses could affect:

- Teacher recruitment and retention
- Classroom resources
- Student programs and extracurriculars
- Facility improvements and long-term planning

Does Oklahoma already offer property tax relief?

Yes. Oklahoma provides several targeted relief programs, including:

- Homestead exemptions
- Additional exemptions for qualifying low-income homeowners

Oklahoma State Questions 843 and 847: A Clear Overview

- Senior property tax protections
- Exemptions for veterans and surviving spouses

These programs reduce taxes for those who need help while preserving funding for local services.

If revenue is reduced, who pays for services?

Public services still must be funded. Depending on future decisions, costs may be covered through:

- Reduced services
- Increased state funding
- Higher taxes on non-exempt property
- New fees or revenue sources

The outcome would depend on future legislative and local actions.

Why are CareerTech centers important to Oklahoma?

CareerTech plays a vital role in Oklahoma's economy by:

- Preparing students for in-demand jobs
- Training workers for local employers
- Supporting economic development
- Meeting workforce needs in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, energy, and technology

Strong CareerTech systems help communities grow and attract businesses.

Key Takeaway

Property taxes are a locally controlled funding source that supports schools, CareerTech centers, and essential community services.

State Questions 843 and 847 would significantly change how this revenue is generated. Voters are encouraged to weigh potential tax savings against the impact on education, workforce training, and local services their communities rely on.