

Dear Chair and members of the Committee for the Record my  
Name is Mike Fellows representing the Montana Libertarian Party.

We rise in opposition to HB 289. This issue is about the rights of  
Property owners to protect their property. Close to 9,000 voters in  
2008 decided to repeal the Ravalli County's Growth Policy and  
decide for themselves issues that control their property. The  
people in Ravalli County have spoken on this issue. Without a  
Countywide Growth policy Ravalli County can't get into the zoning  
and control business. The people I've talked to over the years  
don't want Ravalli County to become like neighboring Missoula  
County. Missoula has these taxing districts. This taxing district take  
taxes from  
everybody and gives it to the competition. Why should Florence  
Coffee, Liquid Planet, and Hastings Video have to subsidize a  
national chain in Starbucks Coffee? Wouldn't it be nice to have all  
my competitors pay for my improvements to my property in these  
taxing districts? The real reason they want HB 289( growth policy  
and zoning), is so their buddies can benefit from a law that says if  
you have a growth policy the government can subsidize your  
development and give you an exemption from the costly and time

consuming subdivision review process.

These folks would also like to restrict their competition from developing. Then they can buy their competitors land for pennies on the dollar and have it re-zoned for development. This of course creates a financial windfall for the victors. As they say follow the money.

We don't need changes in the law. As David Merrick, Libertarian Party of Ravalli County Chair points out that what these people can voluntarily set up a private district and tax themselves. But then we wouldn't be forcing everybody to take part in their scheme.

In the end this issue is about money and control. Those 9,000 voters who supported the repeal of the growth policy did so to protect their rights to control their own property. I would recommend a do not pass on HB 289. Let's protect the voter's Wishes. Thank you for your time on this issue.

178289

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# CME Group's 'Golden Toilet'? Budget Cuts Renew Anger About Chicago TIFs (VIDEO, PHOTOS)

Posted: 01/24/2012 7:33 pm EST | Updated: 01/25/2012 10:46 am EST



CHICAGO -- On Tuesday morning, a group of about 50 protesters gathered at the Board of Trade -- home of the CME Group -- to deliver a "golden toilet" to the biggest operator of U.S. futures exchanges.

The toilet was meant to represent a reported \$15 million deal approved in 2010 by the Chicago City Council, which would give CME money for Board of Trade renovations if the corporation agreed to

create a few hundred jobs and [keep its headquarters in the city until 2017](http://www.ctunet.com/blog/give-it-back-bake-sale-for-cme-millionaires) (<http://www.ctunet.com/blog/give-it-back-bake-sale-for-cme-millionaires>). The

money would come from the city's controversial tax increment financing, or TIF program, a fund made up of property tax revenues intended to stimulate the city economy and create jobs.

"CME was awarded a \$15 million TIF to renovate their bathrooms, build a fancy employee cafeteria, a fitness center for employees and a high-end audiovisual digital conference room," Catherine Murrell, communications coordinator for Stand Up Chicago, told The Huffington Post Monday. Murrell's group, along with Arise Chicago, organized the Tuesday protest, where dozens of activists gathered to criticize the deal.

Though the City Council did approve the funds for renovations, the money was never given to CME, according to Tom Alexander, assistant press secretary at Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office.

"It was approved but they never signed the deal," Alexander said. "There is no active TIF deal in place." Activists, however, feel that the funds should not have been approved in the first place.

"The best way to use [TIF] money would be for things our community needs, like parks and schools," said Maria Hueramo of the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, which last week was denied TIF funds to improve Albany Park. "We also need services for senior citizens, for people who don't have a lot of income to help them with their nutrition."

Hueramo, who attended Tuesday's protest, said she believes it is an "injustice" for a company like CME to receive any taxpayer money when schools, parks and social services are struggling with funding.

CME, as well as other large Illinois companies, has become used to the presence of protesters. Occupy Chicago has railed against massive tax breaks that the state approved in order to keep CME, Sears and Chicago Board Options Exchange in Illinois.

"It's getting old," Nick Allen, who works in the CME building and was watching the demonstration, said of the Tuesday protest. "I don't think it's proving a point."

#### THE IDEA BEHIND TIFS

Alexander said the primary goal for the city's tax increment financing or TIF districts is to create jobs and stimulate the city's economy, and Mayor Emanuel has echoed that sentiment publicly. When announcing a TIF deal with Sara Lee in December, Emanuel said he was "so proud" that the company was moving "home" to Chicago after being based in the suburbs.

The deal will give Sara Lee \$5 million to \$6.5 million in tax incremental financing money ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/08/sara-lee-chicagobound-com\\_n\\_1136830.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/08/sara-lee-chicagobound-com_n_1136830.html)) -- after it proves to the city that it will bring at least 500 jobs to Chicago and move to the Southwest Loop, which was described by *Crain's Chicago Business* as a "sleepy and largely vacant warehouse district" (<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20111208/BLOGSo2/111209823/sara-lee-gets-up-to-6-5-million-to-move-headquarters-500-jobs-to-west-loop>) that could benefit from the business.

For years, former Mayor Richard M. Daley was criticized for approving TIF projects downtown, allegedly diverting the funds from blighted areas where aid was more needed. When Emanuel took office and created a TIF panel to recommend changes to the controversial program, he said he would avoid approving downtown TIFs. But, the mayor said, job creation was the ultimate goal.

The mayor's office would not comment on the merits of the \$15 million CME deal approved by the City Council for Board of Trade renovations, saying only that the deal is "not active."

"The Mayor has recommitted the City to using TIF for the purposes of job creation and economic development, and all TIF deals are being evaluated with these objectives in mind, first and foremost," Alexander stated via an email.

Alexander also explained that for any company or project to receive the funds, it must follow through on the commitments that are part of that deal. In this case, CME was

set to get \$15 million over 10 years if it retained 1,750 positions and created 638 jobs in Chicago ([http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-11-10/business/ct-biz-1110-cme-breaks-20111110\\_1\\_cme-group-cbot-building-property-tax-credit](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-11-10/business/ct-biz-1110-cme-breaks-20111110_1_cme-group-cbot-building-property-tax-credit)), as the *Chicago Tribune* reported:

The company said it needed the funds to fend off its main competitor when it bid for the Chicago Board of Trade. The funds also persuaded the firm to stay in Chicago after it acquired NYMEX Holdings Inc. in 2008 instead of moving to that exchange's offices in New York.

"We never accepted the TIF funds," CME spokesman Chris Grams told The Huffington Post on Tuesday.

When asked about the fact that CME had not accepted the TIF money for the Board of Trade renovations, Stand Up Chicago policy analyst Elizabeth Parisian said it should return the \$77 million-per-year tax break from the state of Illinois as well. CME's Grams said the tax deal allowed his company to be on "equal footing" with other Illinois firms and global exchanges and ensured that Chicago will remain the "risk management capital of the world."

Parisian said that while in some cases TIFs may create jobs, CME has not done much of that in Chicago or elsewhere.

"Let's talk about CME and jobs," Parisian said. "This company takes home \$1 billion per year, and they have 2,500 employees worldwide. That's about how many people went to my high school ... The idea that CME is a job creator, that's a huge stretch."

#### TIFS TAKE CENTER STAGE

For years, media coverage of the city's TIF program has been scarce, aside from some in-depth reporting from the *Chicago Reader's* Mick Dumke and Ben Jovarsky (<http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-chicago-reader-tif-archive/Content?oid=1180567>).

But when the city started to face budgetary challenges over the past two years, including layoffs and cuts to city services, TIFs took center stage ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/29/mayor-rahm-emanuels-tif-p\\_n\\_940998.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/29/mayor-rahm-emanuels-tif-p_n_940998.html)).

"At a time when everybody from the police to the schools needs more money, the city is stockpiling hundreds of millions of dollars," Cook County Commissioner John Fritchey told the Chicago News Cooperative over the summer. "It escapes me how city officials can talk about the importance of education while taking money from schools and giving it to car dealers and grocery stores ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/13/city-approves-7-million-t\\_n\\_897149.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/13/city-approves-7-million-t_n_897149.html))."

Since the City Council approved Mayor Emanuel's budget, residents and community activists have staged protests over everything from cuts to mental health services to Monday library closures -- and many say TIFs can help close budget gaps without cuts to services. But the city says TIFs and the budget are two different things.

"TIF deals are individualized and reflective of the rules governing the TIF program, the specific TIF district, the level of market interest, and numerous other factors," Alexander said in a statement. "Individual TIF deals have nothing to do with the city's 2012 budget." (The Chicago News Cooperative has reported that TIF money over the years has been pretty evenly distributed between private companies and public works projects (<http://www.chicagonewscoop.org/tif-panel-report-redcems-quigleys-long-crusade/>).)

Donna Roberts, an Englewood resident who helped deliver the "golden toilet" to CME on Tuesday, said she has watched her neighborhood deteriorate over the years and was outraged that CME could even ask for TIF money.

"We need it in the blighted areas," Roberts said. "The areas that the mayor is talking about -- he wants to see change. Change in Englewood. Change in Lawndale. Those are blighted areas, and that's where the TIF money is supposed to be spent."

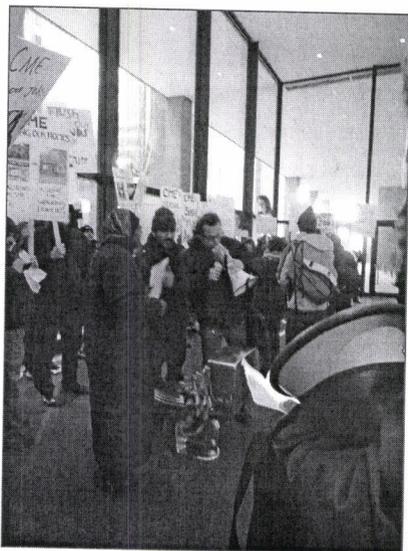
Parisian said union members and activists are well aware of what TIFs are, and with record unemployment, foreclosures and poverty, they will make their opinions heard.

"It's time everyone get their priorities in the right place. There are places that need this money much, much more," Parisian said. "Give back all the corporate welfare."

Check out photos from Tuesday's "golden toilet" protest here, courtesy of Stand Up Chicago.



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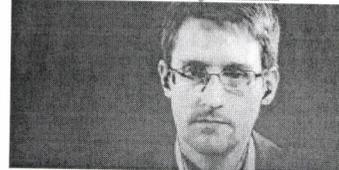
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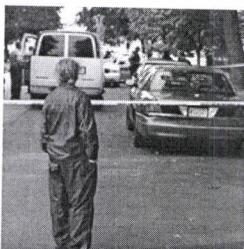


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- [CME Group has unused tax incentives package from 2008 ...](#)  
([http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-11-10/business/ct-biz-1110-cme-breaks-20111110\\_1\\_cme-group-cbot-building-property-tax-credit](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-11-10/business/ct-biz-1110-cme-breaks-20111110_1_cme-group-cbot-building-property-tax-credit))
- [Video: Emanuel on TIF, pensions, CME and what his budget means ...](#)  
(<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20111013/NEWS02/111019935/video-emanuel-on-tif-pensions-cme-and-what-his-budget-means-for-chicago-business>)
- [Corporate Tax Break Bill Sunk - Chicago News Cooperative](#)  
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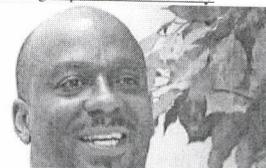
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[CME](#) month the CME got a special tax break from the Illinois legislature and [CME](#). This month Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives and Chairman of the Democratic Party of Illinois, Mike Madigan, announced that Illinois is going to run short of money for its public works projects. Anyone see a connection?

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[CME](#) the single largest taxpayer in the state of Illinois. All states and cities offer tax incentives to lure large corporations because they create jobs and pay the bulk of the taxes. Do you think the other cities that were trying to woo CME were offering them nice bathrooms? How do you think we lured Boeing? If you write something negative about tax incentives, you don't understand how this game works. Your ignorance is like a neon sign.

And if you don't like this game, there's another country above or below us that would welcome you. It's the only game there is.

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[CME](#) is way past time to end this program. 250 million is siphoned off from CPS and put into the TIF fund every year. Library hours shortened, mental health centers closed, when does it end? It would be the right thing to kill this easily abused program, but it is easier for Emanuel to blame the CTU or AFSCME for the budget

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[/social/Karen\\_Ferguson?action=comments](/social/Karen_Ferguson?action=comments) What I don't get is, the comment about "bringing Sara Lee home to Chicago from the suburbs". So, it's ok to put people in the suburbs out of work or force them to commute with Metra price increase on Feb 1?? It's the same with my company, there are no new jobs being created by our company being moved to the city... just the added expense of current employees having to commute... I work at a company that has 24/7 operation but the only potential revenue increase for the city is the 9-5'ers possibly eating out during their workday.... not very practical if you are on the afternoon or midnight shifts... or working weekends. I do believe Daley gave the company I work for millions in tax breaks for the move when we were perfectly happily situated in the Northwest Suburbs for decades. it's utter crap

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# The TIF Illumination Project at One Year

Posted: 02/14/2014 5:43 pm EST | Updated: 04/16/2014 5:59 am EDT

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On February 12 of 2013, the night of the State of the Union, a town meeting was held at the Chopin Theater in Chicago's Near West Side. The subject was tax increment financing. Despite the complexity of the topic and the competition from President Obama, some 390 people packed the theater to hear a journalist, an academic and an activist discuss TIFs.

The TIF Town Meeting (<http://tifailliance.weebly.com/presentations.html>) was the launch of the CivicLab's (<http://www.civiclabs.us>) TIF Illumination Project.



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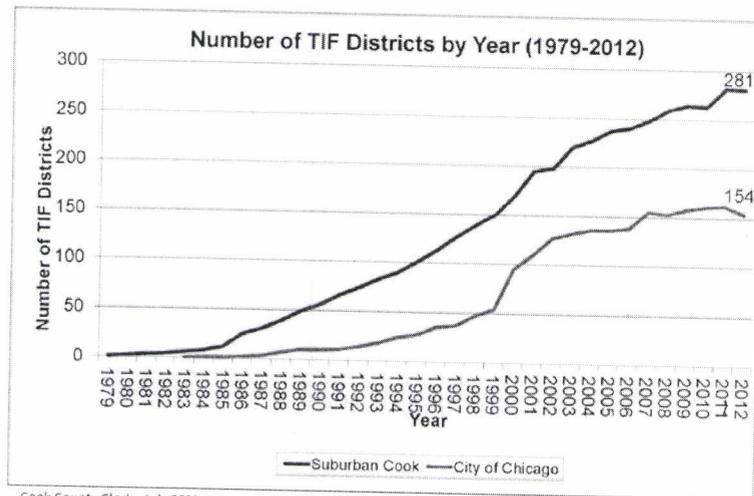
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The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Illumination Project is an effort of a group of volunteers in Chicago to investigate and expose a decades-old municipal finance scheme that annually extracts almost 500 million dollars of local property taxes and places that money in a program controlled by the mayor. This program has dispensed billions of property tax dollars to major U.S. companies (Walmart, Target, Home Depot, UPS, Coca-Cola, United Airlines, Willis Insurance) to well-heeled developers of Loop office towers and to a collection of connected developers throughout the city.

This program has been a source of controversy here for years but is not readily understood by Chicagoans. It is decidedly not a public process and the rationale behind what projects are selected for subsidy in the name of "community development" is not apparent or available for any community to debate or participate in. Chicago has a notoriously corrupt and opaque government with numerous local councilmen ([http://articles.latimes.com/1987-03-12/news/mn-9366\\_1\\_city-council-member](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-03-12/news/mn-9366_1_city-council-member)) having been sent to prison. The city was ruled with an iron hand for 43 years by the father and son Daleys, and the Democratic machine (<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/774.html>) had a firm lock on local government for almost one hundred years. This is a tough town for civic engagement, government transparency and grassroots urban policy planning.

A Tax Increment Finance district is created by the City's Department of Planning and Development. It is a tool to capture property taxes from all properties inside the district. A TIF is usually created to build some project in a "blighted" community that the free market won't support. The developer seeks a gift of cash and/or land to do their project because it is deemed to be a public good. A snapshot is taken of the value of the properties inside the district and how much property taxes they are paying. The TIF district captures all INCREMENT from all those properties for 23 years. The money captured by the TIF is effectively "off the books" from the annual public budgeting process.

Since TIFs first appeared in Chicago in 1986 they have captured over \$5 billion in property taxes.



Cook County Clerk - July 2013

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The TIF Program has taken on significant political and civic import because it diverts and disperses property taxes. In Chicago about 54 cents of every property tax dollar collected by the city is supposed to go to the Board of Education. Other units of government that rely on property taxes for significant parts of their budget include the public libraries, the public parks, the city colleges, the county government and the city, itself. So any entity that steps in and skims, so to speak, hundreds of millions of property tax dollars annually is a grave threat to the finances of local government. Currently Chicago has 154 TIF districts ([http://www.civillab.us/tif\\_illumination\\_project/](http://www.civillab.us/tif_illumination_project/)) covering about 32 percent of the city. No other city in America has so many special taxing bodies.

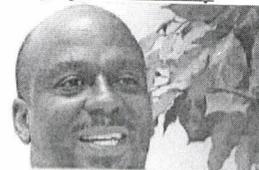
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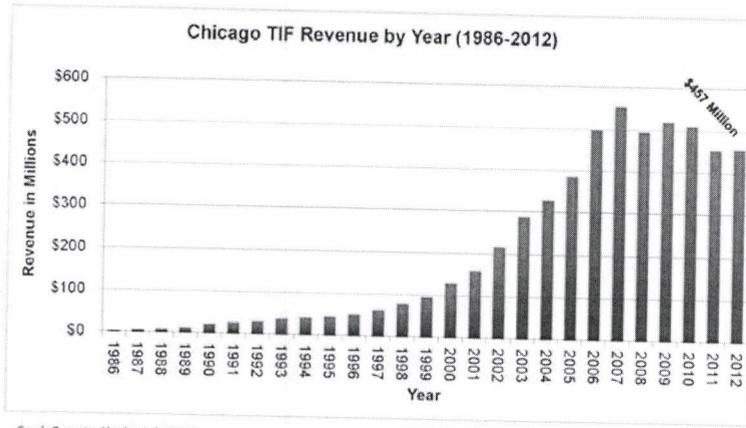
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The TIF Illumination Project is an exercise in civic imagination. It's about civic geography and civic mental map-mapping. We set out to answer the question of "What are TIFs doing to MY community?" If you ask a person, "How is life in the Kinzie Industrial TIF?" they will look at you blankly. But if you ask, "How is life in the 27th Ward?" then people can locate themselves and form a response based on their lived experience of that community. We are telling people what TIFs are doing to us a ward-by-ward basis.

Our volunteers have acquired eight different sets of data and using data mining, GIS coding, map making, investigatory journalism and crowd-sourced organizing, we have compiled an unprecedented picture of what TIFs are doing across the city.

We can tell you, on a ward-by-ward basis:

- How many TIFs are in the ward
- How much money they extracted from within the ward last year
- How much money was left in the TIF accounts at the start of this year
- What projects were funded by TIFs inside the ward
- Location of public schools that have closed by the Board of Education
- Location of public schools that have received budget cuts for the current year

We produce a graphic poster showing all this against a map of the ward we are covering plus a general piece that explains what TIFs are. We do a 50-minute presentation that walks through the history and scope of the TIF program and then zooms in to reveal the details of the TIFs in the ward we are visiting.

At the TIF Town Meeting at the Chopin Theater on February 12, 2013, we asked the attendees if they found the information useful. There was a strong response from the audience that this information was a revelation. We then invited folks to return to their communities and organized public meetings -- or Illuminations -- as we call them.

People responded with enthusiasm. The first meeting was in the 6th Ward on March 9 and since then we've been to 24 meetings and have Illuminated 147 TIFs across 24 wards! Over 2,000 people have attended these meetings. All the [presentations are archived on our TIF Reports website](http://tifreports.com/tif-town-meetings).

Here is the graphic produced for the TIF Illumination of the 4th Ward (Hyde Park, home of the University of Chicago and President Obama) we did on May 13, 2013.



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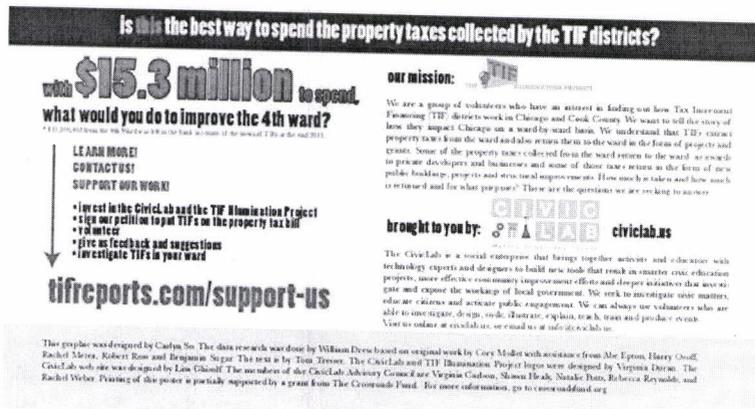


The back of the piece remains the same across all our Illuminations and will be updated for meetings in 2014 to incorporate the latest data. We endeavor to explain what TIFs are using text and graphics.

The piece was produced by [Tom Tresser \(http://www.tresser.com\)](http://www.tresser.com), designed by [Carlyn So \(http://resusstudio.com\)](http://resusstudio.com) and based on the data research of [Cory Mollet \(http://www.linkedin.com/pub/cory-mollet/45/621/4b7\)](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/cory-mollet/45/621/4b7) and [Bill Drew \(http://billdrewblog.wordpress.com\)](http://billdrewblog.wordpress.com). There are many others who helped and some would prefer to keep their participation private.

In the graphic we also highlight our original research that revealed that there was a staggering \$1.7 billion in all the TIF accounts at the end of 2011 and 2012.

Our first poster went through seven iterations and was reviewed by one of America's most experienced academics in the TIF and local government finance arena. We are constantly testing this work. Is this the best way to explain TIFs? We've translated this part of the poster into Spanish and are working to turn the poster into a comic book and animation.



[http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2014-02-13-4th\\_Wardbottom.jpg](http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2014-02-13-4th_Wardbottom.jpg)

This section is immediately below the map and contains the final exclusive piece of news that the TIF Illumination Project delivers to communities. We use the same data analysis that got us the basic Illumination to determine how much money was left in the TIF accounts from the in-ward TIFs at the start of the year.

This number is shown in red and asks the provocative question: "What would you do to improve the ward" if you had this money available? In the case of the 4th Ward at the start of 2012, that number was \$15.3 million.

The remainder of this section of the graphic explains what the TIF Illumination Project is about and also explains that it is a project of the CivicLab, a new co-working space in the West Loop dedicated to collaboration, education and innovation around civic engagement.

From February to October of 2013 the TIF Illumination Project has Illuminated 147 TIFs across 25 wards in front of over 2,000 people. We continue to get requests to illuminate the TIFs in ward we did not get to.

Some 2,000 people have attended these events and received a piece of civic education and that is grounded in their community and made clear and powerful via graphics, PowerPoint slides and the narrative of the presenter. We have shown folks who has gotten paid via TIFs and revealed details hitherto kept secret -- including the startling fact that the TIF accounts held \$1.7 billion (<http://www.progressillinois.com/quick-hits/content/2013/08/28/chicago-s-30th-ward-residents-disturbed-tif-program-s-impact-education>) on January 1, 2013.

The net result is that people ask more questions than can be answered. They are angry. They wonder if the city is truly broke, as the mayor claims. They want to know who green-lighted the projects that received so much public dollars and why are essential city services being cut (including the closing of 49 public schools) at the same time?

We launched an online petition to put TIF data on the property tax bills that the county issues twice a year, and beginning in July of 2014, that will happen.

We launched a second online petition (<http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/mayor-rahm-emanuel-empty>) demanding that the mayor account for the \$1.7 billion and release those funds to the units of government that SHOULD'VE gotten those funds in the first place. Over 3,400 people have signed so far. In an August 2, 2013 editorial headlined "Hand Over TIF Surplus Cast To Chicago Schools" (<http://www.suntimes.com/opinions/21685021-474/hand-over-tif-surplus-cash-to-chicago-schools.html>), "the *Chicago Sun-Times* agreed with us!

We are delighted that our Illuminations have not shed new light on a major piece of Chicago's financial infrastructure but that our work is impacting public policy.

We are thrilled to see civic indignation evolve into civic imagination as our neighbors are now looking past the corrupt and broken TIF Program toward some new ways of imagining local economic development. We will report on these developments in 2014.

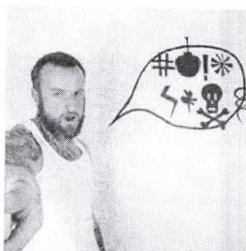
More information on the TIF Illumination Project, including all public presentations made to date , is online at <http://www.tifreports.com> (<http://www.tifreports.com>).

More information on the CivicLab and our co-working program is at <http://www.civiclub.us> (<http://www.civiclub.us>).

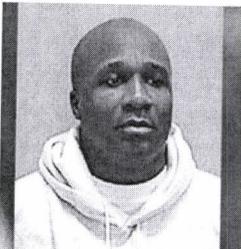
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