

## **Getting started: research**

### ***How can I find out what the property is and where it is located?***

You can start the research process on the Commissioner of State Lands website, [cosl.org](https://cosl.org). You'll find an instructional video demonstrating how to research on the web page.

The COSL office receives the property's legal description and tax information upon certification. As a service to prospective buyers, we maintain a link to the tax assessor's property cards online. This can be found under the auction catalog at <https://www.cosl.org>, by clicking on the parcel number.

Physical addresses may be listed on the property cards maintained by the assessor. We highly recommend that you further research the property to determine its location and condition. You may need to research public information, such as plat maps within the county assessor's office. The State Land Surveyor's Office also maintains a retrieval search online at [www.plat.arkansas.gov](http://www.plat.arkansas.gov).

The best option is to invest the money for a title search; however, even a title search does not provide guarantees. The COSL does not guarantee usability, accessibility, existence or clear title to the property.

Be certain of what you are bidding on before you bid.

### ***What are 'interested parties'?***

Interested parties are individuals or companies that have a filed and recorded interest in the property at the time of certification. They may hold a lien, mortgage, judgment, or other encumbrance on the subject property. Properly recorded liens and encumbrances are filed with the circuit clerk's office.

You will need to do your own research to determine what, if any, liens and encumbrances are filed against the property. As mentioned above, you may wish to consult a local title company or abstractor to perform a title search to be certain. However, funds expended for this type of research are not recoverable.

### ***Are liens, mortgages, judgments, or other encumbrances extinguished by the tax sale?***

The COSL attempts to notify all interested parties that are identified and made known to us. If an interested party receives proper notice of a sale and fails to protect its interest by redemption of the taxes, that interest may be extinguished.

Some liens and assessments such as city liens, improvement district taxes and property owner's fees will most likely transfer with the property and become your responsibility as the new owner.

It is not uncommon for tax delinquent properties to be encumbered by Internal Revenue Service liens. Federal law provides some protection from tax sales to the IRS. Purchasers should contact the IRS for information on how to redeem or satisfy liens held by the agency.

## **Live public auctions**

### ***How do I register to bid?***

Registration begins 30 minutes before each auction at the sale site. There is no fee to register. Simply fill out a numbered bidder registration card and return the completed form to a COSL employee. Keep the opposite half as your bidder number.

### ***How are properties offered at the auction?***

Beginning in the 2023 auction season, we will hold public auctions as regional events. The parcels are offered in sale number order, as shown in the catalog and on our website. The minimum bid is the amount of taxes, interest, penalty and costs due as of the sale date, as shown in the catalog. The total purchase price is the minimum bid plus any competitive bidding.

### ***How do I pay if I am the successful bidder?***

**We do not accept cash for the sale of parcels.** You may pay for parcels with a personal or business check, cashier's check, money order or credit or debit card if there is an internet connection available

at the sale site. Card transactions are subject to a 4% non-refundable processing fee charged by the card terminal provider. All payments must be for the exact amount owed.

You must pay in full immediately following the auction. There will not be additional time given for purchasers to travel to their bank or retrieve forms of payment elsewhere. Please have your payment ready in the exact amount.

## **Online auctions**

### ***What properties are offered for online auctions?***

The Commissioner of State Lands Office holds online auctions for parcels that were previously offered but did not sell at public auction. Thirty (30) days after the public auction, those properties appear in the online post-auction sale.

### ***Why didn't the parcel already sell?***

Sometimes the right person just wasn't at the auction, or bidders missed a good deal. But it's vital to research, because unsold parcels may have liens, may be inaccessible or may have other problems.

### ***How can I find parcels available for post-auction sale?***

You can go to [auction.cosl.org](https://auction.cosl.org), or click the Post Auction Sales link from our home page (<https://www.cosl.org>). You can find a list by county, or search on a map, at this site.

### ***How do I buy property through the online auctions?***

Anyone can browse and research property. Before you can bid, you'll need to register. You must be a U.S. resident with a valid address and U.S. identification. We use a third-party vendor to verify identification. You'll also need to enter a valid credit or debit card number to bid. Your card will not be charged unless you are the winning bidder.



After you register, you can find the parcel(s) you wish to bid on by searching either the list view or map view. You can find the property's information, and, if it's what you want, click the button to bid. The screen will show you the current bid and the minimum required bid amount. You may choose to enter a maximum bid and let the online system bid for you, up to that amount. Or you can manually raise your bid when you receive email notifications that you've been outbid.

You'll find instructional videos demonstrating both the registration and the bidding processes on the auction website.

***Do I have to pay for online auctions with a credit or debit card?***

Yes and no. The first \$100 of your winning online bid will automatically be charged to your card. If your bid is more than \$100, you may choose to pay the balance online with the card, or you may send certified funds (cashier's check or money order) to: Commissioner of State Lands, 1020 West 4th St., Little Rock, AR 72201. We must receive the balance within 10 business days of the auction's end. This means we must have the money in hand; postmarks are not accepted. Please consider using an expedited courier service with tracked delivery.

**My bid won. Now what?  
(Live & Online)**

***When will I receive the deed?***

After the auction, we will process the winning bidder's payment and issue a limited warranty deed. We will record the limited warranty deed with the circuit clerk of the county where the property is located. The recorded deed is then forwarded to the buyer's mailing address. If a deed is e-recorded, it will be emailed to the email address on the buyer's auction registration.

***What is a Limited Warranty Deed?***

The Commissioner of State Lands issues a limited warranty deed for the sale of tax delinquent property. This is similar to a quitclaim deed; it only transfers the interest the state held in the property. The COSL does not guarantee usability, accessibility or existence of the property, nor can it guarantee or warrant clear title to the property.

The sale is subject to a 90-day litigation period, beginning when the deed is issued. We recommend that you not begin major changes or improvements to the property until the litigation period ends. If the sale is overturned in court, the COSL refunds the purchase price to the buyer. Credit card fees are not refundable, and the cost of any improvements may not be refundable.

***What if I wish to withdraw my bid?***

Your bid is a legal and binding contract to purchase. Once placed, bids cannot be withdrawn or changed. Failure to complete payment will result in the bidder being permanently banned from purchasing land at tax-delinquent auctions and through the online auction system.

The Commissioner of State Lands may take additional legal action against buyers whose payments are dishonored or rejected by their bank, or who stop payment or cancel a payment.

***For additional information about purchasing tax delinquent property from the Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands office, please contact the office by calling 501-324-9422, emailing [land@cosl.org](mailto:land@cosl.org) or visiting [cosl.org](http://cosl.org).***

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# Purchasing Tax-Delinquent Land

## *A Buyer's Guide to Public & Online Auctions*



**Tommy Land**  
**Arkansas Commissioner  
of State Lands**