



VALUATION REVIEW

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Opportunities abound in legal, estate work

Commercial appraisers are arming themselves with the training required to tackle any assignment including those dealing with legal and estate matters. The opportunities are out there to be taken full advantage of.

“Training opportunities, that’s a big one,” Metro-West Appraisal Co. Chief Operating Officer **Brandon Boudreau** said. “A lot of our clients are attorneys who find themselves needing clarification and valuation on real estate that is tied to litigation. It isn’t so much training appraisers to do these assignments that are the stumbling block, it’s finding an appraiser willing to take on that work. It can be somewhat intimidating for an appraiser to step out of their regular duties and work in the legal arena. The legal work is also very fragmented.

“The legal side for commercial appraisers is a good position to be in if you make the contacts and establish a strong, referral network,” Boudreau added. “There are a lot of opportunities for appraisers who can specialize on legal matters. The body of work for an appraiser in legal proceedings can be more interesting. Again, we have a very fragmented legal population that only uses appraisals from time to time. I’m not talking about the big law firms; I’m referring to attorneys involved in divorce, probate

and cases involved in litigation.”

Many appraisers might not be willing to take on the added responsibilities facing legal work, which makes it tough for attorneys to find an appraiser willing to work with them. Appraisers are busy, and the legal community finds it difficult to find these valuation experts to render an opinion on legal, commercial matters.



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“It’s not your standard mortgage appraisal or portfolio valuation,” Boudreau said. “Financially, commercial appraising on the legal side is typically great compensation. But just being analytical and supplying the appraisal report isn’t enough for the appraiser to do regarding the legal, commercial assignment. To get engaged in further assignments, the appraiser must be able to articulate their conclusions.

“Focusing on obtaining sufficient knowledge pertaining to highest and best use is critical

for the commercial appraiser,” Boudreau added. “The understanding of zoning restrictions and how property is structured and used are important factors. Commercial appraisers are required to not just determine value as far as what the building is worth, but determine value or worth based on what the structure will be used for. That’s a major difference between typical residential appraising and something professional commercial appraisers must have extensive training and knowledge of.”

Estate appraisals is another avenue commercial appraisers can explore.

“As for probate cases (estates), there is a ton of opportunity here for the appraiser,” Boudreau said. “It is something appraisers should be keeping their eyes on. Knowing judges and probate attorneys in the local market is an advantage for commercial appraisers. It’s a pretty consistent and steady business with companies and firms specializing in handling of estates.”

The idea of probate work growing stems from companies liquidating assets, but those companies not having appraisers on staff to value the liquidated assets. Boudreau suggests that partnerships between the appraisers and these companies can be built.



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