

Chicago, IL Cook County

How many times have you heard, “You need an attorney to appeal taxes in Cook County”? The staff of Paradigm Tax Group has successfully represented properties throughout Cook County for over 12 years and our track record over this time is proof that this statement simply isn’t true. Please allow us to explain.

There are 3 levels of appeal in Cook County:

1. Cook County Assessor’s Office
2. Cook County Board of Review
3. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board or Circuit Court of Cook County

While it is true that taxpayers need to engage an attorney at levels 2 and 3, they DO NOT need to at level 1; and the Cook County Assessor’s Office is where the great majority of assessment relief is given. Furthermore, a great majority of cases are resolved at this initial level and therefore, further appeals to levels 2 and 3 are never required.

If you have either never appealed your Cook County real estate assessment, or you have used an attorney in the past, we encourage you to ask: Why use Paradigm instead of an attorney?

1. Most assessment appeals are valuation issues, not legal issues. Our Chicago office staff, made up of attorneys, appraisers and CPAs has the requisite experience and expertise to properly identify the most effective valuation arguments and present them to the Assessor’s Office.
2. We take advantage of a little-used step with the Assessor’s Office called Re-Review. After filing an appeal and receiving an initial result, taxpayers can then file a Re-Review with another department within the Assessor’s Office to obtain additional assessment relief. Because attorneys can file appeals at levels 2 and 3, they sometimes don’t bother with the administrative “headache” of filing a Re-Review, which is a mistake because additional assessment relief can be achieved on Re-Review.
3. Paradigm Tax Group is more cost-effective. Most attorneys charge a contingent fee for each year of a property’s triennial reassessment cycle. However, since almost all of the work is done in the first year, Paradigm’s contingent fee is for the first year of savings only. Our clients keep 100% of the savings in years 2 and 3. Furthermore, since most attorneys charge a higher contingent fee for appeals that go beyond the first level, there is no real incentive for them to maximize tax savings early in the process. If an appeal does have to be filed beyond the Assessor’s Office level of appeal, we have relationships with attorneys who can file the appeals at below-market rates such that the total fees paid by the client are still less than what they would have paid had they retained an attorney outright.



4. Clients recognize their tax savings within several months, rather than in a few years. Because the Assessor's Office is the only level of appeal in which we can file, we are necessarily very aggressive in trying to maximize tax savings at that level. As a result, our clients are able to recognize the tax savings by the time the property's 2nd installment tax bill is issued, versus the 2 or 3 years it takes for an appeal to be resolved with the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board or Circuit Court of Cook County.
5. Relationships. We maintain and nurture the same kinds of "relationships" that the attorneys say only they have. In many cases, our relationships are even stronger since our approach is far less adversarial than most law firms.

The bottom line is that Paradigm Tax Group CAN and does appeal property assessments in Cook County. In representing hundreds of the nation's largest manufacturing firms, as well as a majority of the country's leading real estate investment trusts, Paradigm is able to provide clients with local expertise throughout the United States. Our national client list and local references are impeccable and will confirm that the above points represent faster and more cost-effective tax minimization solutions than can possibly be provided by local attorneys. With 2008 assessments generally reflecting last year's stronger economy, today's declining property and market values have resulted in thousands of Cook County properties being significantly over-assessed.

If you have any questions or would like a free review of your 2008 assessment, please contact:

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