

Finding The Right Appraiser For The Job

Q. In conjunction with the settlement and distribution of property within my father's estate, our attorney has requested that I, as successor trustee, have appraisals prepared on five properties that are part of the estate.

The properties include several residences, vacant commercial land and a shopping center, located in three different counties. I would like to retain one appraiser to prepare appraisals on all the properties, but have been unsuccessful in doing so.

Several of the appraisers interviewed stated they only prepare residential appraisals, while others stated that they do not work in some of the counties where the properties are located. What should I do?

F. Evans, Lake Wildwood

S. As you have discovered, appraisers generally are trained and licensed to prepare appraisals on either residential properties or commercial properties, with only a small minority like myself that do both property types.

A residential license appraiser can only appraise residential properties having a value of less than \$1.0 million, while a commercial appraiser holding a certified general license is permitted to appraise any type of property, including residential.

Therefore, you will very likely need to retain an appraiser who is licensed and

specializes in residential properties to complete the home assignments, while a commercial appraiser will be needed for the more complex non-residential properties.

Further complicating your task is the fact that the properties are located in several

counties. Most residential appraisers limit their practices to one or two nearby counties, while commercial appraisers may prepare appraisals in a wide geographic region, but will tend to specialize by property type.

The net result is that you will most likely need to retain multiple appraisers given the scope of the task.

Do not simply select an appraiser out of the yellow pages. Rather, the ultimate selection of the appraiser(s) should be like retaining any other professional and completed on a referral basis.

Check the appraiser's licensing status and professional qualifications that should include providing you with a summary of their educational background, professional experience, and client referrals. Seek an appropriately designated appraiser, preferable one having membership in the Appraisal Institute holding the SRA designation indicating residential expertise, or the MAI for commercial properties.

---Submitted by Daniel R. Ketcham & Associates



Daniel R. Ketcham