



JILL'S

Word on the Street

Help, my property taxes are too high! I need you to lower them, NOW!

I hear the above words fairly often at [Lake County Appeal](#), and that usually begins a brief lesson on what this law firm does.

Property taxes are a complex issue, and everyone who owns property in pretty much anywhere in Illinois knows that property taxes are too high. The tax rate varies from town to town and township to township within most Illinois counties and is completely dependent on the numerous taxing bodies (consisting of schools, libraries, roads, park districts, etc., and all of their corresponding pensions). Lake County Appeal works to ensure that clients pay their fair share of taxes and no more. Lake County Appeal can't change the tax rate, since it is set by others.

So, you're still wondering what we actually do? We work to build a case for our clients that proves that the [local assessor](#) has valued their property incorrectly. Simply, the assessor values a property (In all but Cook County, the assessment is supposed to be 33.33% of the property's fair market value.), and your tax bill is, in general, calculated as the assessment multiplied by the tax rate. I get to assist in finding the evidence for our attorney to argue and win before the county Board of Review—I really

like that part of my job! I use evidence such as recent sales of similar properties and equity-related evidence (which means your property is just like all of your neighbors', so it should be valued the same).

What if I'm having an off day and miss something? We have multiple people look at every client file to confirm that we've reviewed all of the facts; and the attorney, of course, has the final determination. Sometimes we have a great case and lose but, you don't have to worry because, as a Lake County Appeal client, we will take your case to the state level if the attorney believes that the evidence is strong.

In the interest of full disclosure, you should know that the assessor is sometimes correct in the valuation of your property, and then we don't have a case to appeal. We do not appeal every client's property assessment. As a law firm, our attorney has rules and guidelines that must be followed. And remember that if you are found to be fairly assessed, it isn't terrible, it just means that you are paying your fair share of taxes and no more.



Jill Odzer is a Commercial Analyst at Lake County Appeal. She joined the firm in 2015, supporting the legal

*representation of homeowner and commercial properties
throughout Lake County.*