

Assessment Appeals: Frequently Asked Questions

How do Assessment Appeals work?

California property owners are assessed on an annual basis (you usually receive your property assessment between July and September) for the new Fiscal Year, but you still have an opportunity to appeal between July 2nd and November 30th. Visit our website at: www.matthewlehmanappraisal.com for details on the Appeals Process. Look at the Assessment Appeals tab for questions and answers.

What is required of me in this process?

When you sign the authorization for Matthew Lehman Appraisal, Inc. to represent you, your obligations are complete. You do nothing and the responsibility becomes ours. We do everything from filing the application to attending the appeal hearing. We also send you copies of all correspondence.

What about firms that charge “up-front” fees to file my assessment appeal?

Keep in mind, “**you get what you pay for**” Many advanced-fee firms will file your claim for an “**up front**” fee. **Here is the problem**... These organizations collect the fee and either file your claim and disappear, or they file your claim and accept a “token” reduction. They have no incentive to fight for a reduced value since they’ve already been paid. **Never pay any firm in advance to reduce your assessment!**

What type properties do you represent?

We represent homeowners and commercial properties of all types. Our client base includes many attorneys and accountants. We represent their personal real property, as well as many of their client properties.

OK, I return this formwhat happens next?

We send you the necessary forms to be signed, and upon return, we file your application with the County (with copies sent to you). California Counties have up to two years to resolve your appeal, but most process appeals within 6-8 months. The sooner we file on your behalf, the quicker any refund will be sent.

I heard that some County Assessors are reviewing properties for possible reductions. Or I have already filed for an assessment review by me (or through an Agent)...Isn't that good enough?

No, you may or may not receive even a nominal reduction with the Assessor review process. You also have no rights in this procedure. With an appeal, we file through the County Board of Supervisors, not the Assessor. You are guaranteed a hearing, with proper representation and due process.

Who is Matthew Lehman Appraisal, Inc.?

Matthew Lehman Appraisal, Inc. has been appealing property tax values for a long time. Matthew Lehman Appraisal, Inc. was originally formed in 1989 as a typical appraisal business, performing residential, commercial and industrial appraisal reports. In 1993, numerous requests were received to represent property owners in assessment appeals. We appraiser's that devote 100% of their efforts exclusively toward representing owners in assessment appeal matters. We represent the smallest & largest of all types of properties throughout California.

I have an Income Property, how does this affect the appeal?

If your property is leased to another party, we may require additional information specific to that lease. Remember, we represent you and all information is confidential.

I have information as to property value declines in my area, why can't I file an Appeal myself?

You may absolutely file an appeal on your own behalf.... **The problem is:** Many property owners are called to attend the Appeals hearing and are either ill-prepared, or completely intimidated by the proceedings. The Appeals hearing may require valuation support such as; Sales Comparison, Regression Analysis, Cost and Paired Sales Analysis, etc. Matthew Lehman Appraisal, Inc. is always prepared to address all issues.

I don't want to do anything right now.....I just want to “think about it” Your hesitation is understood & appreciated. Kindly save our letter in a place where you keep your most important documents. Keep in mind your final day to file an appeal is November 30, 2009.

I will be getting a new tax bill for 2008-09. How would this affect my current assessment appeal, and what should I do?

Pay your Property Tax bills as normal. Our successful appeal will result in a partial tax refund paid directly to you.