

More Information about Family Law appraisals
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Appraisals for family law cases are among the most demanding assignments for a residential appraiser. Unlike the mortgage lender assignment, the divorce appraisal is used to divide community property assets. Every dollar in the appraised value is important because it represents real money that will affect the financial status of the spouses. It may also determine whether one spouse keeps the property in the settlement.

Appraisals for mortgage lenders are used to qualify property for specific loan transactions. For the lender the loan-to-value ratio is actually more important than the appraised value.

Appraisals that are used for divorce cases require more detail, more research and more analysis because they are subject to closer scrutiny. The report will often be reviewed by the attorneys, the court, and another appraiser. The appraiser may have to defend his report and the opinion of value in Superior Court or a mediation hearing.

Other issues that come up in family law assignments are considerations of cosmetic updating or repair work that a potential buyer might expect to be completed prior to making an offer or closing a sale. The appraiser must be able to address these issues if they are within the scope of the assignment.

Finally, the divorce appraisal often needs to be updated because divorce cases can drag on for several months. If real estate prices are appreciating, or receding, the appraiser must be able to reconcile the original opinion of value with the updated value. That can be tedious at times, particularly when market data is scarce. It's important for the value to be well supported at the very beginning of the valuation process.

For all of these reasons the amount of time expended on the family law assignment is usually more than the mortgage lender assignment. Fees for divorce appraisals are usually higher, accordingly. Additional time for updates, joint expert consultation and preparation for testimony can also add to the total cost of the divorce appraisal.