

October 15, 2015

Headcount shrinks at Chicago-area foreclosure law firms

By [CLAIRE BUSHEY](#) | 





[SHARE](#)

[Law and Legal Issues](#)
[Real Estate](#)

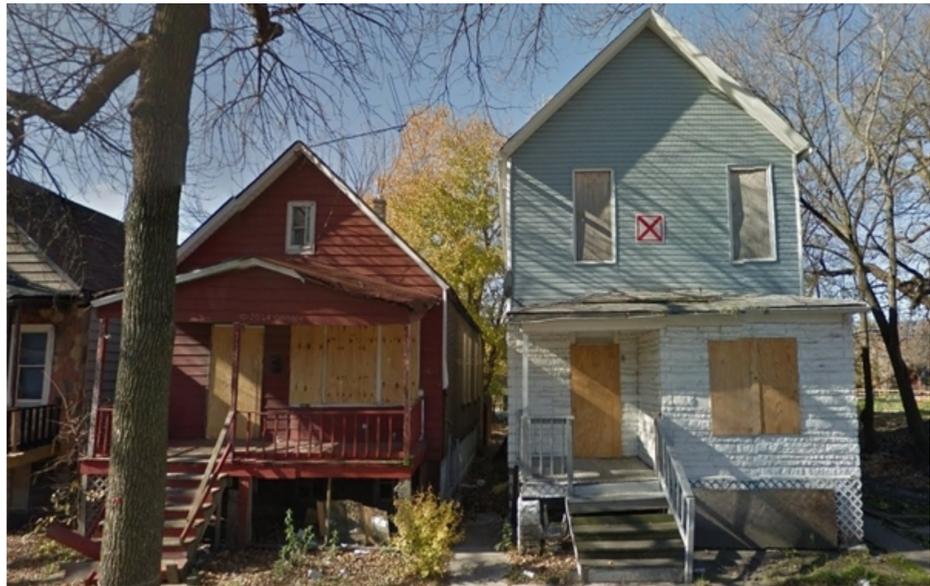


Photo by Google Earth

Two of Illinois' biggest law firms focusing on foreclosures have shrunk headcount in the past two years as the glut of work tied to the financial crisis winds down.

Chicago-based Pierce & Associates lists 400 employees on its website, down from more than 600 in 2013. Over the same period Codilis & Associates in Burr Ridge dropped to 400 employees from 500, including a decrease in lawyers to 57 from 64.

Pierce and Codilis represent banks, handling the legal work that results from foreclosing on a home. That work skyrocketed in the past decade, going to 151,000 foreclosures in Illinois in 2010—at the peak of the crisis—from 35,000 in 2005, according to RealtyTrac, an Irvine, Calif.-based research firm. It's been dropping ever since. In 2014, there were 73,000 cases—roughly half of where they were at the height.

Like many firms, Codilis grew its payroll when the foreclosure crisis took hold in order to properly represent its banking clients, said attorney Adam Codilis, the firm's vice president. But while his firm is still busy, "in the default industry, there's ebbs and flows in volume, and you need to staff appropriately." Indeed, the ebb in work shuttered law firms in **Florida** and **New Jersey** earlier this year.

Lee Perres, managing partner at Pierce, declined to comment.

The diminished headcount suggests that seven years after the crisis started, the bulk of foreclosure cases have worked their way through the legal system, said Steven Bashaw, a real estate attorney in Lisle who defends homeowners in foreclosure. Volume won't be 35,000 again, but he predicted it won't hit 100,000 either. That could mean trouble for firms where "they're going to try to do 50 percent of the work with two-thirds of the employees."

Law firms may end up pivoting to related areas, such as "REO," the practice of selling off foreclosed real estate, Bashaw said. Codilis said his firm began about five years ago to offer for commercial real estate many of the foreclosure, eviction, bankruptcy and REO services it already provided to lenders in the residential market. It also has focused on expanding its real estate litigation practice.

It hasn't yet replaced the revenue from foreclosure work, Codilis said, but "it's been helpful to fill the gap."

YOUR INDUSTRY, YOUR KNOWLEDGE, YOUR TURN

CRAIN'S
CUSTOM MEDIA



DECISIONS

Help aging loved ones make the best healthcare, financial and living choices.

[Read this issue](#) Sponsored by 

Get more answers about our support for Chicagoland.


Jobs


Vendors


Community

[Rollover to expand](#) **BP in Chicagoland.** 

Crain's Daily Alert

Get a roundup of important business news that happens each day.

SUBMIT

Read Next

Illinois Gaming Board to seek ruling on fantasy sports sites



Kirkland & Ellis loses another lawyer to rival



Hastert to plead guilty, lawyer says

0 Comments [Crain's Chicago Business](#) [Login](#)

[Recommend](#) [Share](#) [Sort by Best](#)

Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

[Subscribe](#) [Add Disqus to your site](#) [Privacy](#)



BID NOW: A Celebration of Bordeaux
October 30 & 31

Consignments directly from Léoville-Las-Cases, Mouton Rothschild, and 22 additional Châteaux

Company ▶

Connect ▶

Advertise ▶