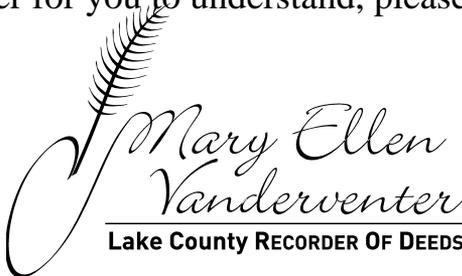


Searching Recorded Documents In Lake County

The Recorder of Deeds Office is responsible for recording documents in Lake County. Since 1844, the office has recorded nearly 7 million documents and 21 million pages. Over 10,000 new documents are added to the index each month. Most of the records are related to real estate, corporations, and military discharge papers.

As we have progressed from hand written ledgers to electronic recordings, so have the “tools” to index & locate records. Today’s challenge is to make sure that searchers are able to navigate the variety of tools needed to conduct searches through the millions of recordings.

We hope that you find these searching tips helpful. If there is anything that our staff can do to help make this process easier for you to understand, please let us know.



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A Word of Caution:

Searching land records can be difficult, especially for the beginner. Prior to making any investment decision, we suggest that you seek professional help. Title companies employ professional searchers that are familiar with the complexities of searching records using a variety of sources and techniques. Title companies & legal professionals rely on the information revealed by the searches to make their decisions. Please don't make the mistake of underestimating their skills and the important role they serve in Illinois real estate transactions.

How to Access Records:

In Person:

Records are available in the Lake County Recorder of Deeds Office. The office is on the sixth floor of the County Building in Waukegan. Public terminals are available Monday - Friday from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm. Searching is free, copies are \$1 per page. Cash, check, MasterCard, Visa, and Discover are accepted.

Online:

Records are available via a subscription service. Subscriptions allow for unlimited viewing of the index and the document pages. A variety of subscription options are available, starting at \$5. The copy fee for printing or saving the document images is \$1 per page, the same fee as in the office. Credit card payments are accepted via a secure PayPal environment.

Tip:

Sometimes it's just easier to call or email for your document. For example, if you are looking for a single document like your deed or mortgage release, it's easier to call us for help. We can send your document by fax, email, or U.S. Mail. MasterCard, Visa, & Discover are accepted. And...we are happy to help.

How to Search:

The index contains document records from 1980 until the present. Pre-1980 documents are available with the Online Index Books tool by searching the Grantor/Grantee index books. Professional searchers utilize all the tools mentioned here as well as property tax records in the County Clerk & County Treasurer offices.

Search by Name:

Documents are indexed by the Grantor/Grantee name(s) on the document. The Search by Name option should be your primary search method. Less information usually reveals better results. For example, if the search criteria is "MI" both Michael & Mike will be revealed. If you had entered "Michael", the documents with "Mike" would not show up in your search results. Over the years as technology evolved, various abbreviations have been used. "Lake County" may have been entered as Lake County or as Lake Cty. To see both versions, we recommend that you search with the % tool. As an example, Lake C%ty would reveal both versions in your search results. When using the % tool, please select the "Show Names List" tab. This will allow you to sort for relevant entries.

Search by Document Number:

This search is for recorded documents back to 1980. Documents prior to 1980 would be found under the Online Index Books tab.

Search by Date Range:

This tool allows a date range search that can be narrowed by document type. A search of all deeds for the current month would be an example of a date range search.

Search by Property:

This tool allows a search by address or by legal description. As technology has improved, the search tools have also improved. Older documents may not always be found in this search.

Search by PIN (Property Index Number):

The most common mistake made by new searchers is assuming that the search by PIN tool will reveal all documents related to a parcel. It probably won't! Although helpful, PIN's are not required on documents. If no PIN is present, the document is not indexed by PIN and will not be revealed in your search. Earlier technology did not accommodate the PIN field. We continue to make efforts to update the PIN information on older entries.

Advanced Search:

The Advanced tab allows for searching remarks. An example would be to search for a specific word or court case number that may be revealed.

Online Index Books:

This tab allows searchers to review the handwritten Grantor and Grantee index books for documents recorded prior to 1980. The file number may be entered to view the pre-1980 document images.

Display Index Dates:

Recording is a two-step process. The first step, "Recording", involves entering basic information and cashiering the appropriate fees. Step two "Indexing", involves verifying the scanned image & entering additional search information. The "Display Date" tab allows searchers the ability to check that the indexing portion has been completed.

Still Need help?

The Recorder of Deeds staff is happy to help you get started. Conducting title searches or interpreting legal documents is beyond our expertise and should be directed to legal professionals.