



HCCP Designee Spotlight: Kerry Menchin

Director of Compliance
ConAm Management Corporation

Kerry Menchin has been the director of compliance for ConAm Management since 2014. Ms. Menchin has been in the affordable housing industry for almost 20 years. She is responsible for compliance for several different affordable programs — including Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), Rural Development, Section 8, HOME and BOND, to name a few — and holds several housing designations and certifications such as Tax Credit Specialist (TCS), Certified Occupancy Specialist (COS), Management Occupancy Review Specialist (MORS), Specialist in Housing Credit Management (SHCM) and Housing Credit Certified Professional (HCCP), among others. She is also a member of the Novogradac Journal of Tax Credits advisory board. Ms. Menchin has been a speaker at several conferences where she is always excited to discuss the intricacies of the LIHTC program, one of her favorite subjects.

How has the HCCP designation impacted your career?

This designation has definitely made an impact on my career but by making an impact on how I felt about myself. Frankly, I've never been a reliable test taker. The HCCP is a closed book test, which is intimidating. Even though, at the time, I already had several years under my belt, you really need to know your stuff. When I got my results, I had done well, and it was such a confidence booster. I'm not one to list my credentials in my signature block; however, I am immensely proud of receiving the HCCP.

How did you get into the LIHTC industry?

I started in 1999 — wow, I'm old — as an administrative assistant with a company called NAPICO and worked for five asset managers. I had no idea that compliance even existed, let alone that I might be good at it. NAPICO was bought by AIMCO, and at the same time, I moved into the compliance



department as an auditor, in charge of lease-up files for the most part. I remember that one of the asset managers told me not to move into compliance because it was a “dead end” job. Funny, right?

What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

At ConAm, my main concern is creating a department that interprets, recommends, collaborates, facilitates and trains. To that end, we give our recommendations and then have to let it go. Compliance people have it tough. How do you let on-site staff know that they got it wrong while remaining a trusted resource? Quite often, my job is to remind everyone that this is more about people than paperwork and that perfection is a direction, not a destination.

What helped with your success in the LIHTC industry?

Any success I've had is attributed to the incredible people in this industry with whom I've had the pleasure of working.

When I first started, I had the honor of working with consultants from Novogradac, Karen Graham Consulting, TheoPro and AJ Johnson Consulting, to name a few. Over the years, they have assisted me, and the companies for which I've worked, with complex questions, and when the path forward was unclear.

Many of us were lucky enough to have Grace Robertson's direct contact information. What a fantastic resource she was! Grace let us know her thoughts with no filter, and it was a wonderful opportunity for a newbie like me.

Finally, I was fortunate to have become friendly with Rose Guerrero and Judy Twilley. Although Judy worked at the USDA with the farm labor programs, both women are similar in their personal style. Both enjoyed teasing me, lightheartedly, about my endless questions and counterpoints, and I've learned quite a lot from them. Also, both retired at the same time. I was sad to see them go.

Among many unnamed others, these fine people understood that my "arguing" was not personal but rather a desire to test the boundaries of the LIHTC program and thereby strengthen it.



What's your favorite hobby?

I am an avid room escaper and very competitive. Unfortunately, room escapes aren't open at the writing of these answers, so recently, I did a virtual scavenger hunt with my family. Everyone lives on the East Coast, so I don't get to see them very much. It was a lot of fun — AND my team demolished ... I mean won, of course!