



HCCP Designee of the Year: Mandi Lewis

Director of Training
Zeffert & Associates

Mandi Lewis is a nationally recognized leader in the development of affordable housing compliance training. She has served as a property manager since 2010, managing LIHTC properties with up to 2,000 units. Since joining Zeffert & Associates, she has earned several promotions, currently serving as the director of training for Zeffert University. For 2023, she was honored by the National Association of Home Builders with its “HCCP of the Year” award, which is bestowed annually to one person.

Mandi works with owner/agents, developers, agencies and thousands of individuals every year to provide the most relevant education when and where it is needed most. She carefully curates the course catalog, oversees the strategy behind training scheduling and content creation, and regularly attends events so that learning is always available to meet every student in their journey.

How has the HCCP designation impacted your career?

When I switched from market-rate properties to LIHTC, I had no idea what was in store for me. I was thrown in a two-day LIHTC training for the HCCP exam just a few months after I started. By day two, I was questioning my career choice. But I stuck with it and eventually had the opportunity to join Zeffert.

After the first few years I was promoted from the compliance department to become the training manager. I immediately realized the HCCP exam training that almost made me switch my career is now in my hands. I asked myself, “How can I make sure no one feels the way I did when I completed that class?” So I set a goal to help bring down staff turnover in our industry by providing an education pathway so the training leading up to the HCCP exam was not scary.



How did you get into the LIHTC industry?

In 2008, I rented a little loft in downtown St. Louis. I managed to become really good friends with the leasing agent who showed me the place. I thought her job was cool, so I applied for a position and got the job a few years later.

In 2010, I started as a leasing agent and eventually evolved into a property manager. In 2013 I was given the opportunity to manage LIHTC properties, and I had no idea what that was. I remember the first time my manager said, “OK, now it’s time to go over what a TIC is.” My response was, “You mean like the bug?” The next two years I learned the opposite side of market rate, and I had no idea how much affordable housing would impact my life.

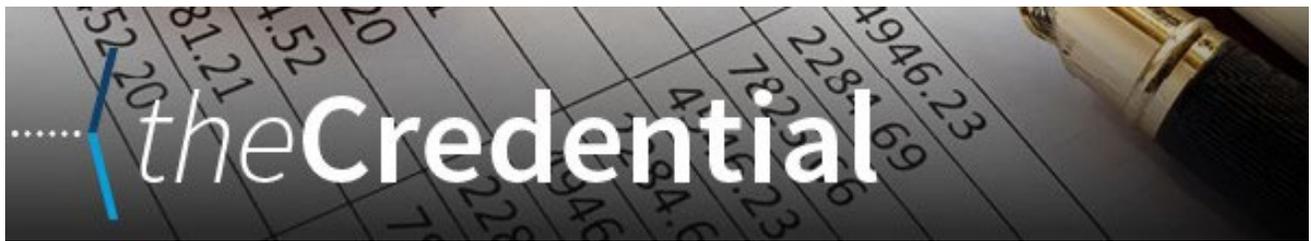
What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

Each day I focus on the bigger picture by remembering that everyone learns differently. No one goes to college saying, “I want to be a property manager when I grow up.” Education in our industry is critical, and each week, we train such a diverse range of people around the country — different ages, cultures, learning styles, etc.

My day-to-day duties include things such as perfecting a flawless travel schedule for our trainers, sending certificates, creating training content, answering client questions, marketing, sales, etc. But all those things are a constant reminder that the learners’ first impression of affordable housing education can make or break their decision to stay in the industry. My daily goal is to help eliminate staff turnover for our clients by providing a top-notch training experience from the moment they land on the registration page to the last email when they receive their certificate of attendance.

What helped with your success in the LIHTC industry?

My industry peers! I could not have excelled the way I have without the help and support from my Zeffert family, but also other industry leaders. I have learned so much by just showing up and listening. I believe that no one ever stops learning and we can only keep this industry growing by doing it together.



What's your favorite hobby?

I am my son's biggest soccer fan! There isn't a week that goes by when we aren't doing something soccer related. In the summer, if we aren't traveling, you can find me taking advantage of Missouri's beautiful rivers or lakes. I have a weird obsession with true crime, and when I am home, you can typically find me tending to my plants.