



## HCCP Distributor Spotlight: Samantha R. Sowards

Samantha Sowards is the Manager of Curriculum Development at Nan McKay & Associates. She has been a full-time trainer and consultant at Nan McKay since 2008. She works with hundreds of housing authority and management companies each year in the areas of program operations, policy and procedure development, training, file reviews, and compliance and quality assurance. She specializes in regulations and operations for a wide array of low-income housing programs, including the housing choice voucher (HCV), public housing, project-based voucher, HOME and low-income housing tax credit programs as well as the Rental Assistance Demonstration program.

### **How has the HCCP designation impacted your career?**

The HCCP is the most recognized designation in the industry and NMA wanted to be able to provide our customers with the option of taking the HCCP as part of the LIHTC services we offer.

### **How did you get into the LIHTC industry?**

For over 28 years NMA has worked with hundreds of public housing authorities and other affordable housing providers as the industry leader in program management, inspections, operational support, technical assistance, and training. For a long time, our service lines were mainly focused on public housing and the housing choice voucher programs.

However, about five years ago, for a variety of reasons, our housing authority clients started entering into LIHTC deals more than they ever had before. We saw a real need in our industry to help affordable housing providers who were extremely well versed in HUD programs bridge the knowledge gap and come up to speed on LIHTC compliance, particularly in mixed-finance developments.

We also saw that housing providers who were very familiar with LIHTC often had knowledge gaps when it came to compliance in HUD programs. We designed seminars and provide consulting that helps affordable housing providers in all parts of the industry understand the complexities of compliance in mixed finance deals and the LIHTC program.

I personally got in the industry by accident when one of my friends got a job at NMA and referred me to the company.

### **What helped with your success in the LIHTC industry?**

NMA prides itself in having accessible industry experts. My background at NMA is in compliance in PIH programs (public housing and HCV/PBV). Initially, I began working with housing providers who had mixed-finance developments, and my training in all things PIH helped me not only understand the

regulatory framework of the LIHTC program, but gave me a unique perspective on how mixed-finance developments maintain compliance, since I understand the ins and outs of multiple programs.

**What's your favorite hobby?**

I love to cook and I have a huge cookbook collection. Cooking and baking and then sharing the results with my friends and family is one of my favorite things to do.