



HCCP Designee of the Year for 2018 Spotlight: A.J. Johnson

President

A.J. Johnson Consulting Services, Inc.

A.J. Johnson is the president of A.J. Johnson Consulting Services and has more than 40 years in the affordable housing industry. As a developer, A.J. has developed more than 70 multifamily housing complexes using federal, state and conventional financing, and more than 40 used the federal low-income housing tax credit.

His organization, A.J. Johnson Consulting Services, has performed asset management reviews on more than 6,000 properties containing approximately 660,000 units since January 1995. A.J. is also the author of *A Property Manager's Guide to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit*, which was written to assist site and property managers in maintaining tax credit compliance.

Question: How has the HCCP designation impacted your career?

The Housing Credit Certified Professional credential carries with it an immediate recognition of accomplishment in the housing credit field. As a consultant, it is important that my clients understand my qualifications, and the HCCP provides a high degree of credibility for clients looking for advice in the area of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

Question: How did you get into the tax credit industry?

I originally got into housing by doing graduate work in college concerning the Housing & Community Development Act of 1974. After that, I spent seven years with housing authorities before going into the private sector. During the early 1980s, my partners and I focused on the development of affordable housing, primarily dealing in HUD and Farmers Home Administration (now the Rural Development Service) programs. I was actively involved in housing at the national level and, in that role, was asked to serve as an advisor to congressional staff during the development of the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (which included the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program). Having been involved in the design of the

program, it was natural for me to develop LIHTC properties when the law was finalized, and ultimately developed 42 tax-credit properties before becoming a consultant in 1995.

Question: What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

As a housing consultant, my clients rely on me for broad-ranging advice in a number of areas. In addition to consulting on the tax credit program, I also counsel clients on all affordable housing programs, including Section 8, HOME, Public Housing, Tax-Exempt Bonds, the RAD program and Rural Development. Much of my work is spent dealing with Fair Housing issues, and my company provides detailed oversight of properties on behalf of a large number of clients, including investors, syndicators, accounting firms, tax attorneys, management companies and developers.

Question: What helped with your success in the LIHTC industry?

Broad-based experience in all affordable housing programs since the mid-1970s has given me a perspective with regard to what it takes to make an affordable housing program succeed. Also, I've been fortunate in that I've been able to work in every area of housing, including management, development, construction and finance. If I could give one piece of advice to those just entering the affordable housing field, it would be to avail themselves of every opportunity that they can. In the long term, the broader the field of experience, the more likely it is that success will follow.

Question: What's your favorite hobby?

Travel! My wife, Betty, and I are basically nomads. We are constantly on the road, finding new places to explore and going back to favorites on a regular basis. One of the advantages of what I do for a living (and having a great staff to take care of things in my absence), is that I can work no matter where I am. As long as I have a phone and Internet, I can serve my clients. And I can do that just about anywhere.