



HCCP Board of Governors Spotlight: Erica Etterling

Rental Compliance Support
Virginia Housing

Erica Etterling is the Rental Compliance Support Manager in Compliance and Asset Management at Virginia Housing. She began her career over 25 years ago and has worked in various roles developing, managing, directing, and monitoring projects and programs in the affordable housing industry.

How has the HCCP designation impacted your career?

I am very proud to have the HCCP designation. I remember the feeling of accomplishment after completing the thorough training program, and I continue to encourage everyone new to the LIHTC program to take the course. The HCCP training equips designees with the knowledge to succeed in understanding the “Why” in their affordable housing careers, and the HCCP network of professionals offers an amazing level of support when needed.

How did you get into the LIHTC industry?

Over 25 years ago, I was working as an administrative assistant for a real estate broker, applying for tax credits. The tax credits were not awarded the 1st year or the 2nd year, but I was well involved in putting the application together, project development, and management of the completed deal. I learned a lot about the Qualified Allocation Plan, tax credit application process, project development, and property and program management, which helped me in my chosen career as a compliance professional.

I took the HCCP exam in 1999 and vividly recall the day I took the test at a conference. I walked away from a lively networking event with development partners to take the test in a small, quiet room. I



received my plaque, which included a certification number, and prominently displayed it in my office. Taking the HCCP test was a great decision in the early stage of my career, and it has helped me progress in my career.

What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

I serve as a trusted advisor and thought leader on the regulations governing the federal and state housing programs administered and monitored by Virginia Housing. My team supports the department by managing internal and external communication about programs, conducting quality reviews of project data in the online Tenant Portal, approving annual utility allowance estimates, updating written procedures, and coordinating training.

Every day is different, and I see challenges as opportunities to navigate diverse and interesting issues in affordable housing programs successfully. Working in an agency is different from my previous roles in managing property operations or compliance for an owner or management agent. The biggest thought adjustment is having to consider multiple aspects of property requests and their effect on the agency program requirements that may or may not require altering agency procedures.

The developers court and date the projects, and the Agency walks it down the “aisle” by approving the tax credits. However, it is the Compliance professionals who sustain the “marriage” to manage the many changing facets of program compliance throughout the project’s life.

What helped with your success in the LIHTC industry?

Developing strong relationships, working collaboratively, and having a big-picture mindset are key to growing my career in the LIHTC industry. Focusing on doing serious work but not taking myself too seriously has helped me maintain my sanity. I am a pro at chasing squirrels and finding rabbit holes! It is so easy to get mired in the details and lose perspective, but building a solid team and peer group for feedback and support is helpful in successfully managing the program and industry changes.

What’s your favorite hobby?

All things food and reading! I cook, but I am not a cook. I love to watch cooking shows and mostly experiment in my kitchen. When it works out, I share the results, and when it doesn’t, I have a story to share. I am also an avid reader. My book list is very long. Feel free to share what you are reading and give suggestions for my long list! My favorite book/story of all time is “Cheese, Peas, and Chocolate Pudding.” A few years ago, I found a compendium of stories on eBay that included my favorite story,



and I hold it dear. It taught me at a young age that routine may make you feel safe, but being flexible and adaptable on a path to the unknown can lead you to new and better horizons!