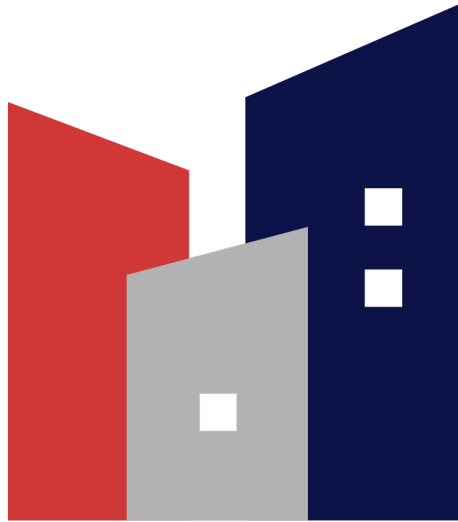




Housing Consultants of America Affordable Housing Staffing Shortages: When Temporary Compliance Support Makes Sense

How owners and management companies can protect compliance operations during turnover, vacancies, and unexpected staffing disruptions



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Affordable housing does not stop when a compliance director resigns, an experienced property manager leaves, or several team members turn over at once. Recertification deadlines continue. Applicants still need to be qualified. Vacant units still need move-in files. Vouchers still need to be processed. Audits still arrive on schedule. Temporary compliance support can give an organization the experienced capacity it needs to keep those responsibilities moving while permanent staff are recruited.

Staffing Vacancies Can Become Compliance Problems Quickly

Affordable housing operations are highly dependent on institutional knowledge. Experienced managers and compliance professionals understand not only the regulations, but also the property's software, reporting calendar, resident files, agency expectations, internal approval process, and unresolved issues. When that knowledge leaves unexpectedly, the remaining team can quickly become overloaded.

The immediate problem may appear to be staffing. Within weeks, however, the organization can also be dealing with overdue certifications, delayed move-ins, unresolved EIV discrepancies, incomplete files, voucher problems, unanswered site questions, and audit preparation that has fallen behind.

Temporary support is most valuable when it is brought in before a staffing vacancy turns into a portfolio-wide compliance backlog.

When a Compliance Director Leaves

The departure of a compliance director can create a particularly difficult gap because the position often serves as the organization's final review point and escalation resource. Site teams may suddenly have no one to approve unusual files, interpret program requirements, review policy questions, or coordinate upcoming monitoring activity.

Temporary compliance specialists can help stabilize the department by reviewing pending files, answering day-to-day compliance questions, prioritizing deadlines, identifying high-risk properties, supporting audits, and maintaining established review workflows while leadership recruits a permanent replacement.

When a Property Loses Experienced Managers

A property manager or occupancy specialist vacancy can create a different kind of risk. Work that was previously handled every day can begin accumulating almost immediately. Remaining staff may be asked to perform certifications or compliance functions they have limited experience completing.

Temporary occupancy support can help maintain the operational workload while the organization trains or recruits permanent staff. The objective is continuity: residents continue receiving required communications, files continue moving, and compliance deadlines remain visible.

When Turnover Hits Several Properties at Once

Portfolio-wide turnover is especially challenging because internal compliance departments may not have enough capacity to absorb work from multiple sites simultaneously. Even strong compliance teams can become overwhelmed when several properties require intensive support at the same time.

In these situations, temporary specialists can be assigned by property, program, function, or backlog type, allowing the organization to add targeted capacity instead of shifting every unfinished task to the same internal team.

1. Keeping Annual and Interim Certifications Moving

Recertifications are often among the first responsibilities affected by staffing shortages. Temporary compliance professionals can help review upcoming annuals, process pending certifications, identify missing documentation, follow established verification procedures, complete calculations, and help sites resolve outstanding items.

For organizations already behind, outside support can also help triage the backlog by effective date, risk, resident status, and documentation needed so the most urgent files are addressed first.

2. Maintaining Move-Ins and Occupancy

A staffing shortage should not automatically mean qualified applicants wait unnecessarily while units remain vacant. Temporary occupancy and compliance specialists can support applicant file review, eligibility documentation, income and asset verification, certification preparation, move-in quality control, and outstanding-document follow-up.

This can allow permanent leasing and property staff to remain focused on applicants and property operations while compliance specialists focus on file completion and program requirements.

3. Providing Independent File Reviews

When experienced reviewers leave, files may begin moving forward without the same level of quality control. Temporary third-party file reviewers can restore that review layer during the transition. They can identify missing documentation, calculation errors, inconsistent dates, unresolved discrepancies, outdated forms, or policy issues before a file is finalized.

This is particularly helpful when newly promoted or less experienced staff are temporarily assuming responsibilities that were previously handled by senior team members.

4. Supporting Voucher, TRACS, and HAP Processing

Staffing disruptions can also affect monthly subsidy workflows. Certifications that are late or incorrect can create downstream problems with voucher preparation, TRACS activity, corrections, and HAP reconciliation. Temporary support can help organizations research unresolved certification issues, review voucher-related documentation, and keep subsidy processing moving while permanent staff are recruited.

5. Preparing for MORs, State Reviews, and Other Audits

Audits rarely arrive at a convenient time. A property may receive an MOR, state monitoring review, investor review, or other compliance request while already operating short-staffed. Temporary compliance specialists can help organize requested documentation, sample tenant files, review policies, identify deficiencies, prepare corrective items, and help staff understand what to expect during the review.

An independent pre-audit review can be especially important after turnover because it helps management identify what may have been missed during the staffing transition.

What Temporary Compliance Support Can Cover

Depending on the needs of the organization, temporary affordable housing support can be structured around one property, several properties, a specific backlog, or an entire compliance function.

- Annual and interim recertifications
 - Applicant and move-in file processing
 - Third-party file reviews and quality control
 - Income, asset, and eligibility documentation
 - EIV documentation and discrepancy follow-up
 - Voucher, TRACS, and HAP processing support
- Recertification backlog recovery
- MOR and audit preparation
- Policy and procedure review
- Compliance question support for site teams
- Temporary department coverage during recruitment
- Training and transition support for newly hired staff

Temporary Support vs. Immediately Hiring Another Full-Time Employee

A permanent hire is often the long-term solution, but recruitment takes time. Affordable housing organizations may need weeks or months to locate a candidate with the right program knowledge, software experience, leadership skills, and portfolio background. Rushing the hiring process simply because work is accumulating can create a second problem later.

Temporary compliance support creates a bridge. It allows leadership to recruit deliberately while experienced professionals keep critical work moving. It can also help the organization determine what the permanent position actually needs by revealing where workload, processes, and compliance responsibilities are concentrated.

A Practical Staffing-Shortage Response Plan

When a key affordable housing employee leaves, management should quickly identify which responsibilities cannot wait. Review the next 30 to 90 days of recertifications, move-ins, voucher deadlines, audits, reporting requirements, unresolved file corrections, and major compliance projects.

Then separate the work into three categories: responsibilities the current team can safely absorb, responsibilities that can temporarily be deferred without creating compliance risk, and responsibilities that require immediate experienced support. This helps leadership deploy temporary resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Signs You Should Consider Temporary Support Now

- Recertifications are already becoming overdue.
 - Move-in files are waiting for compliance approval.
 - Site managers no longer have an experienced compliance escalation point.
 - Voucher or subsidy processing is being affected.
- An audit or MOR is approaching during a staffing vacancy.
- Remaining employees are routinely working outside their normal roles.
- New staff are processing complex files without sufficient review.
- Leadership is rushing recruitment because the backlog is growing.

How Housing Consultants of America Can Help

Housing Consultants of America (HCA) provides temporary occupancy and affordable housing compliance support for organizations experiencing staffing shortages, unexpected turnover, compliance vacancies, backlog growth, acquisitions, or other periods of increased workload.

HCA can assist with certifications, move-ins, applicant files, third-party file reviews, EIV documentation, voucher and subsidy processing support, backlog recovery, MOR and audit preparation, policy support, staff training, and day-to-day compliance questions while an organization recruits permanent employees.

**Do not wait for a staffing vacancy to become a compliance backlog.
Temporary HCA support can help maintain critical compliance and occupancy functions while your organization takes the time to recruit the right permanent team.**

About the Author

Jenna Ghisolfo is President & Founder of Housing Consultants of America. Her work focuses on affordable housing compliance, operational support, training, file review, and helping housing organizations strengthen day-to-day compliance practices.

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