



EMPLOYEE PROFILE



Lisa Carpenter

Director, Asset Management
Boston Financial

INTRODUCTION

It's not often a two-day temp gig turns into the start of a long-term career, but that's exactly how Lisa Carpenter, Director, Asset Management, began her journey in the affordable housing industry. When she briefly detoured into another profession, the pull of working while making an impact on her community led her to Boston Financial.

In our interview for Women's History Month, Lisa talked about the work of the Boston Financial asset management team, how connections with her colleagues drive her 14-year plus commitment to the firm, and the women who have inspired her both professionally and personally.

What are your responsibilities as part of the Boston Financial Asset Management team?

I am a regional team leader for the Mid-Atlantic region overseeing a group of four asset managers and one analyst on our Boston Financial asset management team. Our objective is to carry a project (on average consisting of about 100 affordable housing rental units) from the completion of construction through the 15-year compliance period.

"Stabilized" asset managers act as the liaison between investors and developer/managers on the ground. My role as regional team leader is to guide asset managers in these duties, identify areas for process improvement, and implement changes where needed, as well as foster collaboration both interdepartmentally and with clients. Each day brings new challenges that require thoughtful and innovative solutions.

You had a career path in commercial real estate. What led you to specialize in Affordable Housing and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits?

I was one year out of college and due to start my second job at a travel software company when September 11th happened. I was without work at a time when many companies put a halt to hiring. A temp agency found me a two-day work stint as a receptionist at MassHousing, a quasi-state agency specializing in affordable housing, and two days turned into almost five years. I was promoted through the ranks and learned about the many affordable rental and home-ownership housing initiatives throughout the state. I met my husband



Lisa and her family visit Yankee Stadium.

there and many friends (some of whom are my Boston Financial colleagues today!).

From there I worked at commercial office leasing firms, but I wanted to have a greater impact on my community, which inspired my return to affordable housing. I started out at Boston Financial as an analyst and am so proud of my journey from analyst to asset manager, and ultimately to regional team leader within a group of extremely talented coworkers.

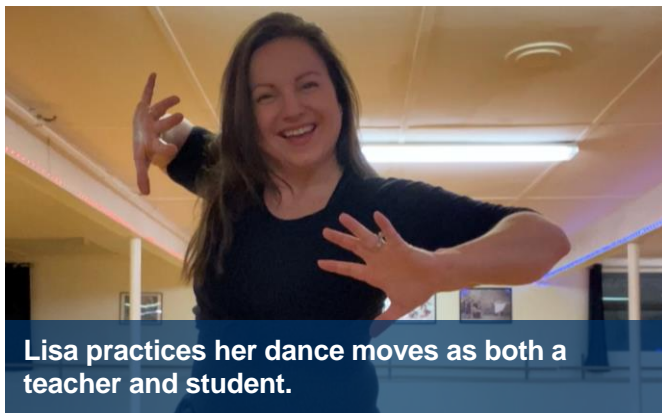
“In my first few months as an analyst, I sat down at the table and was thrilled that there were strong, smart female colleagues around that table with me. I hope I can be that example for other women who enter our field.”

What drives your commitment to the firm after more than 14 years at Boston Financial?

The PEOPLE! We care and want good things for each other in work, but also in life. One of the best ways I've connected with colleagues has been as a co-commissioner of our company-wide fitness competition. What started out as a friendly steps challenge between a few friends has grown into a bigger, more competitive annual event to bring people together and get moving during the coldest months in Boston. I've also enjoyed participating in volunteer opportunities with my coworkers including Project Destined and the Greater Boston Food Bank.

Boston Financial has a long tradition of women in leadership roles and fostering female talent. How does that motivate you as you continue your career?

It was so refreshing to walk in on my first day and see that standard already firmly established. In my youth, I was unaware of the depth of gender inequality in the workplace, or how many times I would be advised to take on a position lesser than my ability or experience because “sometimes you have to take a step down to move up.” In my first few months as an analyst



Lisa practices her dance moves as both a teacher and student.

here, I sat down at the table to present a problem on a project, and was thrilled that there were strong, smart female colleagues around that table with me. I hope I can be that example for other women who enter our field and I will hold the door open for them.

Tell us about a woman who has inspired you in your life or career?

Personally, I have the best mother in the world. Her boundless energy has always been focused on doing good and being compassionate toward everyone. She taught me the power of showing your children how much you love them, sharing in their interests, and all the patience it takes to be a mom. My boys are growing up to be delightful, curious, kind young men thanks to the foundation provided by my mother. I also have an unlikely but powerful example of inspiration from a dance studio owner whom I worked for many years ago. I only worked for her part-time a few years, but I gained several lessons from her: First, you can have it all, but you must work for it. Second, you can also have an enormous impact on a person's life and trajectory in a very short amount of time if you give them a chance and they are willing to step up. And finally, sometimes you only HAVE a short amount of time, so use it wisely. She passed away in the prime of her life before I was able to tell her how much I respected her.

What is something you are passionate about outside of work?

During my spare time I like to travel with my husband, Sean, and our children, especially to downhill ski in Maine. I also take and teach dance classes, mostly tap, jazz, and hip-hop, and I'm enjoying salsa classes as well. I've been dancing since I was three years old and it remains the only place where I can completely tune out the rest of the world and focus solely in the moment.