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## Corporate College, NOAA launch program to train, certify apartment managers

**Judy Stringer** By **Judy Stringer**

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Joy Anzalone says the multi-family industry is looking for a few good men and women – so much so local insiders have launched a new training program in partnership with Cuyahoga Community College’s Corporate College that will educate and certify a new generation of apartment managers. “There are jobs available in our line of work,” said Anzalone, who is executive vice president and COO at Burton Carol Management and president of the Northeast Ohio Apartment Association (NOAA).

“This is the only course I know of that is open to the public and gives anyone the opportunity to learn the business at so many levels, whether you are already in the industry and looking for more training or are maybe making a career change and want to learn the business.”

Jointly developed by NOAA and Corporate College, the five-week Certified Manager of Apartments course will be offered from March 4 to April 3. Classes will meet Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Corporate College East, right off Interstate 271, in Warrensville Heights.

Eric German, executive director of sales and business development at Corporate College, said the course programming includes a broad range of issues facing apartment managers from hiring and managing staff and understanding fair housing policies and leasing laws to property marketing campaigns, overseeing property maintenance and setting and raising rental rates.

“Each class will be assigned an industry liaison through NOAA, which we believe will be invaluable in adding some real-life insight into each topic and make the course a lot more hands on,” he said.

There are no pre-requisites; anyone can apply. The course culminates in a final exam. Passing students earn certification, as well as three course credits that can be applied towards certain associate degrees.

Members of NOAA can take advantage of a discount. German expects local apartment management companies will use the course to move promising candidates up through their ranks, although industry experience is not required.

“All you need is a willingness to learn,” he said.

Looking for a career change?

The biggest impetus behind the new course was NOAA’s desire to ensure Northeast Ohio property owners have a pool of qualified managers to oversee day-to-day operations, Anzalone said. When management companies buy properties, the existing staff does not always stay, she said. Then there are job openings created when companies expand by building new apartment communities.



Both scenarios are commonplace in today's multi-family world. Add to that the 24/7 nature of the business, and it is easy to see why job hunters who cannot find employment in other fields – or are not seeing advancement opportunities – are turning their attention to the apartment industry.

Anzalone said a number of industries include skills that are known to transfer well to apartment management. Successful managers at restaurants, hotels and car rental operations, for example, typically have team working and customer service skills that align nicely. Anyone in a sales role may be a good candidate because often these professionals "know how to close a deal," she said.

"Those jobs where you have to keep people happy, create repeat customers," Anzalone said. "That being said, just because you can run a restaurant does not mean you will be an effective [apartment] manager. What we are saying is that if you have the right attitude and the right skills, we can teach you our business."

Prior to this course offering, apartment managers tended to gain experience and skills by coming through the ranks, starting as leasing agents, for example. Having an educational forum like this is "spectacular," Anzalone said, and will feed well-qualified managers into the growing number of job openings more efficiently.

#### Small operators

The training and expertise offered in the Certified Manager of Apartments course would also benefit smaller property owners. Anzalone added that someone who owns and manages a few modest apartment buildings or even a landlord who rents a few homes could greatly benefit from the breadth of the program.

Take the complicated landscape of fair housing regulations. Many small property owners may not fully understand which activities are illegal under the federal Fair Housing Act or its state-level counterpart. A 2012 report by The Housing Research & Advocacy Center, a Cleveland-based nonprofit, estimated that there are at least 33,500 instances of housing discrimination in Northeast Ohio each year. Penalties for a first-time offense can reach up to \$10,000.

"A lot of people who are investing in rental homes right now do it because they think of themselves as savvy investors," she said, "but they are not necessarily knowledgeable about the business."

For more information on the program, call Corporate College East at (216) 987-2800 or visit

**[www.corporatecollege.com/pages/course.aspx?CourseId=6920](http://www.corporatecollege.com/pages/course.aspx?CourseId=6920).**

NOAA members, to apply your membership discount call Sheryl Hunt at (216) 987-2902 for registration.

#### Program Details

Location: Corporate College East, 4400 Richmond Rd., Warrensville Hts.

Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 to 9 p.m., from March 4 until April 3

Duration: 30 hours total, 5 weeks

Tuition: \$995 for NOAA members;

\$1,495 for non-members (payment plan available)

Contact: Sheryl Hunt (216) 987-2902 or [Sheryl.Hunt@tri-c.edu](mailto:Sheryl.Hunt@tri-c.edu)

Website: **[www.corporatecollege.com/pages/course.aspx?CourseId=6920](http://www.corporatecollege.com/pages/course.aspx?CourseId=6920)**