



**Jennifer Chirco-Coker**  
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**2013 Technical Assistance Panel Panelist**

**How did you find your way into the industry?** Five years ago, I was fortunate enough to be appointed to the Planning Board in Red Bank, NJ. MY involvement sparked my interest in planning and land development and ultimately let me to study urban planning and real estate at Univ. of California, Irvine. Prior to graduating from UCI, I started working at Planet Home Living.

**What advice would you give to an emerging young leader just starting their professional career?** It is never too early to get involved. Determine the type of job you want, no matter how far it may be into the future and immerse yourself into related industry groups, educational courses and professionals who share your passion.

**What traits do you think define a successful leader?** Anyone can work hard and lead by that example. To me a great leader has vision, passion, is willing to mentor and empower others, is respectful, and has humility and a deep commitment to the organization and its employees.

**What is your current job and what types of projects are you working on now?** I work as a project manager for Planet Home Living, a boutique residential builder focused on infill development in Orange and Los Angeles County. I currently manage a half a dozen single-family small lot projects in Los Angeles the majority of which are in Echo Park.

**What do you find most challenging about your profession on a day-to-day basis?** Building in the City of Los Angeles is inherently more difficult than most cities. There are infinite layers of bureaucracy to work through. And because the small lot ordinance we typically build under is relatively new, staff has a hard time understanding the product type and relevant zoning and building code.

**What are you looking for in terms of career development - OR In what areas would you like to professionally develop further?** I am looking for a career that is challenging and ever evolving. The ideal job will fulfill my mechanical sensibilities while allowing me to be a part of the creative process.

**Describe a situation that was a great learning experience.** Switching careers after working in politics for nearly 10 years was challenging but has proven to be rewarding beyond my imagination. In relative short order, I moved across the country with my husband, went to graduate school and secured a job in my field. My success is attributed not only to my diligence and hard work but to the dozens of people from ULI OC/IE I have the pleasure of calling a friend.

**How do you deal with stress at work?** It's important to act with a sense of urgency but it is pointless to let every situation rack your nerves. Issues inevitably come up and I prefer to address them calmly rather than panic. I also exercise regularly to deal with stress. It is not unusual to find me at the gym in the morning or enjoying the outdoors on the weekend.