

EXTRAORDINARY

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE



solidifi

2021 FALL EDITION

2021 EDITION

Welcome to the 2021 fall edition of the Solidifi Extraordinary magazine.

2021 has been a historic year to say the least. On behalf of the Solidifi team, we would like to thank our clients and partners for their continued commitment to working with us and homeowners across the nation. Because of you, families can feel the sense of pride in homeownership and the country can continue to recover and thrive.

In this edition of Extraordinary, we introduce some of our 2021 Extraordinary Appraisers and Notaries with highlights from each on how they became the exemplary professionals they are today. We also feature one of our trainees – showcasing how mentorship and role modeling can help give future appraisers the opportunity to grow their professional career. It is not only rewarding, but also exciting to see how the next generation of appraisers will continue to expand our industry and continue the level of excellence we have built.

This edition also unveils the Solidifi 2021 Consumer Mortgage Experience Survey results which takes an extensive look at the two consumer-facing touchpoints in the mortgage process – the appraisal and the closing, with a deep dive into what drives consumer preferences, choice and satisfaction. We believe that this year's results hold several insights that can help our industry move forward and prosper. Our network of Extraordinary Appraisers and Notaries continues to rise to the occasion to meet and exceed the expectations of our clients, creating memorable experiences for homeowners at every interaction. We are excited to see what the next year brings us, and for us to continue to grow and thrive together.

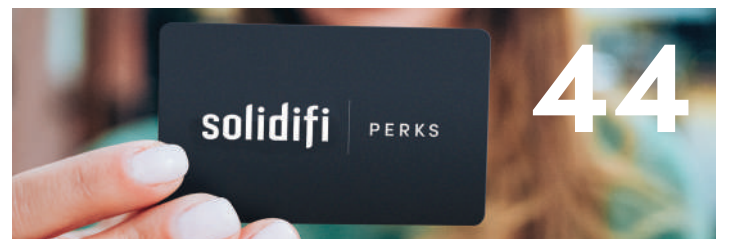
The Solidifi Team



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EXTRAORDINARY

For a list of AMC Registration Numbers for Solidifi U.S. Inc., go to:
solidifi.com/registration-numbers



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ACKNOWLEDGING EXTRAORDINARY

Solidifi reviews the thousands of notaries we work with to identify those who demonstrate high levels of Solidifi's top three values – outstanding performance, exceptional customer service, and a commitment to quality. The Extraordinary Notary designation is a recognized symbol of excellence throughout the industry. It acknowledges notaries as committed professionals that go above and beyond for the lender and homeowner. Solidifi holds our Extraordinary Notaries in the highest regard and views them as valued partners to the Solidifi team.

We are thrilled to welcome the following
individuals into the elite class of
Extraordinary Notaries

An aerial photograph of Cincinnati, Ohio, featuring the city skyline with various skyscrapers, the Great American Ball Park, and a large highway interchange in the foreground. The Ohio River is visible on the right side of the image.

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Being viewed as a respected professional is of the highest importance to me.

— MIKE ARNETT
INDEPENDENT NOTARY | BURLINGTON, KY

BURLINGTON, KY

MIKE ARNETT

Mike has been working as a notary signing agent for 16 years, servicing the northern Kentucky area. Mike consistently demonstrates a commitment to quality and superior customer service. Solidifi is excited to recognize Mike as an Extraordinary Notary for 2021.

MY PATH TO BECOMING A NOTARY

I have been working as a notary signing agent since 2005, servicing the northern Kentucky area. Prior to working as a notary, I started my professional career as an insurance broker. I actually continue to work as an insurance broker while simultaneously servicing notary clients.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

What I enjoy most about being a notary signing agent is that I get to meet new people on a daily basis. I enjoy getting to know each of my clients a little bit while working with them. It makes guiding them through their signing process a little more personalized.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Going above and beyond became even more important during the pandemic. On multiple occasions, I went out of my way to help customers have a safe and productive

experience while completing their signing. Sometimes the signings took a bit longer to complete, but in the end all parties involved were safe and satisfied.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Being viewed as a respected professional is of the highest importance to me. Being professional means always arriving early, coming prepared, and dressing for success. The way you present yourself reflects not only you but also the organizations that you are representing.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

When I accept an assignment with Solidifi I know I will be in good hands. The team always responds to my inquiries in a timely manner and is there to answer any questions I may have. Solidifi is fair with their fees and always pays on time, which is not a standard across the industry. I appreciate their team members and our partnership.



MIKE ARNETT

INDEPENDENT NOTARY
BURLINGTON, KY



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I am always willing to go that extra
mile to get things done.

— JEANETTE GERMANA
INDEPENDENT NOTARY | BROOK PARK, OH

BROOK PARK, OH

JEANETTE GERMANA

Jeanette Germana has been working as a notary signing agent for the last three and a half years, servicing primarily Cuyahoga County, OH. She also travels to Medina County and Lorain County to complete signings as needed. Jeanette's strong background in customer service and dedication to the signers makes her a valued notary partner to Solidifi.

MY PATH TO BECOMING A NOTARY

I worked in sales and marketing for most of my career, but I made the switch to become a notary about four years ago. I enjoy meeting and talking to people and have always liked helping customers, so I thought this would be a good fit for me and a nice career switch.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

What I find most rewarding about being a notary signing agent is helping people. I have always tried to do my best for customers, and I am always willing to go that extra mile to get things done.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

I was conducting a signing for a couple that was very cautious about what they were signing, reading every line. Halfway through the signing, we realized that the dates were incorrect on the documents. I called the company, had the paperwork corrected, went home to print the new

paperwork, and finally went back out to the signers' home. The process took quite some time, but we got it done and closed that day.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Being professional is being courteous, polite, respectful, on time, and acting and speaking in a professional manner. It is important to be on time because everyone's time is valuable, and it shows that you respect that. It is always better to be pleasant and polite to people you are working with.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

I like working with Solidifi because of the support they give their notaries. I can always reach out if I have a problem or a question, and someone will be there to help. Accepting assignments is made very easy with the app and the website is very easy to navigate.



JEANETTE GERMANA

INDEPENDENT NOTARY
BROOK PARK, OH

The image is a vertical composition of two photographs. The top photograph shows a city skyline at sunset, with several skyscrapers and a large building with a green dome. The sky is filled with orange and yellow clouds. The bottom photograph shows a waterfront walkway at night, with a river or canal in the center. The walkway is paved with light-colored tiles and has several small, round, illuminated bollards. The water reflects the lights from the walkway and the city skyline. On the right side of the walkway, there are three illuminated display cases. In the background, there are trees and a large elephant statue.

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My hope is that I provide the best
experience for all of my customers.”

— MARK ULBRICH
INDEPENDENT NOTARY | INDIANAPOLIS, IN

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

MARK ULBRICH

Mark Ulbrich has been working in the mortgage industry for most of his career, and he has been working as a notary, specializing in mobile closings for four years. Mark is trusted partner to Solidifi and we appreciate the work he does to make the closing process seamless for our clients.

MY PATH TO BECOMING A NOTARY

My experience with the mortgage industry began when I bought my first home. My friend worked for a mortgage company and noticed my peaked interest in the industry, and he encouraged me to become a loan officer. Several years later, a colleague of mine talked to me about the title and closing side of things, specifically mobile closings. I've been working as a notary specializing in mobile closings for the last four years, and it is the best work experience that I have ever had.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

What I find most rewarding about working as a notary is that I can help make the homebuying process a little easier for clients. I come to the clients and review all of the documents with them. Buying a home is most people's largest financial investment, and I am proud to play a small part in helping make their lives better.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

My hope is that I provide the best experience for all of my customers. I've had several signings recently with clients that were hearing impaired. They were concerned that they might need an interpreter for the signing, but I found that by taking a little extra time to explain the documents in writing we could still have a smooth closing process. The clients were very grateful for the extra effort!

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is an important aspect of my job as a notary signing agent. I always strive to present myself in a professional manner and be respectful of my clients and colleagues.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

I choose to work with Solidifi because they have the nicest, helpful, and most professional staff that I have ever worked with. Solidifi makes an extra effort to reward their best closing agents and go above and beyond.



MARK ULBRICH

INDEPENDENT NOTARY
INDIANAPOLIS, IN

An aerial photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue. The city is filled with tall buildings, many of which are lit up. In the foreground, there is a park with trees and a baseball field. The quote "I treat my clients the way I would expect to be treated." is overlaid on the image in white text. Below the quote, the name "JAMES DEVROY" and his title "INDEPENDENT NOTARY | GLENDALE, AZ" are written in white. At the bottom right, the location "GLENDALE, AZ" is written in white.

“

I treat my clients the way I would
expect to be treated.

— JAMES DEVROY
INDEPENDENT NOTARY | GLENDALE, AZ

GLENDALE, AZ

JAMES DEVOY

James Devoy became a notary signing agent after a career in retail and foodservice management. He primarily services Maricopa County and also travels across the state of Arizona. James prioritizes communication and respect when working with his clients. Solidifi appreciates James for his willingness to go above and beyond.

MY PATH TO BECOMING A NOTARY

I spent 30 years working in management, and I ended up managing a storage facility for a towing company. I wanted to become a Notary Public to help facilitate the sale of the cars that were in accidents that people no longer wanted. In researching how to do that I came across information on becoming a notary signing agent. It didn't take long for me to leave the towing company to pursue this full time.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

I enjoy traveling across the state and meeting different people from different backgrounds. I find it most rewarding to help clients, whether it be finalizing the purchase of their dream home or assisting with a much needed refinance.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

I once had a signing scheduled at 6pm with a doctor and her husband. At the last minute, the doctor got called in for

an emergency surgery. The surgery was a success and she was able to make it home by 11pm. We were able to get the signing completed by midnight and they were able to close as scheduled.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

I treat my clients the way I would expect to be treated. Communication is my top priority. My clients know what to expect when I arrive and they are updated if any unforeseen circumstances arise. I want my clients to feel like their time and schedule is just as important as mine.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

My favorite thing about working with Solidifi is the people. It goes without saying their professionalism and knowledge is top notch, and you can tell that they value the relationships with their notaries. The team at Solidifi is always pleasant and genuinely wants to help.



JAMES DEVOY

INDEPENDENT NOTARY
GLENDALE, AZ

The background of the entire image is a low-angle shot of several palm trees reaching towards the sky. The sky is split into two horizontal color bands: a teal upper half and an orange lower half, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The palm trees are dark silhouettes against this bright background.

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**It's important to me to leave
the signer with a great parting
impression.**

— **SUE KO**
INDEPENDENT NOTARY | LOS ANGELES, CA

LOS ANGELES, CA

SUE KO

Sue Ko has been a notary signing agent since 2019 and services Los Angeles County. Sue strives to make each client feel confident and educated during the signing process. Her upbeat attitude, punctuality, and flexibility give her an advantage in the field. Solidifi is proud to recognize Sue as an Extraordinary Notary.

MY PATH TO BECOMING A NOTARY

I had been working with a mortgage broker on my own loans over the years. He always took the time to answer questions and educate me on the process. During my loan closings, I'd always thought it curious that the notaries weren't familiar with the documents. I thought to myself, "I could deliver a better experience than this." I dove into education on loan documents, got licensed, and got to work!

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

The biggest reward of working as a notary is playing my small part to support borrowers in what for most of us is our biggest financial transaction.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

The borrowers of an early evening signing were not on the same page about their loan. It became apparent that they needed more time for discussion. I offered to give them

some privacy and circle back. I tended to some other signing appointments, zoomed back to them, and we completed the signing just before midnight!

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

I consider that I represent escrow and title in each client's transaction. Everyone in the mortgage process has invested their efforts to ensure a positive experience for the borrower. Notaries are the last stop in that chain, so it's important to me to leave the signer with a great parting impression of their entire journey.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

What I appreciate most about partnering with Solidifi is the people. The Region Managers and their teams alike are so friendly, supportive, and professional. This speaks to the culture at Solidifi. It's great working with a company that values relationships.



SUE KO

INDEPENDENT NOTARY
LOS ANGELES, CA



IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS DRIVE TRUST AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

FINDINGS FROM THE SOLIDIFI 2021 CONSUMER MORTGAGE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

On the heels of another record-breaking year in the mortgage industry, historically low interest rates and a recovering economy continued to fuel strength in mortgage originations in 2021. As households adjust to a new normal of hybrid workplaces, social migration and low interest rates played an increasing role in the American consumers' choice to become homeowners rather than renters.

We conducted The Solidifi 2021 Consumer Mortgage Experience Survey to assess the two most critical touchpoints in the mortgage transaction, the appraisal and the closing experience. We surveyed 1,000+ residential borrowers 18 years of age or older in the United States who have refinanced or purchased a home within the last two years, including an equal mix of those who have purchased a home or refinanced a mortgage in the last year and a mix of those who closed between one or two years ago.

The survey took an expansive look inside the borrower's experience during the valuation and closing processes, uncovering insights about what ultimately drives consumer preferences and expectations. This year's results reaffirmed findings of the past two years and uncovered interesting, new generational differences that will shift how our industry can better serve consumers in the future.

Homeownership Still Represents the American Dream

The survey found that regardless of age, borrowers believe owning a home represents an investment in their future, stability, a place for children to grow and thrive, and it represents the most significant financial transaction in their life. In fact, homeownership still represents the American dream.

Interestingly, Millennials are more likely to see home ownership as fulfilling needs related to family and community, while Boomers see it as a significant financial transaction and providing stability.

This year, lower interest rates caused home homeownership to increase; however, they were also responsible for the purchase of more vacation and investment properties. Home purchase decisions were increasingly driven by social and lifestyle reasons, especially among younger generations. Approximately 7 in 10 Millennials said that social migration was a factor in their home purchase. Consistent with last year's study, the main reasons for refinancing involve taking advantage of lower rates and reducing monthly payments.

Appraiser and Closing Agent Professionalism Determine Customer Satisfaction

The caliber of the appraiser and closing agent continues to be a key determinant of customer satisfaction. Our survey revealed that meaningful interactions, communication, professionalism, and preparedness make or break the consumer experience. In-person interaction in both the appraisal and closing process continues to build trust and drive an extraordinary borrower experience.



Solidifi is outperforming the competition with a 94% consumer satisfaction rating on the appraisal experience and 9 out of 10 satisfied customers with Solidifi and the closing process.

Great Customer Service and an Extraordinary Experience Influence Lender Selection

This year we looked at what motivated borrowers, how they selected their lender and what drove satisfaction with their lender. The survey found that existing banking relationships and low interest rates play a large part in lender selection. Not only do borrowers value great customer service and a seamless experience from their lender, borrowers were twice as likely to recommend their lender if they had an exceptional experience and 94% were likely to use their lender again based on this experience. With younger generations' proclivity to share their experiences online, exceptional customer experiences can become an important source of referrals for lenders.

Younger borrowers were twice as likely to say that an easy, seamless experience drove their choice of lender. Compared to older generations, Millennials and Gen Z were more likely to choose based on convenience, ease of the experience, and speed of approval and/or closing. Boomers were the most likely to choose based on an existing banking relationship.

Appraisals are Important to Borrowers

Borrowers revealed that appraisals are very valuable to them. They continue to value interactions with appraisers and confirmed that those who interacted with appraisers had a better overall experience. In fact, borrowers who interacted with the appraiser in any way – either in-person and/or via video call – were nearly twice as likely to rate the appraiser as excellent or very good compared to borrowers who did not interact with the appraiser. In addition, most borrowers said it was very important for the appraiser to personally visit the home and conduct an interior inspection. In fact, 2 in 3 borrowers indicated that having a full interior evaluation increased trust in their lender.

Overall, 4 out of 5 borrowers were satisfied with the appraisal process. For the second year running, our survey confirmed that having an appraiser who did a great job usually results in a satisfied borrower even if the value is lower than expected. In addition, scheduling flexibility increases borrower satisfaction.

The Majority of Borrowers Want an In-Person Closing

The survey revealed that convenience drives consumer preferences when it comes to closings, and the majority of borrowers prefer to close in an office or at their home versus online. This year, 62% borrowers indicated that they would like mobile notaries to facilitate their closing, including 71% of Millennials, who were the largest age cohort to prefer a mobile notary.

Borrowers preferred digital tools for reviewing documents and eSigning documents prior to closing; however, an overwhelming majority of borrowers still preferred an in-person closing. In fact, more than half of borrowers wanted to close face-to-face, versus online, because buying a home is one of the single largest investments in their life.

The results confirmed that borrowers want a trusted professional to guide them through the most important transaction of their lives. And, that responsive communication, convenience and a streamlined process drive customer satisfaction and repeat business for lenders.

Those who prefer a digitally-supported experience are looking for “the best of both worlds” with a combination of digital and paper having the most appeal in the closing experience.

To download the full survey results, visit:

go.solidifi.com/2021mortgageexperiencesurvey





ACKNOWLEDGING EXTRAORDINARY

Solidifi reviews the thousands of appraisers we work with to identify those who demonstrate high levels of Solidifi's top three values – outstanding performance, exceptional customer service, and a commitment to quality. The Extraordinary Appraiser designation is a recognized symbol of excellence throughout the industry. It acknowledges appraisers as committed professionals that go above and beyond for the lender and homeowner. Solidifi holds our Extraordinary Appraisers in the highest regard and views them as valued partners to the Solidifi team.

We are thrilled to welcome the following
individuals into the elite class of
Extraordinary Appraisers



“

I take pride in my work and make
sure I am honest before all else.

— DANIELLE MURPHY
INDEPENDENT APPRAISER | NORFOLK, MA

NORFOLK, MA

DANIELLE MURPHY

Danielle Murphy has been working in the appraisal industry since 2009 and has been a licensed independent appraiser since 2014. Danielle's background in customer service and strong work ethic contribute to her successful appraisal career. Solidifi is proud to honor Danielle as a 2021 Extraordinary Appraiser.

MY PATH TO THE APPRAISAL INDUSTRY

My father owned his own appraisal company, and after I had my first child I decided to change career paths and work for him. In 2009, I got my appraiser trainee license and started to learn the business training under my father. In 2014, I obtained my Certified RE Appraisal license and started working for myself.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

I love the flexibility of being an appraiser. I am able to make my own schedule, contribute to the financial success of my family, and still be a mom.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

I always strive to keep my customers happy. I take pride in my work and make sure I am honest before all else. Whenever I have received requests for rush orders, I always try to accommodate the request and help get the job done.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

I worked as a customer service representative for years, and that position gave me the foundation that I needed to learn to always be professional and put the customer first. This is all I have ever known, and I carry that same mentality into the appraisal industry.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

Solidifi is the best AMC I have worked with in my career as an appraiser. Their system is easy to use, and communication is clear and efficient. I have one assigned Region Manager that I am able to establish a relationship with and can filter all requests through them. It has been a pleasure to work with Solidifi over the years.



DANIELLE MURPHY

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER
NORFOLK, MA



“

I still wake up every day excited to
complete appraisals!

— **BRAD WILLIAMS**

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER | GREENSBORO, NC

GREENSBORO, NC

BRAD WILLIAMS

Brad Williams has been a certified appraiser covering the Guilford, NC region for the past 10 years. Brad is passionate about the appraisal industry and is proud to know that his part in the mortgage process helps homeowners make one of the largest investments of their lives. Brad's willingness to go above and beyond makes him a valued partner to Solidifi.

MY PATH TO THE APPRAISAL INDUSTRY

I decided to follow in the family footsteps and become an appraiser – both my brother and my uncle are appraisers. I was always intrigued by the profession, and having family around to train and coach me helped. I became a certified appraiser in 2011, and I still wake up every day excited to complete appraisals!

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

The most rewarding part of working as an appraiser is that I am the trusted expert providing analysis for home investment. Purchasing a home is the biggest investment most people will make in their lifetime. I find it extremely rewarding to know I am providing analysis and support for the market value of this investment and am helping turn someone's dream into a reality.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

I once had a lender contact me in a panic – their borrower was closing on a new construction home in three hours and they forgot to order the final inspection. I dropped what

I was doing and rushed over to the property, completed the final inspection, and submitted the report back to the lender within the hour. The closing process was not delayed and moved forward without a hitch.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is multi-faceted in the appraisal industry, but most important is being punctual. Arriving on time for an appointment and completing the appointment in the amount of time suggested is very important to me. In today's world it's even more important to remain respectful of other people's space and homes – maintaining social distance and always wearing a mask.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

I chose to work with Solidifi based on their respected name in the appraisal industry. Upon onboarding with them, I found them to be professional, credible, and understanding. Their platforms are efficient and easy to navigate, and I appreciate all of the support I receive from my Region Manager.



BRAD WILLIAMS

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER
GREENSBORO, NC

A full-page background image featuring a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted tall grasses. The sky is filled with soft, orange-hued clouds.

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The best way that I can go above and beyond is making myself available to accommodate the lender and homeowner.

— **MELVIN JONES**

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER | UPPER MARLBORO, MD

UPPER MARLBORO, MD

MELVIN JONES

Melvin Jones has been working as a licensed appraiser across Prince George's County, Maryland for 16 years. After working in management for most of his professional life, Melvin decided to make a career change and become an appraiser in 2005. Melvin is appreciated by Solidifi for his professionalism, flexibility, and emphasis on time management.

MY PATH TO THE APPRAISAL INDUSTRY

I started my appraisal career later in my professional life. I had an appraisal done on my own home and was intrigued by the process. The inspection part looked simple enough, but I didn't realize the depth of the overall appraisal process. I passed the licensing exam in 2005 and started my own company later that year.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

After having been in management in previous professional positions, I enjoy the solitude of being my own boss. I also enjoy the ability of setting my own schedule and interacting with the clients that I meet on a day-to-day basis.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

The best way that I can go above and beyond is making myself available to accommodate lender and homeowner schedules. I always make sure I meet all assigned due dates. Being flexible to changes is part of the job.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

To me, being professional means being a good time manager. This also means arriving on time to appointments, treating customers in a professional and respectful manner, and delivering the appraisal assignment on time.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

After working with multiple AMCs, Solidifi met my needs in terms of appraisal independence and the ability to deliver the volume of business that I desired.



MELVIN JONES

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER
UPPER MARLBORO, MD



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Professionalism is all about
gaining trust.

— **ATHENA COUGHLIN**
INDEPENDENT APPRAISER | HONOLULU, HI

HONOLULU, HI

ATHENA COUGHLIN

Athena Coughlin became a licensed appraiser in 2007 and services the Honolulu, HI area. Athena consistently demonstrates professionalism and ensures she provides a thorough, well-analyzed appraisal report for every order. Athena has been partnering with Solidifi for the past eight years, and we are honored to acknowledge her as an Extraordinary Appraiser for 2021.

MY PATH TO THE APPRAISAL INDUSTRY

My interest in the appraisal industry started when I met an appraiser trainee who had just entered into the field. He described the appraisal process to me and I was intrigued. I decided to make a major career change and pursue my appraisal license.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

The most rewarding part of this career is providing the lender, home purchaser, and homeowner with a cogent report that will be utilized to complete a transaction based on my analytical thinking and due diligence.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging, especially since we are required to enter people's homes. I had a homeowner request that I wear a head-to-toe PPE suit to complete his interior inspection. He

and his family were very frightened to have a stranger enter their home during the pandemic and were so appreciative that I was willing to cooperate. I moved quickly and efficiently to complete the inspection.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is all about gaining trust. A trusted appraiser provides an unbiased, analyzed appraisal report, and that report will be utilized by the lender, AMC, and homeowner. One must have ethics, meet expectations, and communicate.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

Solidifi is a professional and organized appraisal management company. Their appraiser guidelines are well-defined with every order, and my Region Manager is always quick to respond whenever I have a question.



ATHENA COUGHLIN

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER
HONOLULU, HI



“

A true professional is someone
who strives to always be better.

— **CARMEN BROCATO**

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER | CLARK, NJ

CLARK, NJ

CARMEN BROCATO

Carmen Brocato has been working as a certified appraiser since 2000. His path to an appraisal career started when he had a refinance appraisal done on his own home, which peaked his interest in the industry. Carmen has been a long time partner with Solidifi, and his professionalism and dedication to the homeowner is appreciated by the Solidifi team.

MY PATH TO THE APPRAISAL INDUSTRY

My interest in the appraisal industry began 25 years ago when I had an appraisal done for a refinance on my home. The appraisal came in significantly lower than what I originally paid for my home, and it got me thinking about how and why the value varied. I decided to enroll in courses to see exactly what an appraisal entailed – that was the beginning of my appraisal career.

THE REWARDS OF THE PROFESSION

My favorite part of working in the appraisal industry is being able to meet new people and see different types of homes in my area. I also enjoy managing my own schedule.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

I constantly schedule my appraisals outside of business hours to accommodate homeowners when they cannot

make an appraisal appointment during daytime hours. I think it is important to remain flexible and accommodating to the schedules of the lender and homeowners.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

A professional in our industry is an appraiser who commits to continuing education and training throughout their career and is ethically and morally committed to the profession. A true professional is someone who strives to always be better and not remain complacent.

PARTNERING WITH SOLIDIFI

I have been working with Solidifi for many years now; I originally signed up with them due to their great reputation. They continue to be a great company to work with.



CARMEN BROCATO

INDEPENDENT APPRAISER
CLARK, NJ





GROWING THE APPRAISAL INDUSTRY THROUGH MENTORSHIP

Jeff Hosto has been working as an appraiser for the past 35 years. His newest appraiser trainee, Jason Martinez, started his appraisal journey just five months ago. Although they are separated by three decades of experience, Hosto and Martinez both have the same passion for their careers and are contributing to the future of the appraisal industry.

Martinez has always had an interest in the mortgage industry. He obtained his real estate license in 2017, but his work as an agent was more of a hobby than a full-time pursuit. He was interested in finding a more permanent career within the mortgage industry but wasn't quite sure about his options. After learning more about the appraisal side of the industry from his girlfriend's father, licensed appraiser Joe Macias, he was hooked and eager to learn more. "Knowing what I know now, it's odd that you generally don't hear about appraising when you talk about real estate," says Martinez. "You hear about real estate investing, real estate development, but not so much the appraising side. That's surprising to me because it's such an important aspect of real estate." Martinez took the first steps to begin his new venture and enrolled in appraisal courses to obtain his trainee license.

Today, lenders are becoming more supportive of appraiser trainees, allowing them to participate more actively in the appraisal process.

Making the Connection

Throughout the course of his career, Jeff Hosto has mentored more than 40 appraiser trainees, 25 of whom still work at his appraisal firm, Appraisal Resource, in Newport Coast, CA. One of these trainees was Joe Macias. And so when Martinez was wrapping up his coursework, Macias contacted Hosto to see if he would be willing to take him on as his next trainee.

Martinez received his trainee license in April 2021 and started working with Hosto on a regular basis. Their connection works because of their shared passion for the profession. "With Jason, I got really lucky. He's doing incredibly well. He's driven, he's a hard worker, and it's really working out." Hosto says he was a lot like Martinez when he was a trainee himself; he had an appetite to always know more and loved learning something new every day.

Shared Trainee Experiences Across the Decades

Although they started their appraisal trainee careers 35 years apart, Hosto and Martinez experienced similar challenges when seeking out a mentor. Martinez cold called more than 100 appraisers looking for a supervising trainer to mentor him. Most of the appraisers he spoke with were either too busy or unwilling to take on a trainee. In the early days of his trainee career, Hosto also experienced difficulty finding a mentor – but not to the same extent. This was partially due to the fact there were no licensing requirements and fewer lender regulations in place at the time. "Requirements have certainly changed since I was training. Up until recently, lenders weren't willing to accept a report completed by a trainee," says Hosto. Today, lenders are becoming more supportive of appraiser trainees, allowing them to participate more actively in the appraisal process. Hosto and Martinez both hope this growing acceptance will encourage more appraisers to become mentors to new trainees.

Hosto has experience on both the trainee and mentor sides of the industry and recognizes there are challenges and rewards to both sides of the relationship.

“One of biggest challenges is finding the right mentor. I was fortunate to find a great mentor early in my career who invested time and training to ensure I could be an independent appraiser.” Because of his own positive experiences, Hosto tries to do the same for his trainees. “I just try to treat each trainee the way I would want to be treated. Obviously there will be questions and patience is required, but we just take it day by day, assignment by assignment.”

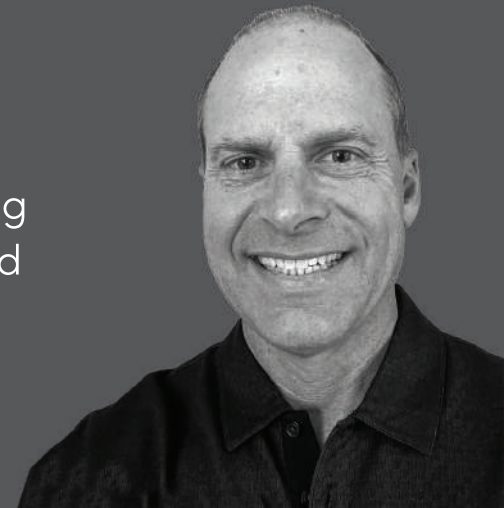
The Rewards of Mentorship

Even after mentoring for decades, it still amazes Hosto to watch each of his mentees become fully licensed appraisers. “The most rewarding part is taking someone who knew nothing, training them, and right before your eyes they become an appraiser.” He hopes to instill enough technical knowledge and insight to make each of his trainees successful. If he could

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JEFF HOSTO



Martinez is enjoying his time out in the field with Hosto. He appreciates the autonomy and the variety of work the profession offers. “It’s a good mix of being out in the field inspecting a property but then sitting down to create analytical, data-driven reports.” When asked where he sees his appraisal career heading, Martinez says he plans to learn as much as he can from Hosto on his path to becoming a certified general appraiser.

only pass along one piece of advice to new appraisers and trainees, Hosto would stress the importance of the appraiser’s role in the mortgage process. “Appraisers exist to be the lenders eyes and ears – we’re here to help and support them. We have to justify what we do and take our role in the process seriously.” Once his trainees are fully licensed themselves, Hosto hopes that they will pay it forward and become mentors for the next generation of appraiser trainees.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE APPRAISER PROFESSION

Introducing the Solidifi Appraiser Trainee Mentorship and Scholarship Program



Advocating for Appraiser Trainees

This fall, Solidifi announced the launch of its Appraiser Trainee Mentorship and Scholarship Program. As part of the Program, Solidifi has joined the Appraisal Institute's Appraisal Diversity Initiative (ADI) as an Advisor Sponsor by providing scholarships and mentorship matching opportunities for new entrants to the appraisal profession.

Mentor Support from the Solidifi Network

For aspiring appraisers, finding a qualified mentor to oversee part of their training is often cited as a significant barrier to entry in the profession. However, more and more appraisers on the Solidifi network are opening their doors to trainees. Solidifi has already onboarded more than 80 trainees with appraiser mentors through its national network of appraisers.

About the Appraiser Diversity Initiative

The Appraiser Diversity Initiative is a collaboration between the Appraisal Institute, National Urban League, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The goals of the Appraiser Diversity Initiative are to attract diverse new entrants into the residential appraisal field, overcome barriers to entry (such as education, training, and experience requirements), and provide support to position aspiring appraisers for professional success.

The goal of the ADI is to create relationships and partnerships with sponsors for the benefit of the ADI participants. ADI sponsors workshops and other activities to inform aspiring appraisers about the requirements to become an appraiser and the multiple career opportunities available. ADI participants are awarded education scholarships for the completion of base course requirements to become an appraiser.

TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT

MARCUS KNIGHT

Marcus Knight was the first trainee to participate in the Appraiser Trainee Mentorship program and was awarded a scholarship through the ADI. He completed his required coursework in October 2020 and received his trainee license in January 2021. Thanks to his partnerships with Solidifi and Appraisal Institute, Marcus is working regularly with an appraiser mentor and is on his way to becoming a fully licensed appraiser.



How did you learn about the appraisal industry?

The Appraisal Institute hosted an information session through the Chicago Urban League. I didn't know anything about the appraiser profession, but after hearing from the Appraisal Institute (AI) team and learning more about the industry I decided it was a perfect fit for me.

What led you to pursue your appraiser trainee license?

I liked that it involved working in my own community and interacting with new people every day, but it also required analytical skills and strong attention to detail. I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship through AI's Appraisal Diversity Initiative and started my required coursework in 2020.

What challenges did you face when seeking out a mentor?

After receiving my license in January 2021, I called appraisers in my area to see if they would take me on as a trainee. I was turned down by everyone I contacted. After more than a month of rejections, I reached out to the AI team to let them know I was struggling to find a mentor. They connected me with Solidifi to find a supervisor trainee.

How was the mentor match process with Solidifi?

The mentor matching process with Solidifi was wonderful. Within one week of contacting them, I was paired and in contact with my mentor, Fred Toussaint. The team at Solidifi was so helpful; they gave me the opportunity to start my appraisal journey.

There are so many trainees struggling to find mentors – it's amazing that Solidifi is helping appraiser trainees like me succeed. I would not be an appraiser trainee today if it weren't for my partnerships with AI and Solidifi. Receiving the ADI scholarship and the mentor match assistance from Solidifi literally changed the future of my career.

How has your mentorship experience been so far?

Fred is a great mentor. He understands the nuances of the different areas we cover and is such a knowledgeable resource. Fred is supportive and answers any questions I have, but he also challenges me to step outside of my comfort zone. I also have direct access to the contacts at Solidifi and AI who I can reach out to at any time for guidance. I am so grateful for that support.

SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY

In conversation with Solidifi Chief Technology Officer Ryan Smith

Since the onset of the pandemic, technology leaders across industries have played a key role in keeping businesses running – bringing ingenuity and agility to day-to-day operations. In the mortgage industry, these challenges were amplified by record-setting volumes, putting efficiency and customer experience at the forefront of technology conversations. We sat down with Solidifi Chief Technology Officer Ryan Smith to get his perspective on the future of mortgage tech.

In what way do you think the mortgage industry was prepared to take on the challenges posed by the pandemic? What changes do you think are here to stay?

The pandemic accelerated a number of technology trends – from remote workforces to a digital-first approach for consumers. A decade ago, it was the need for efficiencies that was driving technology changes in the mortgage industry – and while we still see that today, we have moved to a customer-driven approach to technology where consumers expect the same level of ease and innovation from their lender as they would from their favorite retailer.

Data and artificial intelligence seem to be ubiquitous in mortgage technology conversations – where do you think we are in the evolution and how do you think these advancements will change the industry?

Mortgage lending is one of the oldest and most complex industries in North America – more than two dozen vendors can touch one mortgage transaction, not to mention the multiple layers of security and compliance involved, which is what makes it ripe for disruption.

However, the complexity of our industry also makes it challenging to innovate – unlike the telco industry where cellular technology has managed to leapfrog century-old technology by starting fresh, in banking, we typically don't have the ability to implement new systems that completely circumvent old processes – there are simply too many complex integrations at stake.

The good news is that the industry is changing. Lenders are looking at their processes and investing in new technology that is changing how they do business from the outside in – putting the customer experience first. While we see great potential with artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities, the key to winning will be the ability to harness the power of these technological advancements to drive a better customer experience. It will be about change management.

When it comes to technology, is faster always better? What do you think the industry should be more focused on?

The mortgage industry is notorious for being slow – but when we look to use technology to speed up the process, I think it's important to not lose sight of what we are solving

for: a better customer experience. Leveraging technology to speed up front end of the process only to cause more errors at the back end isn't really progress – that's a customer escalation waiting to happen.

As Bill Gates once said: "The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency," – nowhere is that more applicable than in the mortgage industry. Intelligent systems which include automation, machine learning and predictive analytics should be used to power smarter decisions from the get-go.

What do you view as the most critical investments Solidifi has made in technology over the last five years?

Solidifi's approach has always been unique. We follow the carpenter's rule (measure twice, cut once) because we believe that focusing on quality at the front end of the process creates better outcomes – for us, for our network, for our clients and ultimately for their customers. We

have built a proprietary network management platform around these principles which has allowed us to grow our business based on delivering better performance. We have invested [more than \$50 million] into our systems and predictive analytics that provide our network of appraisers and notaries with actionable insight and complete transparency into the quality of their work – allowing them to continuously improve their performance. Our data-driven approach to performance allows us to assign the right appraiser or notary to every transaction, which means we're able to offer a better customer experience.

Where do you see the company investing going forward?

As we've done in the past, Solidifi will continue to invest in our platform, connecting intelligence and experiential learning to drive better outcomes for our clients with the goal of bringing simplicity and peace of mind to a complicated process. Our mission is to make the home ownership experience extraordinary by empowering incredibly smart decisions. That is what our technology team is focused on, every day.



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MEET THE SOLIDIFI TEAM

Meet some of the Region Managers on the Solidifi team who support our appraiser and notary partners.



MICHELLE ROTHENBERG
REGION MANAGER, NOTARY

NORTHEAST U.S.



What is something you've learned in this role that has made you successful?

My previous positions have taught me to work under pressure in a fast-paced environment. In this role, I have learned how to prioritize my day to ensure my region runs successfully.

What sets Solidifi apart from the competition?

Solidifi is in the business of working with clients, notaries, and employees to cultivate long lasting relationships. These relationships build a strong sense of community which leads to sustainable success.

What's the most important thing a notary can do to be successful when partnering with Solidifi?

The most successful notaries on our panel communicate frequently, remain flexible, and have an eagerness to build their business and capacity with us.

What is your favorite part of your role as a Region Manager?

My favorite part of my role is working with the best group of notaries!



CHRIS MESSANA
REGION MANAGER, NOTARY

SOUTHEAST U.S.



What is something you've learned in this role that has made you successful?

I've learned to reach out to my fellow Region Managers for help. Most times, another Region Manager has already faced a similar issue and can advise what has or has not worked for them in the past.

What sets Solidifi apart from the competition?

Solidifi accommodates the borrowers as much as possible. We understand this process is stressful and we try to help alleviate as much as we can to make the signing process simple for our clients.

What's the most important thing a notary can do to be successful when partnering with Solidifi?

The most important thing notaries can do is keep a clear line of communication with our notary team. If an issue arises and the notary contacts us to make us aware, a team member will address it immediately.

What is your favorite part of your role as a Region Manager?

I love recruiting and building relationships with our notaries. Building solid relationships ensures closings are completed quickly and accurately for the borrowers.



NATALIE OLARI

REGION MANAGER, APPRAISAL

FLORIDA



What is something you've learned in this role that has made you successful?

The most important thing I have learned as a Region Manager is how to deescalate situations quickly and efficiently.

What sets Solidifi apart from the competition?

Solidifi assigns each appraiser that partners with us to a single point of contact – their Region Manager. Having one sole contact makes the process seamless for both the appraiser and the Solidifi team.

What's the most important thing a notary can do to be successful when partnering with Solidifi?

Communicate, communicate, communicate!

What is your favorite part of your role as a Region Manager?

My favorite part of my role is getting to know all of my appraisers and having mutually beneficial business partnerships with them.



KRIEG MCEUIN

REGION MANAGER, APPRAISAL

CALIFORNIA



What is something you've learned in this role that has made you successful?

I've learned the importance of forming reliable relationships with everyone I work with, from my appraisers to the Solidifi Account Managers to other internal departments.

What sets Solidifi apart from the competition?

Solidifi treats each appraiser as a member of our team, not just a contractor. It's a huge benefit to the appraiser to have a dedicated contact that they can reach out to and work with every day.

What's the most important thing a notary can do to be successful when partnering with Solidifi?

The most successful appraisers communicate regularly with their Region Manager. I try to coach my appraisers to be direct so we can build a great partnership.

What is your favorite part of your role as a Region Manager?

My favorite part of being a Region Manager is watching my region and the company succeed. It's so rewarding to win more market share or have the quickest turnaround times on lender scorecards.

A COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP

One of the benefits of partnering with Solidifi is having a dedicated point of contact – your Region Manager. Each Region Manager oversees a specific geographical area across the U.S. and manages the panel of field professionals within that region. Focusing on one area allows the Region Manager to become familiar not only with the local field professionals, but with the challenges and attributes specific to their region. Field professionals have one assigned contact that they can reach out to consistently for questions and support.

INTRODUCING **SOLIDIFI PERKS**

Solidifi values the partnerships we have with all of our field professionals across the country. To show our appreciation, we are proud to offer the Solidifi Perks program to all of our active partners!



Solidifi has teamed up with leading nationwide organizations to offer discounts on various professional services. This program is complimentary and offers great savings on services for business needs, as well as dozens of additional services.

We are excited to offer the following discounts to all of our active partners:



MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT

Discounted rate on AAA Basic Memberships and waived first-time registration fees. Includes AAA roadside services as well as all AAA discounts (varies by location).

- Gas Stations
- Travel/Hotels/Rental Cars
- Shipping Services
- Phone and Internet Services
- Dining, Retail, and more



National
Purchasing
Partners

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

By leveraging the purchasing power of more than 300,000 members, NPP can provide top discounts and special B2B pricing to businesses of all sizes. Enjoy exclusive deals on a catalog of items, including:

- Staples
- Office Depot
- HP
- Verizon Wireless
- Dining, Retail, and more!

solidifi

PERKS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [SOLIDIFI.COM/PERKS](https://solidifi.com/perks).

2021–2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

Meet the Solidifi team and learn more about our growing network at these upcoming events.



MBA ANNUAL CONVENTION & EXPO

OCTOBER 17 – OCTOBER 20, 2021
SAN DIEGO, CA



DIGITAL MORTGAGE CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 14 – DECEMBER 16, 2021
SAN DIEGO, CA



MBA SERVICING SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 22 – FEBRUARY 25, 2022
ORLANDO, FL



CBA LIVE

MARCH 7 – MARCH 9, 2022
SAN ANTONIO, TX



ELLIE MAE EXPERIENCE

MARCH 14 – MARCH 16, 2022
LAS VEGAS, NV

HUMBLLED BY YOUR KIND WORDS



My Region Managers are really easy to work with and always very understanding. I love working with Solidifi.

Roy Kim – Appraiser, GA

I have had the pleasure of working with many AMCs, but I find the working relationship with Solidifi exceeds all others.

Gary Garvey – Appraiser, MD

Solidifi offers the most professional business model. Their platform is easy to work with and the staff is excellent.

Norman Kantrowitz – Notary, TN

Solidifi has a solid reputation as an AMC that makes the relationship with the lender and borrower easy and seamless.

Connie Layman – Notary, TX

Solidifi is well-regarded as an industry leader and has responsive and helpful support staff.

Kan Yao – Appraiser, CA

Solidifi has been my most consistent and trustworthy partner. From the very beginning I was shown that I'm a part of a network of trustworthy professionals.

Sean Moshrefi – Notary, CA

Everyone I have encountered at Solidifi has been wonderful. My favorite for sure!

Jenny Amsden – Notary, CO

I chose to work with Solidifi simply because they're easy to work with. My Region Manager and I have established great rapport.

Akira Sim – Appraiser, CA

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