

Dennis Hunt EVP/Manager of Public Finance



Mr. Hunt has served as an investment banker with Stephens since 1993, providing investment banking services for tax-exempt and taxable financings. Over the last few years, he has structured more than two billion dollars in tax-exempt municipal bond issues. In 2015, Mr. Hunt was selected to head the public finance division for Stephens with offices located in seven states. He holds a master's degree with honors from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and has completed post-graduate training at Harvard University, the University of Texas and the University of Virginia.

dhunt@stephens.com

Stephens Inc.
111 Center Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 377-2041

www.stephens.com

Member NYSE, SIPC

Dennis Hunt, recently appointed Executive Vice President and Manager of Stephens Public Finance Division, talks about his 22 years with Stephens and how experience on the client side informs his point of view.

What was it like transitioning from being a client of Stephens Public Finance to going to work for the group?

Having worked in municipal management for 15 years and having a master's degree in public administration, I had experience with issuing municipal bonds, but it was still a career change. I wouldn't call it a quantum leap, but it was still a change.

Because I had been a client for a number of years, I had great familiarity with the firm and the highest level of respect and admiration for both Stephens Inc. and the Stephens family.

How has your experience on the client side been valuable?

Public finance in particular is very relationship-driven – as is the culture at Stephens – and I had a significant number of strong relationships with individuals in the public sector. Those relationships gave me the opportunity to effectively serve as a trusted advisor to those individuals. Also, when you've been a client, you know how to serve the clients' needs—how to alleviate their concerns rather than add to them.

You've talked a little about the transition from the client side and being on the other side of the deal. Are there any deals that stand out?

You do this kind of work because you have a desire to preserve or even advance the public interest. Stephens has completed financings for a significant number of projects for cities, schools, and universities, and you realize you are helping to provide something that is making an important difference to both individuals and their communities. Each deal offers both unique challenges and a true sense of satisfaction when it is completed.

What has changed in public finance since you joined Stephens in 1993?

Two things really stand out. The first is technology. Of course technology has affected every business, but it has especially enhanced our ability to be much more efficient. Public financings can be rife with politics, bureaucracy, and an intense flow of documents and information. Technology hasn't reduced the complexity but it has greatly increased the efficiency.

The second is the significant expansion of federal regulations, specifically the Dodd-Frank Act. Our mission is to be a trusted advisor and to have long-term relationships. In this firm, a person's word and a handshake are very important – going back to the company's founding. New complex regulations make it more challenging to operate in that way, but we remain committed to being trusted advisors to our clients.

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