

THE ACCESS · TALENT MARKET

Property management hiring in 2026

Where demand is, which roles are hardest to fill, and what it means for pay.

By **Brandon Bates**, Co-Founder and President

~39,000

PROJECTED ANNUAL
OPENINGS THIS DECADE¹

34%

TURNOVER IN 2025, VS 21%
NATIONALLY²

+3.8%

WAGE GROWTH OVER
TWELVE MONTHS³

466,100

MANAGERS EMPLOYED IN
2024¹

I spend most of my week inside property management hiring, and the 2026 market is not what the headlines say.

I also take a fair number of these calls from the school pickup line, so if you ever hear a kid in the background, that is just the operation running at full strength.

The headline is a cooling labor market. The reality on the ground is a talent shortage that never left. There were about 466,100 property, real estate, and community association managers working in 2024, and the field is projected to add openings at roughly 39,000 a year this decade, most of it replacement rather than growth as experienced people retire or leave.¹ The seats are not new. The people who knew how to fill them are walking out the door.

Turnover is the real story

Property management turnover hit 34 percent in 2025, against a national average closer to 21 percent.² A 100-unit community staffed by eight can replace nearly three people in a single year. Every exit takes institutional knowledge with it, and the replacement market is thin.

Two categories are hardest to fill

Skilled trades and maintenance. Technicians, HVAC, porters. Properties need fast service response and there are not enough hands.

Compliance and recertification specialists. This is the one most operators underestimate. These roles need real program knowledge in LIHTC, Section 8, and HUD, plus certifications that take time to earn. You cannot post the job Monday and fill it Friday. The pool is small, mostly already employed, and shrinking as compliance gets more complex.

That scarcity is showing up in pay

Average hourly earnings climbed about 3.8 percent over the last year, and specialized compliance talent commands a premium on top of that because so few people can actually do the work.³ If you are still benchmarking salaries to two years ago, you are losing candidates before the first call.

What I tell operators

Stop treating hiring as a reaction to a vacancy. By the time the seat is open, you are already behind a market fighting over the same short list. The talent is not unemployed and waiting by the phone. It is employed, busy, and ignoring your InMail the same way the rest of us ignore a 7 a.m. meeting invite.

The firms winning in 2026 build the pipeline before they need it, pay to market, and hold onto the people they already have. The market is not soft. It is selective. Plan for that and you beat the operators still waiting for resumes to show up.

SOURCES

1. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, "Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers" (2024 employment; 2024 to 2034 projected openings).
2. HH Staffing Services, "2026 Property Management Staffing Audit Guide" (January 2026), citing Bureau of Labor Statistics turnover data.
3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Situation report (average hourly earnings, twelve-month change), reported February 2026.