



MERRITT

COMMUNITY CAPITAL CORPORATION

# 2026 JOB DEMAND STUDY

Findings + Insights



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## Why we completed a job demand study:

Merritt's Commitment to Community (C2C) initiative attracts, trains, and retains the next generation of housing leaders to build a housing industry that best represents the communities it serves.

We conducted this study to explore the affordable housing job market and identify upcoming trends that will inform and shape our C2C programs.

As the market evolves, it's critical for us to have a pulse on recent and upcoming changes to help us tailor our programs and help participants identify the right opportunities.



## Industry observations:

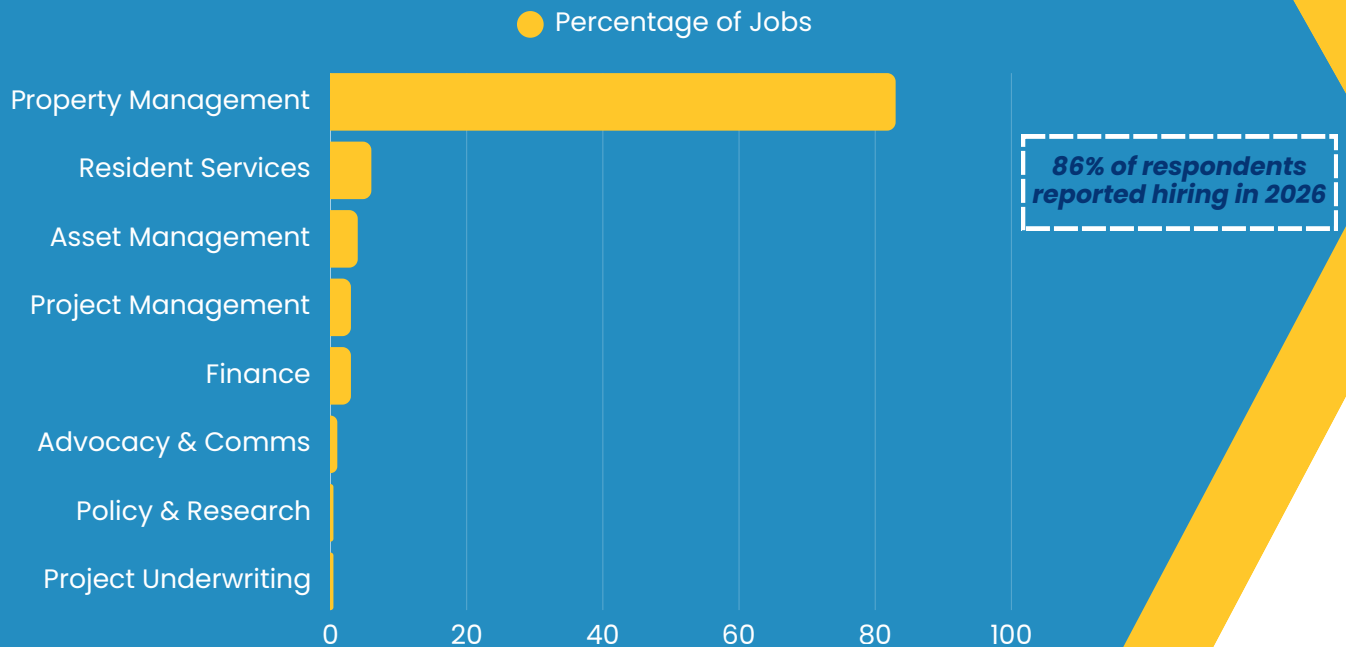
- ✓ The demand for skilled property managers remains one of the industry's most persistent workforce challenges.
- ✓ Fundraising constraints are limiting hiring capacity for policy, research, and development roles across mission-driven organizations.
- ✓ Mid-career professionals remain an underserved segment of the workforce, highlighting the need for leadership development and professional growth training.

# Key Insights

We received insights from 28 organizations\* across California that represent the following organizational categories:

*\*Most respondents were hiring managers/team leaders across the state*

- Nonprofit developers
- Advocacy organizations
- Housing authorities
- Policy organizations
- Banks
- Property management



## Takeaways

While most hiring is happening at the entry and early career levels, no new roles were reported in policy and research.

The majority of positions were concentrated in the Bay Area and Los Angeles, reflecting where much of the industry's growth continues, while San Diego is beginning to emerge as a growing market for new opportunities.



# Skill Gaps



## General Findings

- ▶▶▶ Policy organizations are seeking professionals with stronger operational and leadership skills to complement increasingly robust academic training in housing policy.
- ▶▶▶ Property management and resident services teams continue to face a need for greater cultural competency, trauma-informed practices, and experience collaborating with residents and communities.
- ▶▶▶ Finance roles require candidates with more experience in development.
- ▶▶▶ Organizations are balancing growth through both new positions created to support portfolio expansion and ongoing hiring needs driven by staff turnover/backfill.

# Summary

Our 2026 Job Demand Study provided key insights about current and projected workforce needs within affordable housing.

The labor market data, employer feedback, and economic trends allow us to identify where job opportunities are growing and what skills are in demand.

These findings not only inform our own workforce development strategies—embedded within our C2C programs—but also serve as a resource for employers and industry partners to understand emerging talent needs, and for workforce development institutions to align training programs that strengthen the broader housing ecosystem.



Find out more about the impact of C2C: →



## What's Next?

We are continuously researching and exploring new approaches that help us stay ahead of industry trends.

In response to the growing demand for skilled property managers, we recently launched our newest program, Rising Affordable Housing Management Professionals (RAMP), in partnership with Santa Monica College, to create stronger pathways into these critical careers.

## Contact Us

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