



WORKFORCE RESEARCH STUDY

A data-driven roadmap for the
texas apartment industry

— 2026

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Executive Summary

The Texas apartment industry plays a critical role in meeting the state’s rapidly growing housing needs, yet it faces mounting pressure to attract, onboard, and retain talent in an increasingly competitive labor market.

To better understand how Texans view careers in the industry—and what truly influences their employment decisions—this statewide research study surveyed 1,500 Texans ages 18–58, across broad generational segments (Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X) and key cohorts including the Texas general population, Texans without a college degree, and self-identified Texas Hispanics.

The research study explored perceptions, expectations, and decision drivers across the full employee lifecycle, from awareness and recruiting through onboarding, development, and long-term retention.



Perceptions of Working in the Texas Apartment Industry

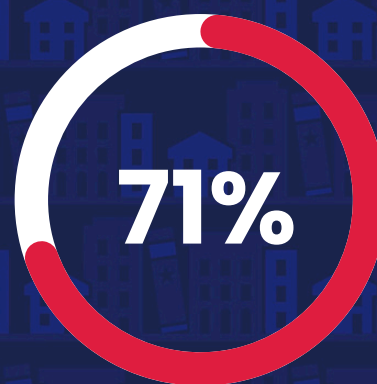
For the purpose of this study, the term apartment industry refers to the business of running apartment communities.

This includes running the onsite properties, managing the business, including the marketing, operations, and financials, and working with the companies that supply goods or services to the apartment communities.

Main Research Discoveries

Overall, the research findings reveal a strong and often underleveraged opportunity.

More than half of Texans (55%) report a positive overall perception of working in the apartment industry, with even stronger sentiment among Gen Z (60%) and younger Millennials (60%). Interest spans a wide range of roles, with Community Management emerging as the most attractive career path across all demographic groups.



Apartment Communities Fill a Major Housing Gap

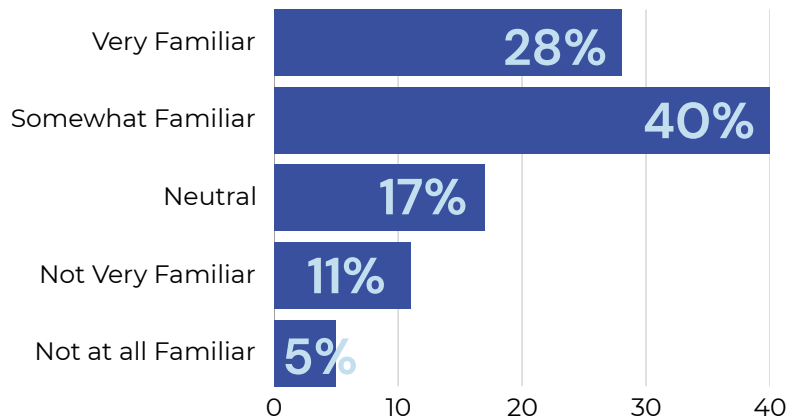
Notably, 71% of Texans recognize that apartment communities fill a major housing gap in America today, underscoring the industry's relevance, stability, and societal impact.

Familiarity: A Powerful Driver

One of the most powerful drivers uncovered in the study is familiarity. Texans who are familiar with apartment communities as a place to work are dramatically more likely to view the industry favorably (67% vs. 26%) and are, on average, 30.8% more interested in pursuing careers across every job role tested.

Main Research Discoveries

Percentage of Texas General Population familiar with apartment communities as a place to work.



Understanding of the job roles and daily responsibilities of employees.



Nearly half of Texans (44%) have considered a career in the apartment industry at some point, and that figure jumps to 54% among those with prior familiarity with apartment communities as a place to work.

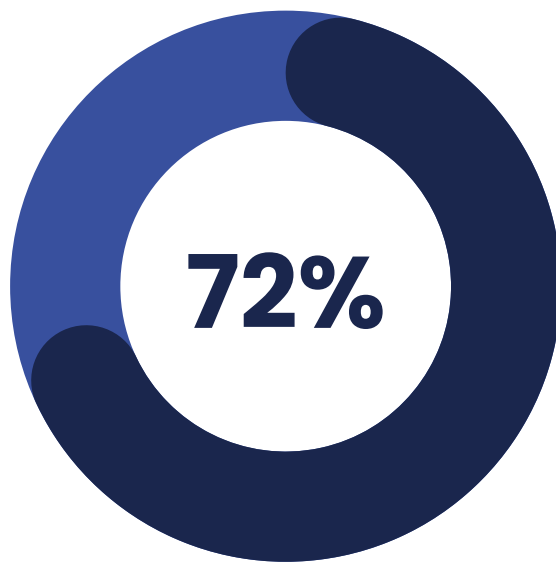
This reinforces a central insight of the research: awareness and exposure are not passive conditions, but strategic levers for workforce growth.

The expectations of working in the apartment industry that Texans, Texans without a college degree, and Texas Hispanics agree with most are that it requires specialty skills, is a stable career, and provides on-the-job training. In addition, 72% of Texans believe digital tools (i.e. team messaging platforms, digital training and credentialing platforms, virtual tours, and leasing tools) make frontline roles in the apartment industry more appealing for younger workers.

Apartment Industry Career Benefits

Texans, Texans without a college degree, and Texas Hispanics all agree that the biggest benefits of working in the apartment industry are strong job security and discounted or free housing benefits.

72% of Texans would consider working in an apartment community if it meant free or discounted rent, including 83% of Texans without a college degree.



of Texans would consider working in an apartment community if it meant free rent.

Key Barriers & Motivators for Apartment Industry Careers

Conversely, Texans without a college degree and Texas Hispanics all agree that dealing with difficult or upset residents is the biggest negative of working in the apartment industry.

In fact, 35% of Texans would hesitate to work in an apartment community because of fear of dealing with unhappy residents, including 42% of Gen Z, the highest of any generation tested.

Overall, Texans are most likely to seriously consider a job in the apartment industry as a career option if it has competitive pay, comprehensive benefits, industry stability, and a positive work culture.

Recruiting Outcomes



Perception Gaps That Impact Recruiting Outcomes

At the same time, the research highlights meaningful perception gaps that directly impact recruiting outcomes. Many Texans underestimate compensation potential, advancement opportunities, and the breadth of transferable skills available in apartment careers.



**Job
Stability**



**On-the-Job
Training**



**Leadership
Pathways**

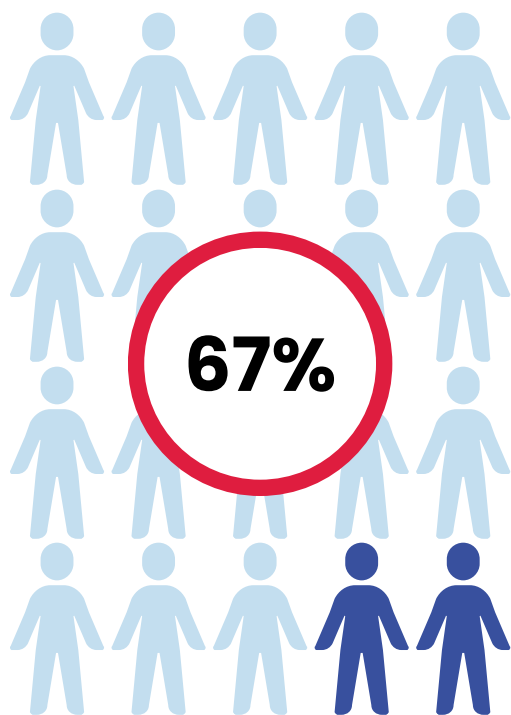


**Housing
Benefits**

In fact, 71% of Texans would be surprised to learn that some apartment industry roles pay more than entry-level technology jobs, and 75% believe the industry teaches skills they can use for the rest of their lives.

When respondents were presented with accurate information, such as job stability, on-the-job training, leadership pathways, and housing benefits, interest in pursuing an apartment industry career increased significantly across all audiences, particularly among those exploring new career paths.

Recruiting Realities



Where Texans Look & What Holds Them Back

From a recruiting perspective, Texans rely heavily on search engines and job boards when seeking new roles, yet the most common frustration cited is not hearing back from employers after applying.

Competitive compensation and strong benefits are the top factors that convince candidates to apply for and accept roles, while concerns about workload overload, emotional burnout, after-hours demands, and unclear advancement pathways remain primary deterrents.

Importantly, 67% of Texans report avoiding jobs altogether because they believed they lacked the “right” degree or certification, highlighting the need for clearer messaging around accessible entry points and employer-provided training.



Decisive Moments for Employee Retention



The study further reveals that onboarding and early training experiences are decisive moments for retention. Texans overwhelmingly prefer hands-on onboarding that clearly defines expectations and success metrics within the first 30 days. Shadowing experienced team members, one-on-one coaching, and real-time feedback are consistently rated as the most effective approaches to building confidence and competence. New hires do not want to “figure it out” alone—and inadequate training is one of the fastest ways to lose talent early.

Beyond onboarding, investment in ongoing development strongly influences long-term commitment. **Seventy percent of Texans—and 75% of those without a college degree—say they would be more likely to stay long-term if their employer pays for continuing education.** Talent development programs tied to credentials, recognition, and visible career progression are viewed not as perks, but as signals of employer credibility and long-term intent.



Retention findings reinforce the critical role of culture, leadership, and respect. **Free or discounted housing is the single most powerful factor influencing early retention, with 72% of Texans saying they would consider working in an apartment community if housing discounts were offered.** Conversely, toxic or disrespectful workplace culture is the fastest way to drive employees out, outweighing compensation, benefits, and advancement opportunities. Open-ended responses repeatedly emphasize respect, professionalism, and fair treatment as non-negotiable expectations.

The Workforce Journey Must Align



Taken together, these findings make one thing clear: Texans evaluate the apartment industry as a single, connected experience, not a series of disconnected touchpoints. Recruiting promises, onboarding experiences, leadership behaviors, development opportunities, and workplace culture must align—or trust erodes quickly. Texans primarily search for jobs through search engines and job boards, yet the most cited recruiting frustration is not hearing back from employers after applying, while 67% report avoiding roles altogether because they believed they lacked the “right” degree or certification, despite the industry’s strong on-the-job training reality.

Once hired, early experiences become decisive for retention: hands-on onboarding with real examples, clear expectations in the first 30 days, job shadowing, and one-on-one coaching consistently build confidence, while inadequate training or being expected to “figure it out” is among the fastest ways to lose new hires.

Over the long term, retention is driven by both tangible benefits and culture, with 70% of Texans saying they would be more likely to stay if their employer pays for continuing education. 72% would consider or remain in roles offering free or discounted housing, and toxic or disrespectful workplace culture outweighs compensation, benefits, and advancement as the strongest driver of early exits. Employers who deliver clarity, consistency, and respect across the full employee lifecycle are therefore best positioned to attract new talent, reduce early attrition, and build a sustainable workforce pipeline.

This research provides a data-driven roadmap for the Texas apartment industry, shifting the conversation from talent shortages to talent strategy, and from reactive hiring to intentional workforce development grounded in evidence, transparency, and long-term growth.

What This Means for Employers

This research makes clear that attracting and retaining talent in the Texas apartment industry is not fundamentally a perception problem—it is an alignment opportunity. Texans are not rejecting the industry; rather, they are responding to gaps between what is promised, what is experienced, and what is clearly communicated at each stage of the employee journey.

When expectations around compensation, training, culture, and advancement are unclear or inconsistent, interest erodes. When those same elements are transparent, intentional, and aligned, interest and commitment rise. The opportunity for employers is not to “change minds,” but to close the gap between reality and understanding, and to design workforce strategies that reflect how Texans actually evaluate careers today:



Lead with clarity, not assumptions

Texans respond strongly when they understand what apartment industry careers actually offer: stability, competitive compensation, on-the-job training, and advancement opportunities. Employers who proactively communicate these realities, early and often, will outperform those who rely on outdated job descriptions or passive recruiting.



Treat familiarity as a growth strategy

Familiarity with apartment community work is one of the strongest predictors of interest, confidence, and intent to stay. Employers should invest in exposure strategies, including career storytelling, transparent role previews, community-based outreach, and employee advocacy to close the awareness gap before candidates ever apply.



Make onboarding a retention strategy, not an orientation checklist

The first 30 days matter more than ever. Hands-on training, clear expectations, job shadowing, and real-time feedback are not “nice to have”—they are essential to early success and confidence. Inadequate training or unclear roles are among the fastest ways to lose new hires.

What This Means for Employers Continued



Design for the full employee lifecycle

Texans evaluate employers holistically. Recruiting promises must align with onboarding experiences, development opportunities, leadership behaviors, and advancement timelines. Breakdowns at any stage undermine trust and accelerate turnover.



Culture and leadership are non-negotiable

Respectful treatment, transparent communication, and supportive leadership are baseline expectations. Toxic culture, lack of respect, or poor management communication will override compensation, benefits, and perks.



Advancement must be visible and believable

Clear career pathways, skill development, and performance-based progression are critical drivers of long-term retention. Employees want to know not just that growth is possible, but how and when it happens.



Benefits still matter but meaning matters more

While compensation and housing benefits remain powerful motivators, long-term commitment is driven by purpose, belonging, recognition, and the belief that work makes a real difference in people's lives.

Key Takeaway for Employers

The takeaway for employers is both clear and actionable: workforce success in the Texas apartment industry depends on alignment across the full employee lifecycle. Recruiting messages must match onboarding experiences.

Training investments must support advancement promises. Leadership behaviors must reinforce stated values. And culture must consistently demonstrate respect, support, and opportunity.

Employers who intentionally align these elements, rather than treating hiring, onboarding, development, and retention as separate initiatives, will be best positioned to attract new talent, reduce early turnover, and build durable, long-term workforce pipelines. This research provides a practical blueprint for making that shift with clarity, intention, and confidence.

