

# Real Estate Alert

## Survey: Senior asset-management pros open to job offers in favorable hiring market

With sales volume still below historical averages, investment firms continue to emphasize the role

A large swath of senior asset managers are itching to switch employers amid market conditions that are keeping their expertise in high demand, according to RETS Associates.

In a survey of asset-management professionals, the Newport Beach, Calif.-based executive-search firm found that 45% of seasoned pros – those with five years or more of experience – would consider a new job. By comparison, just 26% of their junior counterparts reported the same.

That presents a critical retention challenge at a time when investors remain focused on managing existing holdings, RETS principal Kent Elliott told Green Street News. “The bottom line in 2026: The asset manager is still incredibly important at the vast majority of real estate companies given that deal volume continues to be off.”

Indeed, demand for asset-management talent picked up after spiking borrowing costs tempered sales volume in 2023 – a typical trend line in a down market. And the need for such specialists has persisted as sales have climbed back slowly.

Asset managers remain aware of the importance of their roles. Among the respondents, 63% said asset management had become a higher priority for their employers in 2026, versus 73% when RETS first offered the survey in 2023.

Yet against that backdrop, most real estate firms have grappled with flat compensation pools that have stymied pay raises over the last few years – a potential reason more senior managers might be interested in moving, Elliott said. “If somebody has generally been with a company for a longer period of time, it’s probably less likely that their compensation has

been brought up through market conditions,” he said. “Loyalty and compensation haven’t necessarily caught up to one another.”

Indeed, respondents to the survey ranked compensation as the leading driver for a job change, followed by opportunities for advancement or higher titles, better workplace culture, improved work-life balance and broadening of responsibilities.

The survey found that while asset managers with less than five years of experience earned mean compensation – salary plus bonus – of \$153,000 at the top of the scale, managing directors and heads of asset management with backgrounds of 20 or more years earned \$534,000.

Pros based in New York commanded a 41% premium in total compensation compared with those in other markets.

Partially remote work schedules were the most common among respondents, at 65%, versus 33% who are in the office five days per week and 12% fully remote.

The 2026 RETS Asset Management Survey, scheduled for release this week, encompasses responses from 255 survey participants working at companies including private investment firms, larger investment managers, public REITs and operators of properties. The respondents handle tasks such as oversight of strategy and operations for real estate portfolios.

### Asset manager compensation based on experience and title

Mean total of salary and bonus payouts (\$)

Position	<5 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20+ years
Asset manager	\$153,000	\$186,000	\$251,000	\$237,000	\$303,000
VP/AM director	—	264,000	296,000	331,000	313,000
SVP/AM sr. director	—	—	421,000	363,000	444,000
MD/Head of AM	—	—	486,000	421,000	534,000

Source: RETS Associates

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