



RETS
ASSOCIATES

2026

Asset Management in Motion.

*Insights from the 2026
RETS Asset Management Survey*

Steady & Strategic in 2026.

A workforce essential, mobile, and methodical.

The 2026 RETS Asset Management Survey reveals a sector that is well-paid, geographically anchored to capital-rich markets, and clear-eyed about what drives a career change.

The findings point to opportunity for firms that build pathways, not just paychecks.

— RETS Associates

ASSET MANAGEMENT: STILL ESSENTIAL, GRADUALLY EVOLVING

For the past several years, asset management has occupied the center of gravity in commercial real estate — and in many ways, it still does. But the 2026 data tells a more nuanced story: one of transition, recalibration, and cautious optimism.

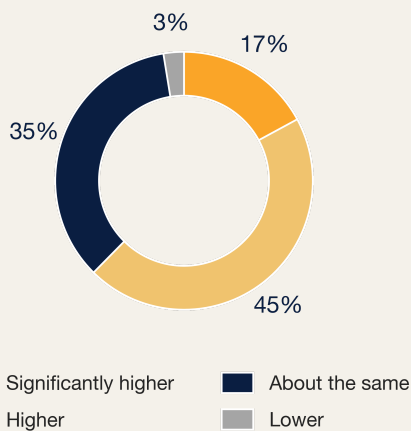
Sixty-three percent of respondents indicate that asset management has grown in strategic importance at their firms — a meaningful majority, but notably down from 73% in 2023. That 10-point shift is not a decline so much as normalizing conditions.

THE NEW NORMAL: FLEXIBILITY WITH GUARDRAILS

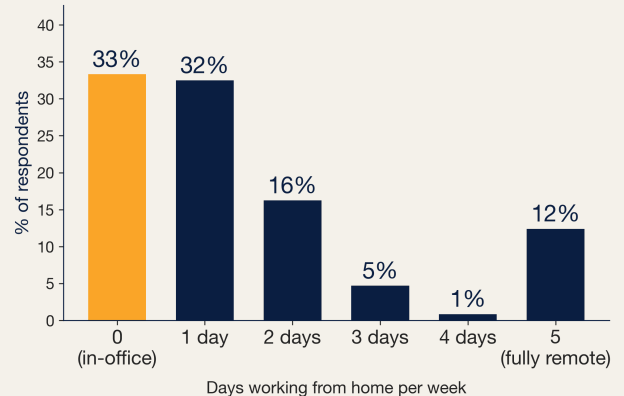
If the 2020s reshaped how CRE professionals think about where they work, 2026 suggests the pendulum is finding its resting point — somewhere firmly in hybrid territory.

Sixty-five percent report working from home at least one day per week, edging down from 72% in 2023. Within that 65%: **18%** work remotely three or more days per week, and **12%** are fully remote.

Is Asset Management a Higher Priority in 2026?*



Days Working From Home per Week*



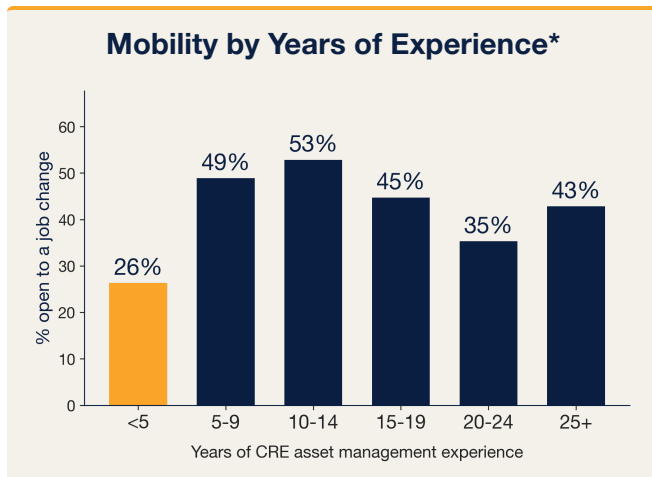
*RETS surveyed 255 asset management professionals across the U.S., ranging from Asset Managers to Managing Directors, who work at private firms, REITs, private equity firms, and investment management companies.

JOB MOBILITY: STEADY, NOT SURGING

The talent market for asset managers in 2026 is characterized less by volatility than by considered intention. The "Great Resignation" dynamics of prior years have given way to a more measured movement pattern.

Only **44%** of respondents say they are more likely to change jobs in 2026 vs. 2025 — virtually unchanged from the 45% who said the same heading into 2023.

A generational divide is telling: **26%** of professionals with under five years of experience are considering a move, vs. **45%** of seasoned asset managers. This cohort represents the critical retention challenge.






MOBILITY SIGNAL

45%

of experienced asset managers are open to a new role in 2026 — nearly double the rate of their early-career peers. The talent you most need to keep is the talent most likely to leave.



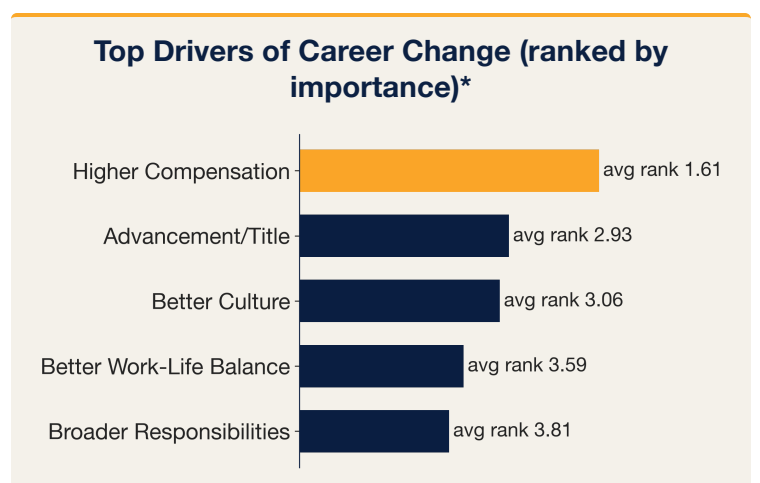
Key Takeaways

- **63% say AM is a higher priority** at their firm in 2026, down from 73% in 2023 — a normalizing market, not a retreat.
- **65% are hybrid+**, with 12% fully remote. Blanket RTO mandates are a retention risk.
- **45% of experienced AMs are open to a move** — nearly double the 26% rate of early-career peers.
- **NY commands a +41% total comp premium** — driven by bonus density, not just base salary.

WHAT MOVES THE NEEDLE: TOP DRIVERS

When it comes to what motivates asset managers to explore new opportunities, the data is clear and consistent — compensation. But pay alone is not the whole story.

Career advancement ranks closely behind: asset managers want to know their careers are progressing. Culture and work-life balance round out the top drivers.



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COMPENSATION BY POSITION & YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: THE EARNING CURVE

Compensation in asset management climbs sharply with experience — and the curve steepens once title and platform-level responsibility enter the equation. The biggest jumps occur not at the early-career stages, but at the transitions into senior leadership.

Base salary roughly doubles from an entry-level Asset Manager to an MD/Head with 20+ years of experience. But it's total compensation — where bonuses, carry, and long-term incentives sit — that reveals the real ceiling.

An Asset Manager with under five years averages **\$125K base** and **\$153K total**. By the MD/Head level with 20+ years, those figures climb to **\$313K base** and **\$534K total** — a 3.5x gain in total compensation over the career arc.

For employers, the data offers a precise benchmark. For talent, it underscores a clear lesson: total comp, not base, is where the differentiation lives in 2026.

Mean Base Salary by Position & Years of Experience*

POSITION	<5 YRS	5–9 YRS	10–14 YRS	15–19 YRS	20+ YRS
Asset Manager	\$125K	\$151K	\$185K	\$197K	\$225K
VP / Director of AM	—	\$192K	\$210K	\$229K	\$225K
SVP / Sr. Director of AM	—	—	\$227K	\$248K	\$287K
MD / Head of AM	—	—	\$302K	\$312K	\$313K

Mean Total Compensation by Position & Years of Experience*

POSITION	<5 YRS	5–9 YRS	10–14 YRS	15–19 YRS	20+ YRS
Asset Manager	\$153K	\$186K	\$251K	\$237K	\$303K
VP / Director of AM	—	\$264K	\$296K	\$331K	\$313K
SVP / Sr. Director of AM	—	—	\$421K	\$363K	\$444K
MD / Head of AM	—	—	\$486K	\$421K	\$534K

+41%

New York commands a +41% total compensation premium over other U.S. markets — the widest gap in the country, driven by bonus density and proximity to institutional capital.

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ASSET CLASS EXPERTISE: THE FOUR FOOD GROUPS — AND THE PROBLEM CHILD

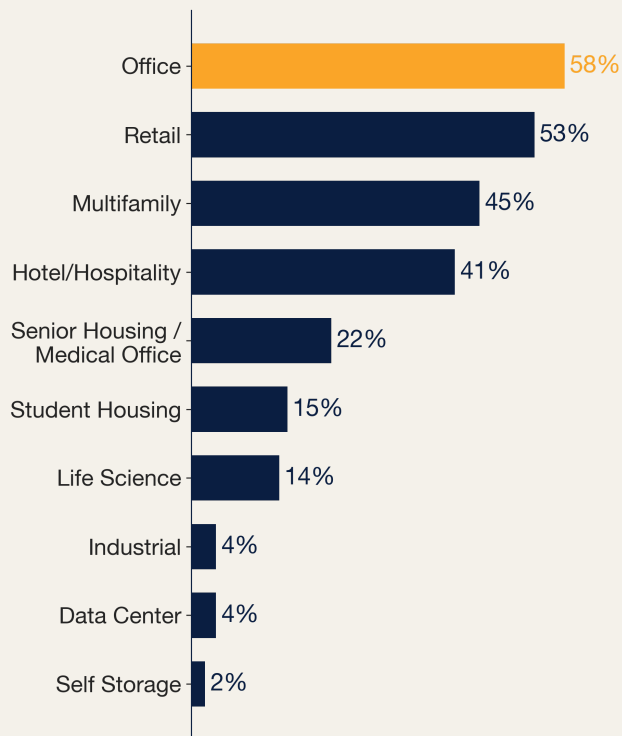
Commercial real estate has always revolved around a core set of asset classes, and the 2026 survey confirms that the traditional "four food groups" — multifamily, industrial, office, and retail — continue to anchor the asset management profession.

Multifamily and industrial remain the most sought-after specializations, reflecting investor appetite and the underlying fundamentals that have made these asset classes resilient through multiple market cycles. Professionals with deep expertise in these sectors continue to command strong demand.

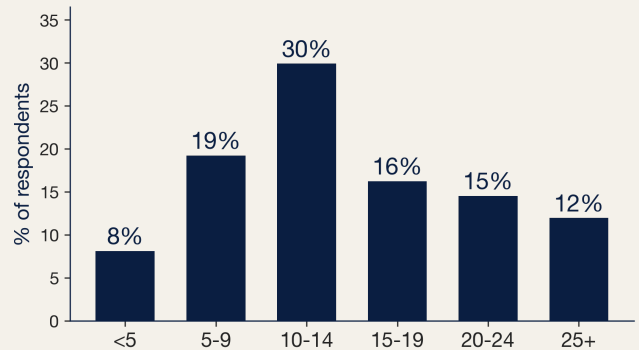
Office stands apart — and not in a favorable way. Survey respondents consistently identify office as the most challenging property type to manage. Hybrid work patterns have permanently reshaped occupier demand, lease-up timelines have extended, and the gap between well located trophy properties and the rest has widened considerably.

Emerging asset classes — most notably **data centers** — are beginning to appear in the conversation. The pipeline of capital flowing into digital infrastructure is creating new roles that blend traditional asset management skills with technical literacy.

Most Challenging Asset Classes to Manage*



Years of CRE Asset Management Experience*



58%

of respondents flag **office** as the most challenging asset type to manage — the highest of any property class. By contrast, only **4%** say industrial is challenging.

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THE RETS PERSPECTIVE: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

FOR EMPLOYERS

Retention is a strategy, not a reaction. The professionals most likely to leave are your most experienced. Combined with the fact that we are in the midst of **Peak 65** — the period when the largest number of CRE leaders have now entered retirement age — succession planning becomes a must.

And these leaders are motivated by a combination of factors that go well beyond comp. Culture, title, scope, and flexibility all matter. Build pathways, not just paychecks.

FOR TALENT

The market rewards specialization and adaptability in equal measure. Deep expertise in resilient asset classes — multifamily, industrial — paired with fluency in broader investment strategy, is the profile organizations are actively seeking.

Know your value. Know your market. Total compensation, not just base salary, is where the real differentiation occurs in 2026.

“*These survey results aren't just data points — they're the conversations happening in our calls, in our searches, and across every market we serve.*”

GET IN TOUCH —

Looking to grow?



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