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IREM®
INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Safety *in the* AI era

Reducing risk and creating secure workplace cultures

- LIHTC in today's affordable housing market
- Managing life sciences facilities
- Celebrating IREM Japan

Sneak peek

Image: iStock.com/Nikada

“AI is different, and we don’t fully know how it works. It’s driven by data, fancy math, and probability. It can give a different response tomorrow than it does today, and it doesn’t leave a clear audit trail. P12

Even if developers underwrite to the maximum allowable LIHTC rents, stagnant wages and rising costs mean tenants may still be rent-burdened. P9”

“When someone is injured at one of our properties, the property owner’s and property manager’s actions to keep the property reasonably safe will likely be scrutinized. P18

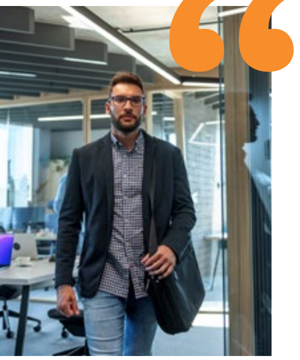

Image: iStock.com/AzmanJaka

“With a turnover rate of 33%, substantially higher than the national average, property management companies face increased operational expenses, service disruption, diminished tenant satisfaction, and loss of institutional knowledge. P28

When you’re managing lab space, proactive maintenance goes above and beyond. With AI, you can focus more on predictive maintenance, capturing trends over years, looking at the number and types of repairs that were made on specific equipment, and their associated costs. P24”

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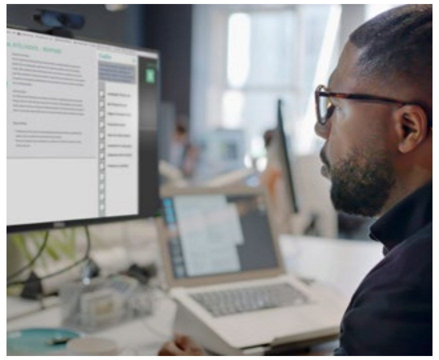

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Chief Product Officer
Wendy Becker, J.D. | **wbecker@irem.org**

Vice President, Marketing and Communications
Bridget Terrones | **bterrones@irem.org**

Advertising and partnerships
irempartners@irem.org

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President's letter

Dawn Carpenter, CPM®

As we enter the cooler fall months, nature begins to shed the old in preparation for upcoming revitalization. Property managers must also revitalize their toolbox as new trends emerge while remaining aware of the most current needs in the industry.

Affordable housing remains an increasingly important topic. Sixty percent of all federally subsidized housing is owned or managed by an IREM CPM®. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program finances around 90% of all affordable housing developments nationwide. On **P6**, Daniel Last, CPM®, discusses the history and significance of this program.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has also become an increasingly important tool for property managers. As shown on **P10**, AI offers many operational efficiencies, but it is imperative to understand the new legal, ethical, and operational risks it presents. JPM spoke with several AI experts about how to balance these risks and efficiencies.

The life sciences market, which includes pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and diagnostics, continues to grow rapidly. This expanding sector presents a unique mix of tenants and property needs. Learn how to tackle these challenges and opportunities on **P22**.

While paying attention to what is new, property managers still have to focus on the basics. On **P16**, Jeffrey S. Lapin, CPM®, ARM®, DREI®, reviews the standard of care for property managers to maintain and ensure their commercial or residential rental properties are safe for tenants and visitors.

In September, IREM's government affairs team will travel to Washington, D.C., for the annual congressional briefing to ensure property managers' interests are protected. The team will honor Property Management Day on September 23 and aims to convey to legislators that property managers are essential to national priorities, such as affordable housing, workforce development, and urban revitalization. Discover more about this plan on **P30**.

This June, IREM's Leadership Team traveled to Fukuoka, Japan, for IREM Japan's annual meeting. We were thrilled to recognize the achievements of more than 80 enthusiastic and passionate

In June, 2025 President-Elect Mindy Gronbeck, CPM® (left), and 2025 IREM President Dawn Carpenter, CPM® (second from left), joined outgoing IREM Japan Vice President Takashi Yoshimura, CPM® (right), in welcoming one of the 80 new CPMs from across Japan.

new CPMs. Arihiro "Ari" Shintani, CPM®, CCIM, incoming IREM Japan vice president, spoke with JPM about his strong vision for IREM Japan, including improving member networking and support systems. His goals coincide with IREM's broader global strategy emphasizing education, collaboration, and local empowerment. Learn more about the impact of this event and the bright future of IREM Japan on **P26**.

Also, this summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, to advance initiatives there. Most noteworthy, IREM signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) to advance and reskill property managers and those aspiring to the industry, starting with professionals currently working for the department. A landmark agreement with the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) of South Africa launched the ARM® certification into the South African market, paving the way for significant growth for IREM in the region.

On **P28**, Rita Khan, PhD, CPM®, ARM®, ACoM®, speaks about the findings of her research project on reducing property manager turnover. The study was funded by the J.T. Aveni Center for Research, a program of the IREM Foundation.

Dawn Carpenter, CPM®
IREM President

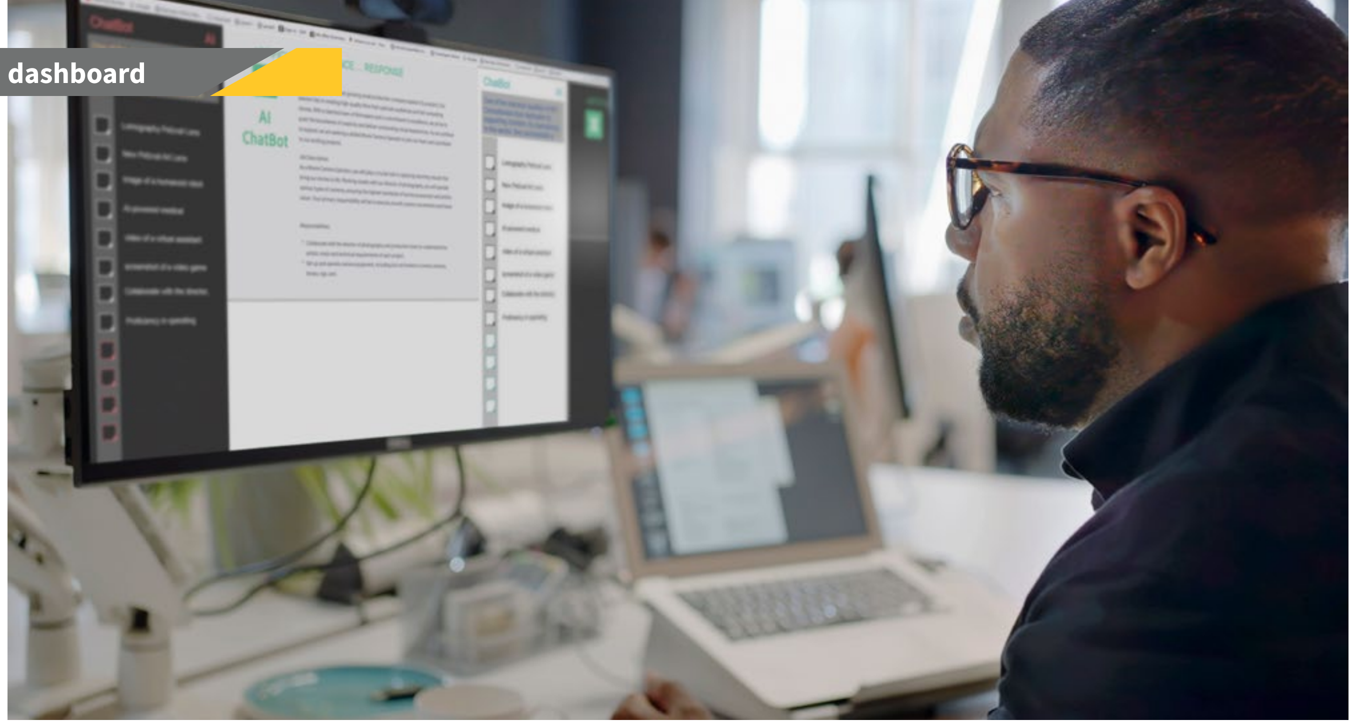


Image: iStock.com/Laurence Dutton

AI takes root in the workplace

Unsurprisingly, artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly used tool in the workplace, and Gallup has the data to back it up. Note the following increases from 2023 to 2025:

21% to 40%: percentage increase in employees who used AI a few times a year or more in their role

11% to 19%: percentage increase in employees who frequently use AI (a few times a week or more)

4% to 8%: percentage increase in employees who use AI daily

Source: Gallup, AI Use at Work Has Nearly Doubled in Two Years

Want to protect your team from AI's inherent risks? Read the feature "Safety in the AI era" on **P10**.

Podcast

Jeffrey Lapin, CPM®, ARM®, highlights the significance of National Preparedness Month (September) and talks about preparing for disaster in real estate management. Listen in at **irem.org/learning/from-the-front-lines**.

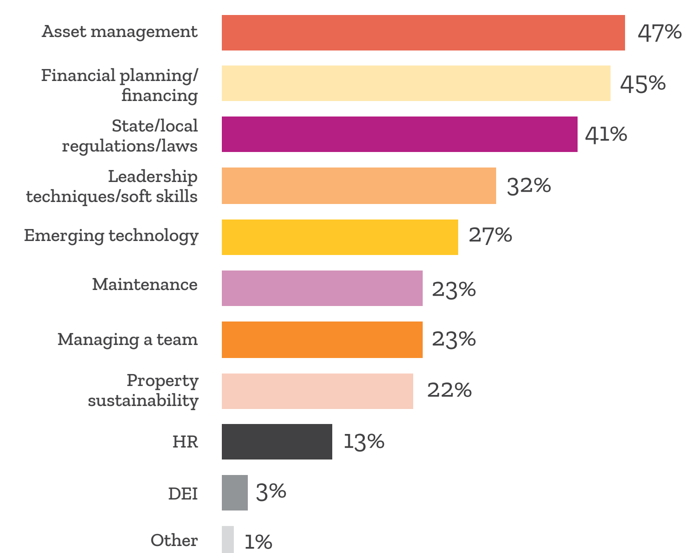
What the next gen wants

In April 2025, IREM surveyed 2,000 members under age 40 for the 2025 Next Gen Survey to better understand what early career professionals want, need, and value. The 360 members who responded noted the following were what they wanted most from professional development and training:

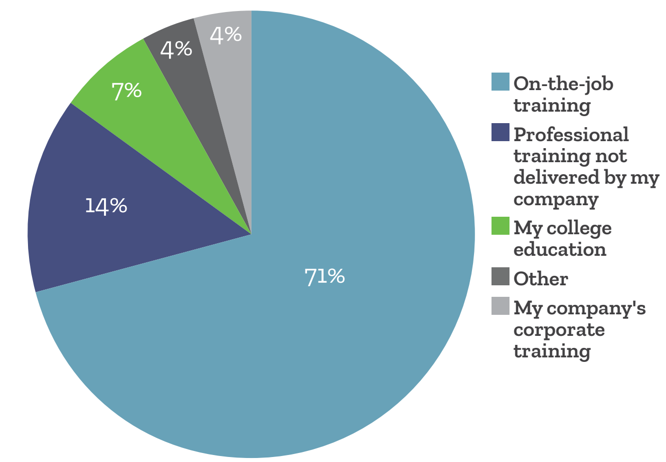
> Asset management
> Financial planning
> Knowledge of state/local regulations and laws

Read the full report at **irem.org**.

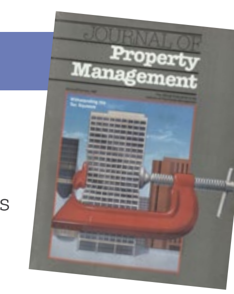
On what topics do you need more professional development/training?



What training set you up for the most career success?



Flashback: 1987



Months after the Tax Reform Act of 1986 passed, property managers feared affordable housing might be doomed, as traditional tax incentives disappeared and the newly introduced Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) had yet to prove itself. The JPM feature, "The Tax Reform Vise" by Jacques Preis and Daniel Swanson, covered the topic in the **Jan/Feb 1987** issue of JPM.

"Rod Heller, president of National Housing Partnership (formerly NCHP) in Washington, D.C., expects a shakeout among companies focusing exclusively on low- and moderate -income housing. The second largest company in the industry, Security Properties, was taken over by the Farmers Savings Bank of California a few years ago. Now the bank has gone under, and the properties are being administered by the FSLIC. Other low-income housing developers have also faced severe financial problems as a result of tax reform.

'There will be virtually no new low- and moderate-income housing built for the next several years,' continues Heller. 'In order to build, you must have cash flow, appreciation, or tax benefits. In low-income housing, you don't have cash flow, it almost never appreciates, and now the tax benefits have been eliminated.'"

Read more about how LIHTC has fared since 1986—and the challenges it still faces—in the feature on **P6**.

Behind the credit

The power and challenges of LIHTC in today's affordable housing market

By Daniel Last, CPM®

With a shortage of approximately 7 million housing units for low-income families, the importance of available, affordable housing in the U.S. is undeniable.

The most common type of affordable housing is funded through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program—responsible for financing approximately 90% of all affordable housing developments in the U.S. Affordable housing also includes rent-restricted units supported by outside subsidies and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), where rents are low due to suppressed demand or market conditions.

Despite its significance, the LIHTC program is frequently misunderstood. Let's explore its background and shed light on why it remains a powerful yet increasingly complex tool for asset managers, developers, and housing advocates alike.

New law impacts LIHTC

On July 4, 2025, Congress enacted the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, introducing reforms that will affect affordable housing and its residents. The act permanently expanded the tax credit program by 12%, which is expected to add around 80,000 affordable housing units over the next decade. Although this marks progress and ongoing support, continued efforts are still needed to ensure the supply of affordable housing for future generations.

Images: iStock.com/Gorgots; Larry_Reynolds

A brief history

Created as part of the 1986 Tax Reform Act, the LIHTC was designed to incentivize private development of rent-restricted housing. The program gives developers federal tax credits, which they can claim over a 10-year period to reduce their tax liability dollar for dollar. Unlike tax deductions, which reduce taxable income, tax credits directly reduce the amount of tax owed, which makes them a far more powerful financial instrument.

However, because these tax credits often exceed the developer's own tax burden, they are frequently sold to investors in exchange for equity that is then used to fund the development. In essence, developers trade future credits for up-front capital, creating a private-sector funding source for the public good.

Image: iStock.com/Aum racha

> The real power of the program lies in the fact that tax credits can be bought and sold.

The real power of the program lies in the fact that tax credits can be bought and sold. This capability enables investors of all types, whether motivated by financial return or a desire to invest in socially minded causes, to directly own affordable housing through an equity investment in this type of housing. There remains a debate as to whether or not those legislators back in 1986 foresaw the impact their change to the tax code would have. But with more than 3.7 million units of affordable housing developed since the inception of the program, the results speak for themselves.

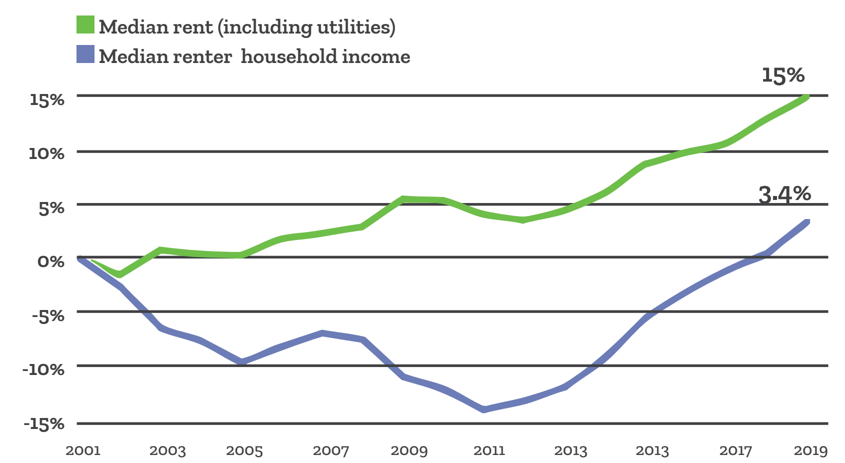
The mechanics and misconceptions

Tax credits in the tens of millions of dollars can attract large-scale investors but also introduce complexity. Developers must assemble financing from multiple sources, with LIHTC equity being a major pillar. Navigating this financial puzzle has become more challenging due to rising interest rates, inflationary pressures, and market volatility.

According to Kevin Nowak, executive director of CHN Housing Partners in Cleveland: "So many times in the last five years, we've heard the word 'unprecedented,' but for the affordable housing industry, we truly have not seen the confluence of so many headwinds at once."

Nowak, who has been developing or financing affordable housing for nearly 20 years, added, "We are faced with everything from soaring construction costs and tariff-related price increases to elevated debt service from higher interest rates."

Renters' incomes haven't caught up to housing costs
Percent change since 2001, adjusted for inflation



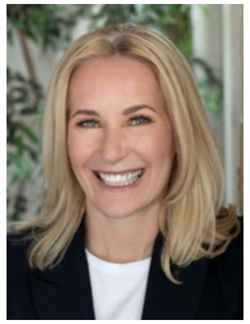
Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The increased financial complexity and rising construction costs are adding more challenges to—and putting even more pressure on—this already-stressed housing solution.

What property managers and asset managers need to know

Affordable housing property managers and asset managers have always needed to be creative with operating budgets. Even with a more restrictive budget than conventional, market-rate housing, managers must ensure that properties deliver on the promise of high-quality housing. Nowak acknowledges this challenge. "Once properties convert from construction to permanent financing, operating costs—ranging from payroll to insurance—continue to escalate, shrinking available cash flow and increasing strain on asset performance," he says.

For those in asset management, the LIHTC landscape requires more than a working knowledge of tax credits. Deal sizes are growing—often exceeding $35 million—as developers seek economies of scale. But these larger deals pose their own risks: reduced investor appetite, absorption challenges in saturated markets, and limited placement opportunities for syndicators.



> *While underwriting, due diligence, and deal structure are essential, our internal data shows the most effective mitigation for economic vacancy is strong, engaged property management.*
>
> —Stacie Nekus, KeyBank

As Stacie Nekus, senior vice president of KeyBank's Community Development Lending and Investment, notes, "Market analysis, cap-ture rates, and thoughtful deal structure have only become more important, but it is economic vacancy trends that have become more critical than ever. While underwriting, due diligence, and deal structure are essential, our internal data shows the most effective mitigation for economic vacancy is strong, engaged property management."

Another key consideration is tenant affordability. Nekus explains that "even if developers underwrite to the maximum allowable LIHTC rents, stagnant wages and rising costs mean tenants may still be rent-burdened. Asset managers must assess whether income from rents can sustain operations without compromising long-term stability or resident well-being."

These developmental and operational challenges require our industry to rise to the occasion, work together, and ensure that low-income Americans are not left behind.

Looking ahead

The current political environment has brought many funding sources, such as grants or subsidized loans, under review. It is incumbent on all of us, regardless of our own need for affordable housing, to encourage our leadership to preserve housing for low- and moderate-income Americans.

Despite current challenges, LIHTC remains one of the few federal programs with long-standing bipartisan support. While it represents less than 1% of the $6.5 trillion federal budget, its impact on low-income families is profound. In a nation facing a shortage of more than 7.3 million affordable homes, the need for effective, scalable housing solutions is more pressing than ever.

In this environment, partnerships among developers, lenders, asset managers, and property managers are essential. Programs like LIHTC show that when private expertise aligns with public purpose, we can create housing that truly changes lives.

> *So many times in the last five years, we've heard the word 'unprecedented,' but for the affordable housing industry, we truly have not seen the confluence of so many headwinds at once.*
>
> —Kevin Nowak, CHN Housing Partners

Daniel Last, CPM®, serves as asset management team lead at KeyBank Community Development Lending and Investments, specializing in affordable housing. He is the current chapter president for IREM of Northern Ohio and an active member of NeighborWorks America and the National Association of Homebuilders.

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feature | AI risks

Image: iStock.com/gorodenkoff

Reducing risk and creating secure workplace cultures

Safety in the AI era

From chatbots to lease screening to maintenance tools, artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly gaining a foothold in property management.

According to market researcher Gitnux:

- 45% of property management firms have adopted AI tools to improve tenant screening processes.
- 55% of property management firms use AI for predictive maintenance.
- 65% of property management firms have implemented AI for fraud detection.
- Looking ahead, 72% of property managers view AI as essential for getting a competitive advantage.

For many, adoption has been swift, but as usage increases, so do risks. With any new technology comes caution and complexity, but AI's threats are especially unique, with red flags raised around concerns such as data bias, privacy, cybersecurity, and overreliance. Despite these concerns, experts say internal education, governance, and ongoing human oversight will go a long way in protecting property managers, owners, and tenants.

Risky AI business

To understand the risks of AI, it's important first to understand what AI is—and what it isn't.

> AI mimics or parrots back data it's been given, so if that data isn't accurate or is too limited, it can create problems. Garbage in, garbage out.
>
> —Anne Hollander, The Strategic Edge

Anne Hollander, founder of The Strategic Edge, an advisory firm specializing in AI strategy, says it's crucial to distinguish between traditional software (like Excel and QuickBooks) and AI.

Traditional software follows written instructions, so it behaves the same way every time, making it predictable. "We understand how it works, we can see the code, and we can trace errors," says Hollander. "AI is different, and we don't fully know how it works. It's driven by data, fancy math, and probability. It can give a different response tomorrow than it does today, and it doesn't leave a clear audit trail. AI mimics or parrots back data it's been given, so if that data isn't accurate or is too limited, it can create problems. Garbage in, garbage out."

Bias

One of the most significant risks when feeding flawed data into AI is the potential for bias. Tracey Hawkins, a safety instructor and generative AI cybersecurity expert, breaks this bias into two key areas:

- Safety bias
- Bias that can lead to Fair Housing violations

"As for safety bias, most AI tools have been trained on white male American English voices," Hawkins says. That means AI voice attendants may struggle to understand women, people with accents, or older adults, which could pose potential problems in service or during emergencies.

Bias also emerges in data-driven tools, such as lease screening systems. If the AI was trained on limited or skewed datasets—such as those from high-income or homogeneous communities—it may replicate those patterns in ways that create Fair Housing compliance risks.

"A good example is screening applicants," says Christa Leary, principal and co-founder of Maitri Partners Consulting. "If you feed AI a data set from a student property, it's going to assume most applicants are young and have limited credit. It learns from patterns in that environment. In this example, it may assume that all applicants need cosigners. But if you apply that same model to a senior community or urban property, the applicant profiles are completely different." The model's assumptions won't translate—and that's when bad decisions and legal exposure can occur.

Data security

Another critical area of risk is data privacy. Hawkins warns that many people don't realize how exposed their data becomes once it's entered into AI systems.

Image: iStock.com/hapabapa

"If you're including client data—any personal, financial, or proprietary information—it can become public," she says. "There's no such thing as privacy. Redact anything sensitive before it ever touches an AI tool."

Leary emphasizes that many companies lack clear, proactive internal privacy policies. Many organizations haven't set guidelines around what data is collected, where it is stored, who has access to it, and what happens in the event of a breach.

AI regulations in multifamily and hospitality

The use of AI—and the development of new tools—is accelerating faster than legal regulations can be passed. Currently, there is little regulatory guidance on AI usage. To explore what this means for the multifamily and hospitality sectors, Sanil Paul, associate, investment & portfolio analysis at RLJ Lodging Trust, and FNU Marsella, senior financial analyst at RBH Group, share insights on the current landscape and potential changes ahead.

*[Below is a transcript excerpt. To read the full interview, visit **JPMOnline.org**]*

Are there any regulations or guidelines to govern AI use in multifamily and hospitality? Is anything on the horizon?

FNU Marsella: Right now, most of the regulation around AI in multifamily [and hospitality] falls under broader data privacy laws. In the European Union (EU), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) gives people the right to know what personal data is being collected and to request that it be deleted. In the U.S., California's Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) offers similar protections, such as allowing consumers to opt out of the sale of their data and request its removal. These frameworks set the standard for how personal information must be handled, and multifamily operators using AI systems must ensure full compliance, especially when dealing with resident data.

Beyond privacy, regulators are beginning to look more closely at how AI is used in housing decisions. Agencies like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have raised concerns about fairness in screening and pricing, and some states are considering new legislation that would require companies to disclose when AI is used and ensure that a human review process is in place. I believe the direction is clear: AI accountability is on the horizon. Operators that build strong internal practices now around transparency, oversight, and fairness will be in a much better position as more formal rules take shape.

Sanil Paul: Along with the data privacy laws, anti-discrimination laws become highly relevant when AI is used in dynamic pricing due to the inherent potential for algorithmic bias. For instance, if an algorithm generates different pricing based on geography or race, these anti-discrimination laws could apply. Even the FTC can intervene if AI systems are found to mislead consumers or engage in unfair practices.

As AI represents a nascent but rapidly evolving sector, most AI-specific regulations are still in their early stages of development. California and New York are proposing legislation that would require establishments to disclose when AI is used and provide consumers the option to opt out of automated decisions generated by AI. Also, the EU AI Act, which was formally adopted in 2024 and is being implemented in phases, is one of the most stringent regulations that governs the usage of AI. This act mandates rigorous conformity assessments, human oversight, and strict data governance. The U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has also developed an AI Risk Management Framework, a guidance document designed to help companies navigate AI adoption. It could shape future AI regulations in the U.S.

Image: iStock.com/PeopleVideos

"These are the basics, but in this fast-moving space, it still feels like the Wild West," Leary says. "There are so many tools popping up, and not all of them were built with real estate-specific risks in mind."

Brain drain

As AI tools become more capable, the risk of overreliance is growing—a concern Hollander refers to as "brain drain."

"You start by not knowing what to do with AI, then it becomes part of your daily routine—until one day you realize you haven't written your own email in weeks or even months," she says. "That's when we know we've reached a point of overreliance and need to back off a bit."

> *If you're including client data—any personal, financial, or proprietary information—it can become public. There's no such thing as privacy. Redact anything sensitive before it ever touches an AI tool."*
>
> —Tracey Hawkins, safety instructor and generative AI cybersecurity expert

That overuse can lead to the erosion of core skills, such as communication and judgment. Findings from a recent MIT study back this up. In the study, researchers broke participants into three groups and asked them to write SAT essays using ChatGPT, Google search, or nothing at all. Using EEG to monitor brain activity, the researchers saw that the ChatGPT users had the weakest brain activity, observing that they "consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioral levels."

The antidote to this "brain drain," according to Hollander, is a balanced education strategy: Train people to use AI effectively, but also guide them on when not to use it.

"Brain drain happens when people start losing critical thinking and soft skills," she explains. "That's why education and enablement need to be two-sided: Use AI to its maximum potential, but build human skills alongside it. That's our differentiator in the AI space—humans know people."

Vendor considerations

To mitigate AI risks, one of the simplest and most effective steps a property manager can take is to thoroughly vet their AI vendors. Asking the right questions can reveal red flags or reassure that the tool is safe and compliant.

Whether working with your current vendor or vetting a new one, there are helpful questions to ask, including:

- Do they test for and mitigate bias?
- Can they provide documentation of their training data?
- Is there human review built into AI decision-making?
- Who owns the output?
- How does the tool protect sensitive data?
- Is there an ethics policy or governance framework?

"We want to understand how the model is built, and when we don't get answers or encounter defensiveness from vendors, that's a red flag," Hollander says. "We're not looking only for a tool; we want a partner in this."

She adds that it's a green flag if a vendor has a publicly available governance program, so you can review how they think about AI policy and governance within their own build, development, and monitoring cycles. "Even better if they can share their audit logs or the monitoring process they go through on a regular basis," she says.

> *These are the basics, but in this fast-moving space, it still feels like the Wild West. There are so many tools popping up, and not all of them were built with real estate-specific risks in mind.*
>
> —Christa Leary, Maitri Partners Consulting

Building a safe AI environment

Whether an organization is going all-in on AI or still testing the waters, Hollander advises a thoughtful approach. She encourages organizations to take time to understand the risks, move slowly, and invest in strong education and guidance around AI use.

Since many organizations already use AI tools, Hawkins recommends starting with a risk assessment.

"Find out who's using AI, what tools they're using, and how," she says. "Are they using passwords instead of passphrases or passkeys? Have they set up two-factor authentication? Is everyone installing security updates regularly? With AI, all of that becomes even more important."

In her experience working with organizations, these assessments often open the door to stronger training, internal policies, and oversight.

"Establish safety and governance," Hawkins says. "Make sure your team knows when and how to use these tools, and what data is off-limits. If not, you're inviting risk."

To navigate the changes AI introduces, Leary recommends hiring or designating a certified change management practitioner—someone who can lead internal adaptation with clarity and neutrality.

"This is a massive shift," she says. "You need someone internally who's unbiased, certified, and has the horsepower to guide those changes, because roles will shift, job descriptions will change, and human resources and operations will have to adapt. This isn't just a software rollout—it's ongoing, and it touches every part of the business."

Leary notes that internal training has become a necessity that many companies can no longer afford to skip, and the education needs to reach every person in the company. "You have people at very different knowledge levels when it comes to AI," she says. "But this isn't a one-and-done. AI training must be ongoing, and it has to stay up-to-date."

Some companies are even forming AI steering committees before launching any new tools, and in some cases, creating their own AI agents, thereby keeping data in-house. Leary says that by controlling and owning their data, they can minimize risk related to access to data, implement Fair Housing rules, and avoid vendor breaches, among other benefits.

A look back at using AI

One year ago, JPM published "**An experiment with generative AI**," looking at how accurate and useful tools like ChatGPT and Copilot were for property management purposes. The conclusion: "Only human input can identify the specific issues and details necessary for real insight into a topic. This is especially true for a complex industry that constantly changes, like property management."

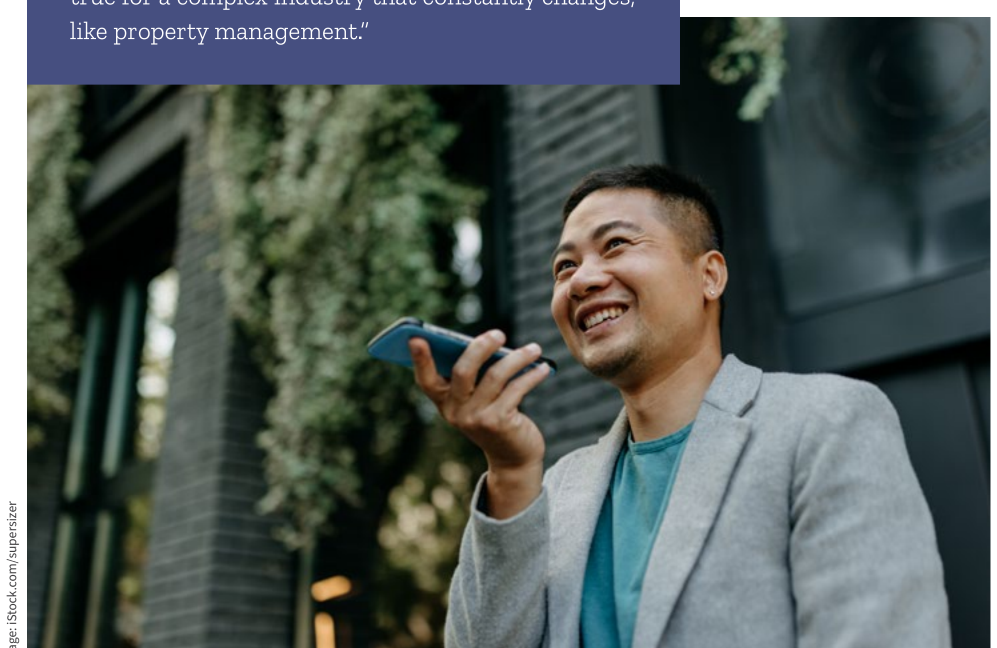


Image: iStock.com/supersizer

A future of safety

Hawkins says she hopes all of the education instills a sense of preparedness, not fear. "The companies that will thrive are the ones putting safety and governance in place before something goes wrong," she says. "That means training your team, understanding your tools, and treating AI with the same diligence you'd expect from any risk-sensitive area of your business."

While AI will become more embedded in daily operations, human oversight must remain central. As Hollander, Hawkins, and Leary all emphasize, AI can augment—but not replace—the critical thinking, ethical judgment, and people skills that only humans can bring.

"Remember the world before the internet in the office? Or life before smartphones? AI will become just as essential," Hollander says. "We've hit the limit of what traditional productivity tools can do. AI is that next leap forward—and the good news for humans is, we get to be human again. It can take some of the burden off our plates, freeing us to focus on the work that matters."

feature | standard of care

Raising standards

What is the standard of care for property owners and property managers? Hint: it's ordinary care

By Jeffrey S. Lapin, CPM®, ARM®, DREI®

The standard of care for commercial or residential rental properties is the measure by which a property owner or property manager's actions or inactions will be judged when determining if an injured party is entitled to recover when claiming negligence by that property owner/manager.

Image: iStock.com/gremlin

Our commercial and residential properties are usually open to the public to reside in, conduct business in, or visit. We have a duty of reasonable, ordinary, or due care to provide a reasonably safe environment at these properties for the public, including tenants, residents, guests, visiting contractors, or prospective renters.

When someone is injured at one of our properties, the property owner's and property manager's actions to keep the property reasonably safe will likely be scrutinized. Similarly, the property owner and manager should make it a priority to determine the likely cause of the injury and begin an internal investigation to re-examine inspection and maintenance procedures. The purpose of such an investigation is to verify that the proper procedures were in place and, if so, that they were followed correctly. The goal is also to prevent future injuries.

We have a duty of reasonable, ordinary, or due care to provide a reasonably safe environment at [our commercial and residential] properties for the public.

As an expert witness in property management cases, I am often asked to review the policies, procedures, and actions by property owners and managers and to issue opinions as to whether the injuries to members of the public were the result of a failure by the owner or manager to follow the standard of care for such a property.

Far too often, my review of the discovery materials in these cases results in finding that either the property owner and/or manager had improper or insufficient policies and procedures to find and reasonably correct unsafe conditions or that mostly adequate policies and procedures existed but that they were not followed. In other words, often the property owner and manager failed to meet the standard of care for their properties, resulting in injuries to tenants or visitors.

What is the standard of care?

The standard of care for owners and managers of properties open to the public is not perfection. Nor does it require that absolutely no injuries occur at a property. That standard would not be deemed "reasonable." Courts generally recognize that commercial and residential properties are busy places where hazards can happen, often instantaneously.

Courts usually rule, however, that property owners and managers have an affirmative duty to reasonably discover foreseeable hazards, take actions to mitigate or minimize the chances of someone getting injured, and then eliminate those hazards in a reasonable period of time to restore the property to a reasonably safe condition.

Those who own or manage such properties should understand how their policies, procedures, and actions might be judged if someone is injured and that we must often justify how we inspected and maintained the property.

What is considered negligence?

The People's Law Dictionary defines negligence as a "failure to exercise the care toward others which a reasonable or prudent person would do in the circumstances, or taking action which a reasonable person would not."

The reasonable person standard is important for us to understand. A determination of whether the defendant was careful enough is usually based on what a reasonable person would do (or not do) in the same circumstances. Once again, perfection is not the measure by which we are judged, but rather what is reasonable in the circumstances.

In other words, the test is objective, not subjective. It is not about whether the defendant did the right thing, but whether a reasonable person in the same circumstances would do or not do what the defendant did or failed to do. What this means is that our actions will likely be compared to those of a reasonable person. But what do courts expect the reasonable person to do?

First, the reasonable person takes rational and prudent precautions against foreseeable risks, but is usually not required to do so for every conceivable danger. They consider the likelihood of harm and the potential severity of such harm and act accordingly. This concept of foreseeability simply means that if a reasonably qualified and trained property manager, exercising ordinary care, discovers a hazardous condition on property and considers that hazard likely to injure someone, then they would take precautions to make it safe temporarily and proceed to fix it permanently.

And because this test is objective, not subjective, meaning that it is not based on someone's personal perspectives or preferences, but rather upon an unbiased observation or decision, it does not matter that the defendant in the case

did "their best." What matters is whether a reasonable person in the same circumstances would have done—or not done—the same thing.

A higher standard for professionals

The standard of care for professionals like property managers is different from that of someone who is not a trained and experienced property professional. Property owners and managers are held to a higher standard, which is: "What would a reasonably competent, trained, and experienced professional do in similar circumstances?"

We are expected to be "reasonably competent" and "reasonably trained" professionals who act carefully. Professional property managers of commercial or residential rentals are rightfully expected to do a better job of discovering and resolving dangerous conditions than a nonprofessional at their single-family residence.

Property owners and managers are held to a higher standard, which is: "What would a reasonably competent, trained, and experienced professional do in similar circumstances?"

The terms "reasonably competent" and "reasonably experienced" mean that, if we hold ourselves out to be professional property managers, then the court will likely hold us to a higher standard of care than someone who does not claim to be a professional property manager. And there is usually no allowance for the inexperienced property manager. The court will usually not go easier on an owner who hires an incompetent or inexperienced manager.

Error in judgment vs. negligence

Errors in judgment, meaning that, in hindsight, the wrong decision was made by the property owner or manager, resulting in injury to the plaintiff, can and often do result in a finding of "no negligence".

For example, what if the attorney for the defendant can establish that the property owner or property manager made the same decision as a reasonably careful professional, but injuries still occurred? Is it possible or likely in such a circumstance that the property manager or owner defendant would escape liability for the injury?

The short answer is yes. Based on information from attorneys who have retained me on such cases and were consulted for this article, such an error in judgment wherein a reasonably qualified, competent, and experienced professional acting on the

Image: iStock.com/gremlin

best information they had at the time, made a decision that proved to be wrong, would likely not be considered negligent.

Remember that negligence is a legal finding. And every case is different, just as every judge and jury is unique. We, as property professionals, must make the very best, well-informed decisions that we can in each circumstance.

Compliance with statutory standards

Often, the actions of a property owner or manager are mandated by codes or other legal standards. It is more likely that negligence will not be found if it can be established that:

- the owner or manager was complying with applicable law, and
- the injury occurred as a result of:
  - a condition required by law, or
  - a condition that the law prevented the owner or manager from correcting

In other words, we should not be penalized for following the law.

Following the law or being compliant with applicable codes, however, would be a poor defense if the law resulted in a demonstrably unsafe condition and the property owner and/or manager failed to recognize that it was necessary to go above and beyond minimal code requirements. Once again, the standard is reasonably safe, not perfectly safe.

> While unforeseen accidents and injuries do happen, as an industry, we need to do a better job of inspection, maintenance, and repair.

The importance of education and training

Too often, I find that the property manager, although well-intentioned, is simply not adequately skilled and experienced enough to establish the minimum level of action necessary to properly avoid an injury on the property. Just as new drivers are statistically more likely to get into traffic collisions, new property managers are more likely to fail to discover and correct unreasonably dangerous conditions.

As a long-time designer and instructor of professional real estate education courses for IREM® and others, I know the vital importance of proper training and education. Property owners who self-manage and management supervisors for third-party managers must require all property management employees to attend and participate in professional development courses.

I often find that the most egregious failures to meet the standard of care, and therefore the most frequent offenders regarding injuries on properties, come from owners and property management companies that do not require such training and education. We must invest in those in whom we place such a tremendous responsibility to keep the public reasonably safe.

Value in education

I base a portion of my opinions on what we teach at IREM in courses such as MNT402: Managing Maintenance Operations and Property Risk. I know that most property owners and managers who join IREM and get its excellent education and training take safety seriously and usually employ the policies, standards, practices, and procedures that we teach.

It is also true, however, that too many people are still getting injured on our properties from causes that were both foreseeable and preventable. And while unforeseen accidents and injuries do happen, as an industry, we need to do a better job of inspection, maintenance, and repair.

The key point is that property managers must obtain professional experience and competence through proper training, education, and mentorship before assuming the responsibility of managing properties. They must continue to grow and learn better and more effective techniques to establish and maintain reasonably safe environments at their properties.

Jeffrey S. Lapin, CPM®, ARM®, DREI, is a 40-year veteran of the property management industry, having managed all types of properties throughout the United States. He has dedicated the latter portion of his professional career to helping others in the property management industry become more proficient and to improve the properties that they manage.

Disclaimer: I am not an attorney. I do not and am not providing legal advice or coming to legal conclusions. The opinions I have expressed herein are mine and mine alone and are based upon my knowledge and experience as a real estate professional and as an expert witness. If you need legal advice, please retain the services of a qualified and licensed attorney-at-law.

Hubs of discovery

Property managers embrace unique operational and regulatory demands of life sciences sector

Healthpeak's Callan Ridge Campus in Torrey Pines, California

Image: Aaron Gilliam

What do rapid vaccine development, the testing and storage of controlled substances, and safety assessments for Botox and dermal fillers have in common? They all take place within a life sciences facility.

The life sciences market, encompassing pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, diagnostics, and other related industries, is projected to surge at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.28% from 2024 to 2033. The pharmaceutical industry alone is projected to grow to $2.8 trillion by 2033, up from $1.6 trillion in 2023.

This growth—coupled with the sector's unique mix of tenants and property needs—presents a wide range of challenges and opportunities for property managers overseeing life sciences facilities.

"It's a very complex, dynamic market—there's nothing static about it," says Robert Fuller, CPM®, who has experience overseeing life science facilities in New Jersey.

Centers of innovation

In the U.S., the right mix of research institutions, universities, and life sciences companies fuels the major hubs for this market, including Boston, San Diego, San Francisco, and North Carolina's "Research Triangle" of Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill.

Life sciences and pharmaceutical companies flourish in these areas, whether they are larger companies, such as Illumina or Johnson & Johnson, which often own their facilities, or smaller companies that rent space in a shared building. Start-ups can take advantage of life sciences incubators, which offer supportive staff, necessary equipment, mentorship, and even seed funding.

Sean Harvey is the San Diego-based assistant vice president and regional property manager for Healthpeak Properties, which manages approximately 700 life sciences, medical research, outpatient medical, and continuing care retirement community properties nationwide.

"Healthpeak has more than buildings in San Diego with a mix of tenants—some in biotechnology focusing on oncology, neurodegenerative disease, regenerative medicine, or drug development," Harvey says. "We have tenants in medical diagnostics, medical device manufacturing, and several research firms working on crop and agricultural sciences. With the University of California San Diego right here, it's a mutually beneficial environment, as students with life sciences degrees are a great source to fill any demand."

Each facility is tailored to meet tenant needs, featuring administrative space, research and development labs, and production or manufacturing space known as "cleanrooms," which are specially controlled environments, Fuller explains.

"While there is a clear delineation between cleanrooms and administrative areas, there's a true synergy," Fuller says. "These buildings are a beehive of activity."

Unique specifications

Along with the property management considerations of other office buildings, life science properties require a deep understanding of technical systems and industry-specific protocols.

Special considerations include:

- **HVAC, air pressure, and humidity control.** These facilities require 100% outside air intake and maintain strict temperature and humidity requirements, especially in laboratory environments. Along with a traditional building management system (BMS), these facilities have proprietary BMS that monitor the cleanrooms for their exact specifications.
- **Emergency power.** Backup generators and batteries must be able to handle the full load of the building, including its numerous refrigerators, incubators, and other critical equipment.
- **Deionized water, compressed air, and vacuum systems.** These are standard requirements in the laboratory environment.
- **Sanitation systems**. These maintain sterile conditions.
- **Laboratory and cleanroom equipment and protocols.** "It's essential that we know what every room is used for, and the rules for each room, such as if we have to gown up fully or partially," Fuller says. He recalls one building he managed had an "explosion" room, where chemicals were mixed, so staff had to pay close attention to when the room was in use.
- **Staff qualifications and background checks.** "One building had the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as a tenant, and confiscated drugs were tested and held as evidence in the building," Fuller says. "It was highly secured, so our staff had to undergo background checks."
- **Regulatory compliance requirements.** It's essential to comply with various government agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"Regulatory compliance is constantly evolving, and we have to be compliant with all state, county, city, and federal requirements," Harvey says. "There's a lot to keep up with, and the checklist for inspections has grown."

Fuller says that life science pharmaceutical facilities are frequently audited by both government agencies and third-party auditing firms. "The audits involve in-depth reviews on a frequent basis (annually, bi-annually, etc.) of the facility's cleanliness, processes, procedures, and recordkeeping areas of operation. Also, in-house audits are performed by the owners of pharmaceutical facilities, allowing the companies to prepare for upcoming audits, address audit findings, remain compliant, and improve operations."

Ensuring the smooth and safe operations of a life sciences facility begins with client communication and collaboration.

"We check in with our tenants several times a year to review regulatory compliance and partner with them when needed," says Kris Kopensky, CPM®, vice president of operations at **BioMed Realty**. "When a tenant leaves a space, we support their efforts to obtain decommissioning reports when required."

To understand lab requirements and help clients stay compliant, Harvey recommends that property managers in this sector stay familiar with resources from the International Society for Pharmaceutical Engineering and the International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories.

> *When a tenant leaves a space, we support their efforts to obtain decommissioning reports when required.*
>
> —Kris Kopensky, CPM®, BioMed Realty

Preventive maintenance

Given the importance of the work conducted in life science facilities, preventing damage and staying on top of maintenance is essential.

> *With AI, you can focus more on predictive maintenance, capturing trends over years, looking at the number and types of repairs that were made on specific equipment, and their associated cost, so you can plan or maintain them accordingly.*
>
> —Robert Fuller, CPM®

"We have a comprehensive proactive maintenance program that covers every aspect of our facilities," Harvey says. "Early, proactive alerts are helpful. If something goes out of spec, we're on it right away. There's no time to waste."

Fuller notes that artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced new capabilities in predictive maintenance. "When you're managing lab space, proactive maintenance goes above and beyond," Fuller says. "With AI, you can focus more on predictive maintenance, capturing trends over years, looking at the number and types of repairs that were made on specific equipment, and their associated cost, so you can plan or maintain them accordingly."

He adds that they also have found value in computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS), which are used in life science facilities and other facilities with complex manufacturing equipment. These systems plan, track, and analyze maintenance activities to improve efficiency and minimize downtime.

Kopensky says BioMed Realty has a disaster management software solution and an integrated work order platform that consolidates operations and key performance data into one centralized system. "We look five to 10 years ahead on critical building systems to ensure that all preventative maintenance is done," he says. "This provides for consistent and reliable service of these systems for our tenants."

Emergency preparedness

Fuller says life sciences property managers must be ready to address any type of unexpected event. "We have an active evacuation team for any type of emergency—earthquake, tornado, hurricane, fire, or cybersecurity incident—and we have drills throughout the year," he says. "We have the proper insurance and a business continuity plan in place so if a catastrophic event occurs, the business can continue."

Dexter Yard

Image: BioMed Realty

In his experience, Harvey has had to run generators and battery backups when unexpected power problems have occurred. "We've also had our access to city water disrupted when nearby construction accidentally cut into plumbing," he says. "So we had to find ways to get water and to keep operations running."

He adds that the job requires managers to think on their feet—"testing, monitoring, maintenance, fire and life safety checks, hazmat training for staff—and constant communication. Collaboration between us and the tenant is so important, and we must understand their protocols and emergency plans. Even if we don't manage that equipment, we have a responsibility to the property and the surrounding area and must have an outline of all critical functions of the property."

Above-and-beyond amenities

Employees of life sciences facilities are seeking the same amenities as those in other office buildings—and the facilities deliver. Along with the typical amenities, such as cafeterias, these buildings offer plenty of ways for workers to de-stress, practice self-care and wellness, and have some fun.

"Showing that the well-being of employees is a priority goes a long way with retaining employees," says Fuller, who adds that game rooms, meditation rooms, and libraries are popular.

BioMed Realty's Dexter Yard in Seattle goes above and beyond with high-end amenities, offering the SLU BRU beer hall, rooftop deck, speakeasy, bowling alley, card room, darts, and a golf simulator. "In Canal District Kendall in Cambridge, Massachusetts, BioMed Realty has hosted seasonal events and activities, like outdoor concerts, dining, a canoe and kayak launch, public art, a farmers market, a winter artists' market, and a community ice skating rink, bringing life to the community even outside of working hours," Kopensky says.

Harvey says they prioritize gathering tenant feedback to gauge interest and satisfaction in amenities and events. They are working on rolling out a "one-stop, one-touch" app to engage with employees and make them aware of the various offerings.

"We focus on creating environments where employees can fully concentrate on their work and then relax during breaks," Harvey says, adding that they try to take advantage of their Southern California natural environment with outdoor activities and meeting spaces. "We also raise bees on campus and host events to educate people about ecology and bee science, sharing products such as honey produced by the bees."

> *These facilities are the physical backbone of the global effort to discover, develop, and then deliver new things. And you'll always need a place to do that.*
>
> —Sean Harvey, Healthpeak Properties

Thriving in life sciences

For property managers looking to transition into the life sciences market, Fuller recommends obtaining certification in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), which is a requirement for many of these roles.

"Constant education to stay abreast of changes and innovations is a must for successfully managing a life sciences facility," Fuller says. "Use your people, marketing, financial, or engineering skills—these are all transferable to the life sciences sector."

To truly succeed, Fuller suggests managers surround themselves with others in the field, take advantage of their company's training platforms, attend conferences, take courses, and read the numerous books devoted to managing pharmaceutical spaces.

Harvey agrees that ongoing learning is key to succeeding in this flourishing sector.

"These are such specialized buildings, and the demand for knowledgeable managers will only grow," he says. "These facilities are the physical backbone of the global effort to discover, develop, and then deliver new things. And you'll always need a place to do that."

Celebrating IREM Japan

Japan includes some of IREM's oldest and largest international chapters

At IREM Japan's annual meeting in Fukuoka, 2025 IREM President Dawn Carpenter, CPM® (center), with 2025 President-Elect Mindy Gronbeck, CPM® (to Carpenter's right), presides over the swearing-in of more than 80 new CPMs from across Japan.

In June 2025, IREM's Leadership Team was invited to attend IREM Japan's annual meeting in Fukuoka to commemorate the swearing-in of more than 80 new CPMs® from across Japan. 2025 IREM President Dawn Carpenter, CPM®, led the swearing-in ceremony. 2025 President-Elect Mindy Gronbeck, CPM®; 2025 Secretary/Treasurer Kim Collins, CPM®; IREM CEO Zack Wahlquist, and IREM HQ team members Senior Director of International Programs Leah Misbin and International Education Coordinator/IREM Japan Liaison Megan Beckerich were also in attendance at the celebration.

IREM Japan

IREM Japan was established as the Japan Chapter in November 2003. IREM Japan achieved IREM Country status in 2017 with the formation of three chapters: the East Japan Chapter (Tokyo and surrounding areas), the West Japan Chapter (Osaka, Kyoto, and surrounding areas), and the Kyushu Chapter (Fukuoka and surrounding areas). In 2019, they added two more chapters: the Hokkaido Chapter in the north and the Tokai Chapter in the south (centered around Nagoya). IREM Japan currently has 899 members and anticipates breaking 1,000 soon.

As an IREM Country, IREM Japan elects a vice president who oversees all IREM activity in Japan. This year, IREM Japan saw the transition from outgoing Vice President Takashi Yoshimura, CPM®, to incoming Vice President Arihiro "Ari" Shintani, CPM®, CCIM, past president of the West Japan Chapter and 2020 CCIM Japan president.

Shintani has a bold vision for the future of IREM Japan and was recently featured in local industry media for his induction as IREM Japan vice president and his plans for the organization. His goal is not only to expand the chapters but also to promote cross-chapter communication in Japan, helping young professionals connect with veterans in the industry. In his general report during the swearing-in on June 4, he concluded with a message to the new members: "Create your own opportunities and let them change you."

Shintani's priorities as vice president have been consistent since his tenure as West Japan Chapter President from 2022 to 2024. "New members need to have the opportunity to participate, share their perspectives, and grow so they can better learn to be leaders," he shared with IREM leadership. "It's thanks to the members that IREM Japan has grown, and it will be through members that it continues to thrive."

Annual meeting in Fukuoka

This year's annual meeting was held in Fukuoka, a major metropolis and the main base of operations for the IREM Kyushu Chapter.

Fukuoka is the most populous city in Kyushu, one of the four main islands that comprise Japan. Fukuoka is the sixth-largest city in Japan, with a population of almost 1.6 million. Fukuoka's population has boomed over the past decade, surpassing that of nearby cities like Kobe and Kyoto. With the growing population comes growth for IREM Japan. Among the five chapters in Japan, Kyushu is the second-largest, with 235 members, behind East Japan, which has 388 members. The Kyushu Chapter primarily operates out of Fukuoka Prefecture, with most members residing near or in Fukuoka.

> *"New members need to have the opportunity to participate, share their perspectives, and grow so they can better learn to be leaders.*
>
> —Arihiro "Ari" Shintani, CPM®, CCIM, IREM Japan

Continued growth for IREM Japan

IREM Japan is rapidly approaching its 25th anniversary, and plans are already underway to commemorate the milestone. At the 2023 Global Summit in Toronto, as part of the Japan Forum, IREM HQ staff shared details on how IREM marketed its milestone 90th anniversary celebration.

Similar to the one created for the 90th anniversary, a special video in anticipation of IREM Japan's 25th anniversary was played during the Gala Dinner. It featured all of the past IREM Japan presidents and founders sharing their thoughts and well-wishes for new and current members. IREM Japan leadership celebrated IREM Japan's past and its future. During his speech as new vice president, Shintani reflected on the mentorship he received both for his professional career and as an IREM volunteer leader. He envisions a program that will help all members receive that kind of support across the Japanese chapters.

"We want to make it easier for members to network and learn from other members," he says.

2025 IREM President Dawn Carpenter expressed her excitement for IREM Japan's future and what the next years may bring. "IREM Japan has seen incredible growth and success since its inception almost 25 years ago," Carpenter said. "To see the founding members pass the baton to younger generations shows how IREM is better together and will continue to be an example of excellence for the organization."

Looking ahead—IREM's global strategy

It's clear to everyone who attended the annual meeting in Fukuoka that IREM Japan members are dedicated and passionate. Their enthusiasm for the industry is apparent, as is their commitment to fostering ethical property management practices. Throughout the event, members—at all levels of tenure with IREM—were recognized for their contributions to IREM, whether as standout students or as longtime collaborators. During the celebration, there was a strong sense of camaraderie and a lot of excitement for what will come next.

What is an IREM Country?

IREM Countries are countries outside the United States that have three or more IREM chapters. Upon achieving this status, the country appoints a country vice president. This position serves in a similar capacity to regional vice president in the United States.

IREM Japan annual meeting 2026

Amidst the festivities, Nagoya, Japan, was announced as the venue for the 2026 IREM Japan annual meeting. Tokai Chapter President Tetsuya Minoura, CPM®, said: "Nagoya is a city steeped in history, and in particular was home to the legendary Tokugawa family, whose influence across all of Japan can still be felt today. We want to take this opportunity to celebrate the Japan of both the past and present in recognition of our new members and to continue to recognize the outstanding achievements of our pre-existing members."

Tokai Chapter President Tetsuya Minoura, CPM®

In line with IREM's global strategy developed in 2023 and 2024, IREM will continue to support IREM Japan and its growth. IREM Japan offers the CPM curriculum entirely in Japanese, taught by Japanese IREM instructors. Many chapter leaders in Japan are also IREM instructors, including Shintani and outgoing Vice President Yoshimura. CPM courses are held annually in five locations that correspond to the five chapters: Sapporo City, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka. Japan also has 12 active AMOs®—in large part thanks to the fact that BDM603 is available in Japanese with local IREM instructors. IREM will continue to support the production and distribution of Japanese language educational materials and resources for chapters and members.

As part of the business proceeding, the IREM delegation met with IREM Japan's Board to discuss chapter strategies. As Shintani shared in his report, IREM Japan aims to continue expanding its growth through more collaborations with local industry partners, similar to what many chapters in the U.S. do. As Shintani repeatedly said throughout the event, collaboration is key. IREM will continue to collaborate and foster the enthusiasm and dedication seen in Japan.

"IREM Japan's award ceremony in Fukuoka demonstrated how our members make IREM amazing through collaborative leadership," said IREM CEO Zack Wahlquist. "It was great to meet so many of the members in Japan and learn more about their work and what motivates them. It's exciting to see what comes next as they continue to flourish."

What keeps property managers from leaving?

Insights and strategies for reducing turnover

By Rita Khan, PhD, CPM®, ARM®, ACoM®

Image: iStock.com/SeventyFour

High turnover among property managers remains a persistent and costly challenge for the real estate industry. With a turnover rate of 33%, substantially higher than the national average, property management companies face increased operational expenses, service disruption, diminished tenant satisfaction, and loss of institutional knowledge. A **recent study funded by the IREM Foundation's J.T. Aveni Center for Research** sheds light on how leaders can reverse this trend by focusing on strategies that enhance job satisfaction and retention.

Through qualitative interviews with experienced property management leaders in the Midwest, four primary themes emerged: work-life balance and stress management; career development and growth opportunities; recognition and feeling valued; and supportive work environments with positive organizational cultures. Each offers practical, evidence-based approaches for managers aiming to reduce turnover and build resilient, high-performing teams.

Theme 1: Strengthen work-life balance and manage job stress

Property managers operate under significant pressure, juggling regulatory compliance, tenant concerns, maintenance coordination, and financial oversight. The study found that burnout and chronic stress were leading drivers of turnover. Leaders who successfully retained staff took steps to proactively manage workloads and encourage a sustainable balance between work and personal life.

Tip: Offer flexible scheduling, encourage use of mental health days, and consider portfolio restructuring to prevent overload. Even low-cost adjustments such as dedicated quiet work periods or modified start times can have a measurable impact on employee well-being and commitment.

Theme 2: Invest in career development and advancement pathways

A lack of professional growth opportunities was consistently cited as a reason property managers disengage or seek employment elsewhere. Conversely, organizations that offered structured career paths, skill-building programs, and mentorship saw higher engagement and lower turnover.

Tip: Create clear development pathways, even in flat organizations. Offer cross-training, rotate responsibilities, and implement mentorship programs to help employees build new competencies. Professional development does not always require a formal program. Intentionality and consistency are key.

Theme 3: Foster a culture of recognition and appreciation

Consistent and personalized recognition emerged as a powerful driver of employee satisfaction. Participants in the study described simple practices such as handwritten notes, meeting shoutouts, and peer-to-peer acknowledgments that created a sense of belonging and value among team members.

Tip: Recognition should be integrated into daily operations rather than reserved for annual events. Encourage supervisors to recognize wins both big and small, and ensure appreciation is specific, timely, and authentic.

Theme 4: Create a supportive environment and positive culture

A recurring theme in the study was the importance of organizational culture. Teams that reported open communication, transparency, and psychological safety experienced lower turnover and higher morale. Supportive supervision and inclusive leadership practices provided the foundation for these positive environments.

Tip: Conduct regular check-ins, facilitate open dialogue, and act on employee feedback. Train managers in emotional intelligence and conflict resolution to foster a culture where employees feel heard, respected, and supported.

External and internal drivers

The research framework was guided by Herzberg's two-factor theory, which distinguishes between factors such as salary, policies, and working conditions, and motivators such as recognition, achievement, and responsibility, which actively drive satisfaction. The most effective retention strategies observed in the study addressed both.

Organizations that addressed only salary, policy, or working conditions saw temporary improvement. Those that also invested in motivators achieved longer-term gains in satisfaction and commitment. For example, competitive pay without opportunities for growth may reduce immediate turnover, but long-term engagement requires intrinsic motivators as well.

Low-cost, high-impact retention tactics

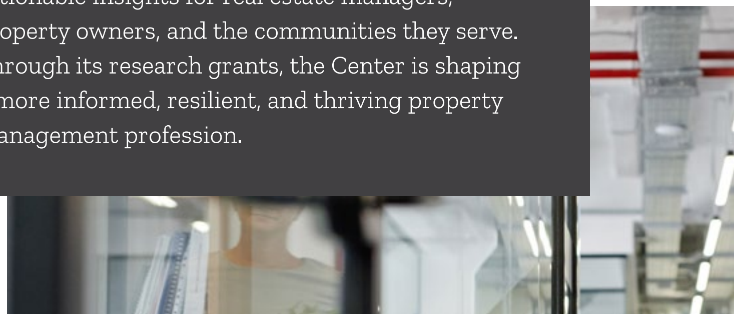
Even organizations with limited budgets can act on the study's findings. The most successful leaders did not necessarily implement costly programs. Instead, they used intentional strategies aligned with both their culture and their team's needs. These included:

1. Flexible work schedules and comp time
2. Regular and personalized employee recognition
3. Internal skill-building and mentorship
4. Quarterly "stay interviews" to gather real-time feedback
5. Open communication channels for staff input

These practices, while simple, created a sense of stability and value that reduced turnover and strengthened team cohesion.

About the J.T. Aveni Center for Research

This research was funded by the J.T. Aveni Center for Research, a program of the IREM Foundation. Named in honor of Joseph T. Aveni, CPM®, the Center was established to advance innovation and expand knowledge in real estate management. Aveni, who served as IREM President in 1977 and was a founding supporter of the Foundation, envisioned a future where research would drive the profession forward. His gift helped establish the Center, grounded in his belief that research is essential to the ongoing advancement of the industry. The Aveni Center supports studies that produce actionable insights for real estate managers, property owners, and the communities they serve. Through its research grants, the Center is shaping a more informed, resilient, and thriving property management profession.



Conclusion

Retention in property management is achievable when leaders address both the root causes of dissatisfaction and the drivers of employee engagement. This study confirms that employees stay when they feel supported, valued, and have room to grow. Property management organizations can reduce costly turnover and build strong, committed teams that serve residents and communities more effectively.

As the industry continues to navigate complex challenges, from staffing shortages to tenant demands, these insights offer a practical roadmap for leaders looking to strengthen their workforce and deliver consistent, high-quality service.

Rita Khan, PhD, CPM®, ARM®, ACoM®, brings more than 15 years of diverse experience to the field of property management, spanning residential real estate, student housing, and condominium and HOA management. She currently serves as the operations manager at Rich Management, where she oversees a multifamily portfolio with a focus on operational excellence and team development.

IREM goes to Washington

IREM's congressional briefing highlights property management's role in supporting communities


Image: iStock.com/halbergman

Autumn marks a season of renewed legislative activity across the United States, as both Congress and state legislatures return from summer recess and shift their focus back to governing. With the backdrop of falling leaves and cooler temperatures, lawmakers reconvene to tackle pressing policy issues, draft new bills, and finalize budgets before the year's end. This period often sets the tone for the legislative priorities ahead, as elected officials balance constituent demands, political agendas, and looming deadlines.

To ensure property management interests are being protected, the IREM government affairs team will travel to D.C. for our annual congressional briefing in September. The objective of the briefing is to inform, educate, and influence legislative staff members who support lawmakers in shaping policy, making decisions, and drafting legislation. Some of the key goals for our event include:

- Inform about our issues
  - We provide congressional staff with accurate, up-to-date information on legislation, regulations, or policy discussions.
- Educate on implications
- Help staff understand the broader context, potential impacts, and unintentional consequences of an issue—using data, subject matter expert opinions, or real-world examples.
  - Support policy decision-making.
  - Offer clear policy recommendations, positions, or actions that align with our interests.
- Build relationships and credibility
  - Establish IREM and our presenters as reliable resources for future information or collaboration.

The Choice in Affordable Housing Act would provide $500 million to create a Housing Partnership Fund.

The briefing, "The Impact of Federal Policies on Real Estate," will focus on federal policies that affect the real estate and property management industry. Property management subject matter experts will provide an overview to congressional staffers on how the property management industry plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic landscape and fostering community development. In addition, legislation IREM will be advocating for support during the briefing includes:

Respect State Housing Laws Act (S. 470/H.R. 1078)

The Respect State Housing Laws Act would eliminate a provision that requires a 30-day notice period before a property manager may begin eviction proceedings against a tenant in federally assisted or federally backed housing. It is our belief that the CARES Act notice-to-vacate requirement was intended to expire when the eviction moratorium itself expired (August 2021) and not be a permanent change to states' eviction laws. We urge Congress to support a legislative fix to ensure that property owners can effectively manage their properties and continue to provide quality, affordable housing to their communities.

Choice in Affordable Housing Act (S. 890/H.R.1981)

IREM members own and manage over 60% of all federally assisted housing and public housing units in the United States. Federally assisted housing puts people into homes who otherwise would have challenges obtaining safe and decent housing.

The Choice in Affordable Housing Act would provide $500 million to create a Housing Partnership Fund. The funds would be distributed to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to offer a signing bonus to a landlord with a unit in an area with less than 20% poverty and to provide security deposit assistance, so that tenants can better afford to meet required deposits and landlords are assured greater protection.

Revitalizing Downtowns and Main Streets Act (H.R. 2410)

The Revitalizing Downtowns and Main Streets Act (RDMA) would provide a federal tax credit to facilitate the conversion of older, underutilized office and other commercial buildings into residential housing. This credit would cover between 20% and 35% of eligible costs involved in converting commercial real estate to housing, since the high costs of many conversions have made turning vacant commercial spaces into new housing too expensive. Overall, the RDMA would help offset prohibitive costs so our communities can address the affordable housing shortage.

Property Management Day

While in D.C., we will also point out to legislative offices how Property Management Day is unofficially observed on September 23. The day is dedicated to recognizing the hard work and dedication of property managers who play a crucial role in maintaining residential, commercial, and industrial spaces.

Some of the points we will be communicating to legislative offices about property managers include:

Importance of property managers

- **Recognize essential work:** Property managers play a critical role in maintaining safe, habitable, and thriving residential and commercial communities.
- **Acknowledge frontline contributions:** Property managers are often the first responders to emergencies, from natural disasters to public health crises like COVID-19.
- **Celebrate economic impact:** The property management industry supports millions of jobs and contributes significantly to local and national economies through housing, infrastructure, and commercial real estate.

The role of property managers

- **Community stability:** They ensure buildings are up to code, tenants are safe, and neighborhoods remain stable and functional.
- **Housing access and retention:** Managers help connect residents to housing, coordinate with assistance programs, and often mediate to prevent evictions and promote housing stability.
- **Small business support:** In commercial real estate, property managers support the operations of small businesses by maintaining viable storefronts and offices.

Why legislators should care

- **Policy alignment:** Property management issues align with broader legislative priorities like affordable housing, disaster preparedness, workforce development, and urban revitalization.
- **Constituent support:** Property managers serve thousands of constituents in every district—renters, homeowners, and business owners alike.
- **Bridge to collaboration:** Highlighting their role opens dialogue for public-private partnerships on housing policy, sustainability efforts, and tenant protections.

Advocating for our members is not just a responsibility—it's a necessity. As the experts who maintain safe, affordable, and well-managed housing and commercial spaces, property managers play a vital role in our communities and the economy. By engaging with policymakers and their staff, we ensure our voices are being heard in the legislative process, regulations are fair and practical, and the industry has the support it needs to thrive. Together, we can help shape policy that reflects the real-world challenges and contributions of property managers nationwide.

Members first

Member Experience Advisory Council champions member-driven improvements across IREM

Image: iStock.com/miniseries

> The IREM experience is more than a concept; it's the collective interactions, impressions, and value that members receive throughout their journey with the organization.

The Member Experience Advisory Council (MEAC) officially launched in 2023. Its purpose and dedication is focused on enhancing the overall member experience journey within IREM. Through collective collaborations, comprising leaders from across the country, MEAC prioritizes improving member services and providing a high-quality member experience across the organization.

Part of IREM's Strategic Plan is a commitment to enhancing the overall experience of being part of our community. But what does that really mean? The IREM experience is more than a concept; it's the collective interactions, impressions, and value that members receive throughout their journey with the organization. As a member-led association, IREM has always prioritized the voices and needs of its members. They are not only the reason we exist, they are also our strongest advocates and contributors.

Member Experience Advisory Council

Image: iStock.com/kate_sept2004

Purpose:

- Establish and refine the requirements for noncertification memberships (associate, academic, student), or any future noncertification memberships as may be determined by the Governing Council.
- Develop strategies and tools for member engagement, experiences, and services at all levels of the organization.
- Develop member recruitment strategies and actively participate in recruitment initiatives.
- Identify impediments to membership and solutions for overcoming those impediments.
- Oversee member recognition/award programs, working in conjunction with other volunteer groups as appropriate, including the IREM Foundation, Next Gen Advisory Council, and Leadership Development Advisory Council.
- Develop strategies for chapter support and engagement that support member experiences and the IREM brand.
- Inform programming for chapter learning at IREM conferences.
- Ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Composition:

Chair, vice chair, and at least 13 but no more than 23 additional members with diverse backgrounds and experience

Improving the member experience means understanding how members engage with IREM, how they perceive their involvement, and what benefits they gain from it. To truly make progress in this area, we rely on insights from those who know the organization best: our members. They live the property manager experience every day and are in the best position to guide how IREM can evolve and deliver even greater value.

Key initiatives

One of MEAC's key initiatives this year is encouraging members to update their contact, professional, and personal information. This initiative is vital as it ensures IREM has accurate and comprehensive member profiles, which help deliver more relevant communications, identify meaningful engagement opportunities, and align members with leadership paths, certifications, and events that match their professional goals. This initiative also supports IREM's broader commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Understanding our members' experiences and unique backgrounds helps IREM build programs and opportunities that are inclusive and reflective of the community we serve.

Another valuable initiative is related to growing our community through member referrals. MEAC is playing a central role in shaping and supporting the 2025 "Member-get-a-member" campaign. With insights from MEAC, IREM is identifying effective ways to promote the campaign and empower members to bring their friends and colleagues into the organization. This peer-to-peer outreach strategy deepens member involvement by inviting them to actively contribute to the growth of the IREM community. As new members join through these trusted networks, they gain instant connection and credibility.

As we continue to look toward the future, what remains clear is that IREM's strength is drawn from its dedicated, passionate, and engaged members. By listening to our members, empowering them to engage meaningfully, and building programs that reflect their needs, we're not just improving the member experience—we're strengthening the future of real estate management.

Ashley Rodriguez, CPM®, serves as senior property manager with Whole Foods Market, where she supports operations and store development within the Worldwide Retail Growth and Development team. In addition to serving as 2025 Membership Experience Advisory Council chair, Rodriguez currently serves as governing councillor, representing Region 7, and as vice president of the IREM Austin Chapter.

New CPMs

Arkansas
Ted Parsons, CPM®, Eureka Springs

California
Andrew Bowen, CPM®, Anaheim
Andrea Calleros, CPM®, Long Beach
Jessika Lloyd, CPM®, Beverly Hills
Mario Lomeli, CPM®, ACoM®, Pleasant Hill
Vince Nguyen, CPM®, Irvine
Cliff Perez, CPM®, San Diego
Steven Tapia, CPM®, San Jose

Florida
Diana Faberman, CPM®, Wellington
Heidy Lemos, CPM®, Heathrow

Idaho
Rachael Brown, CPM®, Boise
Rollin Hansen, CPM®, ARM®, Boise

Illinois
Gabrielle Gregory, CPM®, East Saint Louis

Indiana
Stanley Howard, CPM®, Indianapolis
Michelle Partin, CPM®, Fort Wayne

Iowa
Diana Haubenstricker, CPM®, Davenport

Massachusetts
Amy Boucher, CPM®, Gardner
Kelly Puccia, CPM®, Swampscott

Maryland
Tim Bower, CPM®, Frederick
Ro Shirazi, CPM®, ACoM®, Brookeville

Michigan
Neha Behl, CPM®, Rochester Hills
Stanley Brantley, CPM®, Detroit
Renee Layne, CPM®, ARM®, New Boston

Mississippi
Rebecca Hopkins, CPM®, Magee

Missouri
Adam Barnes, CPM®, Centralia
Kara Steele, CPM®, ARM®, Kansas City

New York
Julius Lamar, CPM®, Stony Point
Franklin Vivar, CPM®, ARM®, Bronx

North Carolina
Audrey King, CPM®, Wilmington
Darcy Nagel, CPM®, Charlotte

North Dakota
Jesse Cahoon, CPM®, ARM®, Minot

Ohio
Lindsay Condron, CPM®, Dublin

Oregon
Hannah Knutson, CPM®, Canby
Nicole Onder, CPM®, Portland

Tennessee
Jessica Mowery, CPM®, Knoxville

Texas
Charlene Brown, CPM®, Austin
Collin Brown, CPM®, Austin
Melissa Franco, CPM®, Austin
Sean Liebman, CPM®, ACoM®, Austin
Tara Meaux, CPM®, Houston
Karla Moreno, CPM®, El Paso
Sedella Morgan, CPM®, Baytown
Joseph Nauman, CPM®, ARM®, Round Rock
Karen Spencer, CPM®, Cedar Park
Kelsea Vernon, CPM®, San Marcos

Utah
Emory Rainey, CPM®, West Valley City

Canada
Ashley Archer-Bereaux, CPM®, Brampton, Ontario
Lucia Capobianco, CPM®, ACoM®, Oakville, Ontario
Tyler Ducharme, CPM®, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Prashant Faria, CPM®, Mississauga, Ontario
Steven Guthrie, CPM®, Toronto, Ontario
Jaime Kilkenny, CPM®, Edmonton, Alberta

South Africa
Tsholofelo Banyatsi, CPM®, Centurion
Violet Meko, CPM®, Johannesburg
Kojo Nketiah, CPM®, Johannesburg

New ARMs

California
Myrriah Dangreau, ARM®, Castroville

Hawaii
Ever Bacnis, ARM®, Honolulu
Randell Barnett, ARM®, Waianae
Ashley Hattori, ARM®, Honolulu
Sung Kim, ARM®, Honolulu
Jason Pasion, ARM®, Mililani
Paula Siobal, ARM®, Waimanalo

Maryland
Darius Moore, ARM®, Ellicott City

Massachusetts
Carolina S. Mier-Casanova, ARM®, Lunenburg

Michigan
Rickkey Mitchell, ARM®, Livonia

New Jersey
Kyle Daly, ARM®, Jersey City

New York
Ashly Alati, ARM®, Rochester
Charles Brown, ARM®, Troy
Ryane Brush, ARM®, Albany
Ciara Casas, ARM®, Watertown
Irina Gomelskaya, ARM®, New York
James Horohan, ARM®, ACoM®, Yonkers
Spencer Marin, ARM®, ACoM®, New York
Caitlin Murray, ARM®, Troy
Patrick Murray, ARM®, Schenectady
Sean Peck, ARM®, Troy
Kevin Spinner, ARM®, Adams Center
Christopher Vargas, ARM®, Bronx

Pennsylvania
Denissa Petrescu-Visconti, ARM®, Pittsburgh

Rhode Island
Wyatt Reynolds, ARM®, Portsmouth

Tennessee
Tiffany Ige, ARM®, Nashville
Zach Johnson, ARM®, Nashville

Texas
Lindsay Bonilla, CPM®, ARM®, ACOM®, Austin

Utah
Adrian Garza, ARM®, Herriman

Virginia
Makayla Reynolds, ARM®, Fairfax
Nicole Rodriguez, ARM®, Fredericksburg
Linda Silva, ARM®, Virginia Beach

Washington
Anthony Brunelle, ARM®, Bellevue

Wisconsin
Veronika Lewkowicz, ARM®, Waunakee
Alana Norman, ARM®, Glendale
Rachael Warren, ARM®, Madison
Cissy Zhang, ARM®, Madison

Canada
Mwenu Amukun, ARM®, Bowmanville, Ontario
Bhargav Bhalgamadia, ARM®, Red Deer, Alberta
Candace Fonos, ARM®, Jarvie, Alberta
Marcelo Medeiros de Paula, ARM®, London, Ontario
Javed Mehri, ARM®, Calgary, Alberta

United Arab Emirates
Bodour Alaaraj, ARM®, Dubai
Waleed Al Barrie, ARM®, Dubai
Ahmed Alzarooni, ARM®, Dubai
Makthum Ishaq, ARM®, Abu Dhabi
Sereen Khalaf, ARM®, Abu Dhabi
Mohammed Nasser, ARM®, Dubai
Amine Oulakhlif, ARM®, Dubai
Youssef Rabah, ARM®, Dubai
Walid Samy, ARM®, Dubai

New ACoMs

Alabama
Thomas Joyce, ACoM®, Birmingham
Charlotte Park, ACoM®, Tuscaloosa

Arizona
Cherie La Mere, ACoM®, Glendale

Florida
Margaret Pfuhl, ACoM®, Cape Coral
Jennifer Trent, CPM®, ACoM®, Stuart
Simon Zarour, ACoM®, Bay Harbor Islands

Illinois
Jacquie Seymour, ACoM®, Roscoe

Louisiana
Vicki Ellis, ACoM®, Baton Rouge
Alexis Roberts, ACoM®, Baton Rouge

Maryland
Kristal Sutton, ACoM®, Bowie

Michigan
Katherine Fowler, ACoM®, Caledonia

Montana
Liesl Uskoski, ACoM®, Stevensville

Nevada
Jessica Heath, ACoM®, Las Vegas

New Jersey
Nicole Stio, ACoM®, Parlin

New Mexico
Mona Lujan, ACoM®, Albuquerque

New York
Spencer Marin ARM®, ACoM®, New York

Oregon
Jade Hennessy, ACoM®, Portland

Texas
Eric Albert, ACoM®, Roanoke
Lucia Morales Ayala, ACoM®, Austin
Lindsay Bonilla, CPM®, ARM®, ACoM®, Austin
Amber Carnes, ACoM®, Austin
William James, ACoM®, Hutto

Virginia
Stacey Hunt, ACoM®, Leesburg

Wisconsin
Jennifer Pennington, ACoM®, Brookfield

Canada
Kimberly Brotzel, ACoM®, Leduc, Alberta

United Arab Emirates
Mosaad R. Elyamani, ACoM®, Dubai

New CSPs

Arizona
Russellville, Russellville
Sonoran Village Phase III, Scottsdale
West Memphis, West Memphis

California
1330 O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park
1430 O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park
1490 O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park
1525 O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park
1555 Adams Drive, Menlo Park
1605 Adams Drive, Menlo Park
The BelAire (The Park), Rancho Cucamonga
The Catherine Phase I, Santa Monica
The Catherine II, Santa Monica

New certifications

Channel Point Apartments, Long Beach
Hornet Commons, Sacramento
The Norman (Tower at Hollywood Hills), Los Angeles
Norwalk Industrial Park - Building 2, Norwalk
Norwalk Industrial Park - Building 3, Norwalk
Norwalk Industrial Park - Building 5, Norwalk
Norwalk Industrial Park - Building 9, Norwalk
Norwalk Industrial Park - Building 10, Norwalk
Norwalk Industrial Park - Building 20, Norwalk
Ontario CA B1 Malaga, Ontario
Sunnyvale Building J – 680, Sunnyvale

Colorado
Apex 5510, Boulder

District of Columbia
Andover House, Washington, D.C.
View 14, Washington, D.C.
1301 Thomas Circle, Washington, D.C.

Florida
Miller Square, Miami
Pointe West Commerce Center - Building 1, Davie
Pointe West Commerce Center - Building 2, Davie
Pointe West Commerce Center - Building 3, Davie
Port 95 Business Center - Building 1, Hollywood
Port 95 Business Center - Building 2, Hollywood

Georgia
Aston City Springs, Sandy Springs
Atlanta – Gateway, Atlanta
Pendergrass, Pendergrass
Rockmart, Rockmart

Illinois
Village Square of Northbrook, Northbrook

Indiana
45 Mission, Whiteland

Maryland
Summit at Washingtonian, Gaithersburg

Minnesota
Vesi Apartments, Minneapolis

New Jersey
Pedricktown, Pedricktown
Piscataway 5, Piscataway

New York
10 Bryant Park, New York
The Vitagraph, Brooklyn
Watermark LIC, Long Island City

Ohio
Columbus, Columbus

Oregon
Seven West at the Trails, Beaverton

Pennsylvania
One On Centre, Pittsburgh

Tennessee
City View, Nashville

Texas
Avana SoCo, Austin
Ft. Worth Samuels, Fort Worth
GW Block 23 Office, LLC, Austin
Meadows Marketplace, Katy
Monaco On The Trail Apartments, Dallas
Overture Mueller, Austin
The Preserve, Texas
State Thomas Ravello, Dallas
Stonelake 6, Austin

Washington
Connell, Connell
East Valley Business Park, Renton
The Olivian, Seattle
West Edge, Seattle

Wisconsin
Jefferson, Jefferson

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