Property Manager

You run buildings other people own: tenants, rent, repairs, budgets. You can start at 18 and learn on the job.

TYPICAL PAY **$69,990** a year, full time	PAY RANGE **$41k to $140k** starting to experienced	TIME TO QUALIFY **2 to 4 years** after high school
DEMAND **Moderate** job outlook	LICENCE NEEDED **Yes** regulated job	WHERE YOU WORK **Apartment communities, office and retail buildings, homeowner assoc...**

How you get there

1. **High school diploma** — Grade 12
   Enough to get hired into leasing. Take anything with math, writing and business in it.
2. **Entry job on site** — 1 to 2 years
   Leasing consultant, assistant manager or maintenance coordinator. You learn rent collection, showings, work orders and fair housing rules by doing them.
3. **Get the state license** — 2 to 6 months, part-time
   In most states, managing someone else's property for a fee means holding a real estate salesperson or broker license. Course, background check, state exam.
4. **Run your own property** — Year 2 to 4
   You take over a site and become responsible for the budget, the staff and the owner's money.
5. **Add a designation** — Later, while working
   The Certified Property Manager (CPM) or Accredited Residential Manager (ARM) credential from the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) is what moves you into regional and commercial work.

Pros and cons

+ You can enter at 18 with no degree and no debt
+ Real budget and hiring responsibility early
+ Every city in the country has these jobs

– You are on call for emergencies and you cannot ignore them
– Evictions are part of the job and they feel terrible
– Owners want higher rent, residents want lower rent, you are in the middle

Good to know

Your rent can be part of your pay
On-site apartment managers are often given a free or heavily discounted unit in the building they run. Some states, California among them, even exempt a manager who lives at the property from...

You hold other people's money
Rent and security deposits sit in a trust account that is not yours. States audit those accounts, and mixing that money with your own is one of the fastest ways to lose a license.

Optional boosts

Certified Property Manager (CPM). Accredited Residential Manager (ARM). Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA). Broker license.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers (11-9141.00)
Institute of Real Estate Management
National Association of Residential Property Managers
California Department of Real Estate

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: https://career.help/us/careers/property-manager

Scan for the full clicker