# Manufactured Housing

June 13, 2025

*The Smart Choice*

a special section of The Derrick. / The News-Herald

# What is a manufactured home?

The price tags for homes are high these days. But if you want to build the home of your dreams, the costs can add up quickly too: The average price of a new-construction house in January 2022 was nearly $500,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Ouch.

But there's a cheaper alternative: the manufactured home. These prefab, permanent residences are factory-built, then installed on a lot. The average sale price of a manufactured home, as of February 2022, was $128,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (exclusive of land cost or other expenses). Even the biggest, most deluxe models can be around $250,000.

Though traditionally associated with temporary housing and trailer homes, these days manufactured homes can be just as permanent as on-site builds. Nor do you have to sacrifice space or functionality when you live in a manufactured property. In fact, the average size home purchased is approximately 1,400 square feet, and some floor plans can exceed 3,000 square feet.

Some 22 million Americans live in manufactured homes, according to the Manufactured Housing Institute's "2021 Industry Overview." Should you join them? Let's talk more about why you might want to consider manufactured housing the next time you buy or build.

## What is a manufactured home?

A type of prefabricated residence, the manufactured home, as its name implies, has its standardized parts constructed and assembled in a factory; it's then transported and affixed to a location (your home site). In contrast, a traditional home is built from the ground up on your lot. While traditional homes may have a basement and usually sit on a foundation, manufactured homes typically don't.

But that doesn't mean your manufactured home is on wheels or meant to be a mobile residence. They can be set up at their permanent location on concrete blocks, metal piers or other substantial tie-downs. As Terrianne and Jinx Kidd, manufactured homeowners in Outer Banks, North Carolina, explain: "Our home is built on 75 concrete footings instead of a foundation, and it's designed to withstand hurricane winds up to 160 mph." Their house has 9-foot ceilings and 2X6 sheetrock studs, and Terianne is happy that the manufactured home builder gave them a ton of customization options and "built it indoors to our specifications."

Indeed, a manufactured home can have many of the hallmarks of a traditional home build. This includes lumber framing, fiberglass insulation, PVC plumbing, drywalls and wood flooring. They can boast fancy trims and features like porches or exterior stairs. Homeowners can choose between multiple floor plans and select everything from countertops to tile based on their preferences.

## Manufactured homes vs mobile homes

Manufactured homes are often referred to as mobile homes — and indeed, the two are in a sense the same thing. Both types of properties are regulated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The main difference between a manufactured home and a mobile home is the date it was built. Homes built in a factory before June 15, 1976 are considered mobile homes, while factory-constructed homes built after that date are called manufactured homes.

Manufactured homes are still "mobile" in that they have a trailer hitch and axles attached to a steel beam that runs their length (which allows them to be transported to the home site). They are considered a vehicle for tax and zoning purposes, because, technically, they can be relocated.

Other than that, they often bear little resemblance to the rectangular, metallic, trailers-with-the-wheels-off of old. As noted above, manufactured homes are solidly built, can be affixed to the land in fairly permanent ways, and often run as much as 2,000 or 3,000 square feet (what the industry calls double- or triple-wide).

Mobile homes, being older, are often less expensive to buy than contemporary manufactured homes.

## Manufactured homes vs modular homes

Manufactured homes are also often confused with modular homes. Both are forms of prefab housing — built in a factory in sections and shipped to the land where they will be set up. Both have standard features that can be customized to varying degrees.

However, they differ in significant ways, starting with the way their construction is regulated. Manufactured homes are subject to HUD standards, which regulate their design, energy efficiency, and safety, while modular homes are subject to local, state and regional building codes.

Manufactured homes are built on a steel chassis, like a car, and transported to their site. In contrast, modular homes are more like traditional builds. Constructed in pieces and assembled like a puzzle on the property, they generally have permanent foundations and a roof that's pitched per local regulations. A modular home might even have a basement or crawl space.

Because they are often subjected to more serious code specifications, a modular home may be more expensive than a comparable manufactured one. Manufactured homes cost around $40 to $50 per square foot compared to $40 to $80 per square foot for modular homes, according to HomeAdvisor. According to Fixr, the average cost on a 2,000-square-foot modular home runs about $240,000. A comparable manufactured home runs more towards $150,000-$170,000.

## How much do manufactured homes cost?

Overall, manufactured homes are less expensive than traditional homes. According to HomeAdvisor, their total cost is around $100-200 per square foot; in contrast, a traditional new-build home averages $150 per square foot, and can easily go as high as $400, depending on the locality.

When you're figuring out the cost of your manufactured home, consider the following:

**Are you buying the land the home will sit on?** This additional cost can be in the tens of thousands of dollars. Some homeowners rent a space in a manufactured home park instead.

**Do you want lots of upgrades and luxe features?** Switching from carpeted to hardwood flooring or from laminate counters to granite counters will cost more, just like in a traditional home.

**Are you making it permanent?** If you want to put your factory-built home on a foundation, it will become like a modular home, and thus liable to standard building codes. This process can be more costly.

## Financing a manufactured home

It's more difficult to get financing for a mobile or manufactured home than a traditional on-site build. Both online and traditional lending institutions will offer standard financing on modular homes because they meet the same local code requirements as traditional builds, but they often won't finance manufactured homes.

The situation eases a bit if you own the land, and build the manufactured home to stay in place via a foundation (like a modular home) or some other permanent way. Mainstream mortgages would be available to you in this scenario.

See **MANUFACTURED HOMES,** Page 3

# Manufactured housing proves value in growing market

Since 2012 Manufactured Homes Have Appreciated in Value Faster than Site-Built Homes

For many years there has been a common belief that one of the downsides to manufactured home ownership is that these factory- built homes do not appreciate in value.

A recent analysis of Federal Housing Financing Agency (FHFA) data by the Urban Institute dispels the myth that manufactured homes do not appreciate in value as much as site-built homes. In fact, since 2,000, manufactured housing prices have appreciated similarly to traditional housing prices.

The report, which includes government-sponsored enterprise (GSE) mortgage data for manufactured homes reveals that between 2000 and 2024, manufactured homes appreciated at nearly identical rates to site-built homes, growing approximately 5% annually. Over this period, site-built homes appreciated 212.6%, while manufactured homes followed closely at 211.8%. This data underscores the financial viability of manufactured housing, which has historically faced negative perceptions and restrictive zoning laws.

The FHA's methodology focuses on the repeat sale approach, analyzing price changes across multiple transactions. While the study excluded refinancing data due to lower refinancing activity in manufactured housing, it relied on purchasing indexes to provide a market-reflective valuation. Year-over-year price index data further highlighted that since 2014, manufactured homes have consistently appreciated at higher rates than site-built homes in all but two quarters. Since 2000, manufactured housing prices have appreciated similarly to traditional housing prices,

Manufactured housing presents a viable solution to the nation's affordable housing crisis. The analysis highlights how outdated zoning laws and negative stereotypes continue to hinder the potential of manufactured homes as an affordable option. Legislative changes in states like California, Maine, and Maryland, which now permit manufactured housing in single-family zones, offers a blueprint for expanding affordable housing options. Similarly, increased federal participation in the manufactured housing market could unlock new opportunities for affordable, sustainable housing nationwide.

**Note:** A little known fact is that since 2012 manufactured homes have appreciated faster than site-built homes!

— *ManufacturedHomes.com*

# Manufactured Homes

Continued from Page 2

If you are buying an older mobile home or a non-modular manufactured home, you will probably have to turn to a private personal loan to get financing. Many homebuyers take out a chattel loan — manufactured homes are often classified as personal property, or chattel — especially if they buy an existing manufactured home away from the lot where they intend to keep it. Chattel loans carry higher interest rates than traditional mortgages do.

A variety of HUD loans, including Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans and Veterans Affairs (VA) loans are available for financing manufactured homes in many circumstances.

## Pros and cons of manufactured homes

Manufactured homes are gaining momentum, thanks in large part to their affordability and increasingly customized floor plans. Still, they may not be right for every home buyer.

### The advantages

**Affordability:** Manufactured homes cost at least half the price of comparable traditional new homes.

**Speed:** Manufactured homes take less time to construct.

**Easy to maintain:** The standardized parts can often be quickly replaced. The home is under a manufacturer-offered warranty.

### The drawbacks

**Less equity:** Manufactured homes are more likely to depreciate over time than a traditional build. They may not be great for buyers who want to move in a few years.

**Financing:** You will find fewer loan options for most manufactured homes.

**Cookie cutter:** While design options do exist, manufactured homes are harder to personalize — or update later on. And while model homes may be available for viewing, you won't see your actual home until it arrives.

**Limited:** Manufactured homes aren't available everywhere. Some localities restrict where they can be located, too.

## Final word on manufactured homes

A manufactured home can be a great forever home if you want more for your money. You can customize the property and enjoy more space than you could otherwise afford. Many retirees and empty-nesters find them ideal.

Manufactured homes do still suffer from the old temporary, trailer-home stigma though. They don't appreciate as well as traditional homes do — so forget about them being good for a quick flip. Be aware that your financing options to buy or build one may be limited, too.

# Champion homes unveils duplex solution for housing crisis

Champion Homes, Inc. again shows its relentless commitment to product innovation and its dedication to developing critically needed solutions to the nationwide affordable housing shortage with the launch of its first national manufactured duplex series. With this cutting-edge product, the Concord Duplex Series, Champion Homes is answering the nationwide call for high-quality affordable housing that can be built quickly, which will help builders and municipalities alleviate the demand for cost-effective homes.

"We're thrilled to launch the Concord Duplex Series as a new product segment for Champion Homes that provides vital affordable housing units for individuals and families across the country," said Champion Homes President and CEO Tim Larson. "Additionally, the Concord series provides community operators, builders and developers a faster, precision-built solution to scale their development projects and deliver timely results."

Champion Homes debuted the Concord Duplex Series at the NAHB International Builders' Show® in Las Vegas in February, where thousands of people toured the home. It was met with an overwhelmingly positive response for its cost-effectiveness and high-quality construction. Featured in the show's "Must-See New Products & Services" session, the series was highlighted as one of the most innovative and pioneering products in the residential construction and development industry.

The Concord Duplex Series was created in response to landmark updates to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards allowing for multi-unit manufactured homes. Champion Homes's duplex series allows developers to build higher density housing at a faster pace, helping to increase the national affordable housing supply. According to a 2024 report by the National Association of Home Builders, the U.S. has a shortage of approximately 1.5 million housing units.

Exemplifying Champion Homes's dedication to making affordable housing more accessible across the country, the Concord Duplex Series is available now across the 48 contiguous states — Champion's entire U.S. manufacturing footprint.

Manufactured homes like the models in the Concord Duplex Series are more cost-effective and faster to build than site-built alternatives, accelerating speed-to-occupancy for buyers and renters. They generate significantly less neighborhood noise, traffic and site waste than onsite construction, making them ideal for land-lease communities and urban infill contexts where residents already live in the area.

With offsite construction, homes are built in a climate-controlled environment that leverages a skilled, centralized workforce. These advantages enhance reliability and cost-effectiveness, allowing builders and municipalities to capitalize on economies of scale. Additionally, the Concord Duplex Series offers builders a shorter time-to-completion compared to site-built projects, reducing overhead capital charges and bolstering affordability. The series is an excellent fit for small-scale developers, real estate investors, and owners or developers of land-lease or build-to-rent communities.

Providing the affordability and convenience of duplexes in an efficient factory-built home package, the Concord Duplex Series features:

A wide selection of floor plans ranging from 576-square-foot, one-bedroom, one-bathroom units to 960-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bathroom units

Thoughtfully designed layouts focusing on quality and cost-effectiveness for individuals, young families, retirees and people looking for multi-generational living options

Desirable amenities residents will love, including open concept floor plans, en-suite bathrooms, contemporary décor, porches and private entrances

Flexible configuration options to fit the specific needs of the building site, including different front- and side-entry arrangements

"The new Concord Duplex Series embodies Champion Homes' uncompromising dedication to innovation in service of our customers," Larson said. "As a cost-effective housing solution built on an efficient timeline, we expect that this exceptional manufactured duplex series will help increase housing supply for individuals and families looking for affordability, value and quality in a home of their own."

### About Champion Homes, Inc.

Champion Homes, Inc. (NYSE: SKY) is a leading producer of factory-built housing in North America and employs more than 9,000 people. With more than 70 years of homebuilding experience and 48 manufacturing facilities throughout the United States and western Canada, Champion Homes is well positioned with an innovative portfolio of manufactured and modular homes, ADUs, park-models and modular buildings for the single-family, multi-family and hospitality sectors.

In addition to its core home building business, Champion Homes provides construction services to install and set-up factory-built homes, operates a factory-direct retail business with 72 retail locations across the United States and operates Star Fleet Trucking, providing transportation services to the manufactured housing and other industries from several dispatch locations across the United States.

*— Business Wire*

# *Mobile and manufactured homes, not the same*

Today's manufactured homes are the most regulated and inspected single family quality affordable housing in the United States. The only form of housing in the U.S. subject to a stringent National Building Code.

With the support of the responsible members of the "mobile home" industry, the U.S. Congress passed legislation in 1976 to establish a federal building code for "mobile homes." This legislation is the Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act which went into effect June 15, 1976, creating legally the "manufactured home."

The federal code is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (commonly known as the HUD Code). The federal standards regulate manufactured housing design and construction, strength and durability, transportability, fire resistance, energy efficiency and quality. The HUD Code also sets standards for the heating, plumbing, air conditioning, wind safety, thermal and electrical systems.

Often those that have not explored today's modern manufactured housing will assume that a "mobile home" is one-in-the-same, exposing myths that have been handed down through generations, such as – "They are not well-built," They are not safe," – "They don't appreciate, – "They are not energy efficient," – "They don't last,"

Unfortunately, many Americans dreaming of quality affordable homeownership are either not aware that a manufactured home as an option due to those- and many more- uninformed misrepresentations and mischaracterizations of today's only quality affordable housing in this country.

In the 1950's, 60's, and into the 1970's, the "mobile homes" aka "trailers" burst upon the housing scene as a form of housing that anyone could afford. The incredible demand resulted in dozens of manufacturing plants building thousands of these low price homes throughout the country, in states where regulations governing construction and health and safety were virtually non-existent.

In the meantime, several manufacturers on the west coast were producing quality mobile homes for homebuyers to be placed on more expensive land or in modern mobile-home land-lease communities.

Today, there are estimated one million plus home owners that still reside in "mobile homes." Perhaps the long outdated terminology is ingrained in "nostalgia."

# Pros and cons of manufactured homes

Home is more than just a place to park your car or sleep at night – it's the place where you can make memories and feel at ease in your own space. If you're searching for a new home to make your own, it's important to factor in your financial situation to set realistic goals.

For many, manufactured homes are a great option when affordability is a priority.

## What is the difference between modular and manufactured homes?

Modular homes and manufactured housing are prefabricated structures, meaning both types of homes are factory-made. However, a modular home is partially constructed in a factory, not fully built in a controlled setting. Modular homes must meet local building codes and standards (as opposed to HUD standards) and may look just like traditional stick-built homes. You can also choose from a wider variety of floor plans than manufactured homes.

## Pros and cons of manufactured homes

It's a good idea to weigh manufactured homes' pros and cons before you decide whether they will make sense for your situation.

### Pros

Manufactured homes might be a good idea for some home buyers based on these benefits:

**Affordability:** Manufactured homes may be more affordable than stick-built homes because of the standardization of creating the homes in a factory and cutting down on assembly costs.

**Customization:** You can customize the floor plan, kitchen, living room and exterior of a manufactured home, such as choosing kitchen islands, backsplashes, porches, roof and siding preferences.

**Fast construction:** It may take less time to build a manufactured home compared to a stick-built home. The construction time may be shorter because the factory process is streamlined and less likely to encounter delays.

**Standards:** Manufactured homes have high safety standards, including HUD's environmental impact standards. In short, HUD standards ensure that you'll live in a quality home.

### Cons

Manufactured homes might not be a good idea for some home buyers for the following reasons:

**Must have a foundation:** Unlike a camper or RV, you can't move your home around. Manufactured homes require finding undeveloped land or space in a manufactured home community.

**Community fees:** Depending on your location, you may need to pay applicable community fees, typically between as little as $100 per month to $800 per month. Not only that, but like rent for an apartment, these fees can increase costs upon renewal.

**Little appreciation:** Long-term value might not appreciate as much as it would for a traditional home due to the manufactured home categorization of "personal" property versus "real" property.

**Reputation:** Manufactured homes may have a negative connotation, and many homeowners in certain markets veer away from investing in manufactured homes.

**Financing challenges:** You may find financing a manufactured home more challenging than a traditional home, as outlined above.

## How much do manufactured homes cost?

According to the latest available data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the average cost of manufactured homes was $120,000 as of October 2023 across all available widths. The average price boils down to about $85 per square foot.

Buying land can cost more upfront than living in a manufactured home community but also requires knowledge of zoning laws and other local requirements. It may add to your costs if you need to incorporate a foundation:

**Pier and beam foundation:** A pier and beam foundation typically costs $8,200 – $22,000. Anchors hold your home down with steel straps to the frame.

**Slab foundation:** A slab foundation usually costs $5,000 – $40,000 and forms a slab of poured concrete with anchors.

**Basement foundation:** Basement foundations cost about $13,000 – $30,000 and offer larger living spaces for occupants.

**Pit/crawl space foundation:** Pit foundations typically cost $13,000 for a home that is 1,000 square feet on the ground level, and refer to digging a pit out of the ground underneath your mobile home to make a crawl space.

You may also pay delivery costs, applicable taxes (including property taxes) and for specific features that may differ compared to "traditional homes." Costs will likely vary depending on the area where you live.

## How do lenders classify manufactured homes?

**Personal property vs. real property**

Most lenders do not consider these homes to be personal property, rather they're considered real property:

**Personal property:** A manufactured home is personal property if it's on a temporary foundation, and you can move it later. For example, if you put the home on a concrete slab, it's considered personal property.

**Real property:** A manufactured home is classified as real property if it's attached to land permanently. For example, removing wheels, axles and towing hitch would make a manufactured home more similar to a site-built home and be considered real property.

## Do manufactured homes hold their value?

Current manufactured homes may depreciate less than older generations of manufactured or mobile homes, but they may not appreciate as much as traditional single-family homes. Their classification as "personal property" may impact their value.

However, it's important to recognize that the land where the home stands will likely appreciate and could positively affect your home value. Several factors can affect home value, including:

- Housing market conditions
- The community
- Initial price and age of the home
- Inflation rate of the broader market
- Supply and demand
- Availability of an organized resale network
- Maintenance and upkeep

**FAQs:** Pros and cons of buying a manufactured home

Consider some common frequently asked questions you may have about manufactured homes before you purchase.

## How can I buy a manufactured home?

Manufactured home retailers are pretty easy to find. You may start by looking in a manufactured home park with ready access to a community and potential utilities and amenities. You may also buy land to put your manufactured home on, though you will have to pay attention to deed restrictions and zoning laws.

You can buy a manufactured home through a manufactured home dealer, who will offer showrooms to tour as well as online 3D tours that can help you choose the right size, layout and other features to fit your needs and lifestyle.

## Are manufactured homes ever a good idea?

Manufactured homes can offer many benefits to homeowners, including affordability, a wide range of customization options and high-quality standards. A manufactured home might fit your needs if you're looking for this type of setting and potential community atmosphere.

## Why don't manufactured homes hold value?

Manufactured homes may not hold value like traditional homes but may keep it better than other assets, such as vehicles. The value depends on the housing market, price and age of the house, inflation rate, maintenance and upkeep and other factors.

**The bottom line:** Manufactured homes can be a good path to homeownership

Living in a manufactured home has changed a lot since the 1970s, and it's an often-overlooked option for those searching for affordable real estate. Manufactured homes offer homeowners more customization and energy-efficiency options than you might believe, even compared to site-built homes. You may also see benefits to living in a tight-knit community.

Write down your own list of the pros and cons of buying a manufactured home and discuss your options with a lender before making a final decision.

# *Why manufactured homes are more sustainable*

Now more than ever sustainability has become a crucial consideration in all aspects of our lives, from the food that we eat to the homes that we live in. As the world faces environmental challenges, the housing industry is adapting to meet the demand for eco-friendly alternatives. Manufactured and modular homes, though often overlooked in discussions about sustainability, are a viable solution to this crisis. In this article, we'll explore why manufactured homes are better for sustainability and how they contribute to a greener future.

### Energy efficiency

Manufactured homes are built with energy efficiency in mind. Unlike traditional site-built homes, which can have gaps and leaks leading to energy loss, manufactured homes are constructed in controlled environments using precise measurements and materials. This results in tighter seals and better insulation, reducing the energy needed for heating and cooling. Additionally, many manufacturers offer optional energy-efficient features such as LED lighting, high-performance windows, and ENERGY STAR® certified appliances, further lowering energy consumption and utility bills. And at Regional Homes, we're proud that over 90% of the homes we offer come standard with a metal roof and Low-E Thermopane windows, which is a major contributor to energy & cost savings.

### Sustainable materials

The materials used in the construction of manufactured homes are carefully chosen to minimize environmental impact. From recycled steel framing to sustainable wood products, manufacturers prioritize eco-friendly options without compromising quality or durability. Moreover, the controlled production process allows for efficient use of materials, reducing waste during construction. Additionally, advancements in building technology have led to innovations such as eco-friendly insulation and interior finishes, creating healthier living spaces while minimizing environmental harm.

### Reduced environmental footprint

Compared to traditional site-built homes, manufactured homes have a significantly lower environmental footprint. The controlled factory environment results in less construction waste, as excess materials can be recycled or reused. Additionally, the streamlined manufacturing process requires fewer resources and produces fewer emissions compared to on-site construction.

### Renewable energy integration

Manufactured homes are well-suited for integrating renewable energy solutions such as solar panels. With advances in solar technology and battery storage, homeowners can generate their own clean energy and reduce reliance on the grid. By harnessing the power of the sun, manufactured homes can become self-sustaining, environmentally friendly dwellings. Many homeowners have begun installing solar panels either fastened to their roof or as fixed ground-mounted solar panels. (There's also federal tax credits available should you decide to consider solar panels to be your source of power.)

### Affordability and accessibility

One of the biggest benefits of manufactured homes is their affordability, which extends to sustainability. The efficient production process and use of cost-effective materials make manufactured homes more accessible to a wider range of homeowners, including those with limited financial resources. Additionally, the energy savings associated with these homes can result in long-term cost savings, making them an attractive option for environmentally conscious individuals seeking both sustainability and affordability.

Manufactured homes are increasingly recognized as a sustainable housing option that offers numerous environmental benefits. From energy efficiency and sustainable materials to reduced environmental footprint and renewable energy integration, these homes are leading the way toward a greener future. As the demand for eco-friendly housing continues to grow, manufactured homes stand out as a practical and environmentally responsible choice for homeowners looking to minimize their impact on the planet while enjoying the comforts of home.


SERVING ALL OF
WESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA'S
MODULAR & MANUFACTURED
HOUSING NEEDS for 50+ YEARS
New Era building systems
COLONY
FACTORY CRAFTED HOMES
GRANDVIEW
ESTATES
Modular & Manufactured Housing
Since 1973
WWW.GRANDVIEWESTATES.COM
2875 STATE RT 157
VENUS, PA.16364
PH: 814-354-2850