EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADVANTAGE VALLEY REGION

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This update evaluates housing needs across the 10-county region and compares current market conditions with the January 2024 assessment to identify changes, constraints and development opportunities.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA: Boone, Cabell, Clay, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mason, Putnam, Roane and Wayne counties.

28,976	10,604	18,372	17,268
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR HOUSING GAP	RENTAL UNITS NEEDED	FOR-SALE UNITS NEEDED	PROJECTED DIRECT & INDIRECT JOBS

1 KEY TAKEAWAYS | THE MARKET AT A GLANCE

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The baseline five-year household decline slowed from 1.5% (2023-2028) to 1.0% (2026-2031). A job-influenced projection indicates a net gain of 9,764 households.

RENTAL AVAILABILITY IS CRITICALLY TIGHT

The 161 multifamily projects surveyed are 98.4% occupied, which is a high rate. More than 1,300 households remain on affordable-rental wait lists.

GROWING SENIOR INFLUENCE

Households age 75+ are projected to grow 15.0% by 2031, while continued losses among households under the age of 35 could limit long-term growth.

FOR-SALE INVENTORY REMAINS LIMITED

Only 621 homes were available, representing an extremely low 0.4% availability rate. The median sales price increased $62,875, or 44.2%, from 2020 to 2025.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROWTH

Growth among renters earning $50,000+ and owners earning $100,000+ will increase demand for moderate- and higher-end housing.

HOUSING GAPS CREATE OPPORTUNITY

The rental need spans various income levels, while 62.5% of the for-sale gap is for homes affordable to households earning $100,000+. As such, development opportunities exist.

ECONOMIC INVESTMENT IMPACT

Planned investment is expected to add 3,808 direct and 13,460 indirect or ancillary jobs, increasing housing demand.

AFFORDABILITY AFFECTS THE WORKFORCE

More than 20,000 households are severely cost burdened. Most leading occupations cannot afford the typical home on one wage.

GROWTH READINESS

Housing production must keep pace with job creation so employers can attract workers and commuters can become residents.

PRODUCT DIVERSITY

The region needs senior-friendly options, attainable workforce rentals, and a broader range of ownership choices.

MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS

New construction, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and financial assistance are all needed to close the housing gap.

THE REGIONAL HOUSING IMPERATIVE

Housing supply must expand at multiple price points so the region can capture planned job growth, serve aging households, retain younger adults and reduce housing cost burdens.

SENIOR-READY • WORKFORCE RENTAL • OWNERSHIP CHOICE • PRESERVATION

2 MARKET SNAPSHOT & HOUSING NEED | DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY, SUPPLY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The region combines strong job-driven potential with severe supply constraints and persistent affordability pressure.

DEMOGRAPHICS

72.7%

OWNER HOUSEHOLDS

- Households declined 12,416 (-5.7%) from 2010 to 2026; 79.3% of the loss occurred before 2020.
- Projected 2026-2031 region change: -2,116 households (-1.0%); Jackson and Putnam counties are projected to grow.
- Household growth (2026-2031) for age 35-44: +1.6%; age 75+: +15.0%.
- 45.1% of renters are projected to earn below $35,000 in 2031.
- 2,307 units are overcrowded; 2,034 lack complete kitchen or plumbing facilities.

ECONOMY & AFFORDABILITY

17,268

PROJECTED DIRECT & INDIRECT JOBS

- 53.7% of leading occupations cannot afford typical rent; 80.3% cannot afford the typical home on one wage.
- Unemployment improved from 6.0% in 2016 to 4.6% through April 2026.
- Jobs located in the region increased by 1,620 (+0.8%) since 2023.
- Nonresident commuters represent 48.2% to 67.6% of individual county workforces.
- 42,930 households pay more than 30% of income for housing; 20,172 are severely burdened, paying over 50% toward housing.

HOUSING SUPPLY

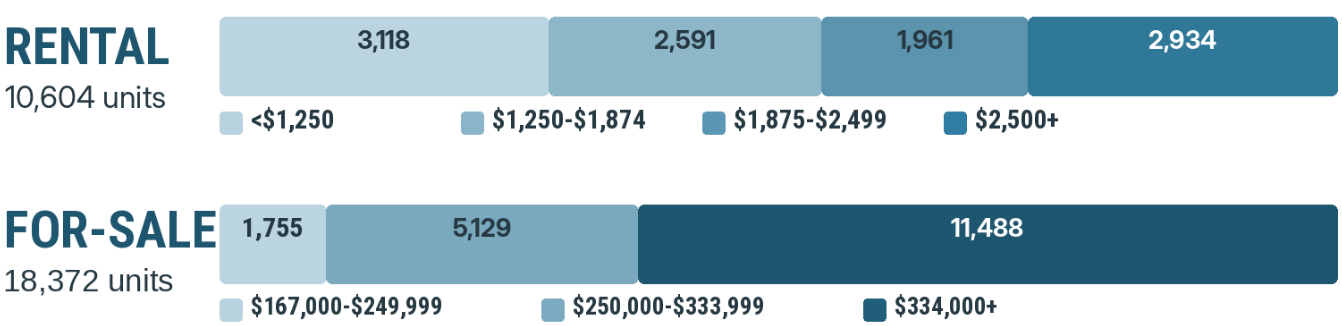
98.4%

MULTIFAMILY OCCUPANCY

- 161 projects and nearly 11,400 multifamily units were surveyed.
- Only 184 non-conventional rentals (e.g., houses, duplexes, etc.) were available - a 0.5% vacancy rate. Rents range from $850 for a one-bedroom unit to $1,800 for a four-bedroom unit.
- Only 621 homes were listed for sale - a 0.4% availability rate, which is very low.
- 2025 median **sales** price: $205,000; April 2026 median **list** price: $179,900.

FIVE-YEAR HOUSING GAP BY AFFORDABILITY AND TENURE

2026-2031 | Units needed to address availability, affordability and quality



28,976
TOTAL UNITS NEEDED

WHAT THE GAP MEANS
The estimate addresses availability, affordability and housing quality through a combination of new construction, rehabilitation and financial assistance.

62.5%
OF FOR-SALE GAP IS FOR HOUSING PRICED AT $334K+

3 PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION | A COORDINATED REGIONAL RESPONSE

01
EXPAND ATTAINABLE RENTALS
Increase workforce, affordable and senior rental options to relieve wait lists and near-full occupancy.

02
ADD HOMEOWNERSHIP CHOICES
Support entry-level, move-up and higher-end product so job growth can translate into household growth.

03
PRESERVE EXISTING HOUSING
Rehabilitate aging or substandard units and pair repairs with affordability and ownership assistance.

04
COORDINATE GROWTH TOOLS
Align infrastructure, land use, incentives and public-private partnerships around priority development sites.

ABOUT THE ESTIMATES
Estimates reflect current policies, incentives, demographic and economic trends, and available or planned units. Actual project support will vary by design, pricing, target market, quality and location; demand could exceed these estimates if policies or incentives encourage additional household and housing growth.

Source: Bowen National Research, Advantage Valley Region Housing Needs Assessment, 2026 Update.