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THE ROLE OF MANUFACTURED HOUSING IN ADDRESSING THE U.S. HOUSING CRISIS

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After years of elevated real estate prices, mortgage rates, and rents, the housing affordability crisis in the U.S. is more apparent than ever. Policy makers, economic experts, and everyday households continue to search for solutions to ease the financial burden of securing housing. Manufactured homes are significantly less expensive to produce than site-built homes.

According to a recent report from the Manufactured Housing Institute, the average cost per square foot of a manufactured home is \$87 – nearly half the \$165 per square foot cost of a traditional site-built home.

This affordability makes manufactured housing an increasingly attractive option for lower – and middle income families. Today, more than 22 million Americans live in manufactured homes, which account for about one in every 10 new homes built nationwide each year. In addition to their lower cost, new manufactured homes have improved in quality over time, offering better materials, energy efficiency, and more appealing designs.

To better understand the role of manufactured housing in addressing the U.S. housing crisis, researchers at Construction Coverage analyzed the latest Census Bureau data. The study

examines how the popularity of manufactured housing has changed over time, how its costs compare to traditional single-family homes, and which states are investing more heavily in this type of housing.

Here are some of the key findings:

- **Manufactured home production is rebounding:** After falling sharply in 2023, shipments of manufactured homes increased to 103,300 units in 2024. As of mid 2025, the annual shipment rate had climbed to 106,000– including a faster delivery than the broader site-built housing market.
- **Manufactured homes remain significantly more affordable:** In 2024, the average manufactured home sold for \$123,399, while the median single family home value reached \$367,282. Despite rising prices on both segments, manufactured homes remain about 66% less expensive.
- **The South leads in manufactured housing investment:** Southern states like Texas, Florida, and North Carolina had the highest total shipments in 2024, while states like Mississippi, Kentucky, and Louisiana had the highest share of manufactured homes among new single-family housing – often reflecting lower income levels and affordability needs.

The relative strength in manufactured housing may reflect easing inflation, sustained customer interest in affordable homeownership, and recent policy changes at the state and local level that have expanded opportunities for manufactured home development.