

Best cities for construction jobs

10 January 2020 by CONEXPO-CON/AGG

Construction workers are in high demand all over the U.S. Here's a look at the top cities for construction workers based on employment level, wages, and key factors driving construction activity.

Construction workers remain in high demand across the United States. In fact, job openings continue to outpace employee availability across a variety of occupations — from entry-level laborers to operating engineers, estimators, project managers, IT professionals...you name it.

According to employment data analysis from the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), nearly two-thirds of the 358 U.S. metropolitan areas saw an increase in construction employment from October 2018 to October 2019.

While most metro areas saw construction employment gains, 58 saw flat employment and 69 actually saw a decrease. However, AGC member survey data suggests that many of those flat or decreasing metro markets would have seen construction employment gains if there was a better supply of potential employees. In other words, construction firms can't hire if there is nobody to hire.

CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS MAKE GOOD MONEY

Construction workers are not only in high demand, but also make good money — far better than the average American worker.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data from May 2018, "Construction and Extraction Occupations" employed roughly 5.96 million people at a median hourly wage of \$22.12. That wage is nearly 20 percent higher than the average for all occupations. Furthermore, the top 25 percent of construction earners made at least \$30 per hour.

WHERE ARE THE BEST CONSTRUCTION JOBS?

Jobseekers should look at a variety of factors when deciding where they might like to live and build a rewarding career in the construction industry:

- Construction activity and employment level

- Construction wages
- Overall economic vitality
- Population trend

Jobseekers should also examine the construction firms known to employ workers in a certain area:

- Company reputation in the construction industry
- Company reputation as an area employer
- Typical pay and benefits
- Opportunities for training and advancement

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

In terms of gauging local construction activity, a good indicator for jobseekers is to look at current employment levels.

BLS data says the following metropolitan areas have the highest construction employment levels:

- New York-Newark-Jersey City
- Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim
- Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land
- Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington
- Chicago-Naperville-Elgin
- Washington, D.C.-Arlington-Alexandria (Virginia)
- Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach
- Boston-Cambridge-Nashua
- San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward

- Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue

It's also a good idea for jobseekers to look at which cities seem to be adding construction jobs.

Employment data analysis by the AGC says the following metro areas saw the largest construction employment gains over the past year (October 2018 to October 2019):

- Dallas-Plano-Irving
- Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale
- Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale
- Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise
- Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater
- Nassau and Suffolk Counties (New York)
- Omaha (Nebraska)-Council Bluffs (Iowa)
- St. Louis
- San Diego-Carlsbad
- Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell

CONSTRUCTION WAGES BY METROPOLITAN AREA

BLS data says the following metropolitan areas pay the highest wages to construction workers:

- Chicago-Naperville-Elgin
- Honolulu (Hawaii)
- San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward
- New York-Newark-Jersey City
- San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara (California)

- Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina (Hawaii)
- Anchorage (Alaska)
- Fairbanks (Alaska)
- Boston-Cambridge-Nashua
- Trenton (New Jersey)

POPULATION GROWTH DRIVES CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

An important driver of construction activity is population. The larger the population and the faster it is growing, the more demand there is for investment in both new and existing housing and infrastructure.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the following cities saw the most population growth from 2017 to 2018:

- Phoenix
- San Antonio
- Fort Worth
- Seattle
- Charlotte
- Austin
- Jacksonville
- San Diego
- Denver
- Frisco (Texas)

U.S. Census Bureau data also says the following cities are the most populous:

- New York City

- Los Angeles
- Chicago
- Houston
- Phoenix
- Philadelphia
- San Antonio
- San Diego
- Dallas
- San Jose (California)

THE 10 BEST BIG CITIES FOR CONSTRUCTION JOBS

Based on a combination of the criteria analyzed above — employment, wages and population — the following large U.S. cities (in alphabetical order) are the best to begin building a rewarding career in construction:

1. Boston
2. Chicago
3. Dallas
4. Houston
5. Los Angeles
6. New York City
7. Phoenix
8. San Diego
9. San Francisco

10. Seattle

THE BEST RURAL AREAS FOR CONSTRUCTION JOBS

Keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of cities in the U.S. are not major metro areas. Yet, these cities often boast vibrant economies and offer much appeal to many people looking for a good place to live and work.

BLS says the following non-metropolitan areas have the highest employment of construction workers:

- West North Dakota
- West Texas
- Eastern New Mexico
- Kansas
- North Texas

BLS says the following non-metropolitan areas are the top-paying for construction workers:

- Alaska
- Hawaii / Kauai
- West North Dakota
- Massachusetts
- Northwest Illinois

PICK A GREAT STATE TO LIVE AND WORK

Construction industry jobseekers can also start their career search by simply identifying those states with the greatest prospects for a rewarding construction career.

In recent years, most states have seen growth in construction-related employment, but 10 have stood out based on several factors including average wages, employment levels and prospects for growth.

The most recent BLS employment data shows that 41 states plus Washington, D.C., added construction jobs from October 2018 to October 2019. AGC analysis of the data points to the following states as having posted the biggest year-over-year job gains. (Data below shows net job gain and percentage increase.)

- Texas — 51,400 jobs (6.9%)
- California — 34,000 jobs (4%)
- Florida — 25,300 jobs (4.6%)
- Arizona — 14,000 jobs (8.9%)
- Nevada — 12,000 jobs (13.1%)

“Construction employment continues to experience robust growth in most parts of the country,” said Ken Simonson, AGC’s chief economist. “Many firms appear to be overcoming the challenge of low unemployment rates and strong demand for labor by increasing compensation levels and investing more in training people with relatively little experience in construction.”

As you can see, it’s a great time to pursue a career in construction. [CONEXPO-CON/AGG](#)

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