

CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK UPDATE

MARCH 2022

WORKFORCE SNAPSHOT

The COVID-19 pandemic was the biggest shock to the building industry in a generation. All non-essential construction was put on hold for a staggering 11 weeks in 2020, with the future of New York uncertain. This disruption underscores the need for investment in public works, which will create good jobs and help grow New York's economy. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, New York's building industry remained resilient and employed over 200,000 workers in 2020.

The building industry lost over 70,000 jobs during the pandemic. The recovery from the lowest points of the lockdown was quick, however, and over 208,433 people were still employed by the construction industry throughout the five boroughs in 2020, according to the American Community Survey. These job losses stress the importance of New York getting its fair share of the \$1 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed by the U.S. Congress last year.

“Despite the economic setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic, the New York City building industry remained resilient. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers — from all different backgrounds, education levels and experiences — were able to provide for their families and keep this great city moving. Now, as we continue to reopen, the construction workforce will only get stronger, more diverse, and forward thinking as we build the future of New York.”

Carlo A. Scissura, Esq.

President & CEO
New York Building Congress

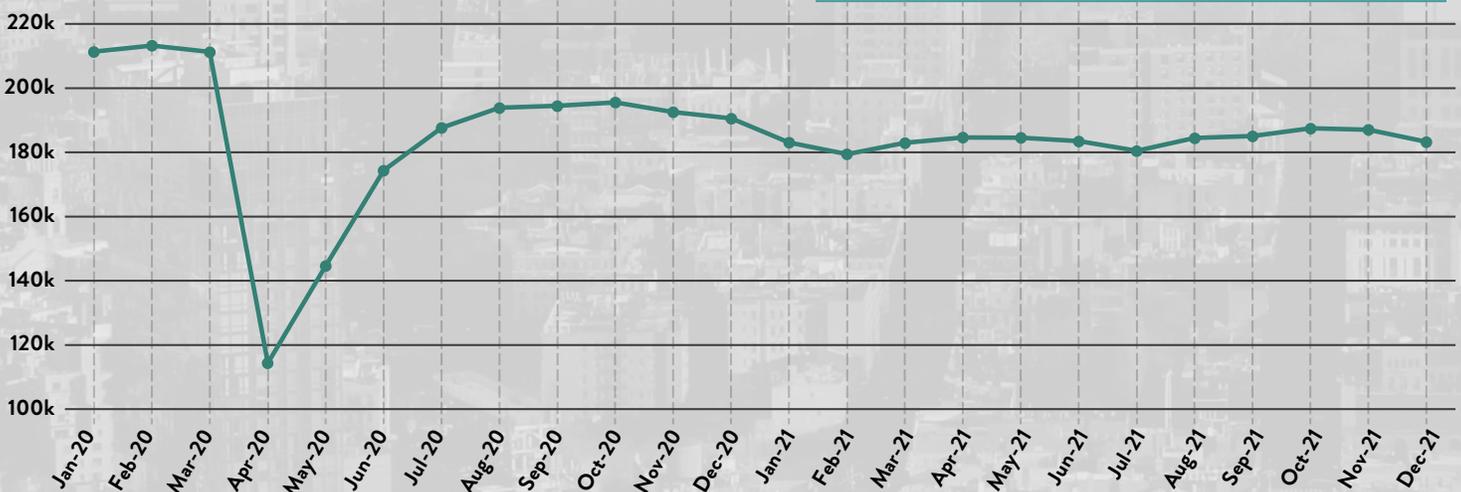
OUR NUMBERS, EXPLAINED

The numbers used in this report are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s one-year American Community Survey (ACS), released in February 2022, and represents New York City’s construction workforce in 2020. The ACS, while delayed, represents the most complete data source for NYC’s construction industry. Due to COVID-19, the Bureau noted that data quality may have been affected and comparisons with prior years should be taken with some caution because of the use of experimental weights. Where applicable, 2021 payroll data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is provided as auxiliary information to provide insight on trends from private employers in New York City.

LOOKING AHEAD

BLS data on workers employed in the “Construction of Buildings, Specialty Trade Contractors and Building Equipment Contractors” in 2021 shows a less than 5-percent change in employment statistics from 2020 to 2021. The ACS numbers for 2020 should remain consistent through December 2021, as BLS numbers on private employment likely overlap the majority of jobs shown in the ACS data.

BLS PAYROLL DATA 2020-2021



DEMOGRAPHICS



GENDER: 8.7 percent of all construction industry workers are women, down from 9.5 percent in 2019, yet still trending up from 8.4 percent in 2018. The decline is due to pandemic-related job losses, which appear to have disproportionately affected women in the industry.



74 percent of women in the industry have some college education or higher.



61 percent of women in the industry earn over \$50,000 compared to 49 percent of men.

These two statistics highlight the value of educational attainment as it relates to earnings.



RACE-ETHNICITY:

63.3 percent of all construction workers identify as nonwhite, relatively unchanged from 2019.



CITIZENSHIP: Citizenship data for the 2020 ACS is not reliable, but 66 percent of the workforce identified as U.S. Citizens in 2019.



LANGUAGE: 56.2 percent of workers engaged in construction indicated English is not their primary language, with the vast majority preferring Spanish.

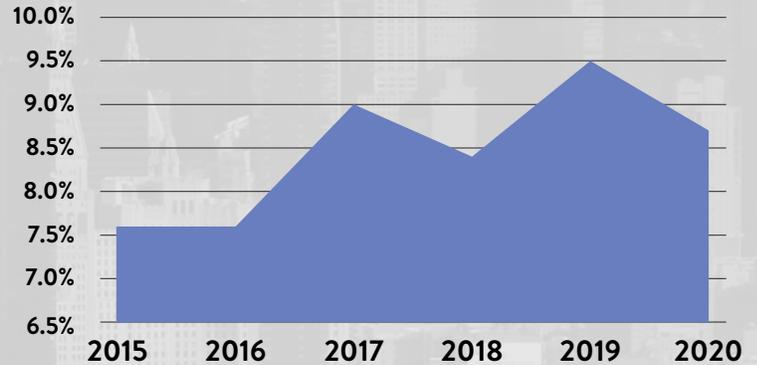


AGE: 52.7 percent of construction workers in New York City are between the ages of 25 and 45 years old. 31.9 percent of workers are 50 or older (up almost 2 percent from 2019), while 4.9 percent are under 25 years old (down 1.6 percent from 2019). This data shows the importance of a diverse workforce as a major strength in the industry, as a younger, more diverse cohort of professionals bolsters an aging workforce.

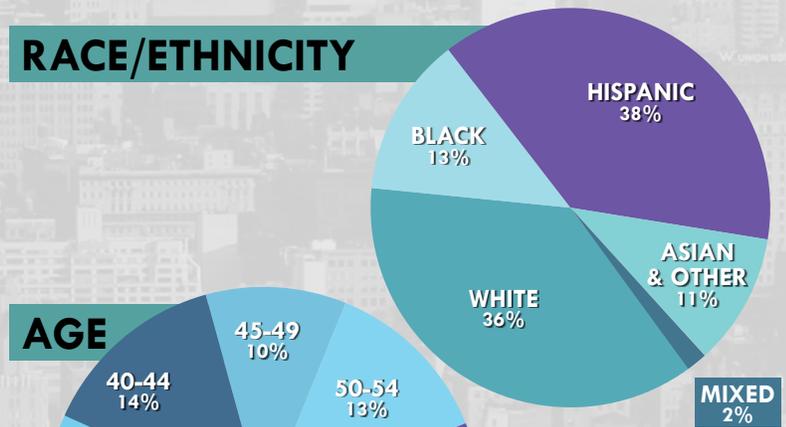


EDUCATION: 86.2 percent of workers have a high school diploma and 51.1 percent have some college education or higher — a large increase from 42 percent in 2019.

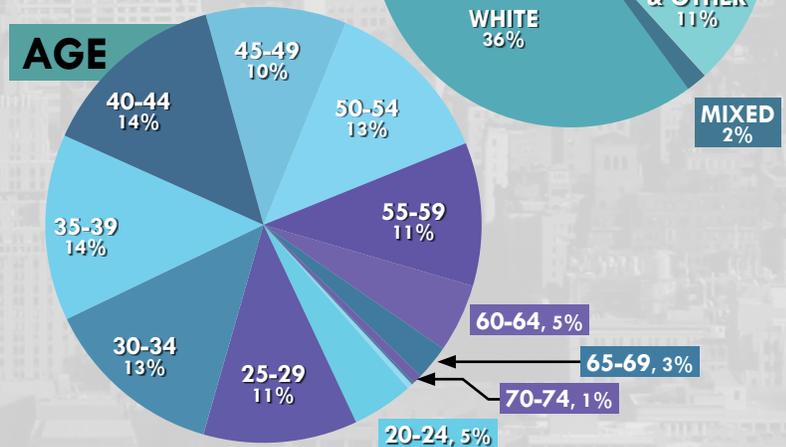
% WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE



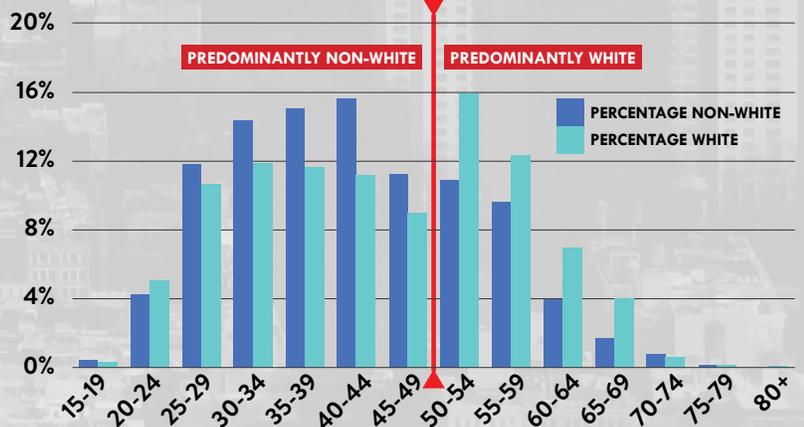
RACE/ETHNICITY



AGE



RACE/ETHNICITY AND AGE



MOBILITY



RESIDENCE: 73.2 percent of all workers engaged in New York City construction in 2020 reside within the five boroughs. The workforce is showing slight proportionate gains in those who reside in New Jersey and Connecticut.



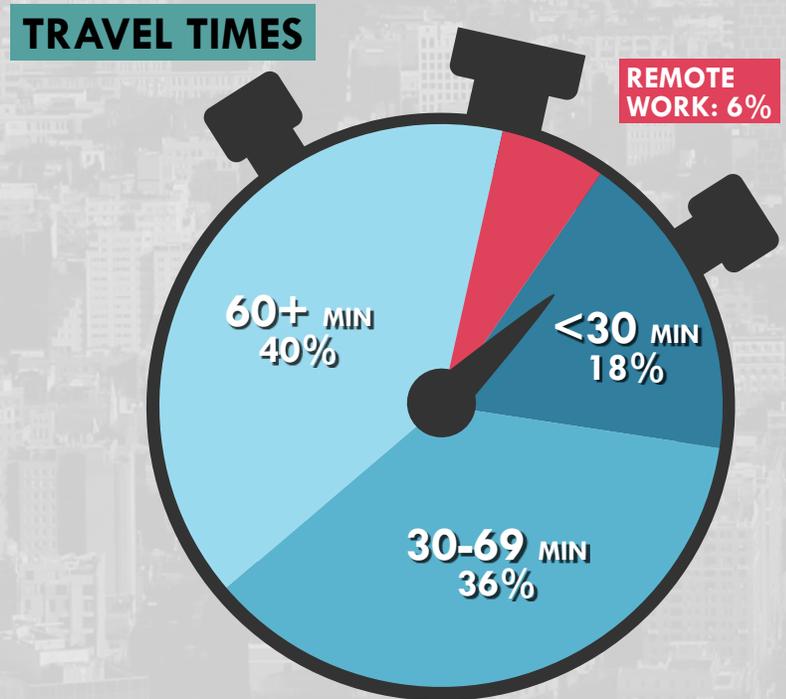
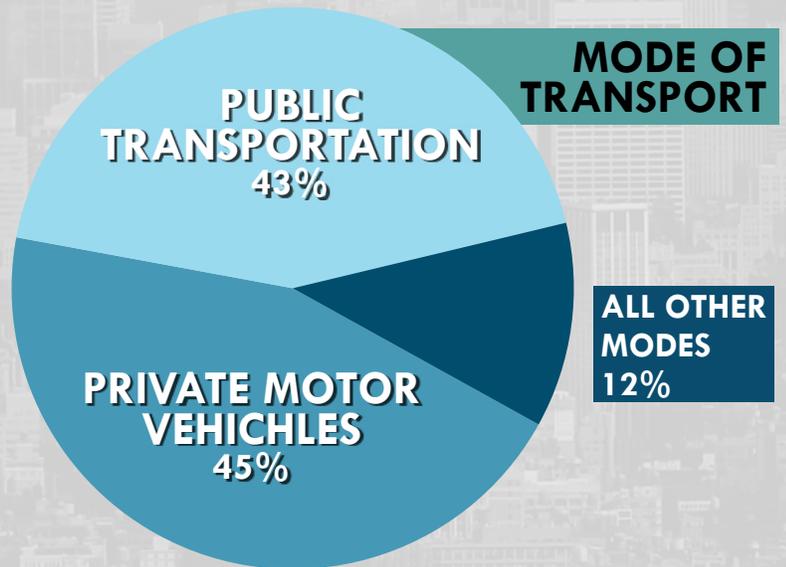
INFLOW/OUTFLOW: 37 percent of total workers who were New York City residents lived and worked in the same borough.



TRAVEL MODE: 43 percent of construction industry workers used public transportation to go to their job, 45 percent used a personal vehicle and 11.8 percent used another mode, such as walking or biking. The pandemic forced an 8.4-percent drop in public transit use from 2019, which was largely offset by increases in motor vehicle use and walking or biking. The share of the workers able to do their job from home skyrocketed, however, from 1.7 in 2019 to 6.1 in 2020.



TRAVEL TIME: 17.8 percent of workers had a less than 30-minute commute to work, 36.4 percent had between a 30- and 60-minute commute, 39.8 percent had an over 60-minute commute.



EMPLOYMENT



EARNINGS: 49.7 percent of all construction workers reported earnings of less than \$50,000 per year, with 31.3 percent between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and 19 percent at more than \$100,000.

The ACS notes that the median earnings for NYC workers in 2020 was \$41,492.



OCCUPATION: 73.8 percent of all jobs in the construction industry are blue-collar workers, including construction, installation, material moving and production. 21.3 percent of the workforce are white-collar employees, such as management workers, architects and engineers, while 4.9 percent are in service occupations. This is a shift from 2019, when 75.8 percent of the workforce held blue-collar jobs. This shift is due to a decline in building construction and transportation/material moving work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

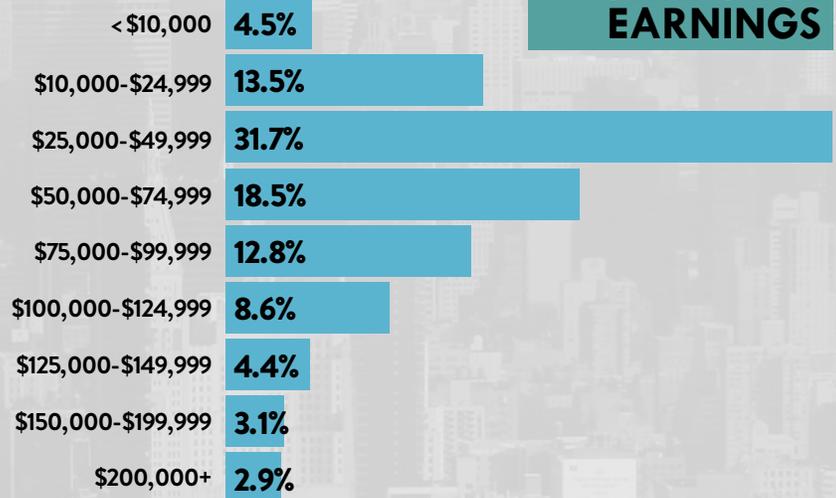


SECTOR: 77 percent of workers are employed in the private sector. Another 7 percent work for government and non-profit institutions, while the remaining 16 percent are self-employed or unpaid family workers.

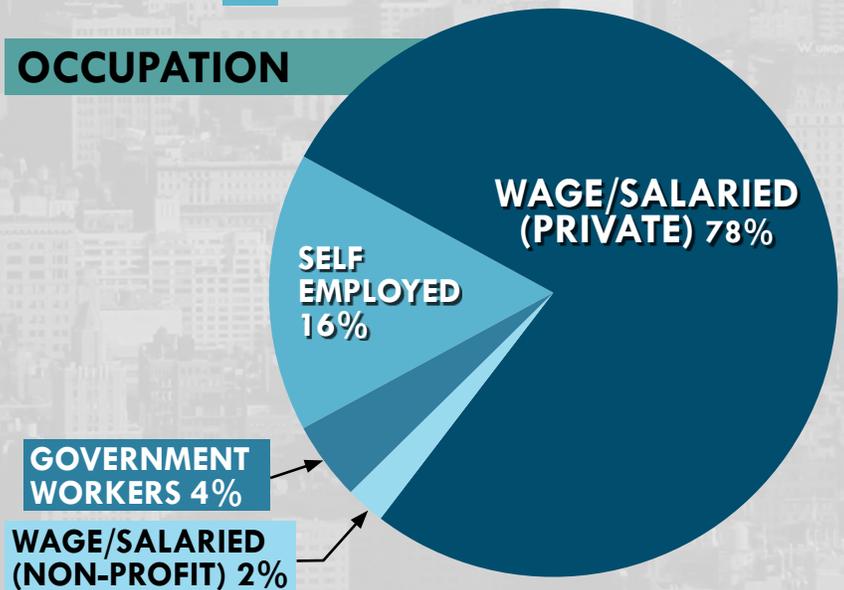


HEALTH INSURANCE: In 2020, 122,346 workers or 58.7 percent of the workforce had health insurance, staying mostly the same as 2019. The industry-wide percentage is largely dependent on blue-collar workers, of whom, 55 percent are covered by health insurance.

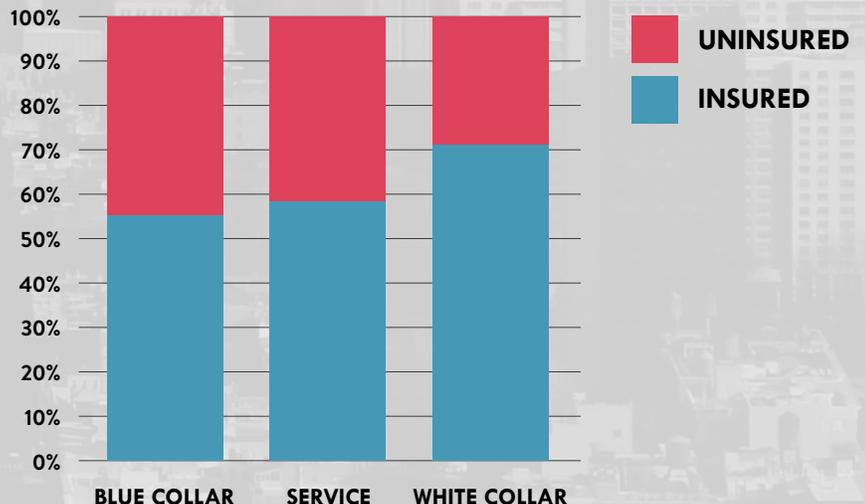
WORKFORCE EARNINGS



OCCUPATION



HEALTH INSURANCE





RECOMMENDATIONS

Investment in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education. STEM Jobs were shown to be more resilient to pandemic-related job losses:

There was a 16-percent loss in Computer/Math, Architecture and Engineering jobs compared to Transportation and Material Moving job losses of 54 percent in 2020.

Investment in career and technical education to augment and eventually replace an aging workforce:

Many Building Congress members award scholarships today to create a more robust construction industry workforce, but those resources can only go so far. The Building Congress encourages further investment by state and local governments in free or affordable career and technical education programs as well as summer youth employment programs.

The New York Building Foundation has also provided grants for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs to organizations such as:

- **New York Helmets to Hardhats**
- **Nontraditional Employment for Women**
- **Pathways to Apprenticeship**

Formed in 1998, the New York Building Foundation promotes the long-term growth and well-being of the New York City building industry and the wider community through an active program of research, education, and philanthropy. The Building Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that leverages the talents and vast resources of all sectors of the building industry to benefit New Yorkers and give back to the community.





100 YEARS



New York
Building
Foundation

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The New York Building Congress, a broad-based membership association celebrating its 101st year, is committed to promoting the growth and success of the construction industry in New York City and its environs.

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