

# CRAIN'S

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<http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20150311/BLOGS01/150309849/blacks-missing-out-on-construction-jobs>



## Blacks missing out on construction jobs

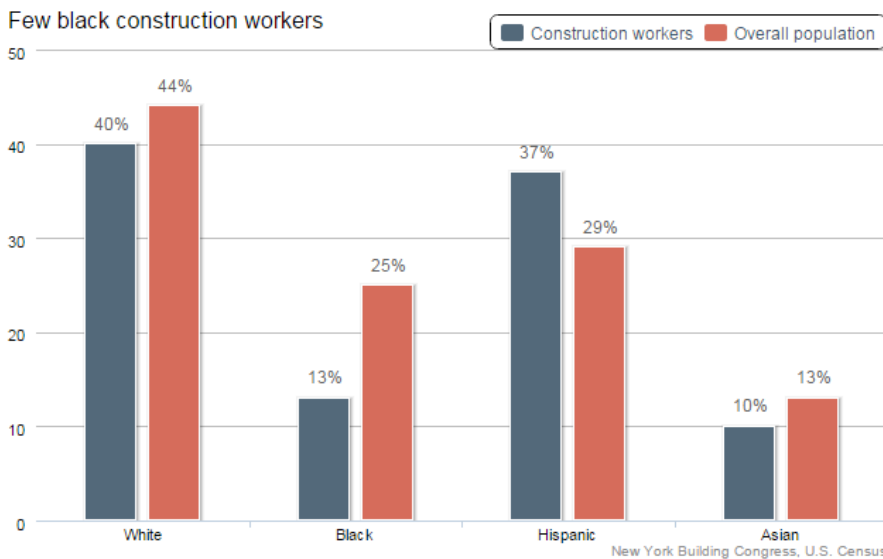
By Greg David

Workers in New York City's construction industry overwhelmingly live in the city (75%), and their relatively high wages bolster the middle class (71% live in households with incomes of at least \$50,000), according to a report issued this week by the New York Building Congress. Even better, the report found, 84% were able to secure employment in the industry without a college degree.

The bottom line is that this sector allows city residents with limited advanced education to earn good money—exactly what New York needs.

Yet the report also spotlights several unflattering characteristics of the construction industry.

**It employs Hispanics but not many African-Americans.** Blacks, who represent 25% of city residents, compose only 13% of the construction workforce. (The data for both the study and the ethnic composition of the city come from the 2013 American Community Survey.) Hispanics get the jobs that blacks do not.



**Women need not apply, either.** Only 9% of workers are female, a decline from 2012. It is hard to imagine many other industries so male-dominated.

**Health insurance isn't very common.** Only 50% of construction workers reported having health coverage, down 3 percentage points from 2012. This is a clear reflection of the growing strength of the nonunion sector, and it is one reason that nonunion labor is cheaper. There may be a lot wrong with the construction unions and their onerous work rules that inflate costs, but this is a stain on the alternative.