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NYC Construction Worker Wages Hit 10-Year High



CONSTRUCTION WORKER WAGES WENT UP 5.4 PERCENT LAST YEAR, THE BIGGEST ANNUAL INCREASE SINCE BEFORE THE GREAT RECESSION. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

BY [REBECCA BAIRD-REMBA](#)

Average wages for New York City construction workers rose more last year than they did in any year since 2007, a new report from the [New York Building Congress](#) found.

Construction workers' average annual wages shot up 5.4 percent last year, to \$80,200 in 2016 from \$76,100 in 2015. The uptick was the biggest annual increase since wages rose 6.4 percent in 2007. It also marks the first time in nine years that construction worker earnings increased by more than 3 percent in a year.

However, the highest-paid folks in the industry—heavy construction workers and civil engineers—actually saw their wages slide to \$116,800 last year from \$119,200 in 2015. (Heavy construction companies are contractors

who [plan and build infrastructure projects](#), like roads, bridges, sewers, and railroads, according to OSHA.) The decrease may be linked to declining overtime rather than a dip in hourly wages, NYBC suggests.

“Like the rest of the job market, construction industry wages finally seem to be catching up to job growth after lagging behind for most of the economic recovery,” New York Building Congress President **Carlo Scissura** said in prepared remarks. “While this is great news for individual workers and their families, it remains to be seen what, if any, effect rising wages will have on the overall demand for construction services in New York City.”

Rank-and-file construction workers saw a significant 9.2 percent increase in wages to \$80,100 last year from \$73,300 in 2015.

Workers employed by specialty trade contractors also saw their pay increase, to \$76,900 in 2016 from \$73,500 in 2015.

Overall, New York City generated 146,200 construction jobs in 2016, a 5 percent increase from 139,200 jobs in 2015. NYBC predicts that construction employment will grow to 147,800 jobs in 2017.

The specialty trades, which include plumbers and electricians, experienced the biggest gains, rising to 93,900 jobs in 2016 from 89,900 jobs in 2015. Jobs for workers involved in the construction of buildings grew modestly, to 43,300 last year, up from 41,000 in 2015. Heavy construction workers and civil engineers saw a small boost, with employment levels ticking up to 8,900 jobs last year, from 8,400 in 2015.

“Thanks to a virtually unprecedented building boom in both the residential and office sectors, the New York City construction workforce has grown by an impressive 30 percent over the past five years,” Scissura said. “Just as importantly, about three-quarters of these well-paying jobs are going to residents of the five boroughs, further strengthening the city’s economy and tax base.”