

The Economic Impact of Construction in the United States and Rhode Island

Economic Impact of Construction:

- U.S. gross domestic product (GDP)—the value of all goods and services produced in the country—totaled \$21.4 trillion in 2019; construction contributed \$887 billion (4.1%).
- In Rhode Island, construction contributed \$2.5 billion (4.0%) of the state’s GDP of \$63.5 billion.
- There were 706,000 construction firms in the U.S. in 2017, including 3,163 in Rhode Island.

Construction Spending:

- Nonresidential spending in the U.S. totaled \$814 billion in 2019 (\$486 billion private, \$328 billion public).
- Residential construction spending in the U.S. totaled \$551 billion (\$280 billion single-family, \$80 billion multifamily, \$184 billion improvements, \$6 billion public).
- Private nonresidential spending in Rhode Island totaled \$1.6 billion in 2019. State and local spending totaled \$815 million. (Totals are not available for residential or federal construction spending).

Construction Employment (Seasonally Adjusted):

- Construction (residential + nonresidential) employed 7.2 million workers in July 2020, a decrease of 306,000 (-4.1%) from July 2019, and 6.6% less than in April 2006, when U.S. construction employment peaked.
- Construction employment in Rhode Island in July 2020 totaled 18,400, a decrease of 7.5% from July 2019, and 21% less than the state’s peak in January 2007.
- Contractors are hiring. In the 2020 AGC-Autodesk Workforce Survey, 60% of firms in the U.S. had unfilled hourly craft positions on June 30, 2020.

Construction Industry Pay:

- Construction jobs pay well. In Rhode Island, 5 out of the 5 most numerous construction occupations had higher median pay than the median for all employees in the state in 2019. (Half of workers earn more than the median; half earn less.)

