

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 \$25.7 trillion at a seasonally adjusted annual rate in the 3rd quarter of 2022; construction contributed \$1.0 trillion (3.9%).
- In Rhode Island, construction contributed \$2.7 billion (3.8%) of the state’s GDP of \$72 billion.
- There were 909,000 construction establishments in the U.S. in the 3rd quarter of 2022, including 4,100 in Rhode Island. (An establishment is a fixed business location; about 99% of construction firms have only one establishment.)

Construction Spending:

- Nonresidential spending in the U.S. totaled \$888 billion in 2022 (\$534 billion private, \$355 billion public).
- Residential construction spending in the U.S. totaled \$910 billion (\$442 billion single-family, \$105 billion multifamily, \$354 billion improvements, \$9 billion public).
- Private nonresidential spending in Rhode Island totaled \$799 million in 2021. State and local spending totaled \$796 million. (Totals are not available for residential, railroad, power, communication, or federal construction.)

Construction Employment (Seasonally Adjusted):

- Construction (residential + nonresidential) employed 7.9 million workers in February 2023, an increase of 249,000 (3.2%) from February 2022 and an increase of 4.1% from February 2020, the peak pre-pandemic month.
- Construction employment in Rhode Island in February 2023 totaled 23,500, an increase of 2,600 (12%) from February 2022 and an increase of 3,200 or 16% from February 2020.
- Contractors are having trouble filling positions, impeding the industry’s recovery. In the January 2023 AGC-Sage Business Hiring and Outlook Survey, 80% of firms had a hard time filling salaried and hourly craft positions.

Construction Industry Pay:

- Construction jobs pay well. In Rhode Island, 5 out of the 5 most numerous construction occupations had median annual pay exceeding the median for all employees in 2021. (Half of workers earn more than the median; half earn less.)

