

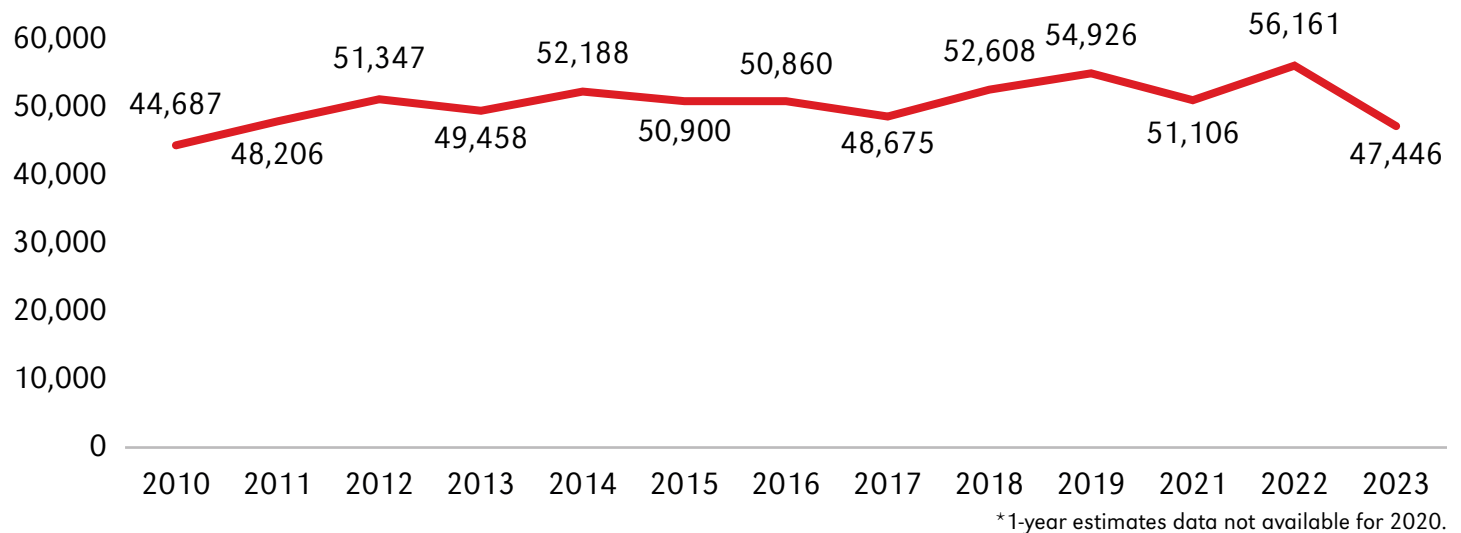
A skilled and readily available construction workforce is crucial for Nebraska’s growth and vitality. This workforce not only builds and maintains the infrastructure that supports communities but also creates jobs and addresses essential housing and business needs. This brief provides an overview of Nebraska’s construction workforce, highlighting opportunities and challenges to foster a robust labor force for the construction industry.

Construction and Extraction Occupations

According to 2023 data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, Nebraska has 47,446 workers in construction and extraction roles. “Occupation” refers to the type of work individuals perform, while “industry” relates to the type of establishment where individuals are employed, as discussed below.

Since 2010, employment in construction and extraction roles has grown by 6.2%. However, from 2022 to 2023, this sector experienced a decline, making it one of few in Nebraska to see a statistically significant reduction in the number of workers during that period.

Figure 1. Total Estimate in Construction and Extraction Occupations 2023

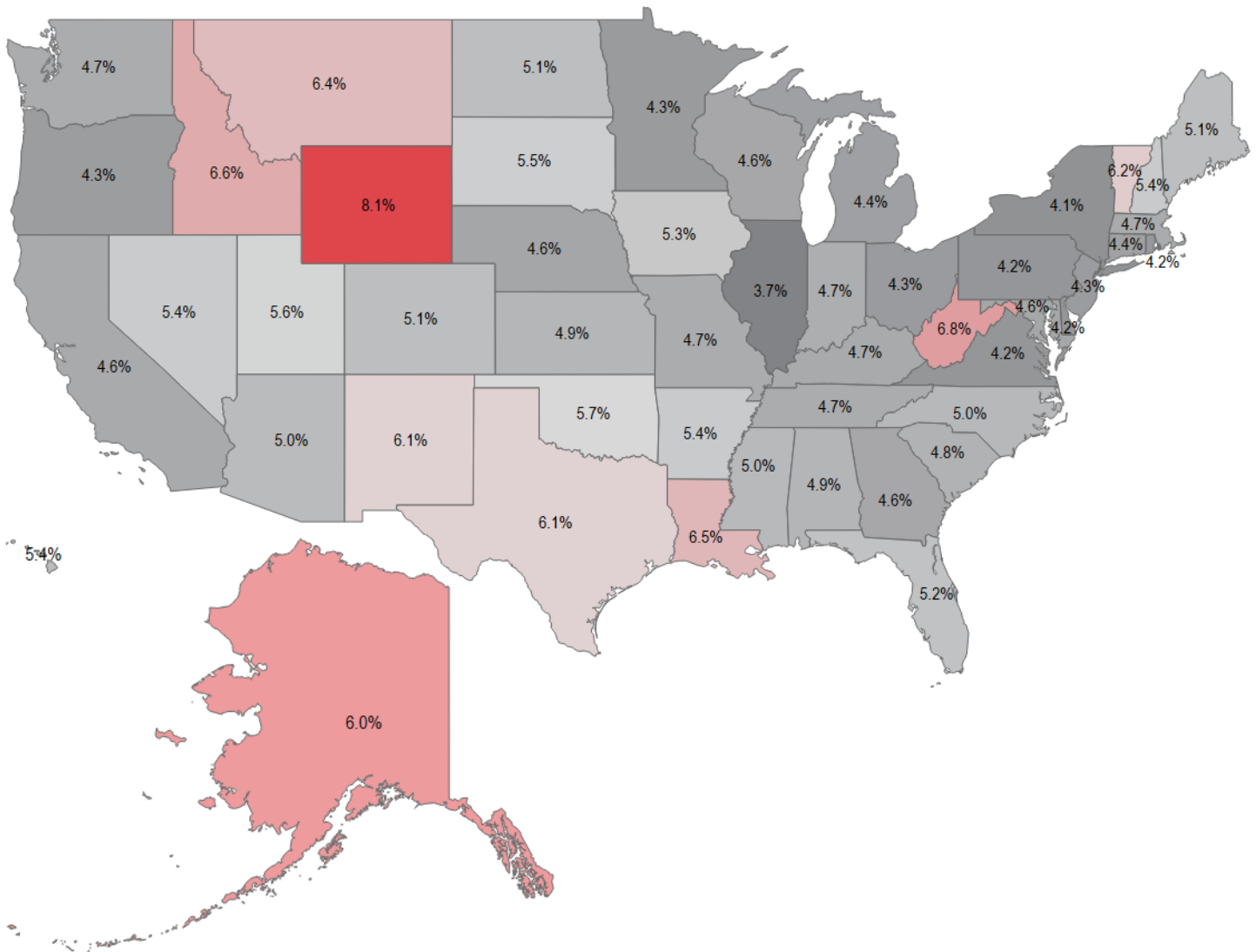


Construction and extraction occupations encompass a wide variety of roles, including carpenters, electricians, roofers, floor installers, brick masons, and highway maintenance workers. Only about 0.9% of these workers are in extraction-specific roles, such as surface mining machine operators and underground mining machine operators. A full list of construction and extraction occupations is provided in the appendix. Note that installation, maintenance, and repair workers are not included in the construction and extraction workforce.

Approximately 50.2% of construction and extraction workers are based in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area, spanning Nebraska and Iowa. An additional 12.8% are located in the Lincoln metropolitan area, with 5.6% in the Grand Island metropolitan area. This leaves 31.4% of the construction workforce distributed across the rest of the state.

The percentage of the workforce in a particular occupation reflects the density of that occupation. Occupational density is significant, as higher concentrations of workers in a field can indicate positive growth factors, such as attracting new talent and boosting productivity. In Nebraska, construction and extraction workers make up 4.6% of the total workforce, maintaining a relatively stable presence since 2010, with an average of 5.1%. Nationally, these occupations account for about 5.0% of the workforce. Wyoming has the highest percentage of its workforce in construction and extraction at 8.1%, while Illinois has the lowest at 3.7%.

Figure 2. Percent of the Workforce That is Employed in Construction and Extraction 2023



As of 2023 in Nebraska, 80.4% of those in construction occupations are employed full-time, accounting for 38,163 of the 47,446 workers in the field. This percentage gradually increased over time, up from 70% in 2010, with an average of 75.3% between 2010 and 2023. The high proportion of full-time workers in the construction sector is noteworthy, reflecting stability in employment within this workforce.

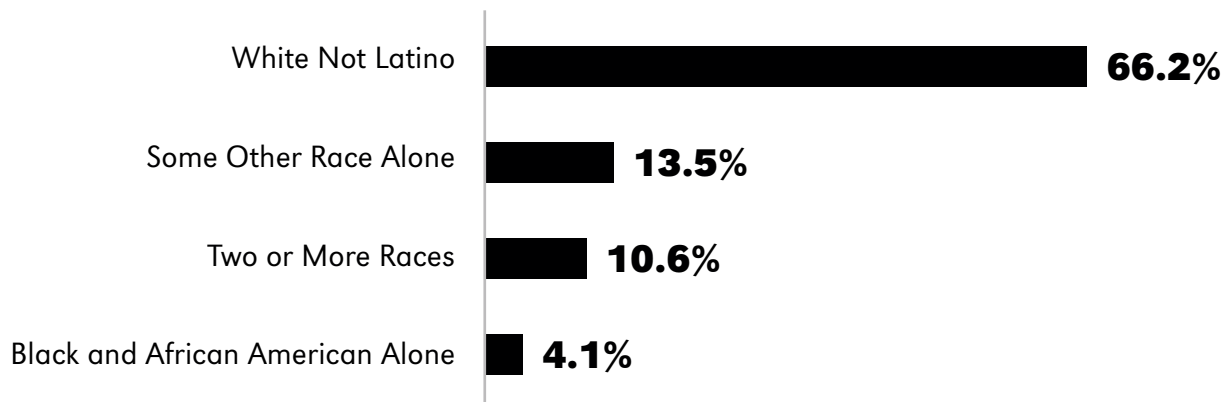
Demographics of the Construction and Extraction Workforce

The demographics of those in construction and extraction occupations offer insights into potential areas for workforce growth and development.

This workforce is predominantly male, with 96.4% of workers identifying as men and just 3.6%, or 1,693 individuals, as women. However, female representation has grown by 7% since 2013, when there were 1,583 women in these roles.

In terms of racial composition, 66.2% of Nebraska’s construction and extraction workforce identifies as White, non-Latino/a. Other racial groups represented include Asian (0.5%), Black (4.1%), Two or More Races (10.6%), and Some Other Race (13.5%). Note, data was not available for other race groups including Native American. These demographic details highlight areas where diversity could be further supported and expanded to strengthen this essential workforce.

Figure 3. Percentage of Construction and Extraction Workers by Race 2023



Ethnically, 25.5% of the construction and extraction workforce identifies as Latino/a. It is important to note that Latino/a is an ethnic, not racial, category, meaning this segment of the workforce can belong to any racial group.

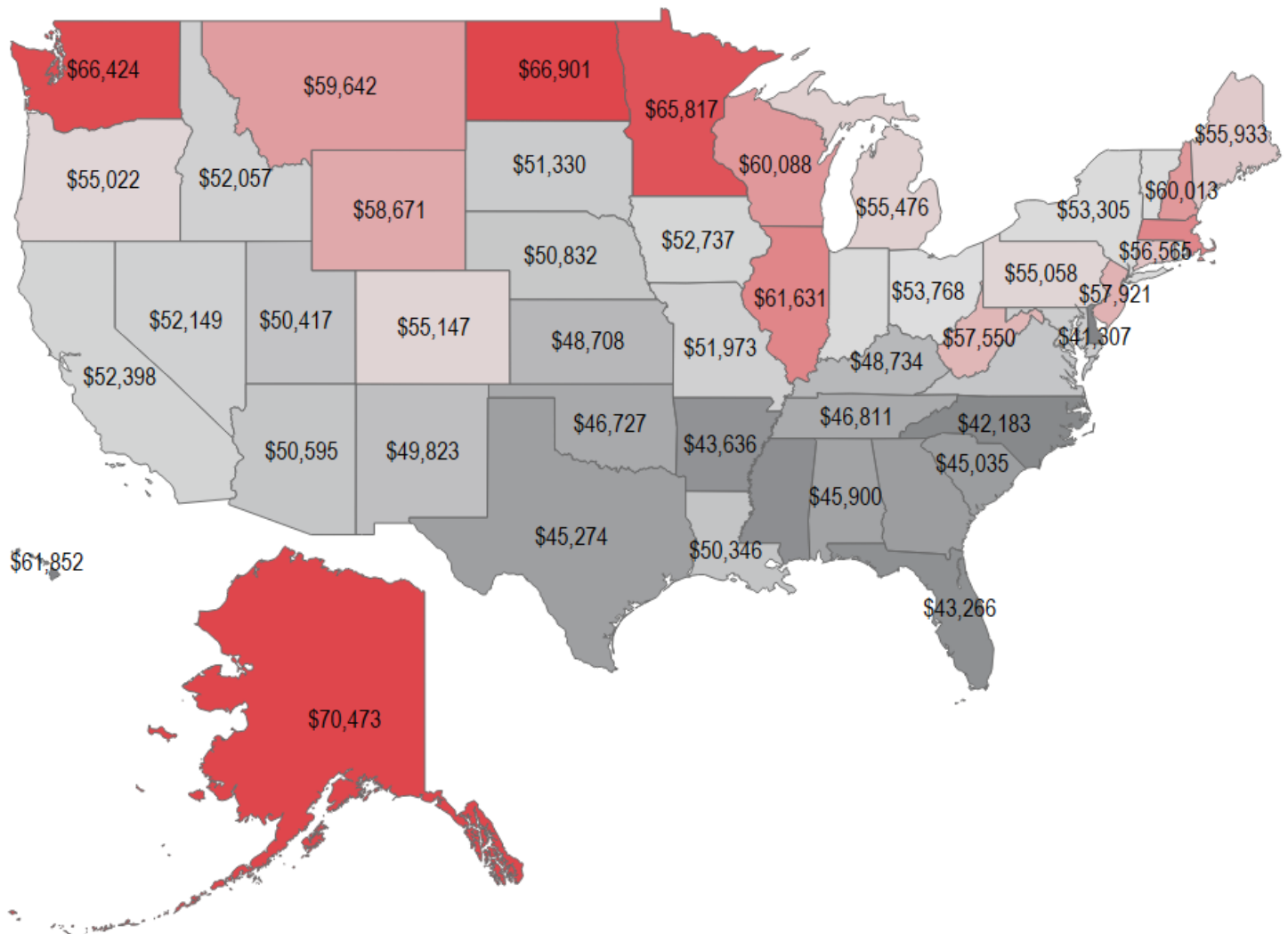
Earnings

The earnings of those in construction and extraction occupations are an important consideration when identifying ways to support and sustain this workforce.

Median earnings for full-time workers in the construction and extraction sector have increased by 39.9% between 2015 and 2023. Adjusted to 2023 dollars, median earnings were \$36,367 in 2015, rising to \$42,324 in 2019, and reaching \$50,866 in 2023. The median earnings for all workers, not just full-time, in Nebraska's construction and extraction occupations are \$46,892.

Nebraska's median earnings for full-time construction and extraction workers are close to the national average of \$53,240. Alaska leads the nation, with median earnings for these workers at \$70,473, while Delaware has the lowest at \$41,307. Compared to the region, Nebraska's construction and extraction workers have slightly lower than average earnings, indicating room for potential growth to remain competitive with neighboring states. Median earnings for full-time construction and extraction workers in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area, Nebraska, are \$51,162. Higher earnings in this metropolitan area highlights the impact of occupational density on wages.

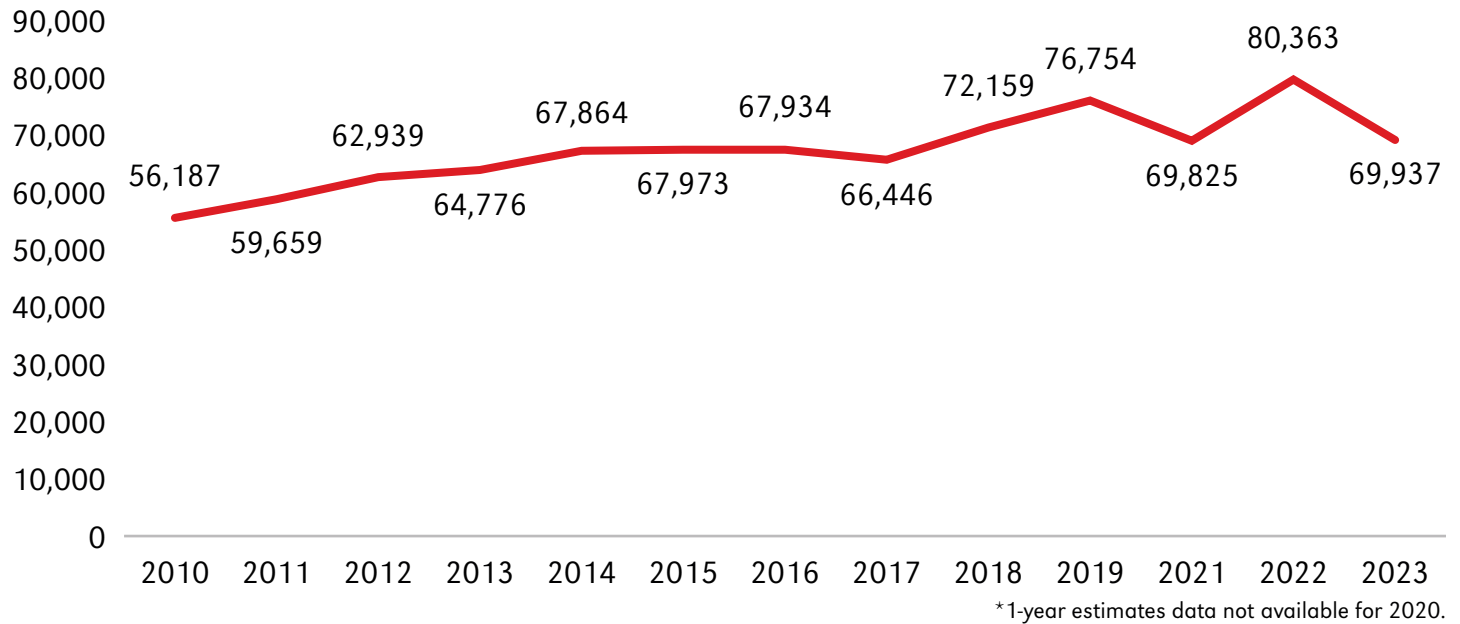
Figure 4. Full Time Median Earnings 2023



Construction Industry

Nebraska’s construction industry employs 69,937 workers. Since “industry” refers to business establishments rather than specific occupations, this figure includes both those in construction roles and those in supportive positions, such as business and finance operations. Since 2010, the workforce in the construction industry has grown by 24.4%; however, as with specific occupations, the estimated number of industry workers declined from 2022 to 2023.

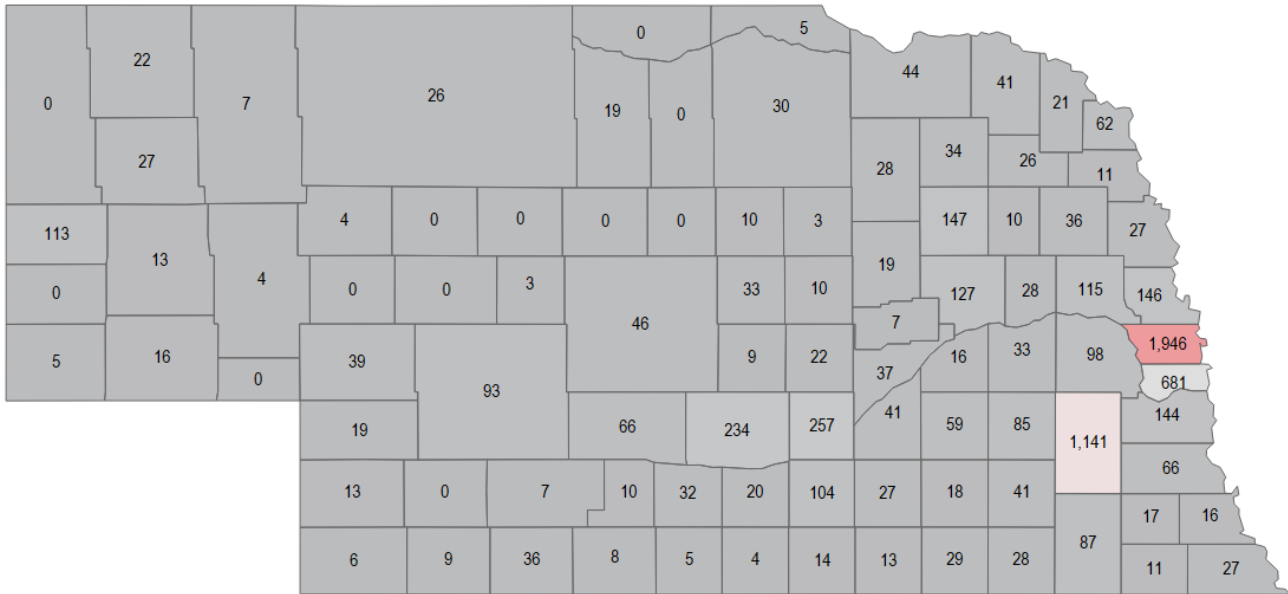
Figure 5. Total Estimate Construction Industry 2023



In Nebraska, 4.6% of the construction industry workforce is located in the Grand Island metropolitan area, 10.5% in the Lincoln metropolitan area, and 45.2% in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area.

As of Quarter Two of 2023, Nebraska had 6,993 construction industry establishments. A map showing the distribution of these establishments by county reveals a concentration in the eastern part of the state, particularly in the metropolitan areas of Omaha and Lincoln. However, construction industry establishments are also present across the state, indicating a widespread industry footprint.

Figure 6. Business Establishments by County



Economic Impact of Construction Industry

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total monetary value of all goods and services produced within a specific area, essentially estimating the economic size of an industry. In 2023, the GDP of Nebraska's construction industry was \$3,908,113,037, placing construction 12th among the state's 19 industries by economic size. This ranking highlights the construction industry's contribution to Nebraska's overall economy and provides context for how the moderate workforce density in Nebraska's construction industry influences the overall economic impact in Nebraska compared to other states.

Table 1. Nebraska's Gross Domestic Product by Industry

Industry	GDP
Manufacturing	\$15,049,597,656
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$12,899,125,976
Finance and Insurance	\$12,777,477,539
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$11,413,246,093
Healthcare and Social Assistance	\$9,741,822,265
Wholesale Trade	\$7,834,603,515
Transportation and Warehousing	\$7,002,178,222
Information	\$6,839,478,515
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$6,525,839,843
Retail Trade	\$5,845,307,128
Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$3,914,113,037
Construction	\$3,908,113,037
Administration, Business Support and Waste Management Services	\$3,828,124,511
Utilities	\$2,699,549,560
Accommodation and Food Services	\$2,350,735,595
Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$2,347,127,441
Educational Services	\$796,933,654
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	\$694,894,348
Mining	\$252,294,342

Conclusion

In summary, this brief highlights key characteristics and trends within Nebraska's construction and extraction workforce, as well as the broader construction industry, underscoring the importance of these sectors in the state's economy. While long-term trends show positive growth in workforce numbers and rising earnings, opportunities for advancement remain. By examining demographic, economic, and workforce trends, Nebraska can strategically position its construction workers and businesses for continued growth and stability in the years ahead.

Sources

IBISWorld. Nebraska –State Economic Profile. Statistics, economic information and rankings for the Cornhusker State (accessed November 4, 2023). <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/economic-profiles/nebraska/>
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages 2023.
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Appendix: Definition of Construction and Extraction Workers

Construction and Extraction Occupations

- First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
- Boilermakers
- Brickmasons, Blockmasons, and Stonemasons
- Carpenters
- Carpet, Floor, and Tile Installers and Finishers
- Cement Masons, Concrete Finishers, and Terrazzo Workers
- Construction Laborers
- Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators
- Pile-Driver Operators
- Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
- Construction equipment operators except paving, surfacing, and tamping equipment operators
- Drywall Installers, Ceiling Tile Installers, and Tapers
- Electricians
- Glaziers
- Insulation Workers
- Painters, Construction and Maintenance
- Paperhangers
- Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
- Plasterers and Stucco Masons
- Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers
- Roofers
- Sheet Metal Workers
- Structural Iron and Steel Workers
- Helpers, Construction Trades
- Construction and Building Inspectors
- Elevator Installers and Repairers
- Fence Erectors
- Hazardous Materials Removal Workers
- Highway Maintenance Workers
- Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators
- Septic Tank Servicers and Sewer Pipe Cleaners
- Miscellaneous Construction and Related Workers
- Miscellaneous construction workers including solar Photovoltaic Installers, and septic tank servicers and sewer pipe cleaners
- Miscellaneous construction workers including septic tank servicers and sewer pipe cleaners

Extraction Workers

- Derrick, Rotary Drill, and Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining
- Roustabouts, Oil and Gas
- Earth Drillers, Except Oil and Gas
- Explosives Workers, Ordnance Handling Experts, and Blasters
- Mining Machine Operators
- Roof Bolters, Mining
- Miscellaneous extraction workers including roof bolters and helpers



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