

Parents: Why a Career in Homebuilding or Construction Might be the Right Career Path for Your Child

A College Degree is No Longer the Only Pathway for Success

In today's economy there are hundreds of thousands of high paying, in-demand jobs going unfilled. *Why?* Over the past 30 years the public education system has moved away from the "hands on" shop type classes towards a "college for all" mentality. While a college education is extremely valuable and can open many career opportunities, in truth, not all students will go to college and not all college degrees guarantee a successful employment outcome. Could your child find a high paying, meaningful career in the homebuilding and construction industry without attending college? The answer is **YES!** Employment in a construction career does not require a college degree. Another point to consider is coming out of the Pandemic, construction is an [essential service](#) and shelter, or housing is an [essential](#) need for safety and survival.

**For every five skilled construction workers retiring in 2021,
only one tradesman will enter the workforce to take their place**

The average age of the [US worker](#) in the homebuilding/construction industry is approaching 42.5 years old. A majority of the construction workforce that are over 55 is nearly 25% while the percentage of 18 to 25-year-olds is less than 13%. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2020, the youngest members of the Baby Boomer generation will be entering the 55 and up age group. The next largely-represented age group are workers 35–55 who belong to Gen X—a much smaller generational group than Boomers. With this, you can understand why there are thousands of construction jobs unfilled. The opportunities are there waiting for your child to take advantage of them.

Every day, the shortage of skilled workers becomes more acute. According to numbers from the National Electrical Contractors Association, "7,000 electricians join the field each year, but 10,000 retire. And as job openings continue to increase without new workers to fill them, the situation could impact every element of home services: wait times, work quality and cost." [Why Do We Have a Skilled Trade Shortage? – bridgingamericasgap.org](#)

According to economic consulting firm Markstein Advisors "a minimum of 430,000 skilled construction workers were forecast for 2021 *if* construction spending nationally rose a modest 1.3% over 2020 construction activity. If construction spending rose higher the need for additional skilled workers could top one million nationally." [Explainer-2021.pdf \(abc.org\)](#)

As baby boomers age and retire, there are not enough young people starting careers in construction to fill retiree's positions. This [skilled labor shortage](#) itself is due to several factors-- priorities in education, misunderstanding of the industry and lack of adequate in-house training.

High pay for essential construction workers in demand careers

During the Pandemic, we learned that there are few services considered essential and an indispensable part of our infrastructure to ensure the health, safety, and survival of the population. The [construction industry, being one of those essential services](#), built temporary housing to shelter those in need, provided emergency and maintenance services to existing buildings and built new homes to keep up with demand for housing throughout the globe.

Over the last 5 years skilled construction workers have seen pay increases averaging 10.7% (electricians) to 36.1% (paperhangers) according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#). On average, California construction wages are higher than the national average. Skilled construction workers in California earn above \$100K annually. Nationally, the average pay for a skilled construction workers range from construction helpers (lower skilled) at \$33-35K annually to \$61K annually for electricians, plumbers & drywall tapers to equipment operators at roughly \$75k annually. [U.S. Construction Jobs with the Fastest-Growing Wages in 2021 - Construction Coverage](#). In California the wages are higher than the national average.

These jobs are highly paid, often with full benefits and on the job **paid** training. The earn while you learn model has been around for years and is the hallmark of the construction training programs. Most construction professions require approximately 4 years to be considered a journeyman in their field. [Many skilled trades pay](#) rates increase in direct relation to the skill level of the worker. Not every carpenter is a cabinet maker or master carpenter for example. Skilled construction workers: electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, drywall installers/finishers, tile setters, etc. all average \$55K to over \$100K annually in California. A skilled construction worker is “in-demand”, highly sought after in an industry considered [essential](#) at the local, state and federal level.

High demand means opportunities for employment

“According to the [People Ready Skilled Trades](#) analysis of millions of job postings, skilled construction professionals were one of the few industries to experience growth nearly every month throughout the pandemic. However, the number of skilled construction workers, already at a massive deficit, did not keep up. Amid an overall workforce shortage, the gap between demand and supply for [skilled workers is only growing wider](#). (August 2021) some people have misunderstandings or stereotypes about construction labor. Anyone, regardless of sex or gender, can become a skilled worker. Men may have historically dominated skilled trades, but the same jobs and opportunities are available to women, and the number of women in the industry is increasing.” [Why Is There a Shortage of Skilled Workers? \(skillwork.com\)](#) According to a recent report from the [National Association of Women in Construction \(NAWIC\)](#) and Safe Site Check-in Report, job opportunities for women are on the rise, and 59% rank employers favor equality in the workplace.

It’s not just a job, it’s a career

The homebuilding and construction industry offer a variety of pathways and career opportunities. Did you know it takes over 150 different occupations to build a home? Not all career paths in the construction industry require manual labor. Most individuals start out as a construction worker or helper and move into supervision, management, estimating, sales, etc., while other construction workers become contractors (business owners) who wear many hats and make well into the six figures on a yearly basis. Most, if not all, construction jobs offer on the job training provided by the employer, worker association or apprenticeship program. **You earn while you learn.** You are being paid as you acquire your building skills.

Some who start out in the construction industry, end up attending college as their chosen career path requires additional education (classes) or a degree (civil engineering, finance, project management, etc.). These professions are very highly paid. A construction industry career path produces the homes, workplaces, recreation facilities as well as infrastructure and public spaces we all use and enjoy—its tangible and relevant. When you build something, it endures for decades or longer.

As an apprentice on [Discovery Channel’s TV series Dirty Jobs](#), [Mike Rowe](#) traveled to every state and worked with plumbers, electricians, steamfitters, pipefitters, brick layers, and many other skilled workers who help keep our polite society humming along. To his surprise, they didn’t resemble the unflattering, blue-collar workers often portrayed in the media. They were individuals who found opportunity where no one else thought to look. They were entrepreneurs running successful businesses. They were happy people who managed to figure out a positive work-life balance and make a great living doing so.

The homebuilding industry offers the perfect combination of a career that is in high demand, considered an essential industry, with above average pay that is tangible and offers the ability to work anywhere—indoors or outdoors anywhere in the country. ***Could this be the career for your child?***

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