Pearl Meyer

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Insights from Pearl Meyer's Inaugural 2025 Engineering and Construction (E&C) Craft Compensation Survey



Rebecca Toman

VICE PRESIDENT, SURVEY BUSINESS UNIT

The engineering and construction industry continues to experience increased demand for skilled craft workers. Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national construction industry trade association, estimates that the U.S. construction industry will need to hire approximately 500,000 new workers in 2026 to meet projected demand. For many companies, compensation strategies that once felt sufficient are now being tested by higher pay expectations, increased project activity, and an increasingly mobile workforce.

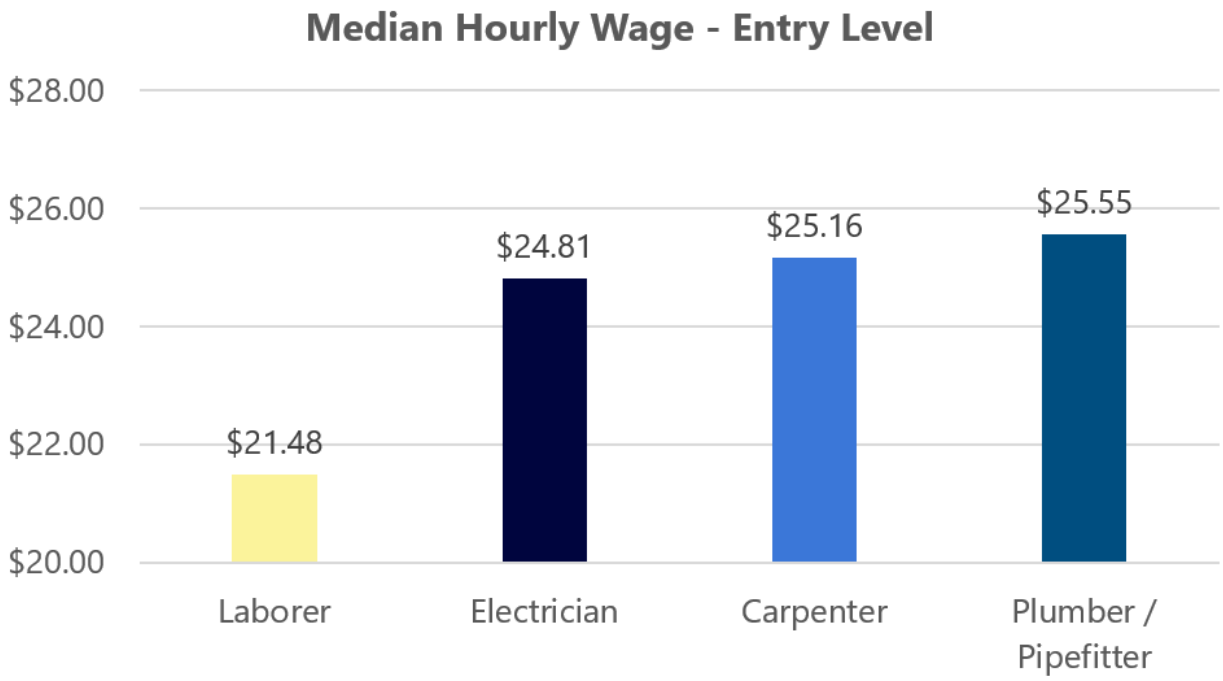
Recognizing the need for a reliable source of craft-level compensation market data, Pearl Meyer launched the inaugural Engineering & Construction (E&C) Craft Compensation Survey in 2025, creating a dedicated salary survey designed specifically for this critical segment of the labor market.

This new survey offers a detailed look into how E&C organizations are rewarding and competing for craft talent. It examines pay structures, incentive/bonus award practices, work schedules, and per diem practices and rates. The survey encompasses a broad range of craft job families including:

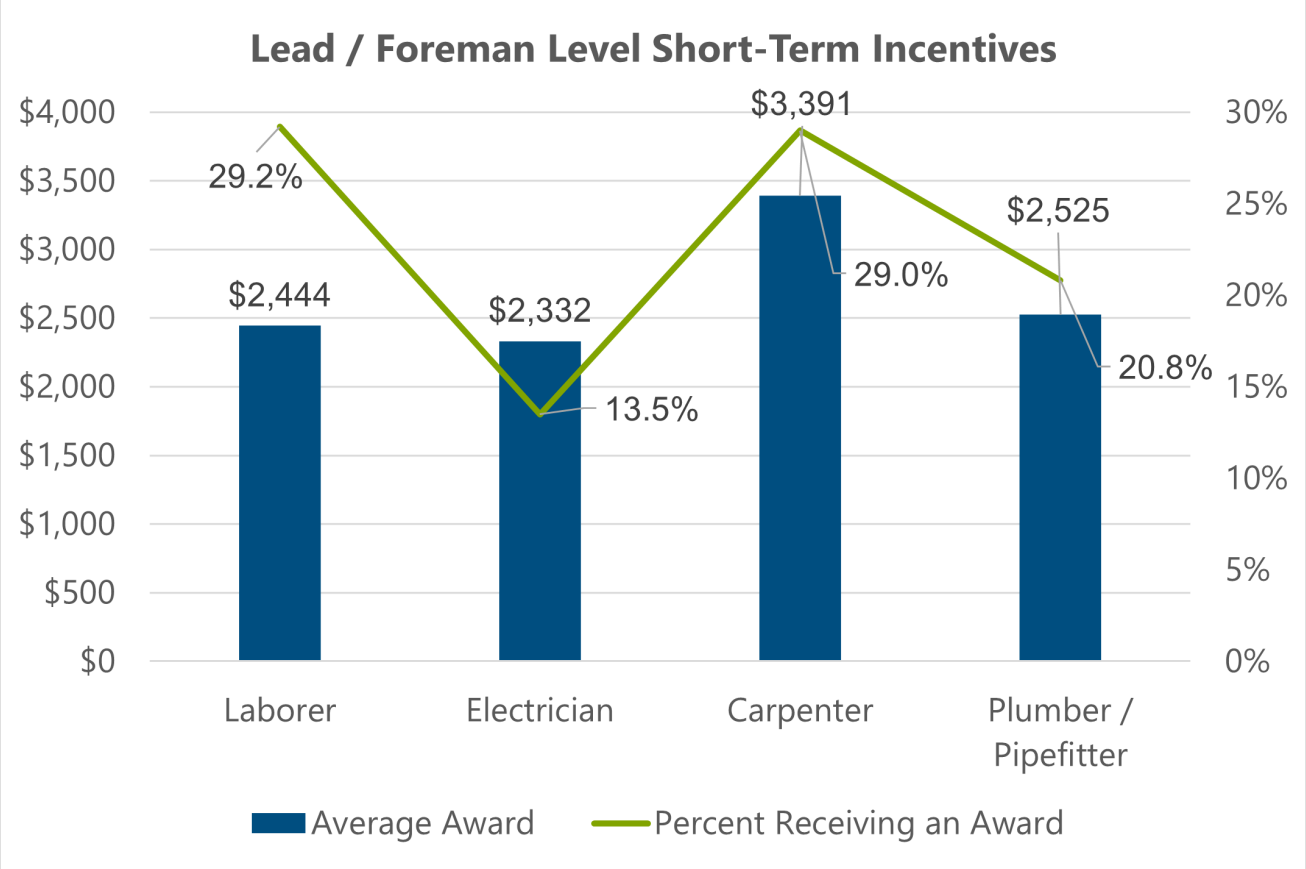
- Boilermaker
- Carpenter
- Electrician
- Equipment Operator
- HVAC Technician
- Insulator
- Ironworker
- Laborer
- Mason
- Millwright
- Painter
- Plumber / Pipefitter
- Rigger
- Truck Driver
- Welder

This breadth of job families ensures that the findings reflect the full scope of the craft workforce and provide organizations with meaningful, role-specific insights.

Median hourly pay rates for entry-level roles across several core trades illustrate the elevated expectations shaping today's labor environment.



Attracting and retaining skilled trade labor goes beyond just a competitive hourly rate. Organizations reported using short-term incentive/bonus awards in the lead/foreman level roles. This practice suggests a focus on pay for performance for the highest-level craft employees.



The survey also highlights the expanding role of travel and per diem policies in attracting and retaining craft workers. With labor shortages varying widely by region, companies are relying more heavily on travel-related benefits to draw talent into competitive labor markets.

Participation is now open for the 2026 E&C Craft Compensation Survey. To obtain a copy of the full 2025 survey results, or to sign up to participate in the 2026 E&C Craft Compensation Survey, please contact survey@pearlmeyer.com.

About the Author

Rebecca Toman is the vice president, Survey Business Unit at Pearl Meyer. In this role, she designs and publishes compensation and benefits surveys for a wide range of industries and employee populations. Rebecca is on the WorldatWork faculty where she teaches a course on Job Analysis and Documentation.

About Pearl Meyer

Pearl Meyer is the leading advisor to boards and senior management helping organizations build, develop, and reward great leadership teams that drive long-term success. Our strategy-driven compensation and leadership consulting services act as powerful catalysts for value creation and competitive advantage by addressing the critical links between people and outcomes. Our clients stand at the forefront of their industries and range from emerging high-growth, not-for-profit, and private organizations to the Fortune 500.