

Numbers Matter: Women Working in Construction in 2025

In 2025, an estimated 365,070 women worked in construction and extraction occupations. This is marginally lower than the 2024 estimates of 366,360, reflecting slow growth in construction employment overall.¹ However, because no data were collected in October 2025 due to the federal government shutdown, annual averages for 2025 and 2024 are not fully comparable.²

Tradeswomen were only 4.3 percent of all construction trade workers, unchanged from 2024. Progress slowed after rapid growth since 2015.³ In three of the five largest trades, women's 2025 share of jobs was even smaller: 3.1 percent of carpenters; 3.1 percent of plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters; and 3.5 percent of electricians (Table 1). Women's share was highest among painters and paperhangers, at 11.1 percent, and construction laborers, at 4.7 percent (Table 1).

Women's share of construction industry jobs (including administrative and professional as well as tradesworkers, both directly employed and self-employed workers) increased marginally in 2025, from 11.2 percent to 11.3 percent, adding an estimated 22,649 jobs to reach close to 1.4 million jobs.

Table 1. Women Working in Construction, 2025 and 2024

Construction and extraction occupations, apprentices, and industry	2025 Women		2024 Women	
	Numbers	(%)	Numbers	(%)
Construction and extraction occupations, including:	365,070	4.3%	366,360	4.3%
Construction laborers	111,954	4.7%	80,255	3.5%
Painters and paperhangers	53,835	11.1%	58,212	10.8%
Carpenters*	36,518	3.1%	53,718	4.2%
Electricians*	37,205	3.5%	28,768	2.9%
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters*	19,344	3.1%	20,352	3.2%
Construction and building inspectors*	15,120	12.6%	11,960	11.5%
First-line supervisors*	29,156	3.7%	47,520	6.0%
Apprentices (43 states, excl. DC, MA, MD, NY, OR, WI, WA)**	13,200	5.3%	11,216	4.9%
Construction managers	101,915	8.5%	131,355	10.5%
Construction jobs on payroll (incl. office/admin.) (December)	1,179,000	14.3%	1,189,000	14.4%
Construction industry all workers (incl. office/ admin.)	1,369,673	11.3%	1,347,024	11.2%

Sources: IWPR calculations based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Averages, Tables 11 and 18, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/tables.htm>; Current Employment Statistics Series CES20000000010 and CES20000000001, accessed April 3, 2026; and Apprenticeship USA (2026) "Data and Statistics: Apprentices by State," accessed April 3, 2026, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics/apprentices-by-state-dashboard>.

Notes: *Year-to-year comparisons are imprecise for occupations with fewer than 50,000 women because of the comparatively small sample size of the CPS.

**Data are for fiscal years. Active construction industry apprentices only; trade apprentices in education industry and utilities are not included. DC, MD, MA, NY, OR, WA, and WI are excluded because of missing/incomplete data in either year in RAPIDS. For a comprehensive methodology for estimating trade apprentices by state, see Cihan Bilginsoy and Russell Ormiston, *The State of Registered Apprenticeship Training in the Construction Trades* (Institute for Construction Employment Research, 2024).

Women construction managers saw a decline both in their employment and in their share of jobs. In 2025, an estimated 102,000 women worked as construction managers, down from 131,355 in 2024. Women construction managers were hit disproportionately by job losses, with their share of jobs falling to 8.5 percent from 10.5 percent in 2024.

Women's share of construction apprentices improved slightly during 2025, but women remain highly underrepresented. Earn-as-you-learn apprenticeships train the next generation of tradespeople. The number of active women apprentices in construction increased from 11,216 in 2024 to 13,200 in 2025 in the 43 states in the Department of Labor database (RAPIDS) with construction industry data by sex. Women were 5.3 percent of active construction industry apprentices (for whom gender was known) in 2025, compared to 4.9 percent in 2024.⁴

State variations suggest that apprenticeship policy matters. In five states, women's share of construction apprentices is at least 9 percent: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and North Dakota.⁵ Women's share is less than 3 percent, however, in Arkansas, Delaware, Nevada, and South Dakota.⁶ Strength in numbers matters as well: In California, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington, there were at least 1,000 active women construction apprentices.

Policymakers and industry leaders must continue to tackle discrimination to accelerate growth and support women in the industry. The 2025 numbers point to women's resilience and staying power, but also show uneven progress and continued dramatic underrepresentation in construction. Too many women—particularly women of color—face discrimination in hiring, employment, and promotions, and experience sexual or racial harassment and gender bias on the job.⁷ Such adverse conditions mean that women are less likely to complete their apprenticeships and are more likely to leave the industry than men.⁸ Making matters worse, the attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are creating a chilling effect on supporting women in nontraditional occupations.

Construction companies need to recruit and retain workers to meet projected demand and replace retiring workers,⁹ and the industry benefits greatly from the skilled work of tradeswomen and investments in apprenticeships.¹⁰ Neither women nor the sector can afford for policymakers and industry leaders to slow or reverse focus on growing women's numbers in construction.

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1. Ariane Hegewisch, "Thankful for Small Graces: Women's Construction Jobs Mostly Held Steady in 2025," Institute for Women's Policy Research, March 12, 2026, <https://iwpr.org/thankful-for-small-graces-womens-construction-jobs-mostly-held-steady-in-2025/>.

2. US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "2025 Federal Government Shutdown Impact on the Current Population Survey," US Department of Labor, last updated March 11, 2026, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/methods/2025-federal-government-shutdown-impact-cps.htm>.

3. Ariane Hegewisch, "Numbers Matter: Women Working in Construction," IWPR Quick Figure #Q120 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2025), <https://iwpr.org/numbers-matter-women-working-in-construction-3/>.

4. US Department of Labor, "Apprentices by State Dashboard," Apprenticeship.gov, retrieved April 3, 2026, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics/apprentices-by-state-dashboard>. While RAPIDS provides a helpful snapshot on women's apprentices numbers in the construction industry, the database is incomplete due to missing data: 22% of apprentices lack industry information, 22% occupation information, 21% race information, and 16% ethnicity information. In 2025, gender information was missing for 3.4% of construction apprentices, up from 2.5% in 2024.

5. Apprenticeship in Maine, Massachusetts, and New York is overseen by state apprenticeship agencies, and in Connecticut and North Dakota by the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA).

6. Apprenticeship in Arkansas, Delaware, Nevada, and South Dakota is overseen by the OA.

7. Chandra Childers, Ariane Hegewisch, and Lark Jackson, "Here to Stay: Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Women in Construction Trades Apprenticeships and Employment" (Chicago, IL: Chicago Women in the Trades, 2021), <https://womensequitycenter.org/best-practices/>; and Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd, *A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say about the Change They Need in the Construction Industry*, IWPR report #C508 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021), <https://iwpr.org/a-future-worth-building-report/>.

8. Ariane Hegewisch, *As Apprenticeships Expand, Breaking Down Occupational Segregation Is Key to Women's Economic Success*, IWPR report #C522 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2024), <https://iwpr.org/as-apprenticeships-expand-breaking-down-occupational-segregation-is-key-to-womens-economic-success/>.

9. Associated Builders and Contractors, "Construction Industry Must Attract 349,000 Workers in 2026 Despite Macroeconomic Headwinds," news release, January 15, 2026, <https://www.abc.org/News-Media/News-Releases/abc-construction-industry-must-attract-349000-workers-in-2026-despite-macroeconomic-headwinds>.

10. Associated General Contractors of America, *The Business Case for Inclusion and Belonging: A Workforce Strategy for a Stronger Construction Industry* (Arlington, VA: Associated General Contractors of America, 2025), <https://buildculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-Biz-Case-for-Inclusion-Belonging-1.pdf>.