

# Union Labor Costs In Construction 2023

**Construction Labor Research Council**



This report contains both general and detailed information on compensation for union craft workers in the construction industry, as analyzed by the Construction Labor Research Council (CLRC). Data are presented for the nation as a whole, nine geographic regions, and 17 different craft classifications. In addition, the report has trend lines which show the union craft total package increase history, as well as results for already negotiated future increases.

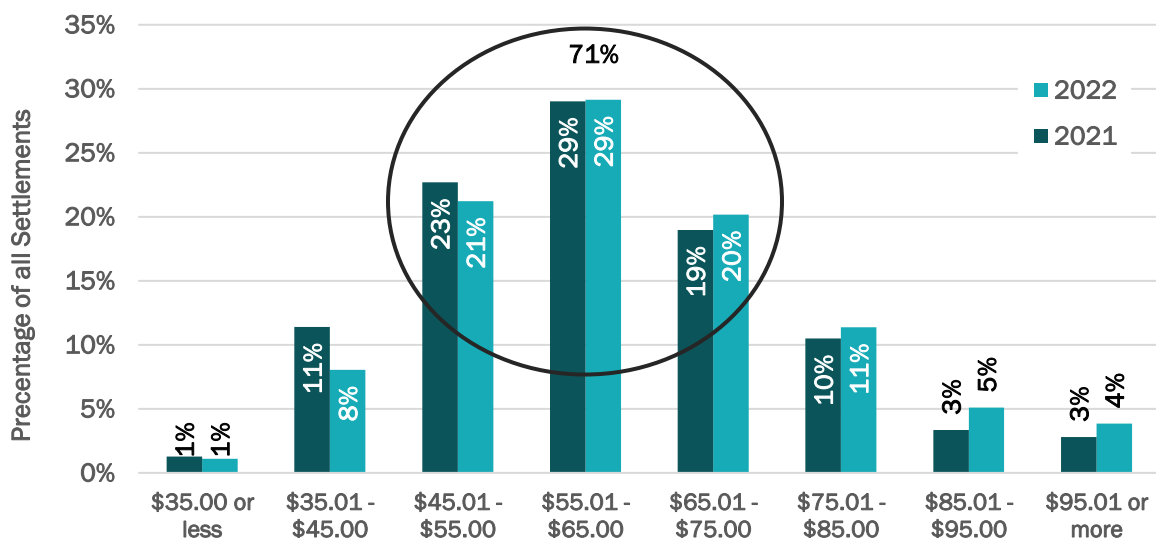
## Total Package Rates

**Exhibit 1** illustrates how total package rates in 2022 and 2021 are distributed across a range. As the exhibit shows, in both 2021 and 2022, 71 percent of the total package rates fell in the \$45.01–\$75.00 range. Predictably,

in 2022 there was a higher percentage of total package rates in the upper end of the distribution and a lower percentage in the lower end, compared to 2021.

**Exhibit 1**  
*Distribution of total package rates*

NOTE: The total package includes all negotiated employer payments contained in the wage sheet (e.g., wages, health & welfare, retirement, apprenticeship, industry advancement).



### The following associations sponsor this report:

- Associated General Contractors of America (AGC)
- Central States Insulation Association (CSIA)
- FCA International (FCA)
- International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (ICE)
- Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA)
- National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)
- National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)
- North American Contractors Association (NACA)
- Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA)
- Signatory Wall and Ceiling Contractors Alliance (SWACCA)
- The Association of Union Constructors (TAUC)

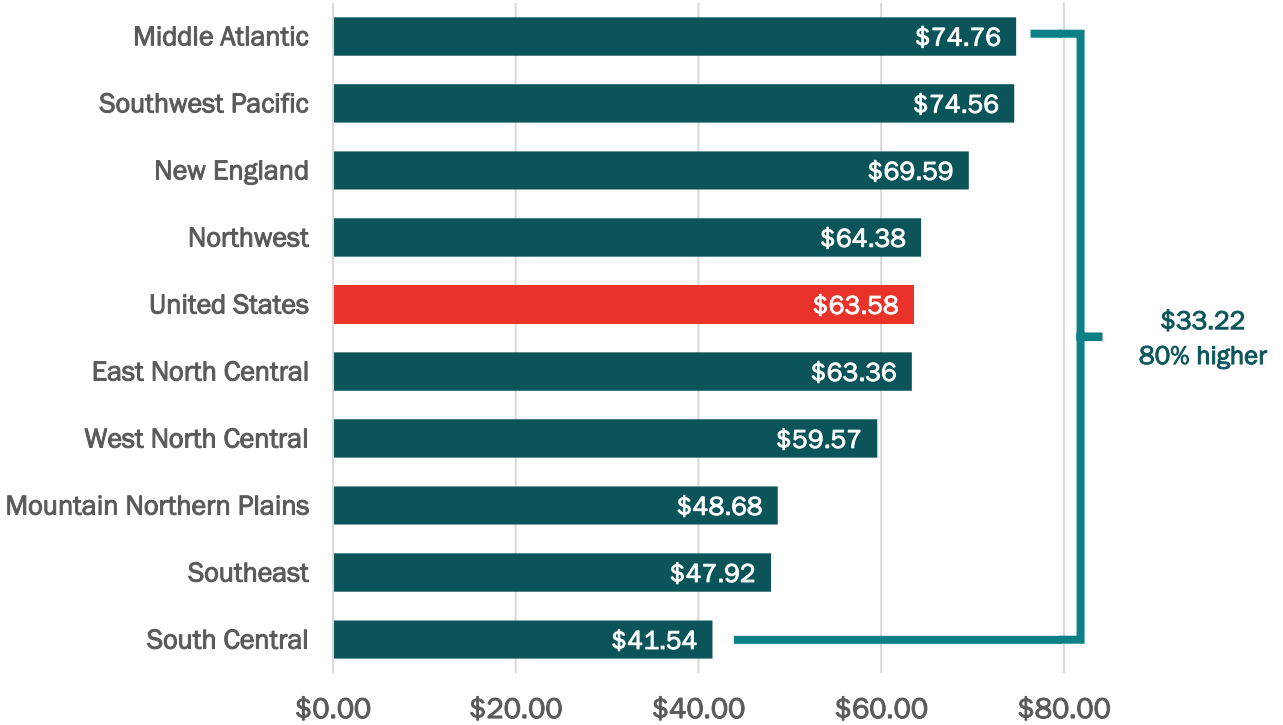
Copyright © 2023 Construction Labor Research Council

**Exhibit 2** displays results for the total package for 2022 by region. The U.S. average (which is the average of the craft averages) was \$63.58 (up from \$62.32 in 2021). The largest average total package in 2022 was in the Middle Atlantic Region (\$74.76), as was the

case last year. The lowest rate was again in the South Central region (\$41.54). The highest average total package rate is \$33.22 (80 percent) higher than the smallest. This range is comparable to last year's range.

**Exhibit 2**

*Total package average rates by region in descending order*



**Regions**

**New England:** CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT

**Middle Atlantic:** DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA

**Southeast:** AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA

**East North Central:** IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, WV

**West North Central:** IA, KS, MO, NE

**South Central:** AR, LA, NM, OK, TX

**Mountain Northern Plains:** CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY

**Southwest Pacific:** AZ, CA, HI, NV

**Northwest:** AK, ID, OR, WA

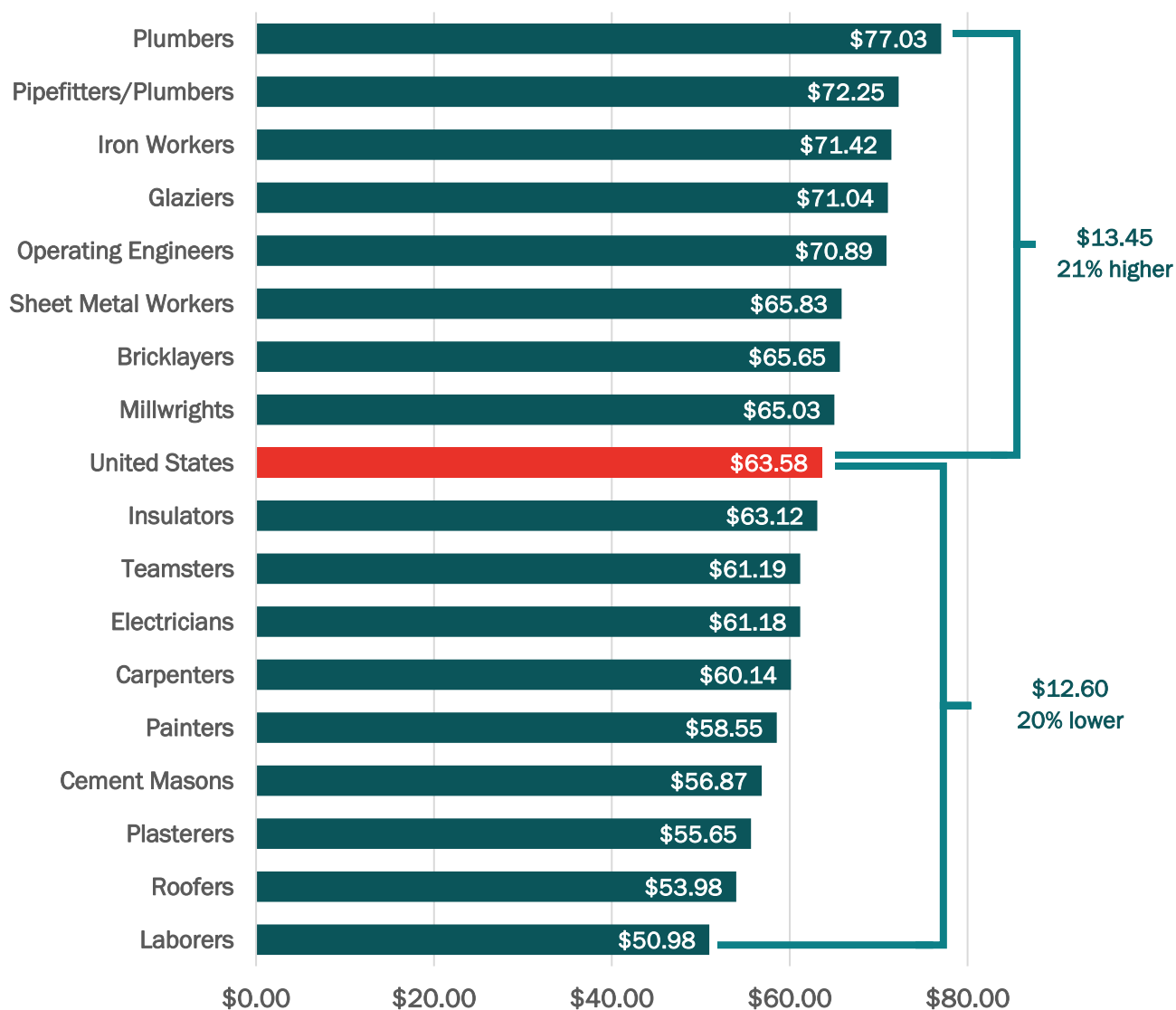
NOTE: In addition to actual differences, variation in total package average rates from region to region and craft to craft can be influenced by the composition of the data sample. For example, a craft's average rate may be partially affected by having more/less data from regions with higher/lower rates. Similarly, the total package average rate in a particular region may be partially due to that region having more/less data from crafts with higher/lower rates. In addition, the sample of available rates may change from year to year, which can affect craft and region averages.

The average total package rates by craft for 2022 are illustrated in **Exhibit 3**. The data ranged from \$50.98 for Laborers to \$77.03 for Plumbers. The highest rate was \$13.45 (21 percent) higher than the average, and the lowest rate was \$12.60 (20 percent) lower. Five crafts had a total package that was at least \$70.00 and for the first time, all crafts

had an average above \$50.00. The difference between the lowest and highest rate was \$26.05 (51 percent). Thus, the spread as a percentage is greater for the geographic data cut than for the craft data cut, which suggests that geography may play a larger role in union craft compensation than craft affiliation.

### Exhibit 3

*Total package average rates by craft in descending order*



**Exhibit 4** gives a detailed look at union craft rates in construction in 2022 using a craft by region matrix. It shows the total package rate,

base wage rate, and fringe benefits & other rate for each craft for each region, as well as for the U.S.

#### Exhibit 4

*Total package, wage rate, and fringe benefits & other: craft by region*

<b>United States</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$69.59	\$74.76	\$47.92	\$63.36	\$59.57	\$41.54	\$48.68	\$74.56	\$64.38	\$63.58
Wage Rate	\$39.37	\$42.74	\$30.36	\$36.30	\$35.60	\$29.11	\$31.69	\$43.90	\$40.95	\$38.57
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$30.21	\$32.02	\$17.56	\$27.06	\$23.97	\$12.43	\$17.00	\$30.66	\$23.43	\$25.01
<b>Bricklayers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$73.73	\$71.81	-	\$63.00	\$57.88	-	\$53.15	\$73.60	-	\$65.65
Wage Rate	\$34.72	\$42.26	-	\$36.37	\$34.33	-	\$31.19	\$44.30	-	\$38.74
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$39.01	\$29.55	-	\$26.63	\$23.55	-	\$21.96	\$29.30	-	\$26.91
<b>Carpenters</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$63.83	\$72.66	\$47.85	\$60.60	\$55.92	\$37.77	\$44.97	\$76.78	\$61.90	\$60.14
Wage Rate	\$34.50	\$44.85	\$26.39	\$33.83	\$32.33	\$25.94	\$29.68	\$47.58	\$42.02	\$37.38
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$29.33	\$27.81	\$21.46	\$26.77	\$23.59	\$11.84	\$15.29	\$29.20	\$19.88	\$22.76
<b>Cement Masons</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	-	\$72.03	\$42.68	\$56.08	\$49.47	\$35.55	\$52.50	\$66.87	\$59.60	\$56.87
Wage Rate	-	\$41.70	\$26.23	\$33.27	\$28.95	\$24.94	\$33.88	\$36.31	\$39.65	\$34.97
Fringe Benefits & Other	-	\$30.33	\$16.46	\$22.81	\$20.52	\$10.61	\$18.62	\$30.56	\$19.95	\$21.90
<b>Electricians</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$74.68	\$75.99	\$45.15	\$67.08	\$62.49	\$41.30	\$56.67	\$71.07	-	\$61.18
Wage Rate	\$38.77	\$43.50	\$30.43	\$39.61	\$37.90	\$29.26	\$37.61	\$46.26	-	\$38.45
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$35.90	\$32.50	\$14.73	\$27.47	\$24.59	\$12.04	\$19.07	\$24.81	-	\$22.73
<b>Glaziers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$64.16	\$78.07	-	\$73.25	\$60.75	-	-	\$76.42	\$69.47	\$71.04
Wage Rate	\$37.64	\$45.44	-	\$40.75	\$36.49	-	-	\$48.03	\$39.75	\$42.51
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$26.52	\$32.64	-	\$32.50	\$24.26	-	-	\$28.39	\$29.73	\$28.53
<b>Insulators</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$62.82	\$64.52	\$53.77	\$62.71	\$68.41	\$44.75	\$49.54	\$69.83	\$73.31	\$63.12
Wage Rate	\$38.40	\$38.40	\$30.69	\$35.72	\$37.17	\$32.69	\$32.87	\$45.69	\$41.25	\$39.40
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$24.42	\$26.12	\$23.08	\$26.99	\$31.24	\$12.06	\$16.67	\$24.14	\$32.06	\$23.72
<b>Iron Workers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$106.41	\$77.70	\$49.36	\$67.06	\$66.79	\$45.59	\$69.34	\$79.56	\$77.56	\$71.42
Wage Rate	\$69.07	\$40.18	\$29.40	\$35.62	\$36.23	\$27.70	\$35.95	\$43.36	\$41.49	\$39.31
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$37.34	\$37.51	\$19.96	\$31.44	\$30.57	\$17.89	\$33.39	\$36.21	\$36.07	\$32.11

See page 2 for a detailed legend defining the geographic regions.

NE	New England	ENC	East North Central	MNP	Mountain Northern Plains
MA	Middle Atlantic	WNC	West North Central	SWP	Southwest Pacific
SE	Southeast	SC	South Central	NW	Northwest

## Exhibit 4 (continued)

Total package, wage rate, and fringe benefits &amp; other: craft by region

<b>Laborers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$62.43	\$56.84	\$39.91	\$51.58	\$46.64	\$26.95	\$34.51	\$60.01	\$54.59	\$50.98
Wage Rate	\$33.77	\$29.04	\$22.95	\$28.94	\$28.82	\$19.38	\$23.26	\$32.32	\$34.85	\$30.31
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$28.65	\$27.80	\$16.96	\$22.64	\$17.82	\$7.57	\$11.25	\$27.69	\$19.74	\$20.67
<b>Millwrights</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$62.37	\$69.61	\$52.56	\$62.95	\$52.67	-	\$52.71	\$86.65	\$63.55	\$65.03
Wage Rate	\$33.77	\$42.19	\$32.09	\$33.85	\$30.03	-	\$38.19	\$52.04	\$43.90	\$39.20
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$28.60	\$27.43	\$20.47	\$29.10	\$22.65	-	\$14.52	\$34.61	\$19.66	\$25.83
<b>Operating Engineers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$78.54	\$83.32	\$52.64	\$68.69	\$59.65	\$40.83	\$57.25	\$85.78	\$67.23	\$70.89
Wage Rate	\$48.74	\$49.71	\$33.23	\$40.27	\$36.39	\$32.10	\$34.85	\$52.24	\$46.73	\$44.43
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$29.81	\$33.61	\$19.41	\$28.42	\$23.26	\$8.73	\$22.40	\$33.54	\$20.50	\$26.46
<b>Painters</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$63.06	\$59.81	-	\$58.34	\$52.42	-	-	\$62.33	\$49.10	\$58.55
Wage Rate	\$36.37	\$34.59	-	\$35.02	\$33.31	-	-	\$38.59	\$33.15	\$36.44
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$26.69	\$25.22	-	\$23.31	\$19.11	-	-	\$23.74	\$15.95	\$22.11
<b>Pipefitters/Plumbers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$85.96	\$88.26	\$48.82	\$69.46	\$66.24	\$48.55	\$56.23	\$85.19	\$86.21	\$72.25
Wage Rate	\$51.39	\$49.66	\$33.25	\$41.58	\$41.05	\$34.14	\$36.75	\$50.26	\$46.09	\$44.74
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$34.57	\$38.61	\$15.57	\$27.88	\$25.19	\$14.41	\$19.49	\$34.93	\$40.12	\$27.51
<b>Plumbers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$100.97	\$85.47	-	\$77.23	\$66.70	\$49.54	-	\$82.89	-	\$77.03
Wage Rate	\$65.09	\$53.11	-	\$42.06	\$41.30	\$34.30	-	\$46.03	-	\$48.06
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$35.88	\$32.36	-	\$35.17	\$25.40	\$15.24	-	\$36.86	-	\$28.97
<b>Plasterers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	-	\$71.36	\$45.13	\$56.65	\$47.84	-	\$44.15	\$63.09	\$62.16	\$55.65
Wage Rate	-	\$41.51	\$27.81	\$32.18	\$27.11	-	\$29.20	\$37.22	\$40.13	\$33.65
Fringe Benefits & Other	-	\$29.85	\$17.32	\$24.48	\$20.73	-	\$14.95	\$25.88	\$22.03	\$22.00
<b>Roofers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$56.45	\$55.78	-	\$51.90	\$50.01	-	-	-	\$63.25	\$53.98
Wage Rate	\$33.55	\$33.61	-	\$33.60	\$32.44	-	-	-	\$44.62	\$34.79
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$22.90	\$22.16	-	\$18.30	\$17.57	-	-	-	\$18.63	\$19.19
<b>Sheet Metal Workers</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$87.81	\$76.75	\$50.76	\$69.22	\$64.13	\$48.50	\$53.16	\$89.76	\$65.77	\$65.83
Wage Rate	\$42.09	\$40.37	\$29.72	\$37.73	\$37.97	\$31.12	\$33.93	\$47.10	\$37.24	\$38.92
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$45.72	\$36.38	\$21.05	\$31.48	\$26.16	\$17.38	\$19.23	\$42.66	\$28.53	\$26.91
<b>Teamsters</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>ENC</b>	<b>WNC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>MNP</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>NW</b>	<b>US</b>
Total Package	\$60.05	\$68.62	-	\$57.66	\$49.40	-	-	\$69.02	\$57.40	\$61.19
Wage Rate	\$31.27	\$34.87	-	\$35.29	\$33.63	-	-	\$36.60	\$36.30	\$35.68
Fringe Benefits & Other	\$28.78	\$33.76	-	\$22.38	\$15.78	-	-	\$32.42	\$21.10	\$25.51

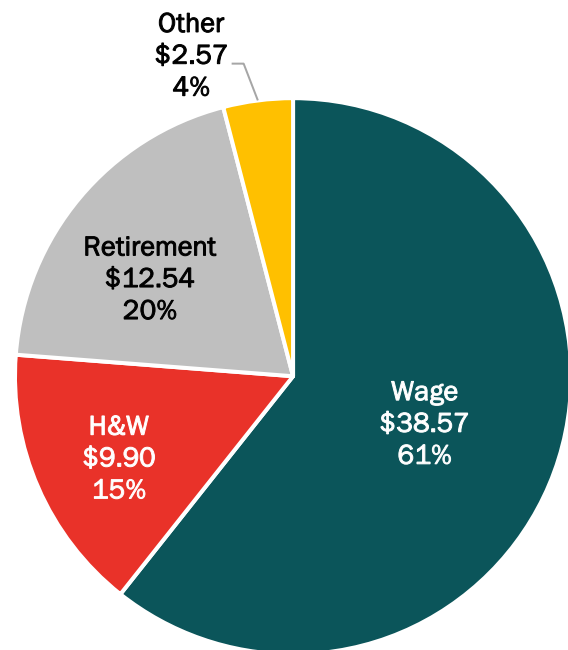
**Exhibit 5***Defined contribution retirement and vacation prevalence by craft*

Craft	Defined Contribution	Vacation
Bricklayers	2%	20%
Carpenters	26%	12%
Cement Masons	7%	31%
Electricians	4%	17%
Glaziers	20%	20%
Insulators	11%	9%
Iron Workers	30%	24%
Laborers	16%	25%
Millwrights	21%	9%
Operating Engineers	22%	21%
Painters	14%	10%
Pipefitters/Plumbers	22%	26%
Plumbers	33%	23%
Plasterers	4%	21%
Roofers	0%	0%
Sheet Metal Workers	23%	6%
Teamsters	2%	24%
<b>United States</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>

**Exhibit 5** shows the prevalence of two nonstandard fringe benefits (defined contribution retirement and vacation) for all crafts and the U.S. Plumbers had the largest prevalence of defined contribution payments at 33 percent, meaning that 33 percent of all Plumber wage sheets had a line item for defined contribution retirement payments. The largest prevalence for vacation was with the Cement Masons at 31 percent. On average, 15 percent of total compensation packages for union crafts in construction in the U.S. had defined contribution retirement payments and 18 percent had vacation pay.

**Exhibit 6***U.S. average rates and proportions*

**Exhibit 6** addresses the average U.S. distribution of wages, health & welfare, retirement, and other costs. Both the dollar amount and proportion of the average U.S. total package are shown. Wages made up the majority of the total package at \$38.57 (61%). Of the fringe benefits, retirement was the largest category at \$12.54 (20%), followed by health & welfare at \$9.90 (15%). The “Other” category, which includes vacation, apprenticeship, and all other payments, was \$2.57 (4%).

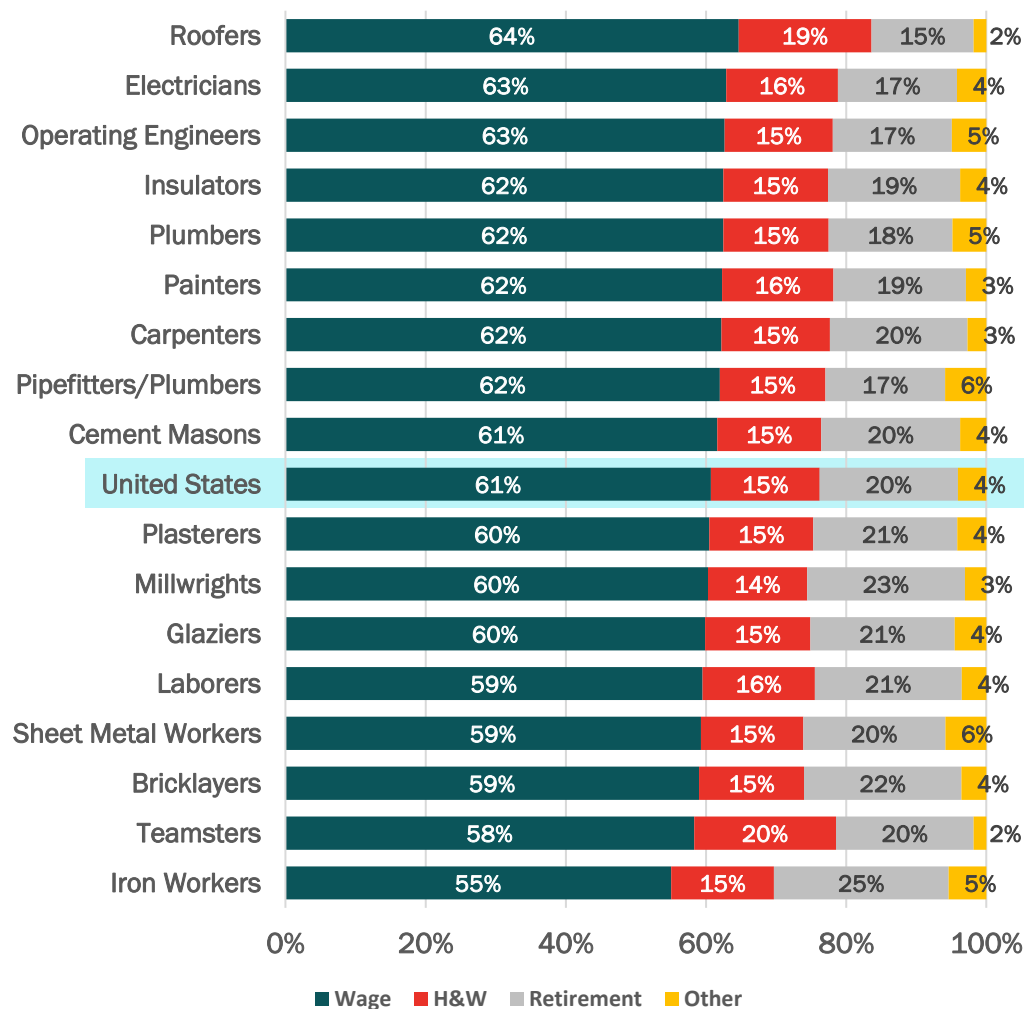


The stacked bar chart in **Exhibit 7** is similar to the pie chart in **Exhibit 6**, showing the proportion of each category in the total package (wage rate, health & welfare, retirement, and other) for the U.S. and each craft. The crafts are listed in descending order based on the wage percentage. Roofers had the largest proportion of the total package in wages (64 percent). Teamsters had the

largest proportion for health & welfare (20 percent). Iron Workers led all crafts in the proportion of their total package funding retirement (25 percent). Note that **Exhibit 7** is not indicative of the dollar amount of each craft's total package (all crafts sum to 100 percent). Rather, it illustrates how the total package is distributed across the four categories.

### Exhibit 7

*Proportions of total package by craft*





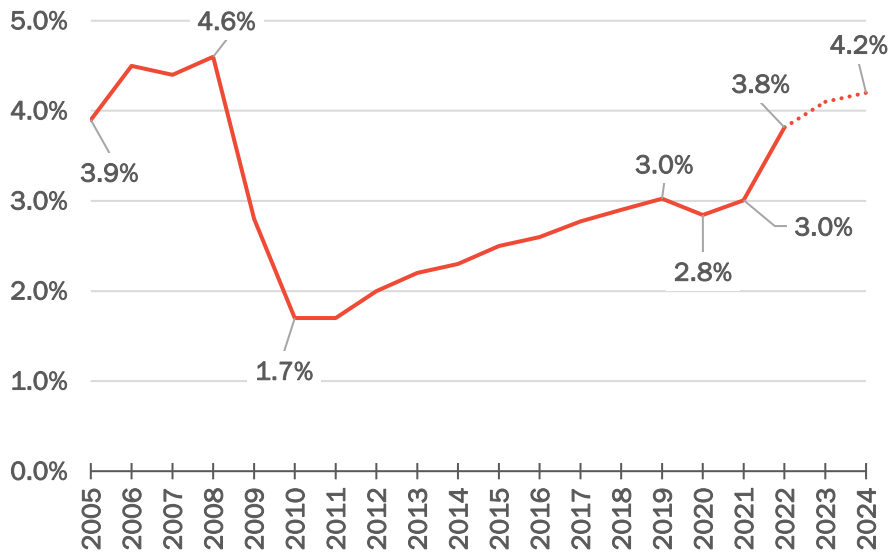
## Total Package Increases

This section contains charts showing the total package increases from the 2022 year-end CLRC *Settlements Report*. See that report for additional information on total package increases for union craft workers in construction.

### First Year Increases in 2022

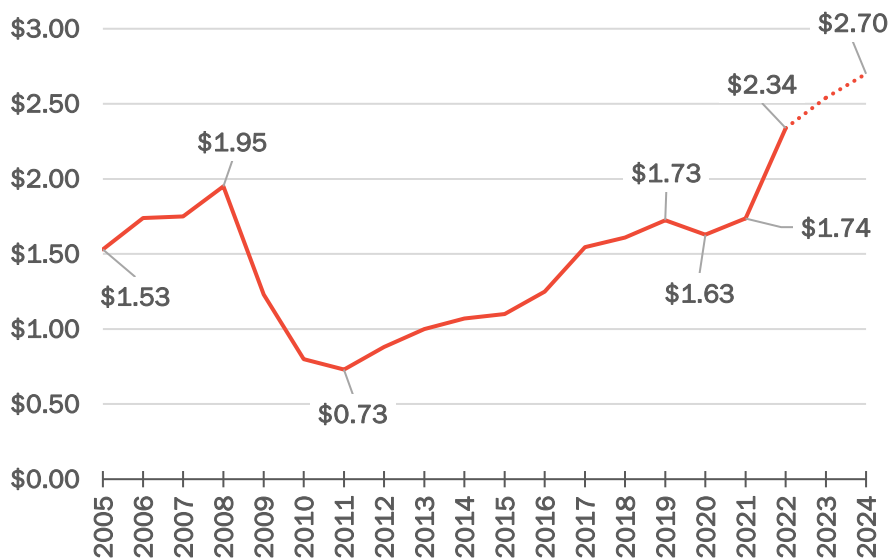
#### Exhibit 8

*First year increases in new settlements, shown as percentages*



#### Exhibit 9

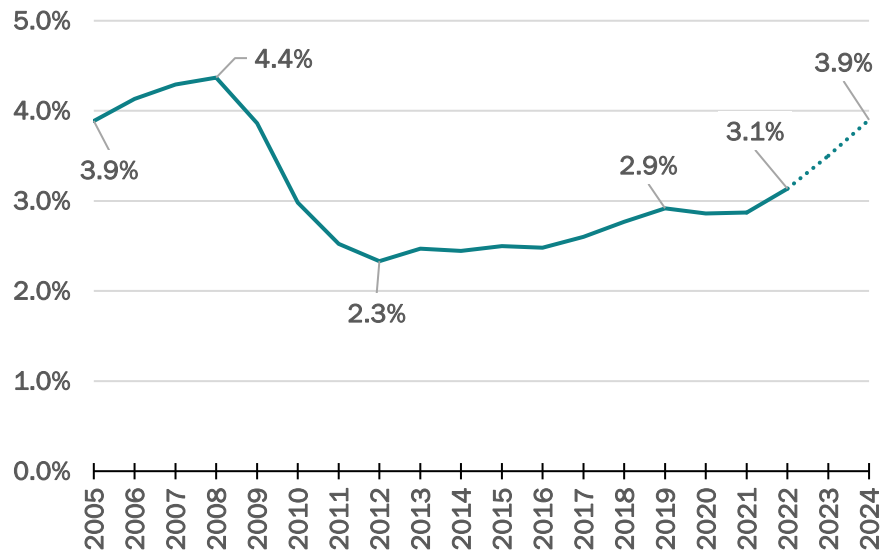
*First year increases in new settlements, shown as dollars*



## Increases for All Contract Years

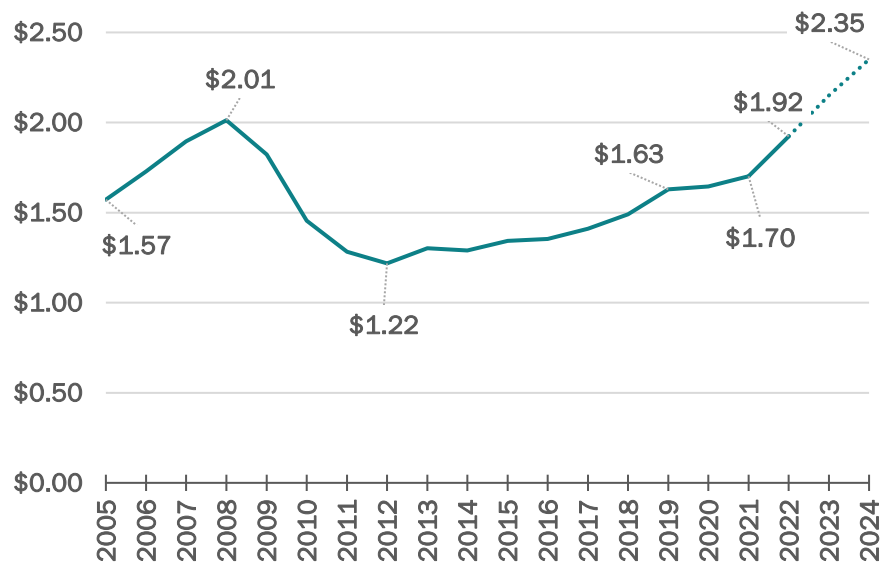
### Exhibit 10

All increases, shown as percentages



### Exhibit 11

All increases, shown as dollars



The first year increases section is useful for understanding current trends. The all contract years data is better for summarizing the total amount actually paid/earned by contractors/employees and for making projections based on already negotiated future increases (CLRC already has hundreds of data points for the years after 2022).

**Construction Labor Research Council**  
1250 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-347-8440  
[www.clrcconsulting.org](http://www.clrcconsulting.org)



This report has been prepared from information collected and maintained by CLRC. Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the data, summaries and analyses. However, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. CLRC disclaims any liability from damages of any kind which may result from the use of this report.