

# Union Labor Costs In Construction 2021

**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 18 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.

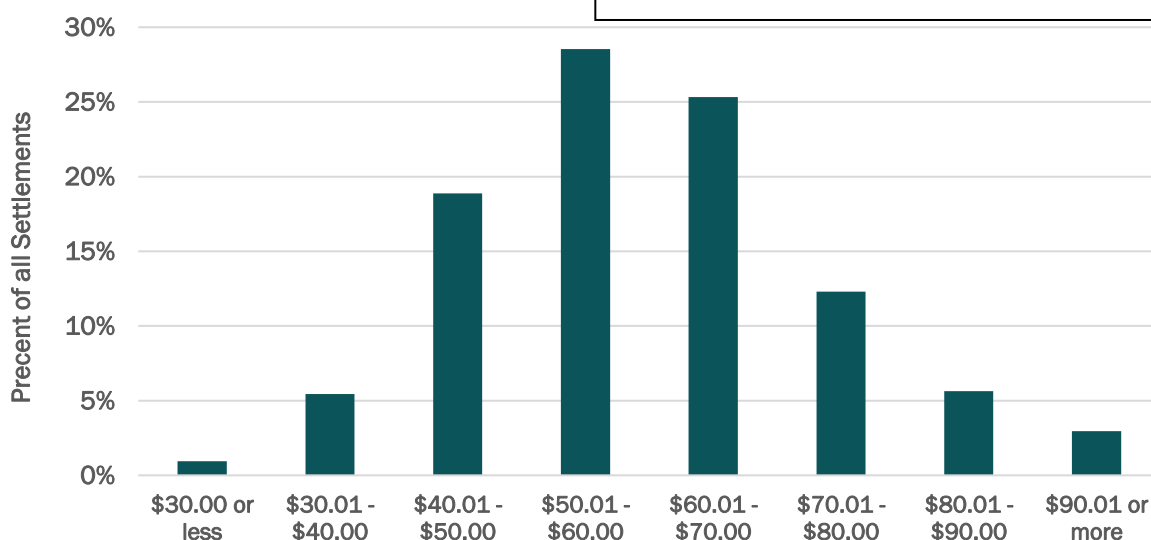
## Total Package Rates

**Exhibit 1** illustrates how total package rates in 2020 are distributed across a range. As the exhibit clearly highlights, the plurality of total package rates in 2020 were in the \$50.01-

\$60.00 range. Most other total package rates landed in the adjacent ranges. Consequently, nearly 73 percent of all total package rates were from \$40.01 to \$70.00.

### Exhibit 1

*Distribution of total package rates*



#### The following associations sponsor this report:

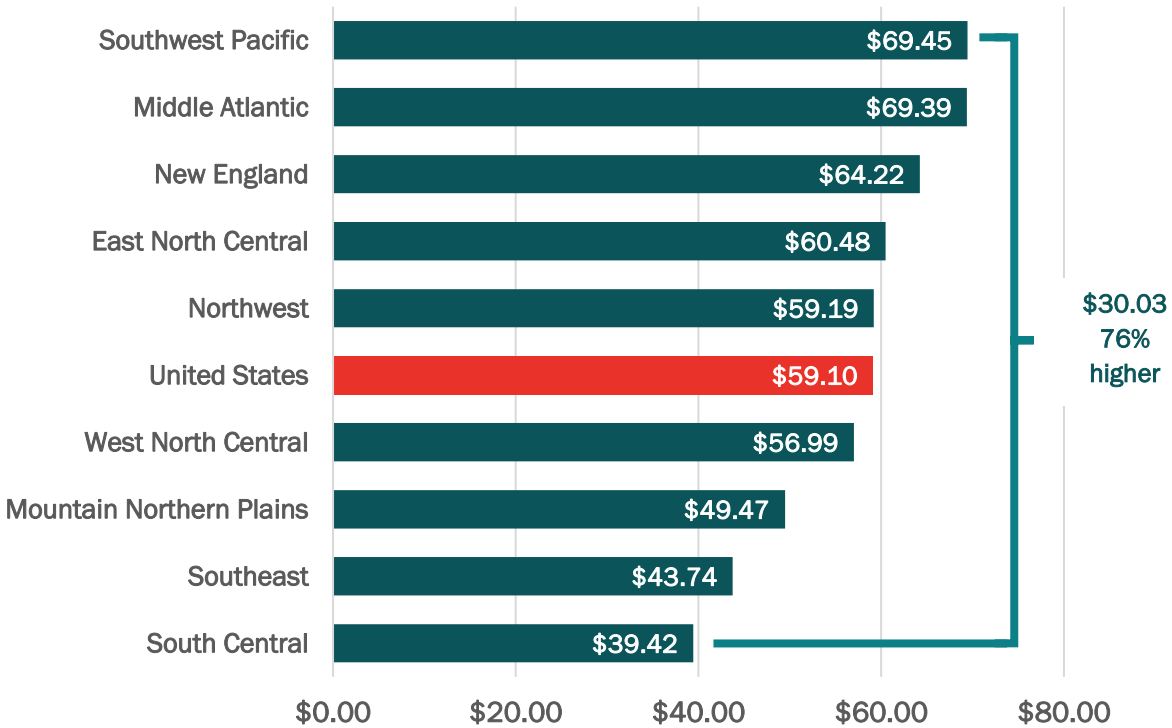
- Associated General Contractors of America (AGC)
- Central States Insulation Association (CSIA)
- FCA International (FCA)
- International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (ICE)
- Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA)
- National Electrical Contractors Association (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)

**Exhibit 2** displays results for the total package for 2020 by region. The US average (which is the average of the craft averages) was \$59.10. As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the largest average total package in 2020 was in the

Southwest Pacific region (\$69.45) and the smallest in the South Central region (\$39.42). The highest average total package rate was \$30.03 (76 percent) higher than the smallest.

### 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

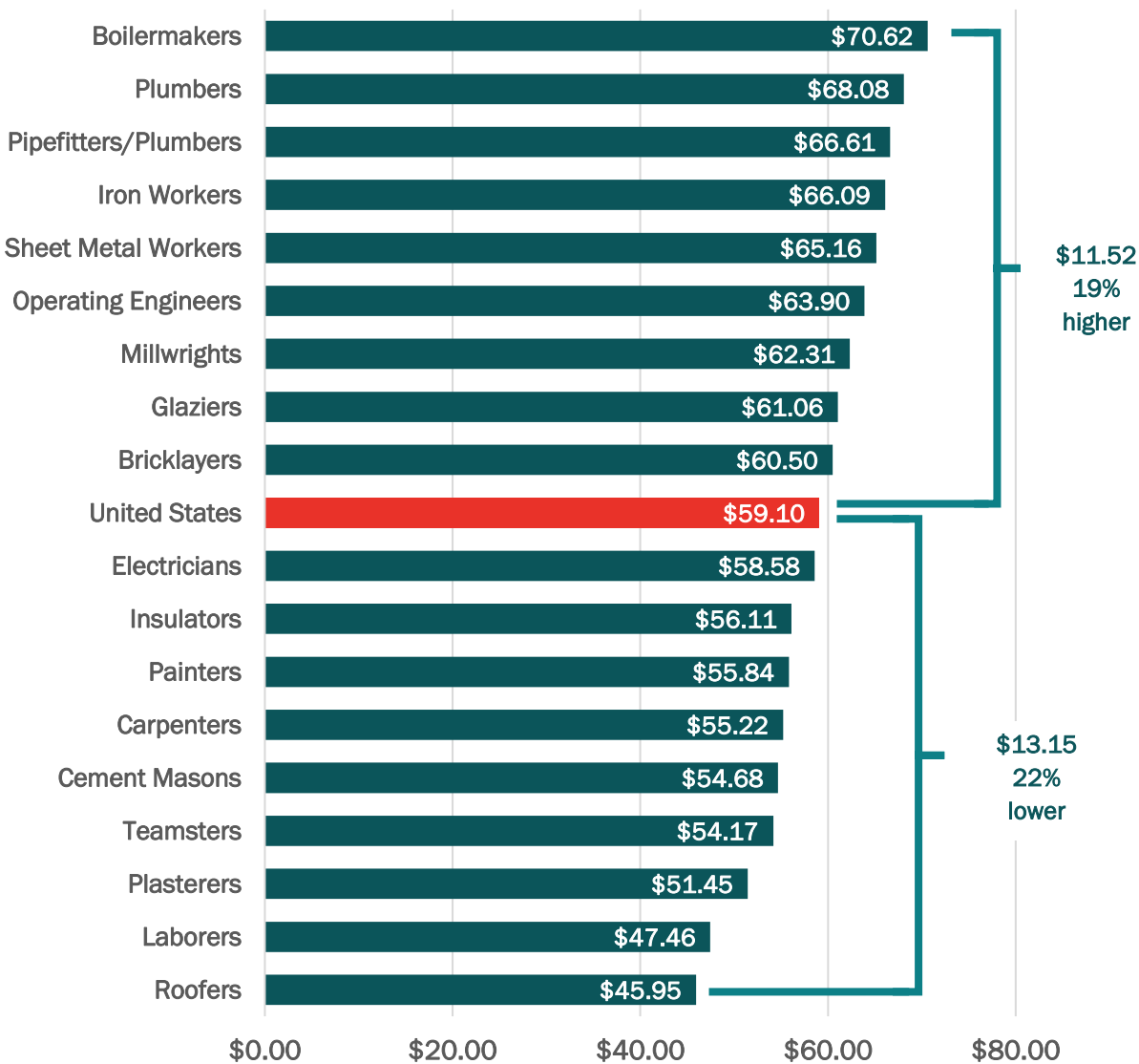
NOTE: In addition to actual differences, variation in total package average rates from region to region and craft to craft can be influenced by the composition of the data sample. For example, a craft's average rate may be partially affected by having more/less data from regions with higher/lower rates. 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 2020 are illustrated in **Exhibit 3**. The data ranged from \$45.95 for Roofers to \$70.62 for Boilermakers. The highest rate was \$11.52 (19 percent) higher, and the smallest was \$13.15 (22 percent) lower, than the US

average. There were five crafts with an average total package higher than \$65.00. There were two crafts with an average lower than \$50.00. All 11 of the other craft averages fell between \$50.00 and \$65.00.

### Exhibit 3

*Total package average rates by craft in descending order*



**Exhibit 4** gives a detailed look at union craft rates in construction in 2020 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 US.

#### Exhibit 4

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

| United States           | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total Package           | \$64.22 | \$69.39 | \$43.74 | \$60.48 | \$56.99 | \$39.42 | \$49.47 | \$69.45 | \$59.19 | \$59.10 |
| Wage Rate               | \$36.15 | \$39.67 | \$28.24 | \$34.95 | \$34.56 | \$27.95 | \$31.41 | \$41.37 | \$38.44 | \$35.16 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$28.07 | \$29.71 | \$15.50 | \$25.53 | \$22.43 | \$11.47 | \$18.06 | \$28.08 | \$20.74 | \$23.94 |
| Boilermakers            | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$68.15 | \$75.89 | \$62.57 | \$69.43 | \$70.67 | -       | \$68.85 | -       | -       | \$70.62 |
| Wage Rate               | \$41.19 | \$42.53 | \$35.31 | \$39.09 | \$40.48 | -       | \$39.69 | -       | -       | \$40.26 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$26.96 | \$33.36 | \$27.26 | \$30.34 | \$30.19 | -       | \$29.16 | -       | -       | \$30.36 |
| Bricklayers             | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$75.50 | \$72.29 | \$36.84 | \$58.91 | \$58.52 | -       | \$50.10 | \$70.36 | \$60.57 | \$60.50 |
| Wage Rate               | \$40.56 | \$41.75 | \$27.23 | \$34.22 | \$34.87 | -       | \$29.39 | \$42.44 | \$39.46 | \$36.33 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$34.94 | \$30.53 | \$9.61  | \$24.69 | \$23.65 | -       | \$20.72 | \$27.92 | \$21.11 | \$24.17 |
| Carpenters              | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$61.58 | \$67.43 | \$40.35 | \$57.07 | \$52.89 | \$35.81 | \$39.68 | \$62.36 | \$57.45 | \$55.22 |
| Wage Rate               | \$34.50 | \$40.98 | \$25.24 | \$32.60 | \$32.04 | \$25.25 | \$26.09 | \$38.61 | \$38.34 | \$33.45 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$27.08 | \$26.44 | \$15.11 | \$24.47 | \$20.85 | \$10.56 | \$13.59 | \$23.75 | \$19.10 | \$21.77 |
| Cement Masons           | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | -       | \$72.81 | -       | \$54.10 | \$48.04 | \$33.88 | \$48.75 | \$59.43 | \$55.01 | \$54.68 |
| Wage Rate               | -       | \$40.60 | -       | \$32.22 | \$28.05 | \$23.82 | \$32.63 | \$33.11 | \$34.11 | \$32.61 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | -       | \$32.21 | -       | \$21.88 | \$19.99 | \$10.07 | \$16.12 | \$26.31 | \$20.90 | \$22.08 |
| Electricians            | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$70.84 | \$70.90 | \$41.33 | \$63.17 | \$57.99 | \$38.44 | \$53.36 | \$70.19 | \$62.40 | \$58.58 |
| Wage Rate               | \$38.77 | \$41.56 | \$28.26 | \$38.03 | \$36.78 | \$27.87 | \$36.63 | \$44.62 | \$39.30 | \$36.38 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$32.07 | \$29.34 | \$13.07 | \$25.13 | \$21.22 | \$10.57 | \$16.73 | \$25.57 | \$23.10 | \$22.20 |
| Glaziers                | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$55.20 | \$61.22 | -       | \$58.72 | -       | -       | -       | \$77.38 | \$66.42 | \$61.06 |
| Wage Rate               | \$30.33 | \$34.22 | -       | \$35.06 | -       | -       | -       | \$46.34 | \$44.08 | \$36.27 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$24.87 | \$27.00 | -       | \$23.66 | -       | -       | -       | \$31.04 | \$22.34 | \$24.79 |
| Insulators              | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$59.14 | \$62.70 | \$50.44 | \$56.76 | \$72.28 | \$42.30 | \$47.71 | \$70.57 | \$64.21 | \$56.11 |
| Wage Rate               | \$36.36 | \$37.12 | \$29.79 | \$34.06 | \$40.35 | \$30.44 | \$31.04 | \$45.38 | \$40.15 | \$34.22 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$22.78 | \$25.58 | \$20.65 | \$22.70 | \$31.93 | \$11.86 | \$16.67 | \$25.19 | \$24.07 | \$21.89 |
| Iron Workers            | NE      | MA      | SE      | ENC     | WNC     | SC      | MNP     | SWP     | NW      | US      |
| Total Package           | \$74.52 | \$73.06 | -       | \$64.31 | \$63.29 | \$44.10 | \$64.24 | \$74.86 | -       | \$66.09 |
| Wage Rate               | \$36.67 | \$40.08 | -       | \$33.86 | \$32.72 | \$27.00 | \$32.55 | \$41.00 | -       | \$35.20 |
| Fringe Benefits & Other | \$37.85 | \$32.97 | -       | \$30.45 | \$30.57 | \$17.10 | \$31.69 | \$33.86 | -       | \$30.89 |

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               | \$58.91   | \$54.56   | \$30.73   | \$48.90    | \$44.97    | \$25.37   | \$44.19    | \$55.42    | \$48.89   | \$47.46   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$33.77   | \$26.95   | \$20.30   | \$27.70    | \$28.89    | \$18.64   | \$25.07    | \$30.84    | \$32.04   | \$27.76   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$25.14   | \$27.61   | \$10.43   | \$21.20    | \$16.09    | \$6.73    | \$19.12    | \$24.57    | \$16.85   | \$19.70   |
| <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               | \$60.09   | \$70.22   | \$45.17   | \$61.91    | \$50.13    | -         | \$50.99    | \$79.11    | \$62.55   | \$62.31   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$33.39   | \$42.02   | \$28.39   | \$34.01    | \$30.03    | -         | \$34.00    | \$48.15    | \$42.94   | \$36.78   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$26.69   | \$28.20   | \$16.78   | \$27.90    | \$20.11    | -         | \$16.99    | \$30.95    | \$19.60   | \$25.53   |
| <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               | \$72.73   | \$78.46   | \$46.55   | \$65.04    | \$56.60    | \$39.48   | -          | \$70.74    | \$59.27   | \$63.90   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$46.17   | \$48.37   | \$31.21   | \$38.50    | \$35.00    | \$31.19   | -          | \$44.46    | \$40.37   | \$40.31   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$26.56   | \$30.10   | \$15.34   | \$26.55    | \$21.60    | \$8.28    | -          | \$26.28    | \$18.89   | \$23.60   |
| <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               | \$55.20   | \$56.08   | \$52.71   | \$55.88    | \$51.62    | -         | -          | \$62.65    | \$45.40   | \$55.84   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$30.33   | \$32.15   | \$29.17   | \$32.28    | \$30.54    | -         | -          | \$39.22    | \$33.15   | \$32.71   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$24.87   | \$23.93   | \$23.54   | \$23.60    | \$21.08    | -         | -          | \$23.43    | \$12.25   | \$23.13   |
| <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               | \$80.07   | \$84.91   | \$47.81   | \$66.98    | \$63.09    | \$45.01   | \$52.73    | \$82.64    | \$80.64   | \$66.61   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$44.70   | \$47.76   | \$31.44   | \$39.69    | \$39.33    | \$31.75   | \$33.65    | \$48.47    | \$46.09   | \$40.10   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$35.37   | \$37.15   | \$16.38   | \$27.29    | \$23.76    | \$13.26   | \$19.08    | \$34.17    | \$34.55   | \$26.50   |
| <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               | -         | \$80.03   | -         | \$72.53    | \$63.50    | \$47.29   | \$56.65    | -          | -         | \$68.08   |
| Wage Rate                   | -         | \$48.64   | -         | \$40.98    | \$41.30    | \$33.64   | \$36.78    | -          | -         | \$41.46   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | -         | \$31.39   | -         | \$31.54    | \$22.20    | \$13.65   | \$19.87    | -          | -         | \$26.62   |
| <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               | -         | \$49.50   | -         | \$55.34    | \$44.82    | -         | \$41.65    | \$58.31    | \$60.41   | \$51.45   |
| Wage Rate                   | -         | \$29.47   | -         | \$32.00    | \$25.92    | -         | \$26.05    | \$34.73    | \$38.38   | \$30.60   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | -         | \$20.03   | -         | \$23.35    | \$18.89    | -         | \$15.60    | \$23.58    | \$22.03   | \$20.85   |
| <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               | \$52.77   | \$51.64   | \$34.57   | \$51.18    | \$48.58    | -         | -          | -          | -         | \$45.95   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$30.05   | \$29.68   | \$25.42   | \$31.43    | \$30.29    | -         | -          | -          | -         | \$29.14   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$22.72   | \$21.96   | \$9.16    | \$19.75    | \$18.29    | -         | -          | -          | -         | \$16.81   |
| <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               | \$82.91   | \$79.52   | \$51.52   | \$65.56    | \$59.65    | \$46.50   | \$49.80    | \$81.28    | \$65.09   | \$65.16   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$40.11   | \$41.15   | \$30.62   | \$35.96    | \$36.33    | \$30.58   | \$31.92    | \$45.49    | \$39.23   | \$36.89   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$42.81   | \$38.37   | \$20.90   | \$29.61    | \$23.32    | \$15.92   | \$17.88    | \$35.79    | \$25.86   | \$28.28   |
| <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               | \$55.76   | \$61.62   | \$43.26   | \$54.02    | \$47.53    | -         | -          | \$64.97    | \$52.99   | \$54.17   |
| Wage Rate                   | \$29.97   | \$31.97   | \$28.67   | \$33.76    | \$31.43    | -         | -          | \$34.26    | \$34.01   | \$32.38   |
| Fringe Benefits & Other     | \$25.79   | \$29.65   | \$14.59   | \$20.26    | \$16.10    | -         | -          | \$30.71    | \$18.99   | \$21.79   |

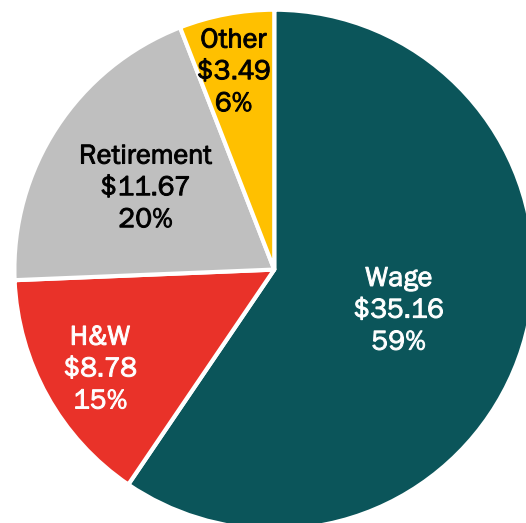
**Exhibit 5***Defined contribution retirement and vacation prevalence by craft*

| Craft                | Defined Contribution | Vacation |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Boilermakers         | 0%                   | 15%      |
| Bricklayers          | 5%                   | 18%      |
| Carpenters           | 26%                  | 6%       |
| Cement Masons        | 4%                   | 27%      |
| Electricians         | 4%                   | 18%      |
| Glaziers             | 0%                   | 4%       |
| Insulators           | 0%                   | 10%      |
| Iron Workers         | 21%                  | 24%      |
| Laborers             | 8%                   | 19%      |
| Millwrights          | 14%                  | 7%       |
| Operating Engineers  | 12%                  | 17%      |
| Painters             | 8%                   | 4%       |
| Pipefitters/Plumbers | 22%                  | 27%      |
| Plumbers             | 21%                  | 39%      |
| Plasterers           | 0%                   | 28%      |
| Roofers              | 0%                   | 3%       |
| Sheet Metal Workers  | 22%                  | 5%       |
| Teamsters            | 0%                   | 19%      |
| United States        | 9%                   | 16%      |

Exhibit 5 shows the prevalence of two nonstandard fringe benefits (defined contribution retirement and vacation) for all crafts and the US. Carpenters had the largest prevalence of defined contribution payments at 26 percent, meaning that 26 percent of all carpenter wage sheets had a line item for defined contribution retirement payments. The largest prevalence for vacation was with the Plumbers at 39 percent. On average, 9 percent of total packages for union crafts in construction in the US had defined contribution retirement payments and 16 percent had vacation pay.

**Exhibit 6***US average rates and proportions*

Exhibit 6 addresses the average US distribution of wages, health & welfare, retirement, and other costs. Both the dollar amount and proportion of the average US total package are shown. Wages made up the majority of the total package at \$35.16 (59%). Of the fringe benefits, retirement was the largest category at \$11.67 (20%), followed by health & welfare at \$8.78 (15%). The “Other” category, which includes vacation, apprenticeship, unallocated and all other payments, was \$3.49 (6%).

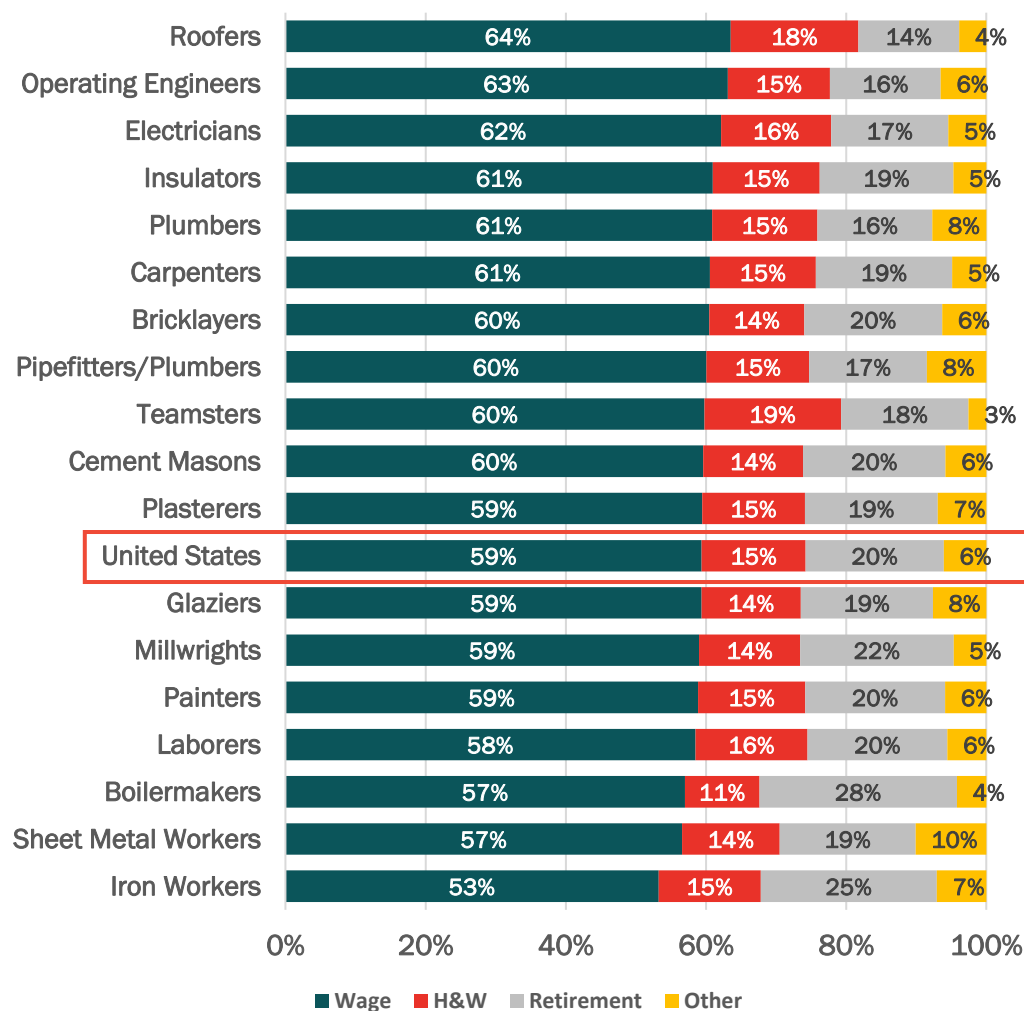


The stacked bar chart in **Exhibit 7** is similar to the pie chart in **Exhibit 6**, showing the proportion of each category in the total package (wage rate, health & welfare, retirement, and other) for the US and each craft. The crafts are in descending order based on the wage percentage. Roofers had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

largest proportion for health & welfare (19 percent). Boilermakers led all crafts in the proportion of their total package funding retirement (28 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





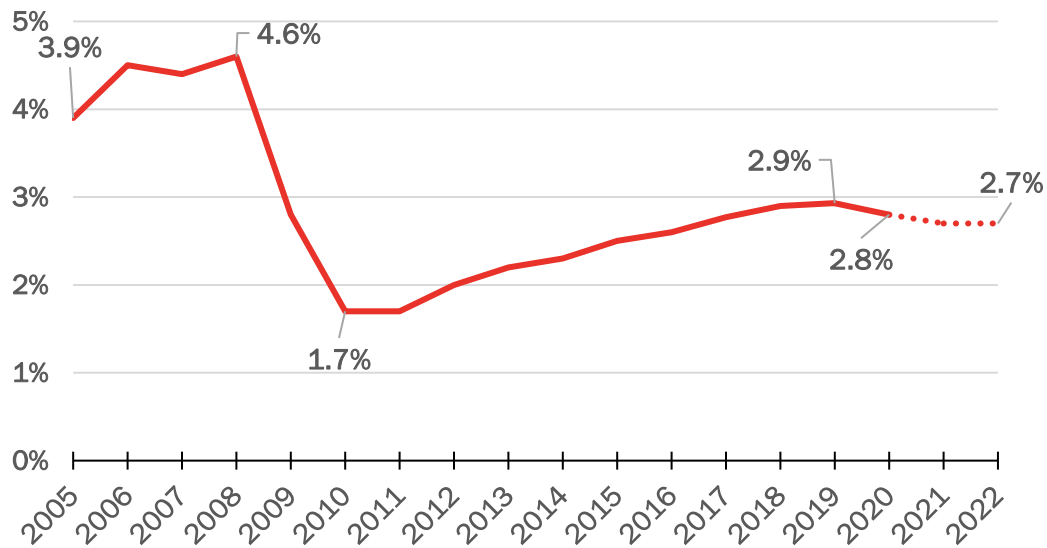
## Total Package Increases

This section contains charts showing the total package increases from the 2020 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 2020

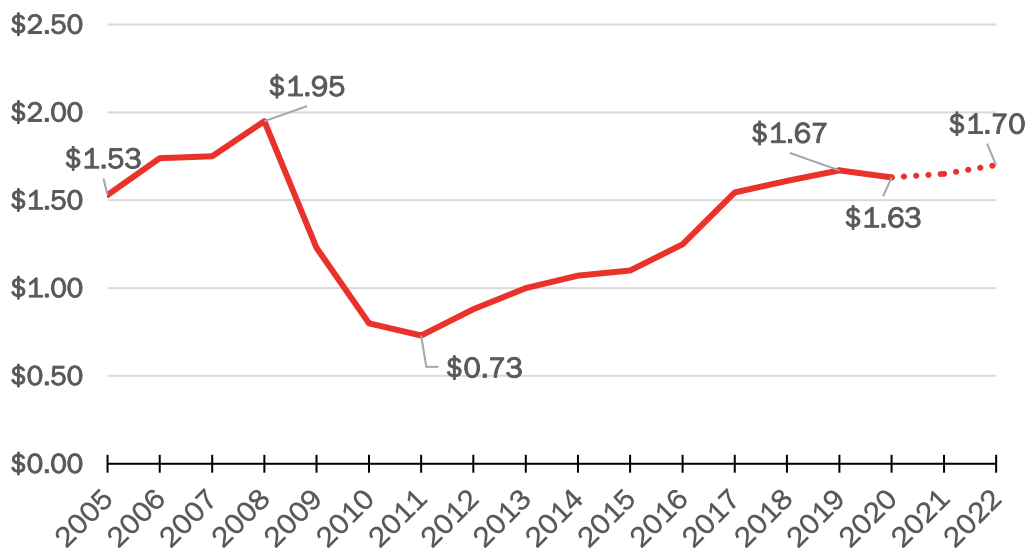
#### Exhibit 8

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



#### Exhibit 9

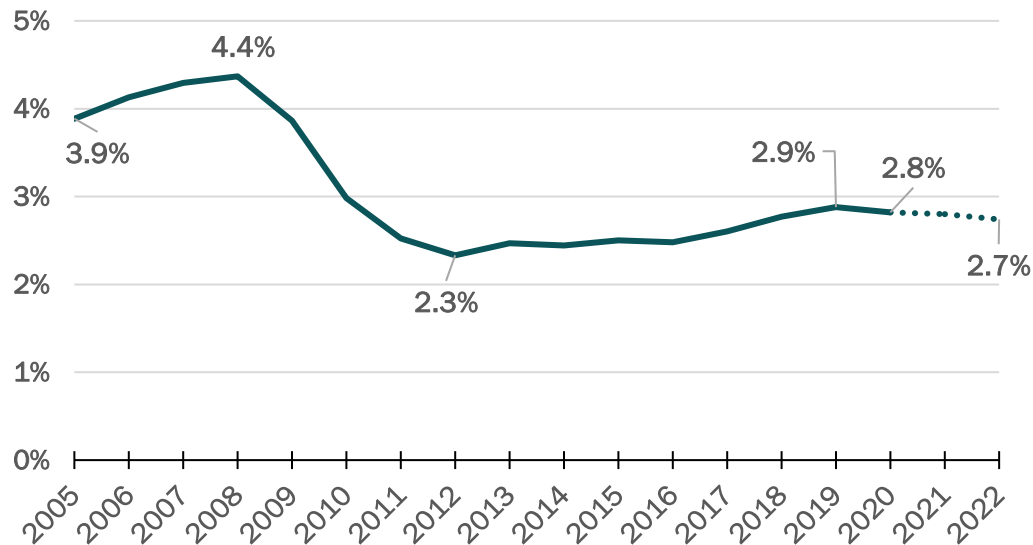
*First year increases in new settlements, shown as dollars*



## Increases for All Contract Years

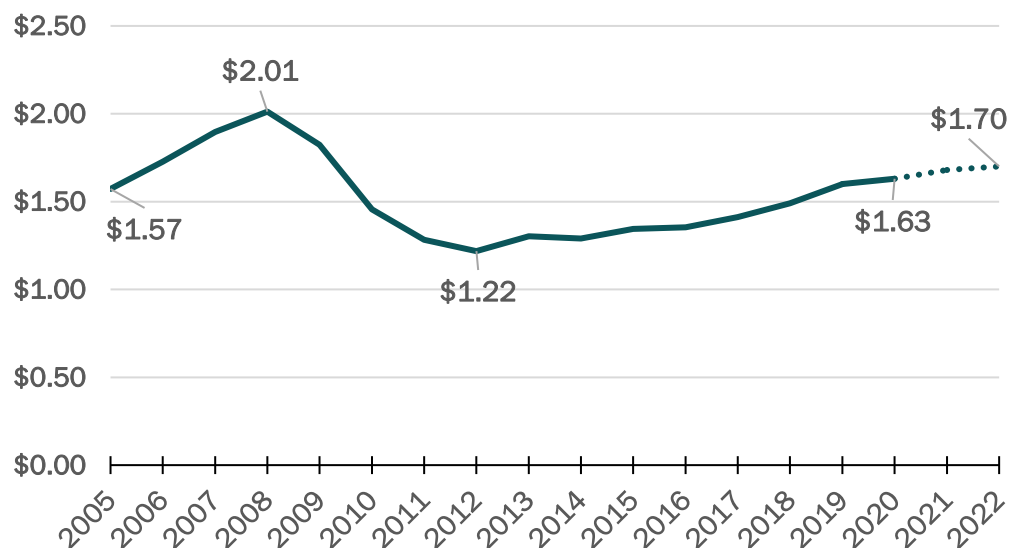
### Exhibit 10

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 2021 – 2025 increases).

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