

2026 CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Construction Executive Compensation Report

A deep-dive analysis of salary, bonuses, benefits, and trends for construction executives across six U.S. regions and five sectors.

PREPARED BY

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A NOTE FROM THE FOUNDER

Why we built this report.

I am in compensation conversations with construction GCs and owners across the country every single week. Senior PMs, superintendents, directors, VPs. Real searches, real offers, real numbers from candidates currently weighing decisions. This report is what I see from that seat.

Most published salary data is six to twelve months stale by the time it lands in your inbox. The numbers in this report are cross-checked against the surveys most firms rely on (PAS, CFMA, Moss Adams x Baker Tilly) and then validated against what candidates are actually accepting in 2026. Where the survey data and the placement data disagree, I say so. Where they line up, you can move on it.

If you are an owner, president, COO, or HR leader making compensation decisions on construction leadership hires this year, use this. Argue with it. Bring it to your next comp meeting. And if you want to talk through how the numbers apply to your specific market, sector, and stage of growth, my contact information is on the last page.

Jordan Arp

Founder & CEO, Flowstate Search

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What this report covers.

The construction industry's executive compensation landscape has undergone a fundamental recalibration over the past four years. The 2021 to 2023 period produced the most aggressive wage growth the industry has seen since modern tracking began, driven by a convergence of inflation, post-pandemic labor shortages, and an unprecedented surge in public and private construction spending. By 2024 and into 2026, the pace of increases has moderated, but the floor has permanently moved higher.

This report synthesizes data from industry salary surveys (PAS, Moss Adams x Baker Tilly, CFMA), job posting aggregators (Indeed, Glassdoor, ZipRecruiter, Salary.com), specialized construction recruiters (Birmingham Group, Flowstate Search, Amundson Group), and authoritative industry publications (ENR, AGC) to produce the most comprehensive current picture of construction executive compensation available.

Five key findings

4.1–4.6%

Annual base salary increase, down from a 5.6% peak in 2023 but still outpacing most industries.

15–30%

Sustained premium for sector specialists in Industrial, Heavy Civil, and Data Center work.

Structural

The talent shortage is not cyclical. Pressure on senior comp will continue through the decade.

Total compensation has grown faster than base salary alone due to expanded bonus structures, profit-sharing, and equity participation at senior levels. Regional disparities remain significant, with Pacific Northwest and Northeast markets paying the highest absolute dollars, while Southeast and Southwest markets are closing the gap rapidly due to population-driven construction booms.

SECTION 01

Market context and two-year compensation trends

1.1 The post-pandemic compensation surge

Understanding current compensation requires understanding the trajectory that produced it. Between 2021 and 2024, construction executives experienced the most dramatic salary increases in decades. Construction input inflation spiked to 19.6% in 2021, far above the general inflation rate, creating intense wage pressure at every level of the organization. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act simultaneously injected \$550 billion into construction projects, dramatically increasing demand for experienced leadership at precisely the moment when the workforce was most constrained.

The result was a sustained period of historically high compensation growth. According to data from Personnel Administration Services (PAS), the industry's leading compensation research firm for contractors, average annual executive compensation increases hit a high mark of 5.6% in 2023, the highest level since 2000. This followed increases of 5.1% in 2022 and 5.0% in 2021, the first time since 2000 that average increases surpassed 5% in consecutive years.

Year	Avg. Executive Pay Increase	CPI Inflation Rate
2019 (Pre-Pandemic)	4.2%	2.3%
2020	3.1%	1.2%
2021	5.0%	7.0%
2022	5.1%	6.5%
2023	5.6%	3.4%
2024	4.6%	2.9%
2025 (Actual/Est.)	4.4–4.5%	2.5%
2026 (Forecast)	4.0–4.1%	2.5%

Sources: PAS Executive Compensation Survey for Contractors; BLS CPI data.

1.2 The stabilization phase (2024 to 2026)

The Moss Adams x Baker Tilly 2025 Construction Industry Salary Report, which surveyed contractors across the nation, confirmed that salary growth decreased in 2025. The report noted that across most participating regions,

increases aligned more closely with cost-of-living adjustments rather than the aggressive compensation inflation seen in prior years, suggesting the labor market, while still tight, is beginning to stabilize. Firms are no longer using dramatic wage increases as the primary attraction tool. Instead, total rewards strategies, including enhanced benefits, deferred compensation, and equity, are becoming the differentiators.

Jeff Robinson, president of PAS, cautions that while the trend is downward, the current level of increases remains historically elevated and still outpaces most other industries. Critically, he notes that despite the surge, most construction employees still have not fully recovered their purchasing power lost to inflation since 2021. Between March 2020 and March 2025, inflation rose 23.8% over five years, while superintendents and project superintendents saw five-year pay changes of only 22% and 21%, respectively. Construction managers fared worse, with only a 15% five-year pay change.

1.3 Structural drivers of sustained demand

Several structural factors will prevent compensation from reverting to pre-pandemic norms. The average age of a construction superintendent in the United States is over 50, and a disproportionate number of experienced leaders are approaching retirement age with a thin pipeline of replacements. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 9% employment growth in construction management from 2024 to 2034, more than twice the average across all occupations. The IIJA continues to fund large-scale infrastructure projects, and data center construction alone is projected to exceed \$50 billion annually, creating sustained demand for specialized leadership.

SECTION 02

Role-by-role compensation analysis

2.1 Superintendent

The superintendent is the highest-ranking field leader on a construction project, responsible for schedule, safety, subcontractor coordination, and daily site operations. Compensation for this role has seen some of the most significant gains in the industry, as the shortage of experienced field leaders is particularly acute.

National compensation benchmarks

The cleanest current range for construction superintendent base salary in 2026 is \$100,000 to \$126,000 for most experienced site leaders, according to Salary.com data (25th to 75th percentile as of May 1, 2026). Indeed reports an average base salary of \$101,821 from over 18,400 job-posting data points. Glassdoor places the typical U.S. range from \$86,782 to \$171,000. The CFMA/PAS 2025 Executive Compensation Survey for Contractors provides the most authoritative industry-specific benchmark, reporting that Project Superintendents have a typical overall base pay range of \$122,000 to \$150,000, with an average salary of \$138,100 and an average bonus of \$23,124. General Superintendents (the senior superintendent in an organization) command a range of \$139,036 to \$188,000, with an average salary of \$166,543 and an average bonus of \$37,284.

Experience Level	Typical Base Salary	Total Compensation
Assistant Superintendent	\$75,000 – \$95,000	\$80,000 – \$105,000
Superintendent I (Smaller Projects)	\$90,000 – \$110,000	\$100,000 – \$125,000
Experienced Superintendent	\$110,000 – \$135,000	\$125,000 – \$155,000
Senior Superintendent	\$130,000 – \$160,000	\$150,000 – \$185,000
General Superintendent	\$150,000 – \$188,000	\$175,000 – \$225,000+

Sources: Birmingham Group; CFMA/PAS; Flowstate Search.

Sector-specific premiums

The sector in which a superintendent operates is the single largest variable after experience level. Commercial construction represents the market baseline. Healthcare and education projects, with their ICRA compliance requirements and occupied-facility complexity, add a 10 to 15% premium. Industrial and manufacturing projects, requiring process knowledge and equipment-intensive management, and infrastructure and heavy civil work command premiums of 15 to 25% above commercial rates.

Sector	Superintendent Base Salary Range
Commercial	\$100,000 – \$130,000
Multifamily	\$90,000 – \$120,000
Healthcare / Education	\$110,000 – \$140,000
Industrial / Manufacturing	\$115,000 – \$150,000
Infrastructure / Heavy Civil	\$115,000 – \$150,000
Data Center / Mission Critical	\$130,000 – \$170,000+

Sources: Birmingham Group; Amundson Group.

Two-year trend

PAS data shows that project superintendents saw an average base pay increase of 3.7% in 2024, while total compensation, including bonus, went up 5%, suggesting that variable pay is increasingly absorbing the compensation growth. Project superintendents in heavy civil saw average base pay increases of 6.8% in 2024, significantly outpacing the overall average. Over the five-year period from 2020 to 2025, superintendents came closest to keeping pace with inflation, with a cumulative pay change of approximately 22%.

FROM THE FIELD

In active searches this year, experienced data center and mission critical superintendents are routinely getting two and three competing offers. The published ranges above are the floor, not the ceiling. We have seen general superintendents on hyperscale data center work clear \$210K base plus completion bonuses that push total comp past \$275K.

2.2 Senior Project Manager

The Senior Project Manager is responsible for the overall direction of the largest revenue-producing projects within a company. They establish project objectives, liaise with prime client contacts, and monitor both construction and financial activities. This role has seen some of the most intense competition for talent, with recruiters reporting that searches for senior project managers have surged significantly.

National compensation benchmarks

The national median for Senior PM base salary lands between \$150,000 and \$185,000 in 2026, with total compensation reaching \$210,000 or more. The CFMA/PAS survey reports the typical overall base pay range at \$128,000 to \$158,000, with an average salary of \$145,045 and an average bonus of \$27,502. ZipRecruiter reports an average of \$133,172, while PayScale places the median at approximately \$128,263. The Birmingham Group's 2026 guide places senior-level PMs at \$135,000 to \$185,000+ in base pay, with total compensation often 15 to 35 percent above base.

Experience Level	Typical Base Salary	Total Compensation
Project Manager (3 – 5 yrs)	\$95,000 – \$115,000	\$105,000 – \$130,000
Senior Project Manager (6 – 10 yrs)	\$130,000 – \$150,000	\$150,000 – \$175,000
Principal / Executive PM (10+ yrs)	\$150,000 – \$185,000+	\$175,000 – \$210,000+

Sources: Birmingham Group; CFMA/PAS.

Sector-specific premiums

Healthcare and pharmaceutical projects command the highest PM premiums due to regulatory complexity, occupied-facility requirements, and strict documentation standards. Data center and technology facility work is similarly premium-priced. Residential and multifamily work sits at the bottom of the PM pay scale.

Sector	Senior PM Base Salary Range
Commercial	\$115,000 – \$145,000
Multifamily	\$95,000 – \$125,000
Industrial / Manufacturing	\$120,000 – \$155,000
Heavy Civil / Infrastructure	\$125,000 – \$160,000
Healthcare / Pharmaceutical	\$135,000 – \$175,000
Data Center / Mission Critical	\$130,000 – \$170,000

Source: Birmingham Group.

Two-year trend

The Senior PM role has experienced some of the strongest demand signals in the industry. Mark Jones, Executive Vice President at Kimmel & Associates, stated in early 2025 that searches for senior project managers and project executives have gone way up over the prior year. The combination of high demand and a thin pipeline of qualified candidates continues to push total compensation upward even as base salary growth moderates.

FROM THE FIELD

The Senior PM searches we run today close on average 12 to 18% above what the same search would have closed at three years ago, and counteroffers are the rule, not the exception. If you are not prepared to move quickly with a strong total comp package, you will lose your top candidate to their current employer in week two.

2.3 Director of Operations

The Director of Operations manages all field operations or all project management for a region or division. This role carries P&L responsibility and manages teams of 10 to 50 or more direct and indirect reports. It represents the first true executive-level role in most construction organizations.

National compensation benchmarks

Glassdoor reports the average Director of Construction Operations salary at \$165,623 per year nationally, with a typical range of \$130,000 to \$210,000. Salary.com places the median at approximately \$158,818 to \$202,187 depending on exact title and scope. The Flowstate Search 2026 guide, drawing from active recruiter placements, reports \$140,000 to \$220,000 with total compensation of \$180,000 to \$280,000. The CFMA/PAS survey reports Operations Managers (the equivalent role) at a typical base range of \$150,000 to \$190,000, with an average salary of \$171,489 and an average bonus of \$52,057.

Scope	Typical Base Salary	Total Compensation
Regional Director (Single Market)	\$140,000 – \$175,000	\$170,000 – \$220,000
Director of Operations (Multi-Market)	\$160,000 – \$200,000	\$200,000 – \$260,000
Senior Director / Division Leader	\$185,000 – \$220,000	\$230,000 – \$280,000

Sources: Flowstate Search; CFMA/PAS; Glassdoor.

Two-year trend

The Director of Operations role has benefited from the broader surge in demand for operational leadership. As construction firms have grown their project backlogs, the need for experienced leaders who can manage multiple project teams simultaneously has intensified. Compensation for this role increased by approximately 20% cumulatively between 2021 and 2024, and continues to grow at a rate of 4% to 5% annually.

2.4 Vice President of Construction

The Vice President of Construction is responsible for the day-to-day administration of a major operational work segment, providing direction and guidance to subordinate executives. This role is where compensation becomes truly executive-level, with significant variable pay components.

National compensation benchmarks

Salary.com reports the average VP of Construction salary at \$255,802 as of May 1, 2026, with a 25th to 75th percentile range of \$229,102 to \$289,202 and top earners (90th percentile) reaching \$319,611. The CFMA/PAS survey reports Vice Presidents of Operations at a typical base range of \$180,000 to \$249,000, with an average salary of \$215,613 and an average bonus of \$113,143. Division Vice Presidents show a range of \$178,000 to \$246,000, with an average salary of \$211,020 and an average bonus of \$95,644. Glassdoor data for Vice President of Construction Management shows a total pay range of \$153,000 to \$277,000 annually.

Scope	Typical Base Salary	Total Compensation
VP of Construction (Regional)	\$180,000 – \$230,000	\$215,000 – \$290,000
VP of Construction (National)	\$215,000 – \$289,000	\$270,000 – \$375,000
SVP of Construction	\$250,000 – \$320,000	\$350,000 – \$500,000+

Sources: Salary.com; CFMA/PAS; Flowstate Search.

At PE-backed firms, equity participation is increasingly standard for VP-level roles and above. This can take the form of phantom equity or profit interests, and can result in seven-figure payouts at exit over a typical 4 to 5 year hold period.

Two-year trend

The VP of Construction role has seen its median salary modestly decrease from \$241,710 in 2023 to approximately \$235,437 in 2025 on some platforms, reflecting the normalization of the market after the peak. However, total compensation has remained robust due to expanded bonus structures. The highest-paying markets for this role are San Jose (\$322,602), San Francisco (\$319,002), and Oakland (\$312,302), with major Sunbelt markets like Atlanta (\$250,402), Dallas (\$252,602), and Phoenix (\$252,602) continuing to close the gap.

2.5 Vice President of Preconstruction

The Vice President of Preconstruction is responsible for directing all estimating and preconstruction activities within the organization. This role is widely considered one of the most undersupplied positions in the industry. Jeff Wittenberg of Kaye/Bassman noted in early 2025 that in estimating and preconstruction, fewer people want to go into the role, to the detriment of the industry.

National compensation benchmarks

Glassdoor reports the average VP of Preconstruction salary at \$241,859 per year, with a total pay range of \$185,000 to \$322,000 (25th to 75th percentile) and top earners reaching \$411,926. The CFMA/PAS survey reports Vice Presidents of Estimating at a typical base range of \$163,000 to \$218,000, with an average salary of \$196,137 and an average bonus of \$92,375. The Flowstate Search guide reports a Preconstruction Manager base of \$110,000 to \$175,000 with total comp of \$140,000 to \$220,000, with top performers exceeding \$250,000 when pursuit bonuses and win-rate incentives are included.

Scope	Typical Base Salary	Total Compensation
Preconstruction Manager	\$110,000 – \$175,000	\$140,000 – \$220,000
Director of Preconstruction	\$150,000 – \$200,000	\$185,000 – \$260,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$185,000 – \$241,000	\$240,000 – \$322,000+

Sources: Glassdoor; CFMA/PAS; Flowstate Search.

Two-year trend

The preconstruction discipline has seen sustained demand growth, driven by the increasing complexity of project delivery methods (design-build, CM at-risk) and the growing importance of early-stage cost management. The scarcity of qualified candidates continues to push compensation above market norms. Companies that tie preconstruction compensation to revenue generated can see total comp exceed \$250,000 for top performers.

FROM THE FIELD

Preconstruction is the hardest discipline to recruit for right now. The candidate pool is thin and the candidates who exist know what they are worth. Searches in this space are taking 30 to 45 days longer than equivalent operations searches, and clients who anchor too low on base lose the candidate before the first interview.

SECTION 03

Regional compensation analysis

Regional compensation is driven by a combination of cost of living, union density, local project pipeline, and competition for talent. The following analysis covers all six targeted regions.

3.1 Pacific Northwest (WA, OR)

The Pacific Northwest is historically a high-compensation market, driven by large metro work in Seattle and Portland, strict environmental regulations, and significant tech-sector construction. However, the region has experienced a notable slowdown in construction employment growth. Washington had the third steepest drop-off in construction employment year-over-year as of August 2025, at -4.9%. Despite this, wage levels remain elevated due to the high cost of living and the complexity of remaining projects.

Role	Pacific Northwest Base Salary Range
Superintendent	\$115,000 – \$155,000
Senior PM	\$140,000 – \$175,000
Director of Operations	\$170,000 – \$230,000
VP of Construction	\$265,000 – \$295,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$210,000 – \$280,000

Sources: Salary.com; Indeed Oregon data; Birmingham Group.

The average VP of Construction salary in Seattle is approximately \$282,702, and Portland averages \$268,002. Construction superintendent salaries in Oregon average \$119,292 per year on Indeed, with Glassdoor placing the Portland average at \$116,400.

3.2 Northeast (NY, MA, NJ, CT)

The Northeast represents the highest-cost construction market in the country, with dense urban project pipelines, strong union presence, and significant institutional and commercial work. New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Connecticut consistently rank among the top-paying states for construction and extraction occupations.

Role	Northeast Base Salary Range
Superintendent	\$120,000 – \$165,000
Senior PM	\$140,000 – \$180,000

Role	Northeast Base Salary Range
Director of Operations	\$175,000 – \$235,000
VP of Construction	\$270,000 – \$319,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$215,000 – \$290,000

Sources: Salary.com; Birmingham Group.

Despite the high absolute salary levels, the Northeast has seen among the lowest percentage increases in recent years, with New York and New Jersey averaging only 4.5% annual increases, ranking at or near the lowest nationally since 2020. This suggests these markets have reached a plateau while other regions catch up.

3.3 Southeast (FL, GA, NC, TN)

The Southeast has been one of the fastest-growing construction markets in the country, driven by population growth, corporate relocations, and significant infrastructure investment. Nashville, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Raleigh are experiencing rapid construction growth with superintendent and PM demand to match.

Role	Southeast Base Salary Range
Superintendent	\$95,000 – \$145,000
Senior PM	\$115,000 – \$155,000
Director of Operations	\$155,000 – \$205,000
VP of Construction	\$240,000 – \$265,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$190,000 – \$255,000

Sources: Amundson Group; Salary.com; Glassdoor Florida data.

The VP of Construction average in Atlanta is approximately \$248,000 to \$250,000, while Florida averages \$245,000 to \$249,000 depending on city. The Southeast historically had the highest turnover rates in the South-Central region (5.9% average annual increase in 2024), reflecting the intense competition for talent. Bob Honour of Honour Consulting notes that while heavy civil continues to perform well in the Southeast, commercial and multifamily sectors experienced layoffs in 2024 and early 2025, though a gradual recovery is anticipated.

FROM THE FIELD

Nashville and Charlotte are the two markets where our 2026 placement comp has run hottest. Both are pulling experienced PMs and supers out of Atlanta and Raleigh with 10 to 15% comp jumps plus relocation. Atlanta-based firms holding the line on comp are watching their bench walk out the door.

3.4 Southwest (TX, OK, NM, AZ)

Texas has consistently led the nation in the number of construction jobs added each month in recent years. From August 2024 to August 2025, Texas added 18,500 construction employees, bringing the total increase since February 2020 to 98,300, or 13%. The South-Central region (which includes Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma) recorded the highest average pay increase of 5.9% in 2024.

Role	Southwest Base Salary Range
Superintendent	\$100,000 – \$155,000
Senior PM	\$120,000 – \$160,000

Role	Southwest Base Salary Range
Director of Operations	\$160,000 – \$215,000
VP of Construction	\$245,000 – \$275,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$195,000 – \$260,000

Sources: Amundson Group; Salary.com.

Houston is the highest-paying market in the region, particularly for industrial and petrochemical work, where superintendents can earn up to \$180,000 in base pay. Dallas-Fort Worth is driven by commercial and data center growth, while Austin's technology campus and mixed-use development sustains strong PM demand.

3.5 Mountain West (CO, AZ, UT, NV)

The Mountain West is experiencing one of the most dynamic construction booms in the country. Arizona has seen construction employment climb 1.3% from August 2024 to August 2025 and 28% over the 5.5 years since February 2020. Phoenix is experiencing a semiconductor and data center construction boom, and Denver's high cost of living drives a compensation premium.

Role	Mountain West Base Salary Range
Superintendent	\$105,000 – \$155,000
Senior PM	\$125,000 – \$165,000
Director of Operations	\$165,000 – \$215,000
VP of Construction	\$250,000 – \$280,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$200,000 – \$265,000

Sources: Amundson Group; Salary.com; Glassdoor Utah data.

The VP of Construction average in Denver is approximately \$260,702, while Phoenix averages \$252,602. Utah's VP of Construction average is \$220,335 on Glassdoor. The Mountain West benefits from strong in-migration, which simultaneously drives construction demand and increases the cost of living, supporting higher wages.

3.6 Midwest (IL, OH, MI, IN, MN)

The Midwest generally aligns with or sits slightly below the national average in absolute salary terms, but lower living costs often translate to superior purchasing power. Chicago remains the dominant high-paying hub in the region due to union influence and large urban construction volume. The data center boom in upper Midwest states, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, is driving particularly strong demand for industrial and mission-critical construction leaders.

Role	Midwest Base Salary Range
Superintendent	\$95,000 – \$140,000
Senior PM	\$110,000 – \$150,000
Director of Operations	\$155,000 – \$200,000
VP of Construction	\$248,000 – \$267,000
VP of Preconstruction	\$185,000 – \$250,000

Sources: Salary.com; CFMA/PAS.

The VP of Construction average in Chicago is \$267,202, Minneapolis is \$264,302, and Columbus is \$249,202. The Great Lakes states reported the lowest turnover rate nationally at 13.3%, suggesting a more stable labor market.

SECTION 04

Bonus structures

Bonuses have become an increasingly critical component of total compensation, particularly for senior roles. The most competitive construction firms structure bonuses across multiple dimensions to align executive incentives with company performance.

4.1 Annual performance bonuses

Annual bonuses are the most common form of variable compensation and are typically tied to company or division profitability. For senior roles, these can represent a substantial percentage of base salary.

Role	Typical Annual Bonus (% of Base)	Typical Annual Bonus (\$)
Superintendent	10% – 20%	\$15,000 – \$35,000
Senior PM	15% – 25%	\$25,000 – \$50,000
Director of Operations	20% – 35%	\$40,000 – \$75,000
VP of Construction	35% – 55%	\$95,000 – \$160,000
VP of Preconstruction	40% – 55%	\$90,000 – \$130,000

Sources: CFMA/PAS; Flowstate Search.

The CFMA/PAS data provides specific average bonus figures: Project Superintendents average \$23,124; Senior PMs average \$27,502; Operations Managers average \$52,057; Division VPs average \$95,644; VPs of Operations average \$113,143; and VPs of Estimating (equivalent to VP of Preconstruction) average \$92,375.

4.2 Project-level and milestone bonuses

Project completion bonuses are particularly common for field leaders (Superintendents and PMs) and are tied to specific performance metrics including schedule adherence, safety record (EMR), budget performance, and client satisfaction scores. These bonuses typically range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per project for Superintendents and \$10,000 to \$50,000 for Senior PMs on large projects.

Retention bonuses tied to project milestones have also become standard, particularly for travel-heavy or remote-site assignments. Payments of \$2,000 to \$10,000 tied to project milestones are common retention tools for skilled field leaders.

4.3 Profit sharing

Profit sharing is common at mid-size and large general contractors. Typical structures allocate 5% to 15% of pre-tax profits to an executive pool distributed based on role, tenure, and performance. A PM managing \$15 million projects reported a profit share of \$50,000 in a strong year, illustrating the meaningful upside this structure can provide.

4.4 Long-term incentives and equity

At the VP level and above, particularly within PE-backed firms, equity participation is increasingly standard. This can take the form of phantom equity, profit interests, or direct ownership stakes. Over a typical 4 to 5 year hold period, equity participation can add \$500,000 to \$2 million or more in realized value depending on company performance. Non-Qualified Deferred Compensation (NQDC) plans are also being used as powerful retention tools, offering executives the ability to defer significant compensation while remaining employed.

FROM THE FIELD

Equity is now the difference-maker on VP-level searches. In the past twelve months, every VP candidate we have placed at a PE-backed firm has had phantom equity or profit interest as part of the package. Independent and family-owned firms competing for the same talent without an equity story are losing finalists at the offer stage.

SECTION 05

Benefits packages

The benefits landscape for construction executives has evolved significantly, with firms competing on total rewards packages rather than base salary alone.

5.1 Health insurance

Medical, dental, and vision coverage is nearly universal for salaried construction professionals. Employer-sponsored family health coverage premiums reached \$26,993 annually in 2025, a 6% increase from 2024, with employees typically paying \$1,065. Comprehensive health coverage is reported by 74% of construction companies, slightly above the national average of 69%.

5.2 Retirement benefits

The 401(k) with employer match is the standard retirement vehicle. Typical matches range from 3% to 6% of salary. For senior executives, NQDC plans are increasingly being used to provide additional tax-advantaged retirement savings above IRS limits. The Moss Adams x Baker Tilly 2025 report highlighted deferred compensation as an underutilized yet powerful tool for retention and succession planning, especially when targeted toward key leaders such as essential project managers and executives.

5.3 Vehicle allowances and per diem

Vehicle support is nearly universal for Superintendents and PMs. Options include a company-provided truck (most common for Superintendents) or a monthly vehicle allowance of \$700 to \$1,000. For travel-heavy roles, per diem rates of \$100 to \$175 per day are standard, and some firms offer additional travel bonuses or rotation schedules.

5.4 Paid time off

Enhanced PTO has become a key differentiator in attracting senior talent. Experienced executives typically receive 20 or more days of PTO annually, with some firms offering unlimited PTO for VP-level roles. The construction industry has historically lagged behind other industries in PTO offerings, making this an area of active improvement.

5.5 Professional development and certifications

Many firms offer tuition reimbursement, certification support (PMP, OSHA 30, LEED, CSP), and access to leadership development programs. These benefits add meaningful long-term value and are particularly important for attracting younger professionals entering the industry.

SECTION 06

Sector-specific compensation summary

The following table consolidates compensation data across all five roles and five primary sectors, providing a comprehensive reference for compensation planning.

Role	Commercial	Multifamily	Industrial	Heavy Civil	Data Center
Superintendent	\$100K – \$130K	\$90K – \$120K	\$115K – \$155K	\$115K – \$150K	\$130K – \$170K+
Senior PM	\$115K – \$145K	\$95K – \$125K	\$120K – \$155K	\$125K – \$160K	\$130K – \$170K
Director of Operations	\$150K – \$200K	\$140K – \$185K	\$165K – \$220K	\$160K – \$215K	\$180K – \$240K
VP of Construction	\$210K – \$270K	\$195K – \$255K	\$230K – \$295K	\$225K – \$290K	\$250K – \$325K
VP of Preconstruction	\$175K – \$240K	\$160K – \$220K	\$195K – \$260K	\$185K – \$250K	\$215K – \$290K

Note: All figures represent base salary ranges. Total compensation including bonuses is typically 20% to 50% higher for Director and VP roles. Data Center / Mission Critical ranges reflect the premium driven by security clearance requirements, 24/7 operational schedules, and specialized MEP coordination. Sources: Birmingham Group; CFMA/PAS; Flowstate Search; Amundson Group.

SECTION 07

Outlook and strategic implications

7.1 Near-term compensation trajectory (2026 to 2028)

Salary growth is expected to normalize at 3% to 5% annually through 2027 and 2028, assuming inflation remains under control and supply chains stabilize. Critically, the wage gains from 2021 to 2024 will not disappear. They serve as the new baseline for construction pay across the United States. The BLS projects 7% employment growth in construction jobs between 2024 and 2034, significantly higher than the 4% average across all occupations, which will sustain upward pressure on wages.

7.2 Roles under the most pressure

The roles experiencing the most acute talent shortages, and therefore the most sustained compensation pressure, are experienced Superintendents, Senior PMs, and Preconstruction leaders. The average development timeline to become an effective superintendent is 8 to 15 years of field experience, and there is no shortcut. Companies that fail to price these roles at market will face extended search timelines, counteroffers, and the compounding cost of project delays.

7.3 The total rewards imperative

As base salary growth moderates, the battleground for top talent is shifting to total rewards. Firms that win talent in 2026 and beyond will be those that offer compelling combinations of competitive base pay, meaningful performance bonuses, clear equity or profit-sharing pathways, comprehensive benefits, and genuine career development opportunities. The Moss Adams x Baker Tilly report explicitly encourages construction leaders to take a holistic view of workforce planning and notes that deferred compensation remains an underutilized yet powerful tool for retention and succession planning.

7.4 Immigration policy as a wild card

Immigration policy represents a significant variable in the construction labor equation. The Census Bureau estimated that 84% of U.S. population growth in 2024 came from outside the country, and analyses show that 34% of craft workers in construction are foreign-born. Tightening immigration enforcement in 2025 has already reduced net immigration significantly, and this shift is likely to have profound effects on both the supply of construction workers and the demand for housing and commercial construction.

SECTION 08

Methodology and sources

This report synthesizes data collected and cross-referenced during May 2026 from the following primary sources.

Source	Type	Key Data Points
PAS Executive Compensation Survey	Industry Survey	Annual pay trends, role averages, bonus data
CFMA Building Profits (Robinson, 2025)	Industry Publication	Role benchmarks, turnover, cost-of-living analysis
Moss Adams x Baker Tilly 2025 Report	Industry Survey	Salary growth, benefits, regional employment data
ENR Cost Reports (Q1 & Q2 2025)	Trade Publication	Executive pay trends, sector demand, recruiter insights
Salary.com (May 2026)	Job Market Aggregator	Role-specific national and city-level salary data
Glassdoor (May 2026)	Self-Reported / Modeled	Role-specific ranges, company-level data
ZipRecruiter (May 2026)	Job Posting Aggregator	State and national averages
Indeed (May 2026)	Job Posting Aggregator	Average salaries from active job postings
Birmingham Group (2026 Guides)	Specialty Recruiter	Role benchmarks, sector premiums, regional data
Amundson Group (2026 Guide)	Specialty Recruiter	Texas and Southeast regional data
BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook	Government Data	Employment projections, median wages
AGC / AGC Washington (2025)	Industry Association	Employment trends, regional data
Flowstate Search active placements	Internal Data	Active placement data, total comp structures, bonuses



LET'S TALK

You have the data. Now talk to someone who lives in it.

This report tells you where the market sits. It does not tell you what your next Senior PM, Director of Ops, or VP hire will actually accept. That answer lives in a 30-minute conversation, not a salary table.

If you are about to open a search, structure a counteroffer, or build out a comp band for 2026, that call is the highest-leverage thing you can do this week.

WHAT YOU'LL GET ON THE CALL

- A read on what your specific role and market are actually paying right now.
- An honest assessment of whether your offer will close the candidate you want.
- Real numbers from active searches, not recycled survey data.

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