The Economic Impact of Construction in the United States and Illinois

Economic Impact of Construction:
- U.S. gross domestic product (GDP)—the value of all goods and services produced in the country—totaled $19.5 trillion in 2017; construction contributed $781 billion (4.0%). In Illinois, construction contributed $28.1 billion (3.4%) of the state’s GDP of $822.5 billion, less than the industry’s 4.0% share of U.S. GDP.
- Construction wages and salaries in 2017 totaled $436 billion in the United States, including $16.2 billion in Illinois.

Nonresidential Construction Spending:
- Nonresidential spending in the U.S. totaled $748 billion in 2018 ($453 billion private, $295 billion public) and $714 billion in 2017.
- Nonresidential starts in Illinois totaled $7.3 billion in 2018 and $8.5 billion in 2017, according to ConstructConnect.

Construction Employment (Seasonally Adjusted):
- Construction (residential + nonresidential) employed 7.4 million workers in February 2019, an increase of 223,000 (3.1%) from February 2018, but 3.9% less than in April 2006, when U.S. construction employment peaked.
- Construction employment in Illinois in February 2019 totaled 224,400, a decrease of 0.1% from February 2018, and 20% less than the state’s peak in December 2001.
- Construction unemployment is near a series low. In AGC’s 2019 Hiring and Business Outlook Survey, 78% of firms in the U.S. and 54% in Illinois reported difficulty filling salaried and hourly craft worker positions.

Construction Industry Pay:
- In 2017, pay for all construction industry employees in the U.S. averaged $60,700, 10% more than the average (mean) for all private-sector employees. Pay for construction industry employees in Illinois was $70,900 in 2017, 21% more than the state average for all private-sector employees.
- The five most numerous construction occupations in Illinois had higher median pay than the median for all employees in the state. (Half of workers earn more than the median; half earn less.)

Small Business:
- The U.S. had 669,000 construction firms in 2015, of which 92% were small (1 to 19 employees). Illinois had 28,500 construction firms in 2015, of which 93% were small.

[Graph: Illinois Construction Employment, 1/90–2/19 (seasonally adjusted; shading = recessions)]

[Graph: Construction Employment Change from Year Ago 1/08–2/19 (seasonally adjusted)]

Empl. Change by Metro (not seasonally adjusted)

5 most numerous construction jobs and median annual pay in Illinois (2017 data)