

Construction Workforce Disparity Study – Race and Ethnicity Addendum #2

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (METRO)**

February 16, 2026

In January 2025, Estolano Advisors finalized and submitted a Construction Workforce Disparity Study to LA Metro. Using data from LCPtracker and the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the 2025 study analyzed and aimed to expand the availability and utilization of female construction workers in the region, including on Metro's projects. Estolano Advisors developed the following addendum in response to Metro Board Member Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker's March 2025 request to: *"Report back in May on the status of efforts to address cultural competency requirements for the rest of the historically underutilized, including the other cultural sensitivities and the disparities that continue to exist and what factors to consider, and include best practices of those that took the scorecard seriously."*

In addition to women, other "historically underutilized" construction workers include Black workers, Indigenous workers, and other workers of color. Nationwide, the construction industry has historically engaged in exclusionary hiring practices, leading to a workforce that remains predominantly white. Metro's March 2025 Construction Workforce Disparity Study references a 2024 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission report "which states that Black workers were nearly 13% of the U.S. labor force in 2023 but less than 7% of the construction workforce." According to the LA Black Worker Center and the UCLA Labor Center, similar disparities exist in Los Angeles County, where 7% of all workers but only 3% of construction workers identify as Black.¹

Public Sector Construction Workforce by Race/Ethnicity

To estimate public works construction workforce availability, the consultant team utilized payroll data from LCPtracker, a payroll system used by most public works construction projects in the Greater LA Area² to track hours by race, gender, trade, apprentice or journey-level status, and other parameters. Every worker in LCPtracker's system has worked on a project using a labor agreement such as a project labor agreement (PLA) or community workforce agreement (CWA). Many public construction projects in the Greater LA Area use PLAs, so every worker recorded in LCPtracker could hypothetically work on public construction projects, including those at LA Metro. As such, the consultant team analyzed this data to estimate the public works construction workforce in the Greater LA region.

In April 2025, Metro and Estolano Advisors requested updated versions of the LCPtracker datasets with race/ethnicity as an additional variable. LCPtracker provided this data in January 2026. The LCPtracker data categorizes each worker into one of the following "ethnicity" categories: African American or Black, Asian, Caucasian or White, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Other. To simplify our analysis, and to align with the ethnic categories in the apprentice dataset, the consultant team recategorized workers who identify as Native Hawaiian and Asian as "Asian/Pacific Islander."

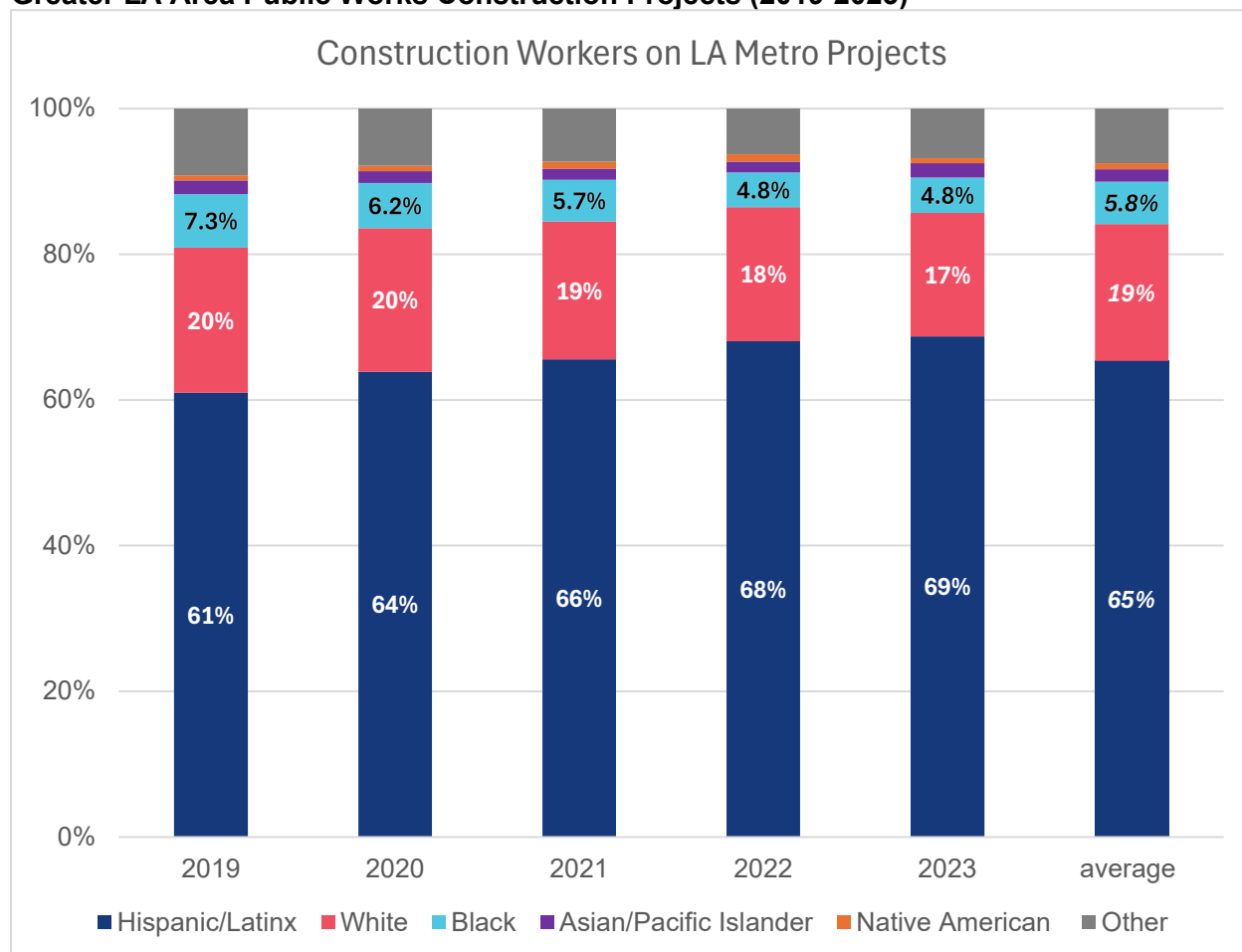
¹ UCLA Labor Center, "Ready to Work, Uprooting Inequity: Black Workers in Los Angeles County," March 2017, https://www.labor.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/UCLA_BWC_report_5-3_27-1.pdf

² The Greater LA Area includes five Southern California counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Ventura, and San Bernadino.

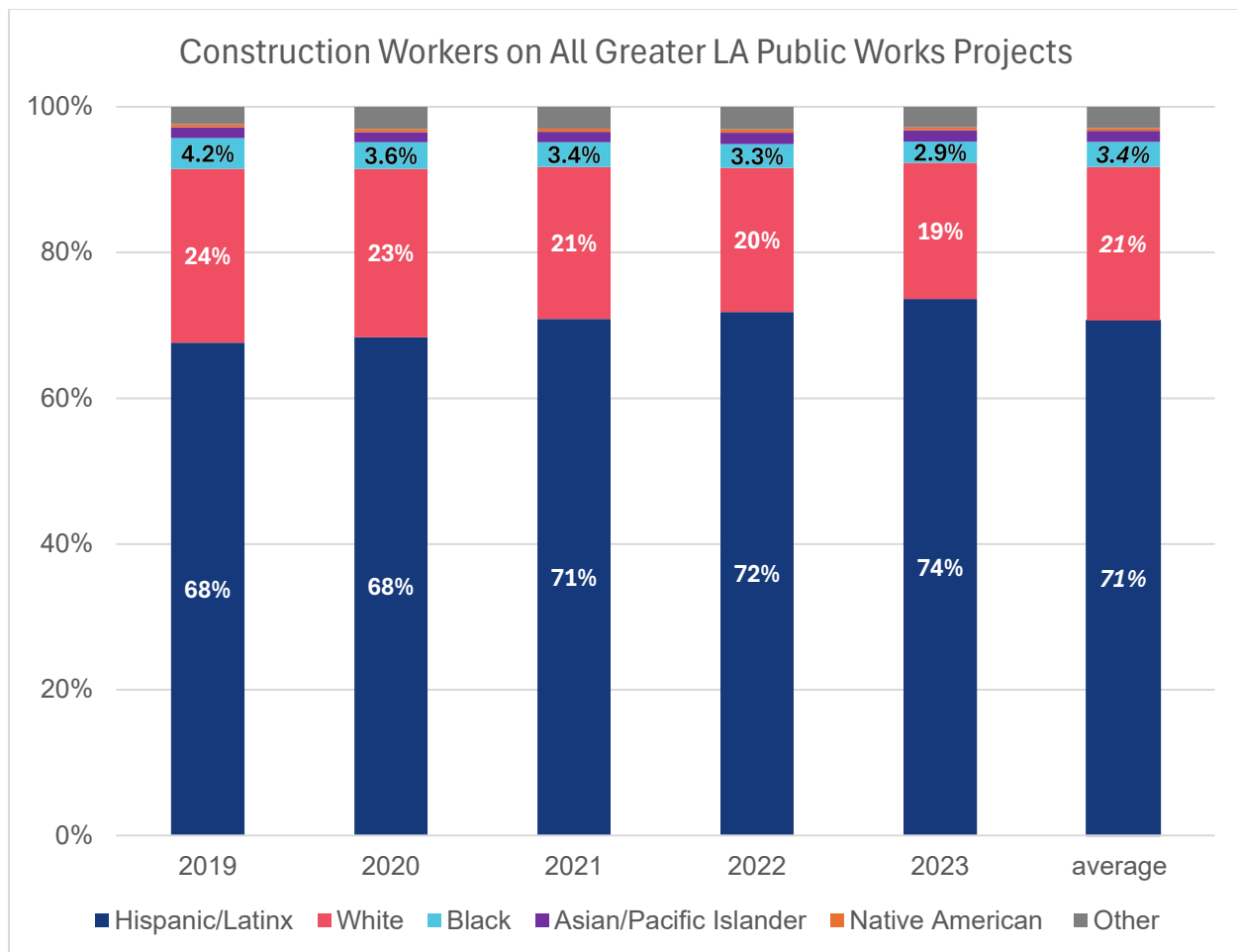
Construction Work Hours by Ethnicity

Figure 1 shows the participation by ethnicity on both Metro construction projects and other public works projects in the Greater LA Area between 2019 and 2023. During those years, Hispanic/Latinx workers performed an increasing majority of construction work hours on Metro and non-Metro projects. Meanwhile, the share of White worker hours and Black worker hours gradually decreased each year on Metro and non-Metro projects. On Metro projects, the share of Asian/Pacific Islander work hours, Native American work hours, and hours by workers of “Other” ethnicities fluctuated year to year, constituting roughly 1.7%, 0.8%, and 7.5% of work hours, respectively. On other public works projects, the share of Asian/Pacific Islander work hours (1.5%), Native American work hours (0.4%), and work hours performed by “Other” ethnicities (2.9%) fluctuated at lower levels.

Figure 1: Worker Participation by Ethnicity on LA Metro Construction Projects and on All Greater LA Area Public Works Construction Projects (2019-2023)



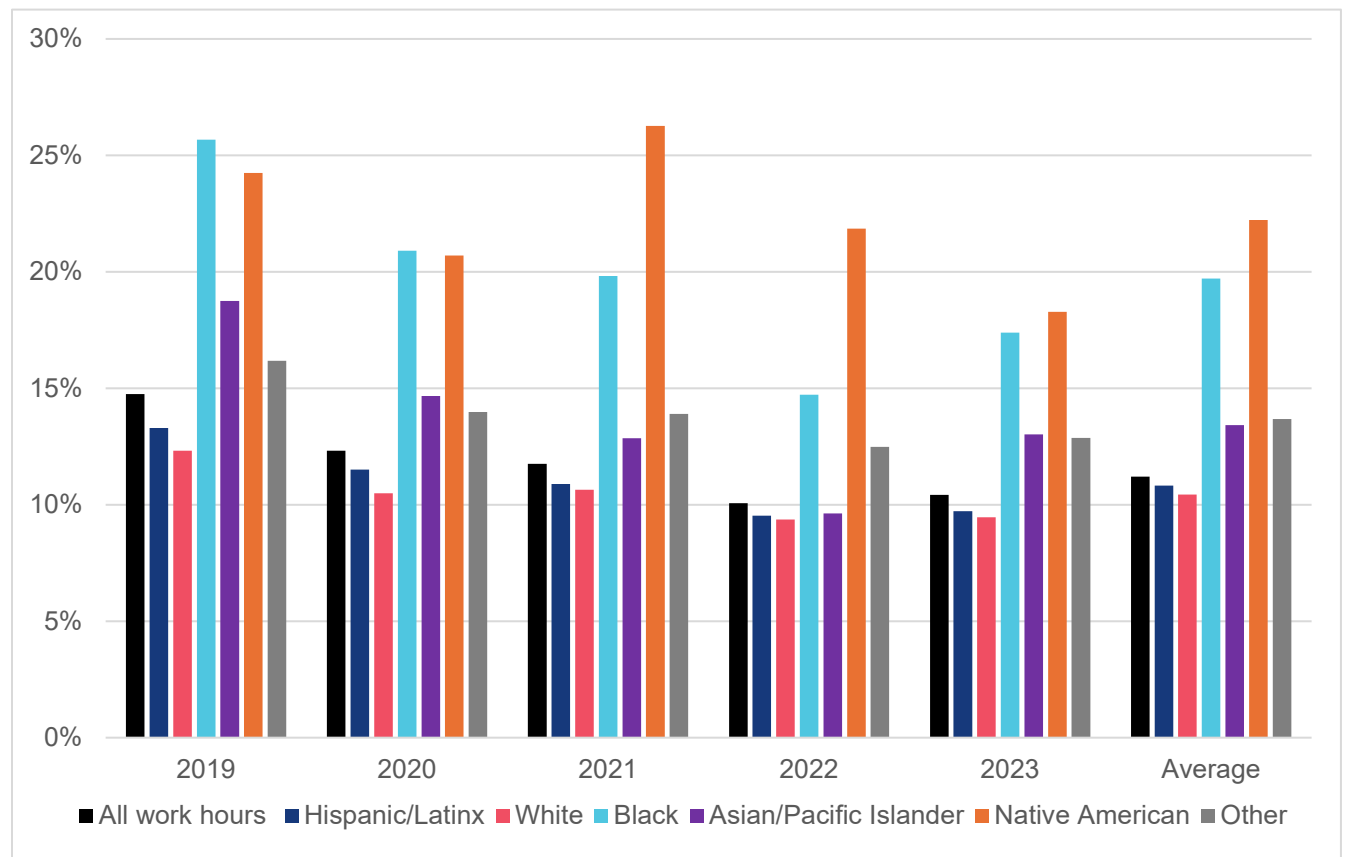
Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)



Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Figure 2 highlights LA Metro's share of work hours across the Greater LA region from 2019 to 2023 by ethnicity. Metro's share of construction work hours declined (-4%) from 2019 to 2023, with Metro accounting for nearly 15% of all construction work hours in the Greater LA Area in 2019 but only around 10% of construction work hours in 2023. However, Metro continues to supply a much larger share of Black and Native American work hours compared to all work hours in the Greater LA Area. For example, while Metro supplied roughly 11.2% of all construction work hours between 2019 and 2023, Metro supplied 19.7% of Black, and 22.2% of Native American construction work hours during the same time period.

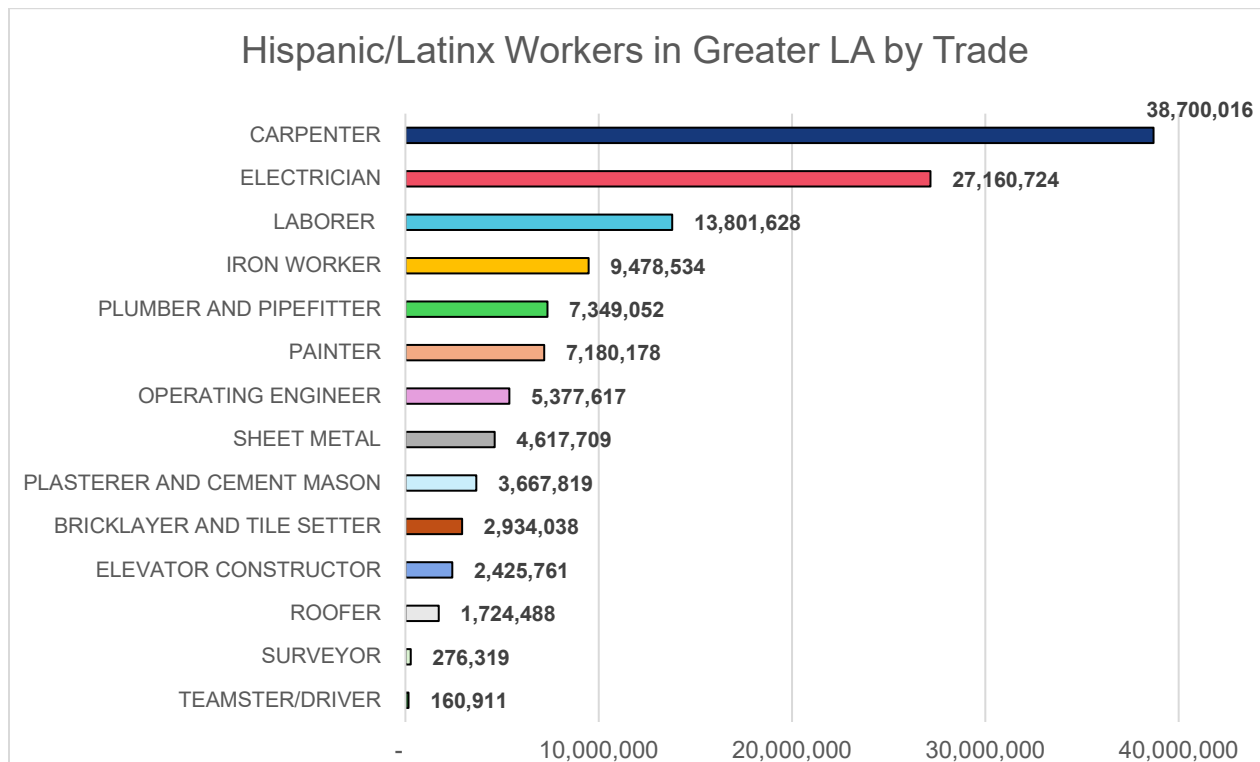
Figure 2: Share of Regional Work Hours on Metro Construction Projects by Ethnicity (2019-2023)



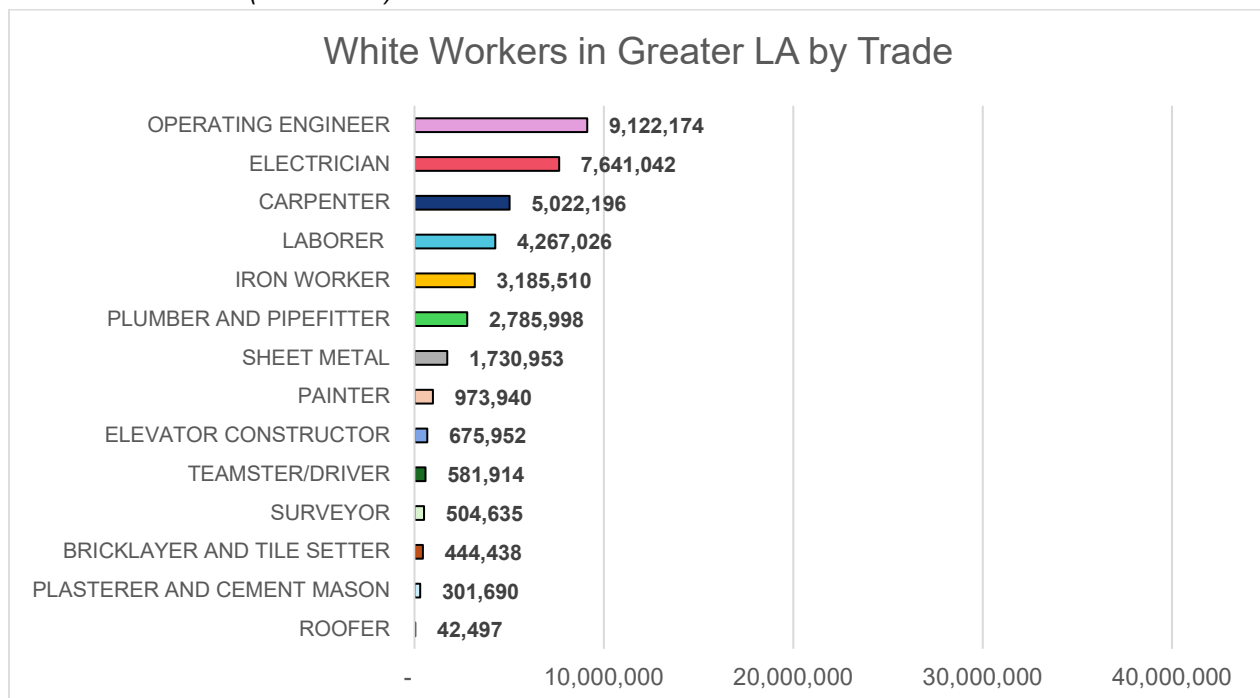
Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Figure 3 shows the estimated number of construction work hours by trade and by ethnicity in the Greater LA Area. The trades with the highest participation of all workers in Greater LA are (1) Laborer; (2) Carpenter; and (3) Electrician. However, the top three trades across ethnicities differ. The Teamster/Driver trade disproportionately represents Black worker hours in the region, as Black workers represent 40.8% of all Teamster/Driver work hours. Operating Engineer is the top trade for White and Native American workers, and the second (2nd) highest performed trade for Asian/Pacific Islander workers; however, Operating Engineer is the seventh (7) most performed trade for Hispanic/Latinx workers. The discrepancy in work hours performed by ethnicity per trade indicate differences among the trades in recruitment and retention of different workers and may indicate disparities in career opportunities available to workers from different backgrounds.

Figure 3: Estimated Hours Worked on Regional Public Works Construction Projects by Ethnicity and Trade (2019-2023)

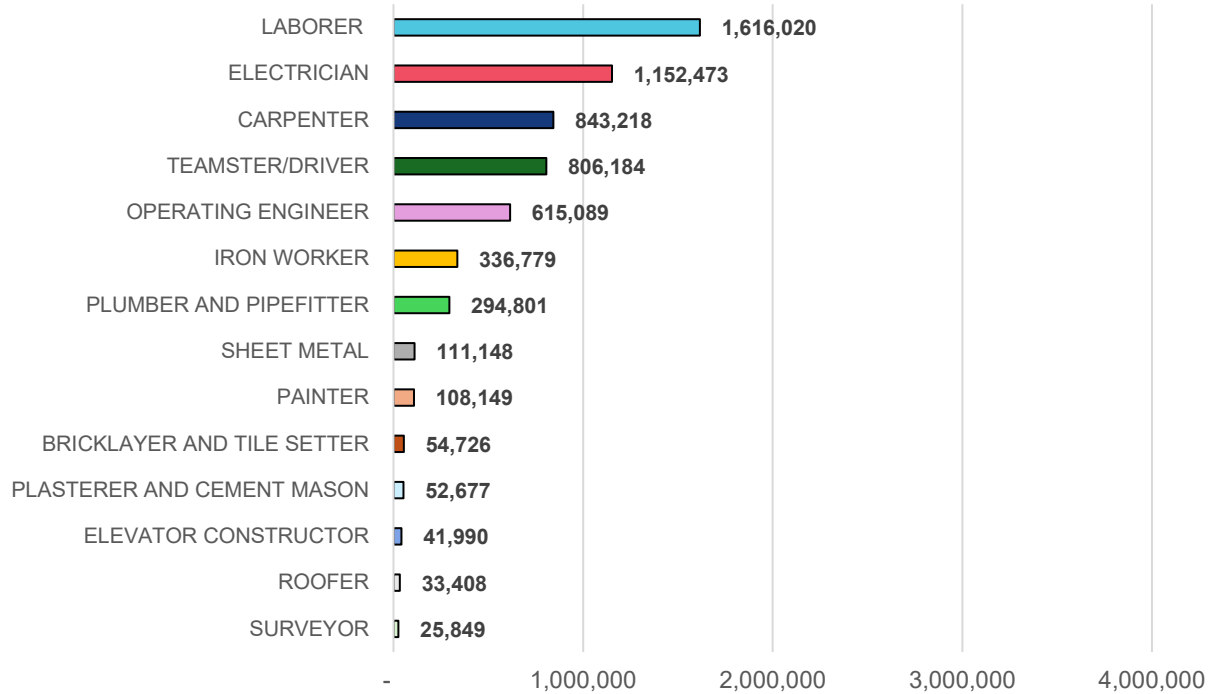


Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)



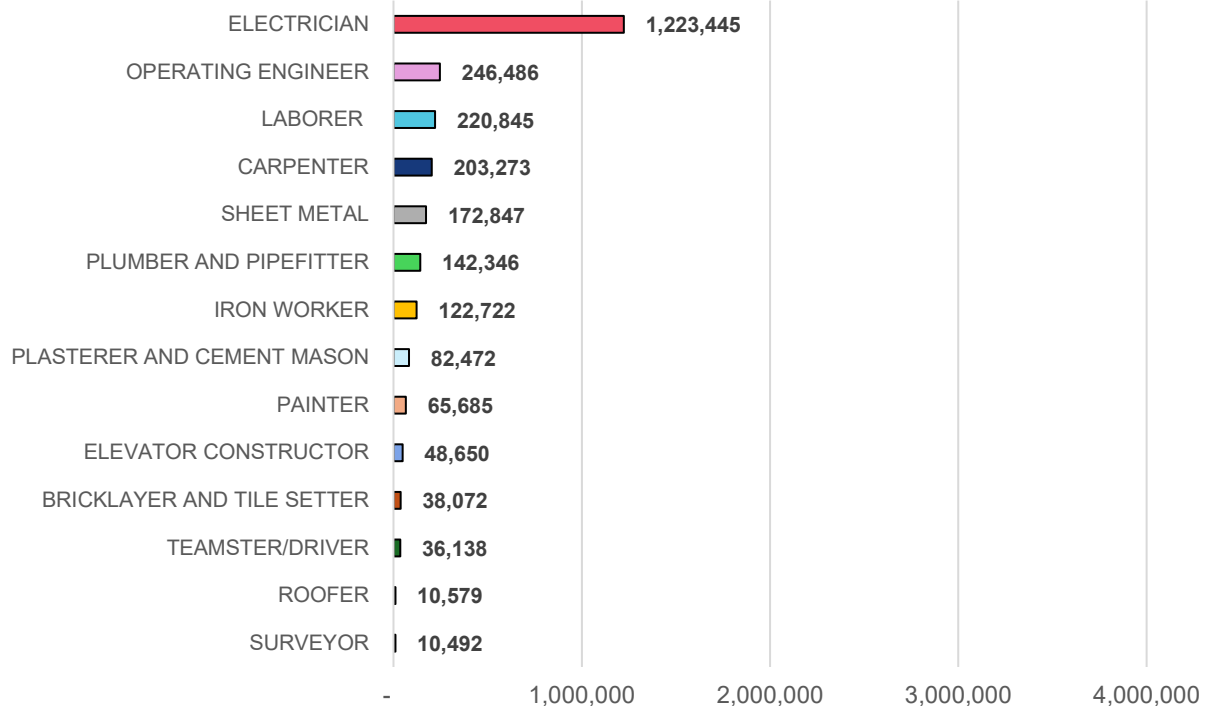
Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Black Workers in Greater LA by Trade



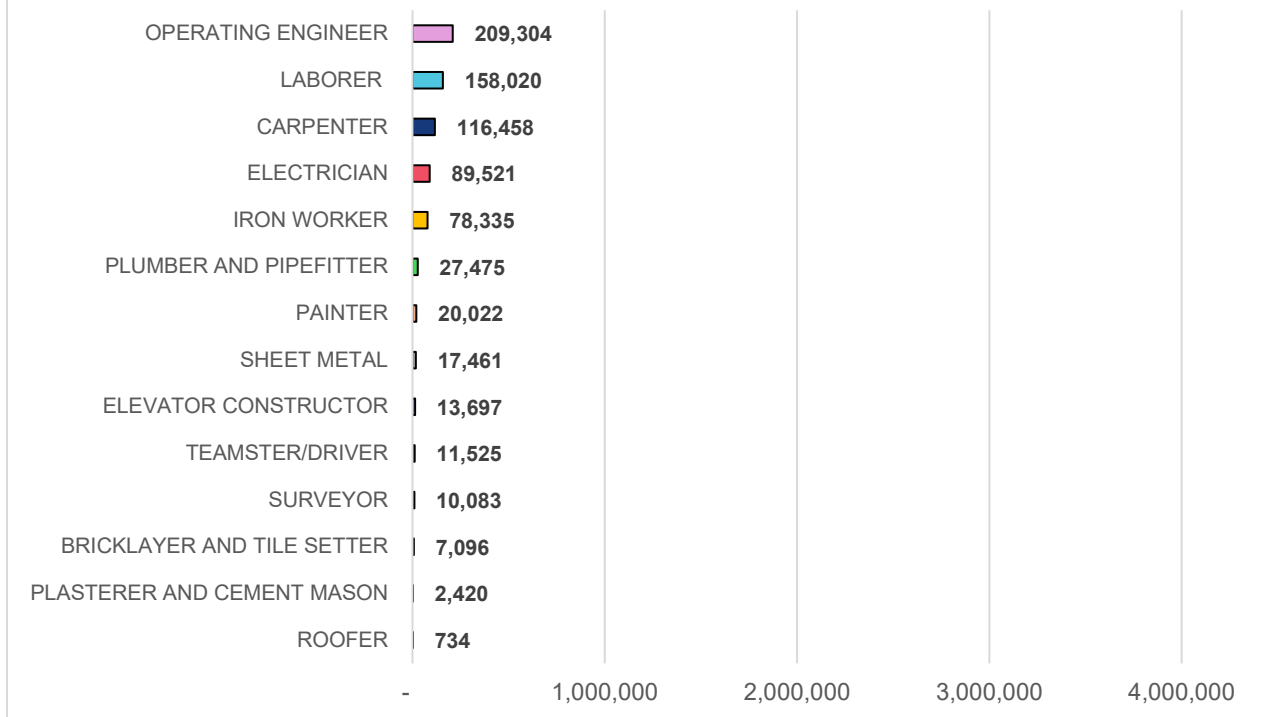
Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Asian/Pacific Islander Workers in Greater LA by Trade



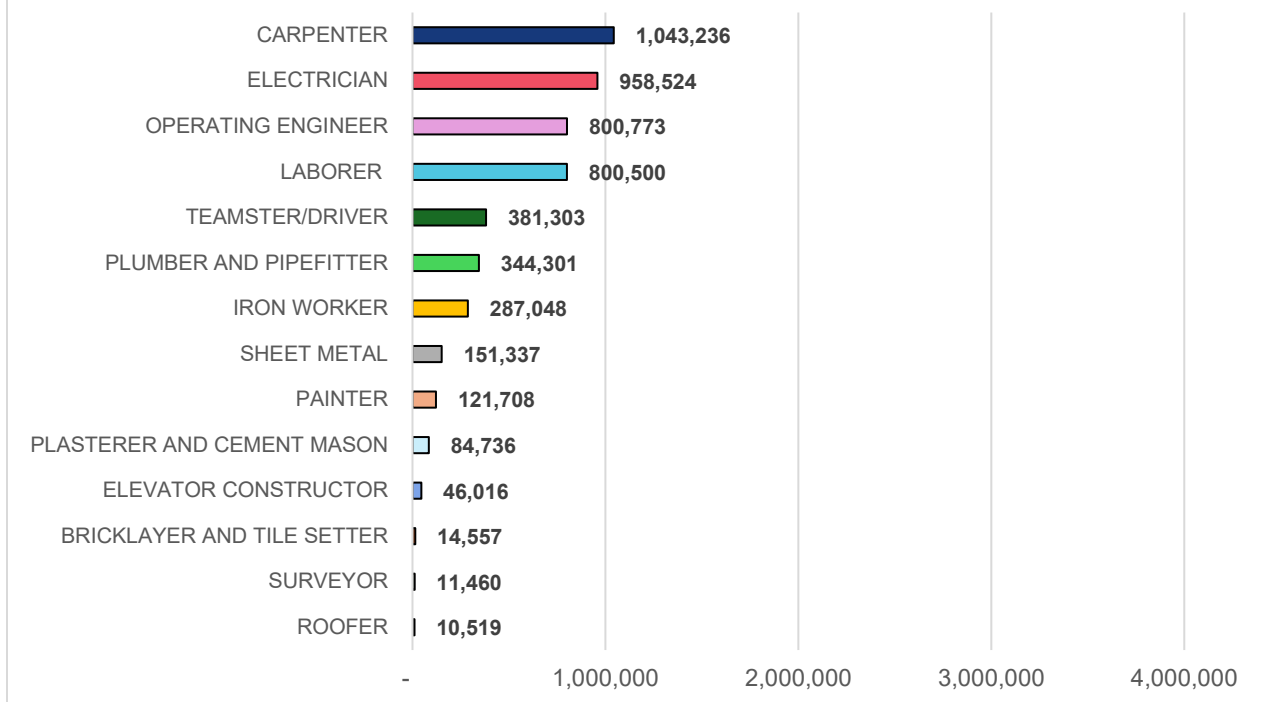
Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Native American Workers in Greater LA by Trade



Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Workers Identified as "Other" Ethnicity in Greater LA by Trade

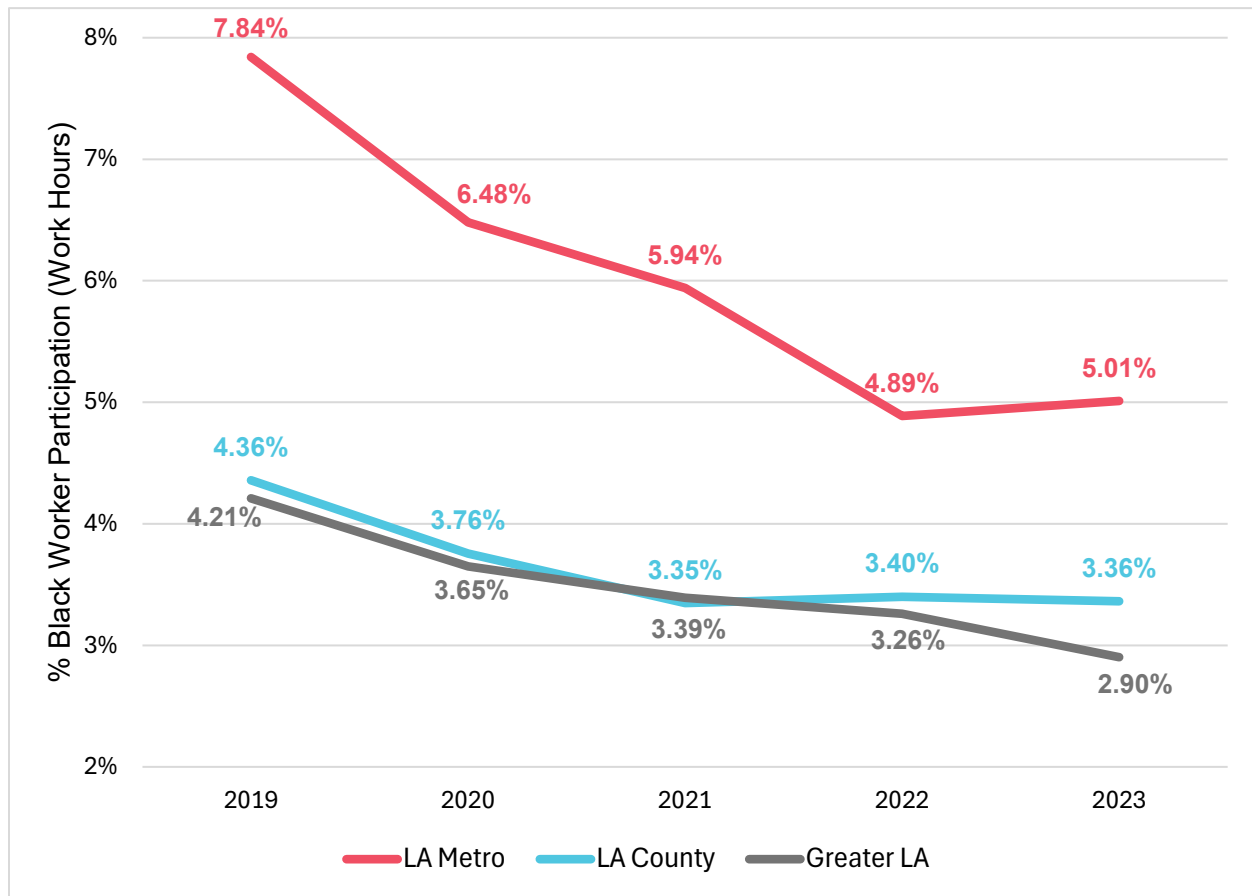


Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Black Worker Participation

Figure 4 highlights Black participation rates by work hours on construction projects between LA Metro, LA County³, and the Greater LA Area.⁴ Black worker participation from 2019 to 2023 declined across LA Metro, LA County, and the Greater LA Area. With a peak Black participation rate of 7.84% in 2019, LA Metro maintained a higher Black worker participation rate than the County and the region between 2019 and 2023. While LA Metro outperforms the region and the County overall, the decline rate between 2019 and 2023 is greater at LA Metro (-2.83%) than the County (-1%) and the region (-1.31%).

Figure 4: Black Worker Participation on Construction Projects (LA Metro, LA County and Greater LA Area)



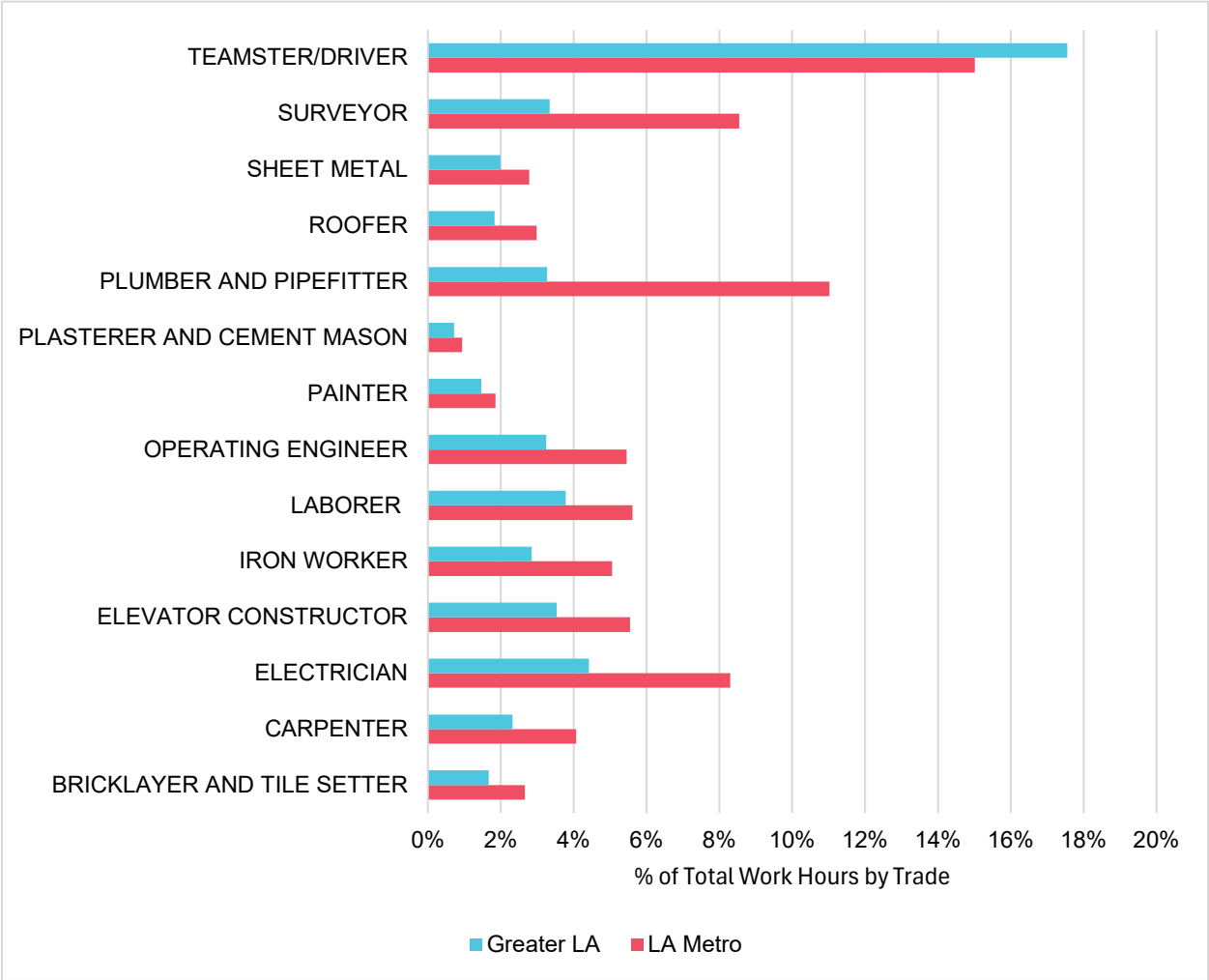
Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

³ "LA County" includes all public works construction taking place within the county boundary, including all LA Metro construction and some multi-county projects that intersect LA County.

⁴ The Greater LA Area includes five Southern California counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Ventura, and San Bernadino.

Figure 5 highlights Black participation rates by trade on construction projects in Greater LA and at LA Metro from 2019 to 2023. Overall, Black construction workers at LA Metro have a higher participation rate than Greater LA. The Teamster/Driver trade is the only trade where LA Metro has a smaller representation of Black work hours than the region. Notably, Plumber and Pipefitter, Surveyor, and Electrician are disproportionately represented by Black workers on LA Metro projects compared all public works projects in the Greater LA Area.

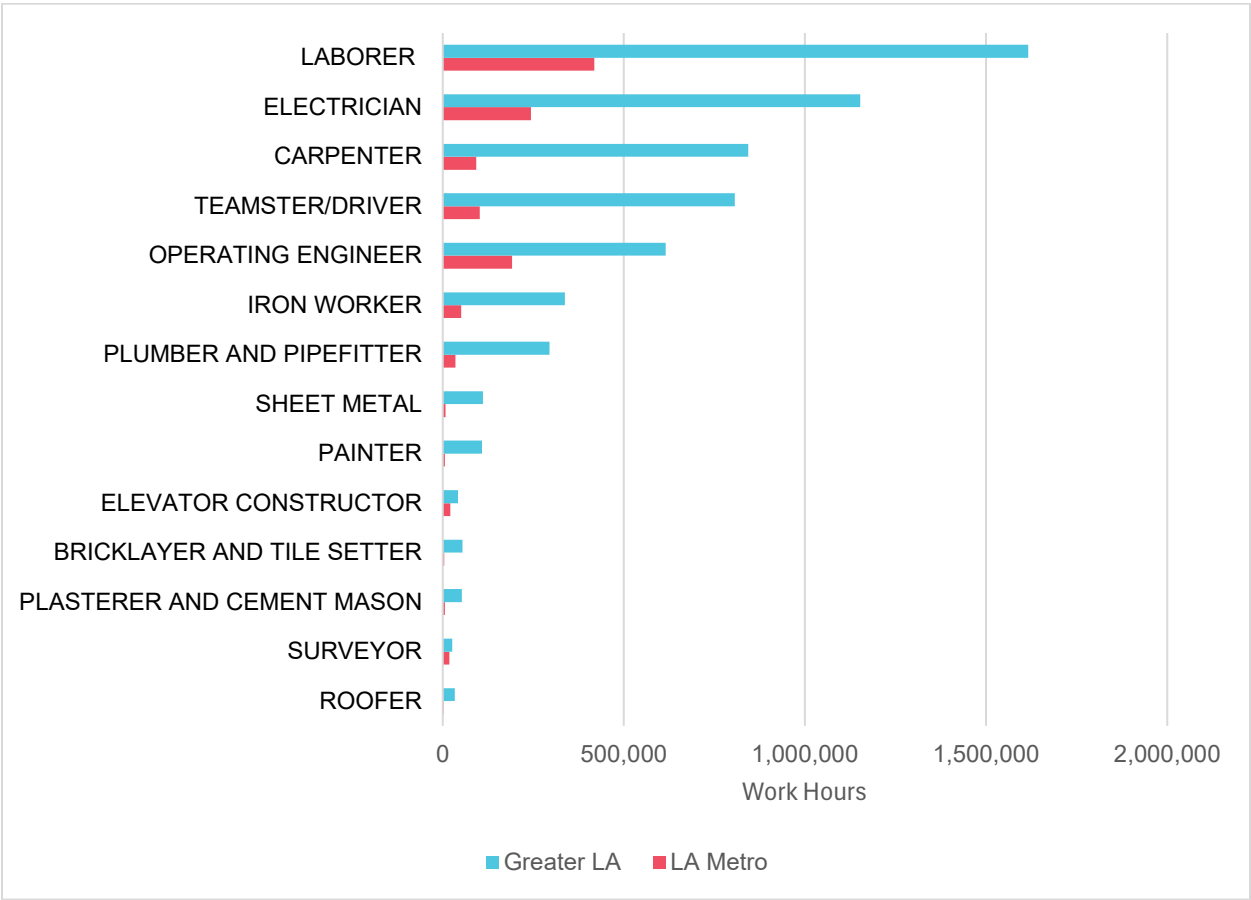
Figure 5: Black Worker Hour Participation on Construction Projects at LA Metro and in Greater LA by Trade (2019-2023)



Source: LCPtracker (2019-2023)

Figure 6 highlights Black worker hours by trade on construction projects in Greater LA and at LA Metro from 2019 to 2023. Regionally, the top three trades among Black Workers in terms of work hours were 1) Laborer; 2) Electrician; and 3) Carpenter. On LA Metro projects, Black workers also performed the highest number of hours in the Laborer and Electrician trades, but Operating Engineer ranked third among Black worker hours on Metro projects.

Figure 6: Total Work Hours Performed on Construction Projects at LA Metro and in Greater LA by Trade by Black Workers (2019-2023)



Source: LCPtracker

Appendix A: Updated Crosswalk of Construction Trade and Metro Craft

As **Table A-1** shows, the consultant team developed a “crosswalk” of trades, crafts, and occupations to ensure consistent analysis of different construction roles. The dataset LCPTracker provided for the 2026 addendum includes additional work hours in 2019 through 2023 that LCPTracker did not include in the dataset provided for the 2024 study. Some of these work hours correspond to crafts that were not available in the 2024 dataset. The consultant team sorted these new crafts, highlighted in blue in Table A-1, into the original 14 trades for further analysis. Note that

Table A-1: Crosswalk of Construction Trade, Metro Craft, and Standard Occupation Classification

Construction Trade	Metro Craft
BRICKLAYER AND TILE SETTER	Bricklayer, Stonemason
	Marble Finisher, Terrazzo Finisher, Terrazzo Worker
	Tile Finisher, Tile Layer, Terrazzo Installer, Terrazzo Setter
CARPENTER	Carpenter and Related Trades
	Drywall Installer / Lather (Carpenter)
	Millwright
	Pile Driver (Carpenter)
	Modular Furniture Installer, Residential Drywall Finisher, Scaffold
ELECTRICIAN	Electrician
	Electrical Utility Lineman
	Light Fixture Maintenance*
	Sound/Communication
	Telecommunications Technician*
	Telephone Installation*
	Communication Systems Installer, Technician, Groundman, Line Construction, Line Maintainer, Substation Technician
ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTOR	Elevator Constructor
	Elevator Apprentices, Elevator Mechanics, Elevator Union Apprentices
IRON WORKER	Boilermaker-Blacksmith
	Iron Worker
LABORER	Apprentice Landscape Irrigation Fitter

Construction Trade	Metro Craft
	Asbestos and Lead Abatement (Laborer) #
	Asbestos Worker, Heat and Frost Insulator
	Brick Tender
	Carpet Layer*
	Fire Safety and Miscellaneous Sealing*
	Furniture Mover & Related Classifications*
	Guniting Worker (Laborer)*
	Horizontal Directional Drilling
	Housemover (Laborer)*
	Laborer and Related Classifications
	Landscape Irrigation Fitter- LA METRO USE ONLY (New Maintenance of Way/Non Revenue Vehicle Building 61 s Design/Build)
	Landscape Maintenance Laborer*
	Landscape/Irrigation Laborer/Tender
	Parking and Highway Improvement (Striper-Laborer)*
	Plaster Tender
	Tunnel Worker (Laborer)*
	Asbestos Insulator, Asbestos Removal Worker, Hazardous Materials Handler, Insulator & Firestopper
OPERATING ENGINEER	Building / Construction Inspector and Field Soils and Material Tester
	Cranes, Pile Driver and Hoisting Equipment (Operating Engineer), Operating Engineer, Operating Engineer (Landscape Construction)
	Engineer
	Field Surveyor
	Inspector/Tester
	Tunnel (Operating Engineer)*
	Operator, Operator - General Engineering Equipment, Operator - Power Equipment
PAINTER	Carpet, Linoleum, Resilient*
	Drywall Finisher
	Glazier
	Painter, Painter - Industrial
	Drywall, Drywall Installers/Lathers, Resilient Floor & Decorative Covering, Soft Floor Layer
	Cement Mason

Construction Trade	Metro Craft
PLASTERER AND CEMENT MASON	Plasterer
PLUMBER AND PIPEFITTER	Fire Sprinkler Fitter*
	Meter Technician*
	Plumber
	Plumbing HVAC
	HVAC, Sprinkler Fitter
ROOFER	Metal Roofing Systems Installer
	Roofer
SHEET METAL	Sheet Metal Worker (HVAC)
	Fabricator Technician
SURVEYOR	Surveyor
	Field Supervisor, Land Survey
TEAMSTER/DRIVER	Driver (On/Off-Hauling To/From Construction Site)*
	Teamster
	Ready-Mixed Driver, Truck Driver

*Non-apprentice crafts