

Workforce Intelligence Lab

Central Florida Construction Workforce: A Descriptive Baseline

Descriptive Research Brief

County employment evidence for Orange, Seminole, Osceola, and Lake, with Florida context and a project-planning evidence checklist.

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ABSTRACT

A regional workforce assessment should begin with a reproducible description of employment and an explicit boundary around what those data can establish. This brief uses BLS QCEW annual private-construction cells for Orange, Seminole, Osceola, and Lake counties, with statewide Florida context. The selected counties recorded combined annual average employment of 91,233 in 2024, equivalent to 14.1% of the Florida private-construction total. These are covered jobs, not a count of available workers. The brief supplies a descriptive baseline and a practical evidence checklist for project planning; it does not estimate labor shortages, project staffing capacity, or hiring availability.

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1 Geographic and Decision Scope

The regional evidence in this paper covers four explicitly selected counties: Orange, Seminole, Osceola, and Lake. “Central Florida” is shorthand for this study boundary, not a claim that all agencies or employers use the same regional definition. County codes and the aggregation recipe are retained in the supporting tables. A project drawing workers from a wider commute shed needs a separately justified boundary.

The decision question is what this employment baseline can contribute to an early project or workforce-planning assessment. It can describe the scale and distribution of covered construction employment. It cannot identify how many workers could accept a new assignment, which credentials they hold, their current commitments, or the schedule on which they could mobilize.

Florida figures provide statewide context. They must not be relabeled as regional results. In particular, the statewide change from 2020 to 2024 is not evidence of the same growth rate in these counties. This paper reports no regional time-series change because the selected regional evidence is a single annual baseline.

2 Sources, Definitions, and Reference Period

The analysis uses BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages annual files [R1-R6]. Every reported employment and pay cell selects construction, NAICS 23; private ownership, code 5; all establishment sizes, code 0; and annual period A. Statewide and county records use their respective BLS aggregation levels. The table labels the geography, reference year, employment unit, and dollar measure explicitly.

Annual average employment is an average of covered employment observations, not the number of unique people employed at any time during the year. QCEW describes jobs at establishments, and a person can hold more than one job. Construction establishments can also perform work away from their reporting location. Establishment geography therefore does not perfectly map project-site labor or the residence of workers [B2].

Average annual pay is the QCEW wage measure per annual-average job. It combines occupations and pay circumstances within the industry and is not a quoted wage for a particular trade or an estimate of benefits. Dollar values are nominal. The paper makes no inflation-adjusted wage comparison and reports no occupational wage premium.

The baseline is explicitly 2024, with 2020 used only for the statewide employment comparison. It is not labeled the latest available QCEW release. More recent files require their own comparable extraction and source checks before they replace this fixed version.

3 Verification and Suppression

The research-use state-detail extract was reconciled against the original BLS files at the complete source key. A warehouse disclosure-field artifact contained a literal quotation mark where the source contained a blank disclosure field. The analysis follows the verified source disclosure value, retains the warehouse value in the audit file, and preserves nondisclosed values as missing. No source database was modified.

Financial activities, industry code 1023, is excluded from construction analysis despite appearing in the warehouse table bearing a construction label. NAICS 23 is a parent industry: adding its subsectors to the parent would double-count employment. This brief uses the NAICS 23 total once per geography. The regional total adds nonoverlapping counties only; it does not add Florida to its counties.

The public numerical findings use disclosed cells only. No suppressed cell was converted to zero or estimated from neighboring cells. The evidence appendix records the full reconciliation counts, source hashes, selected county cells, and executable calculation checks. Source verification establishes what the files contain; it does not expand the substantive meaning of employment or pay.

4 Findings: County Employment and Pay

The selected county cells show the following 2024 private-construction employment and nominal average annual pay [R2-R5]:

TABLE 1. PRIVATE-CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT AND AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY, SELECTED COUNTIES, 2024

COUNTY	ANNUAL AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT, JOBS	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY, DOLLARS
Orange	47,157	\$76,536
Seminole	24,759	\$74,065
Osceola	7,092	\$60,057
Lake	12,225	\$72,902
Selected four-county total	91,233	Not calculated

Orange has the largest covered construction employment base among the selected counties. The differences in average annual pay warrant investigation of industry mix, occupations, hours, and establishment characteristics before being used for a compensation decision. These aggregate figures cannot establish that the same job is paid differently across counties.

No regional average pay is reported. Averaging the county pay figures equally would give each county equal influence regardless of employment, while weighting rounded source averages can introduce rounding error. A separately specified regional wage measure should be calculated from compatible source totals if needed. County values remain useful as labeled descriptive context.

5 Findings: Florida Context

Florida private-construction annual average employment increased from 561,991 in 2020 to 647,881 in 2024, a difference of 85,890 jobs, or 15.3% relative to the 2020 level [R1, R6]. The change is calculated from the two annual cells; it is not an annual growth rate, a forecast, or a causal estimate. The starting year coincides with the pandemic period, so the comparison should not be interpreted as a normal-cycle growth benchmark.

The selected county total of 91,233 divided by Florida's 647,881 equals 14.1%, rounded to one decimal place. This is the selected counties' share of statewide covered private-construction employment. It is not the share of Florida workers available for recruitment or the share of a project's required workforce that can be filled locally.

Florida's \$70,262 average annual pay in 2024 is statewide industry context [R1]. The county comparisons do not establish occupational wage gaps or causal geographic premiums. The supporting table preserves the state and county levels separately so that statewide context cannot be mistaken for a regional result.

6 Implications for Project and Workforce Planning

Use this baseline to structure diligence, not to authorize a staffing assumption. A planner can begin with the selected counties as a clearly labeled study area, then test whether the actual sourcing and commuting geography extends beyond them. Request job-site, trade, credential, schedule, shift, and mobilization requirements before assessing coverage.

Ask contractors and employers for evidence of current commitments, recruitment experience, and feasible mobilization. Validate job openings against dates and hiring intent; a posting can be duplicated, stale, or unfilled for reasons unrelated to the size of the regional employment base. Do not subtract current employment from a planned requirement to manufacture a labor gap.

For training decisions, match proposed occupations and credentials to documented employer requirements and an actual delivery pathway. Program capacity, enrollment, completion, licensure, placement, and retention are different measures. A list of sponsors or training providers does not establish available seats, successful completions, or ready-to-hire workers. The companion evaluation toolkit defines how a program-specific outcome study can be designed.

For compensation diligence, use occupation- and job-specific evidence. The county average annual pay values can help identify questions, but they cannot price a specific trade, supervisor, or municipal position. The companion municipal methods paper explains how to align duties, schedules, pay concepts, and peers before drawing a pay conclusion.

7 An Actionable Evidence Plan

The regional evidence template records the decision, geography, occupation or industry, reference period, measure, source, known coverage, missingness, and next validation step. Assign an owner and a review date for each unresolved assumption. A project staffing decision should explicitly distinguish verified facts, planning assumptions, and unresolved questions.

The project sponsor should specify phased labor demand by trade and credential. The workforce analyst should verify the relevant labor-market sources and geographic compatibility. Delivery partners should document training throughput and employer connections. The decision owner should review whether the remaining uncertainty is acceptable for the proposed commitment. These are suggested responsibilities, not claims that organizations have already agreed to participate.

If the evidence cannot establish available workers or mobilization timing, retain those quantities as unknown. Consider schedule flexibility, phased procurement, or additional diligence as decision options, with their own cost and feasibility assessment. This brief does not select a project strategy or claim that one will succeed.

8 Limitations and Update Rule

QCEW covers employment within its administrative scope and does not enumerate all forms of self-employment or all work arrangements [B2]. It has a publication lag and can be revised. Annual averages conceal within-year changes and short peaks. Industry totals combine occupations and establishments with different work profiles. County establishment location and worker residence are different concepts.

No occupational availability model, commute-shed estimate, contractor capacity survey, project pipeline reconciliation, or participant outcome analysis is included. There is no shortage estimate, capacity score, or forecast. The region's employment scale is a starting point for investigation, not a ready labor pool.

For an update, freeze a new source vintage, rerun the complete source-key and disclosure checks, preserve the old release, and recompute the selected geography and period comparisons. Explain changes caused by revisions separately from newly observed periods. A revised finding requires review of the revised artifact, not reuse of approval for this version.

R References

- [R1] BLS. QCEW Florida annual file, 2024. <https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/api/2024/a/area/12000.csv>
- [R2] BLS. QCEW Orange County annual file, 2024. <https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/api/2024/a/area/12095.csv>
- [R3] BLS. QCEW Seminole County annual file, 2024. <https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/api/2024/a/area/12117.csv>
- [R4] BLS. QCEW Osceola County annual file, 2024. <https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/api/2024/a/area/12097.csv>
- [R5] BLS. QCEW Lake County annual file, 2024. <https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/api/2024/a/area/12069.csv>
- [R6] BLS. QCEW Florida annual file, 2020. <https://data.bls.gov/cew/data/api/2020/a/area/12000.csv>
- [B2] BLS. QCEW overview. <https://www.bls.gov/cew/overview.htm>
- [B4] BLS. Annual file layout. <https://www.bls.gov/cew/about-data/downloadable-file-layouts/annual/naics-based-annual-layout.htm>
- [B5] BLS. Industry titles. <https://www.bls.gov/cew/classifications/industry/industry-titles.htm>

Sources retrieved and checked 24 September 2026. Supporting-tables.csv preserves exact cells; analysis/reproduce.py calculates the reported differences and shares without summing parent industries and subsectors.

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