Paycheck to Paycheck Quarterly Report

This inaugural edition of NHC’s Paycheck to Paycheck Quarterly Update puts a spotlight on infrastructure workers and where they can afford to live. For this update, NHC calculated housing costs for workers in 15 occupations that will see increased employment with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will create jobs, especially for people who have trouble finding work due to a lack of a college degree or weak job markets in their region. But can the people working at these new jobs live where they work?

We found that workers up and down the income distribution struggle to afford housing in most metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) for which we have data. This is true despite recent increases in wages. We also found that a federal down payment assistance program that provides up to $20,000 to first-generation homebuyers would significantly expand homeownership opportunities for these workers.

**KEY INSIGHTS**

- **Homeownership** is unattainable in a majority of MSAs for all but one of the occupations we analyzed.
- **Housing** is often least attainable in MSAs where infrastructure workers are most in demand.
- **A federal down payment assistance program** would increase the share of MSAs where homeownership is affordable by 7% on average.
Power Infrastructure Workers

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act allocates $65 billion to upgrade the nation’s power grid and expand the use of renewable energy, the largest investment in green energy in history.

- **Affordable to rent and own**
- **Affordable to rent but not own**
- **Affordable to rent and own with DPA**
- **Not affordable**

### Electricians

- **MSAs with Affordable Homeownership**
  - 40% with no downpayment assistance
  - 47% with downpayment assistance

- **MSAs with Affordable Rent**
  - 85% 2 bedroom

### Electrical Power Line Installers & Repairers

- **MSAs with Affordable Homeownership**
  - 70% with no downpayment assistance
  - 74% with downpayment assistance

- **MSAs with Affordable Rent**
  - 96% 2 bedroom
Drinking Water and Lead Abatement Workers

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act allocates $55 billion in the nation’s clean drinking water, the largest in American history, much of which will go toward replacing lead service lines.

**Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters**

- **MSAs with Affordable Homeownership**
  - 41% with no downpayment assistance
  - 41% with downpayment assistance

- **MSAs with Affordable Rent**
  - 50% with downpayment assistance
  - 84% 2 bedroom

**Industrial Machinery Mechanics**

- **MSAs with Affordable Homeownership**
  - 43% with no downpayment assistance
  - 48% with downpayment assistance

- **MSAs with Affordable Rent**
  - 88% 2 bedroom

**Welders, Cutters, Brazers, & Solderers**

- **MSAs with Affordable Homeownership**
  - 23% with no downpayment assistance

- **MSAs with Affordable Rent**
  - 31% with downpayment assistance
  - 66% 2 bedroom
Transit Workers

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides nearly $90 million in federal investment in public transportation over the next 5 years, including $39 billion to modernize transit systems and improve accessibility. It also invests $66 billion in Amtrak’s rail services, which includes $24 billion to modernize the Northeast Corridor.

Bus Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSAs with Affordable Homeownership</th>
<th>8%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with no downpayment assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSAs with Affordable Rent</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSAs with Affordable Homeownership</th>
<th>21%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with no downpayment assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
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| MSAs with Affordable Rent         | 29% |
| 2 bedroom                         |    |

Rail Car Repairers

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with no downpayment assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSAs with Affordable Rent</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
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| MSAs with Affordable Rent         | 29% |
| 2 bedroom                         |    |
Construction Workers

All the projects that will be funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will involve some sort of construction, whether by repairing power plants, building new overpasses, or repairing buildings after lead abatement.
Building Systems Workers

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will fund the construction and repair of hundreds of new structures across the country, including transit stations, schools, civic buildings, and countless others.

MSAs with Affordable Homeownership

- **23%** with no downpayment assistance
- **32%** with downpayment assistance

MSAs with Affordable Rent

- **66%** with no downpayment assistance
- **20%** with downpayment assistance

MSAs with Affordable Homeownership

- **31%** with no downpayment assistance

MSAs with Affordable Rent

- **78%** 2 bedroom

**HVAC Mechanics & Installers**

**Roofers**

**Carpenters**
Road Workers

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act allocates $110 billion for highway and road projects, including the largest investment in bridges since the construction of the interstate highway system.
Logging Workers

All the projects funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will require raw materials for their completion. One of the most important of these raw materials is lumber, the supply of which was severely constrained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Logging Equipment Operators

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<tr>
<td>28%</td>
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ENDNOTES


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Housing Conference gratefully acknowledges support for “Paycheck to Paycheck 2021”

JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
Wells Fargo  
Bank of America

“PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK” ONLINE TOOL

To obtain graphs visit www.nhc.org/paycheck-to-paycheck

1900 M Street NW, Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20036  
Email: info@nhc.org  
Phone: 202 466 2121  
www.nhc.org