

BuildND.org

Laborer

Job Description:

Perform tasks involving physical labor at construction sites. May operate hand and power tools of all types: air hammers, earth tampers, cement mixers, small mechanical hoists, surveying and measuring equipment, and a variety of other equipment and instruments. May clean and prepare sites, dig trenches, set braces to support the sides of excavations, erect scaffolding, and clean up rubble, debris and other waste materials. May provide assistance to other trades workers.

Work Conditions:

Most laborers and helpers work full time and do physically demanding work. Some work at great heights or outdoors in all weather conditions. Laborers have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses.

How to Become a Laborer or Helper

Laborers often start by performing simple cleaning duties.

Most laborers and helpers learn their trade through short-term on-the-job training.

- **Education**

Although there are no specific education requirements, high school classes in English, mathematics, blueprint reading, welding, and shop can be helpful. Some workers attend a trade or vocational school, an association training class, or community college to receive further training.

- **Training**

Most laborers and helpers learn through short-term on-the-job training after being hired by a construction contractor or a temporary-help employment agency. Workers typically gain experience by doing jobs under the guidance of experienced workers. Although the majority of workers learn by assisting experienced workers, some opt for apprenticeship programs. Programs generally include 2 to 4 years of technical instruction and on-the-job training. The [Laborers International Union of North America](#) requires 160 hours of training before workers are allowed on site. Workers learn basic construction skills, such as communication, blueprint reading, proper tools and equipment use, and safety and health procedures. The remainder of the curriculum consists of specialized skills training in three of the largest segments of the construction industry: building construction, heavy and highway construction, and environmental remediation for removing such materials as lead or asbestos. Several groups, including unions and contractor associations, sponsor apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship programs usually have only a basic age qualification—age 18 or older—for entrance. A high school diploma or equivalent is preferred but not required.

- **Advancement**

Through experience and training, laborers can advance into positions that involve more complex tasks. For example, laborers may earn certifications in welding, scaffold erecting or concrete finishing and then spend more time performing activities that require the specialized skill. Through training and experience, helpers can potentially move into construction craft occupations. For example, experience as a helper may lead to becoming a tile setter.



Associated General Contractors of North Dakota
22 North Second Street, PO Box 1624, Bismarck, ND 58502
(800) 472-2120, (701) 223-2770
www.agcnd.org



BuildND.org

- **Important Qualities**

- **Color vision**

Laborers and helpers may need to be able to distinguish colors to do their job. For example, an electrician's helper must be able to distinguish different colors of wire to help the lead electrician.

- **Math skills**

Laborers and some helpers need to perform basic math calculations to do their job. They often help with measuring on jobsites or they may be part of a surveying crew.

- **Mechanical skills**

Laborers frequently are required to operate and maintain equipment, such as jackhammers.

- **Physical stamina**

Laborers and helpers must have endurance to perform strenuous tasks throughout the day. Highway laborers, for example, spend hours on their feet—often in hot temperatures—with few breaks.

- **Physical strength**

Laborers and helpers often must lift heavy materials or equipment. For example, cement mason helpers must move cinder blocks, which weigh more than 40 pounds each.

Wage Information:

The table below shows the estimated Employment Wage Statistics for individuals in North Dakota employed as Laborers in 2013.

Rate Type	Entry level	Mean	Experienced
Annual Wage	\$26,860	\$33,410	\$36,680
Hourly Wage	\$12.91	\$16.06	\$17.64

For more information [click here](#).



Associated General Contractors of North Dakota
22 North Second Street, PO Box 1624, Bismarck, ND 58502
(800) 472-2120, (701) 223-2770
www.agcnd.org

