Construction Laborer

What I do every day:

- Dig trenches, backfill excavations or compact and level earth to grade specifications, using picks, shovels and other tools
- Erect or dismantle scaffolding, traffic barricades, ramps or other structures
- Provide assistance to carpenters, plasterers or masons
- Smooth freshly poured cement or concrete, using floats, trowels or powered cement finishing tools
- Operate jackhammers or drills to break up concrete or pavement
- Install sewer, water or storm drain pipes, using pipe-laying machinery or laser guidance equipment
- Grind, scrape, sand or polish surfaces such as concrete, marble, terrazzo or wood flooring using abrasive tools or machines
- Position and seal structural components, such as concrete wall sections or pipes

What makes my job great?

Job growth:
Employment of construction laborers is projected to grow 24 percent from 2012 to 2022.

Short-term training:
The majority of construction laborers have a high school diploma. Many attend technical high schools to gain skills. Apprenticeships are available.

Good pay:
The average median salary is $37,500/year. (That means that 50 percent of construction laborers earn less than this number, and the other 50 percent earn more.)

Benefits:
Most construction laborers work full time, with benefits that may include:

- Health care
- Paid vacation
How can you become an construction laborer?

**Academic/training credentials:**
Experience is not required for entry-level positions but is very helpful in distinguishing you from other candidates. National Center for Construction Education and Research certification is available through many technical schools. An associate degree is typically required for these positions.

**Skills and requirements:**
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Excellent communication skills
- Experience with math and measurement

**Where you can find jobs:**
- Online job boards
- Local career fairs
- Networking
- Company websites
- Social Media
- Department of Career Services at colleges

**Potential job titles:**
- Construction laborer
- Construction worker
- Curb and gutter laborer
- Drain layer
- Drop crew laborer
- Post framer
- Skilled laborer
- Union laborer

**Potential local employers:**
- Cypress Construction Company
- Trimor Corporation
- Simon Roofing
- Ross Builders Co.
Local educational opportunities

Two-year Institutions (associate degrees and certificates):

- Lakeland Community College: Associate of Applied Science in Construction Management
  - Construction management certificate
  - Facility management certificate
- Contact Civil Engineering Department Chair at 440.525.7184
- Cuyahoga Community College: Associate of Applied Science in Construction Engineering Technology
  - Construction project management certificate
- University of Akron: Associate of Applied Science in Construction Engineering Technology

Four-year institutions:

- Kent State University: Bachelor of Science in Construction Management
- University of Akron: Bachelor of Science in Construction Engineering Technology

Technical prep:

- A-TECH: carpentry program or building maintenance technology
- Auburn Career Center: construction program
- Lake Shore Compact: construction management program or commercial building trades program
- TECC: construction trades program

Coursework per educational entity:

Secondary pathway: Construction

Postsecondary program: Construction Management

An Example of Course with Secondary and Postsecondary Credits
How can I grow my career?

Where could I focus or specialize in my career?
- Construction helper
- Construction laborer
- Carpenter
- Electrician
- Plumber
- Project manager
- Construction manager

The career ladder

Construction Laborer
- Career technical high school diploma
- Construction experience
- $37,500 annual salary

Construction Cost Estimator or Project Manager
- Associate degree in construction management
- Construction experience
- $55,600 annual salary

Construction Manager
- Bachelor’s degree, construction management
- Construction experience
- $81,300 annual salary

Sources/References:
O*Net Online-Summary Report, Ohio Labor Market Information