

LINBECK

Subcontractor/Supply Chain Pulse



Q4 2025



Linbeck's Quarterly Construction Market Forecast and Subcontractor/Supply Chain Pulse gather data from various local and national suppliers each quarter to keep clients informed about market news.

Concrete



Concrete materials have experienced sustained cost increases, including sand, aggregate, admixtures, fly ash, and freight, all contributing to upward pressure on installed concrete pricing.

Reinforcing steel remains highly volatile due to ongoing tariff impacts, leading suppliers to limit price validity to approximately 10 days. Current lead times for rebar are averaging 15 business days following approved submittals, underscoring the need for early procurement and contingency planning in project budgets and schedules.

Metals



The structural steel market remains constrained by elevated demand from data center build-outs, which continues to impact mill rolling availability and overall supply capacity.

These pressures, combined with tightening downstream logistics and rising trucking costs, are contributing to sustained pricing volatility. Skilled labor shortages across fabrication and erection further exacerbate schedule risk. In addition, uncertainty surrounding tariffs and the availability of raw material inputs continues to pose upward pressure on structural steel pricing and lead times.

Waterproofing



Private sector construction activity is showing renewed momentum, while demand in key sectors such as data centers, healthcare, and public infrastructure remains stable. However,

with a significant volume of new project awards currently underway, contractors should closely monitor labor market dynamics. Emerging workforce constraints—particularly in skilled trades—may begin to surface in early 2026, potentially impacting project schedules and cost structures.

Masonry



Masonry supply chains remain stable, with pricing holding steady across most product categories. No significant price increases are anticipated in the near term, reflecting balanced supply-demand dynamics. However, specialty masonry products—such as custom blends, high-performance units, or architectural finishes—may experience modestly extended lead times due to limited manufacturing capacities and order-specific production schedules.

Labor availability in the masonry trade remains consistent, with wage rates showing minimal volatility. Current project delays related to masonry work are largely attributable to material lead times rather than workforce shortages.

Millwork



Metal casework has remained stable for 10-12 weeks. Pricing is expected to increase modestly by roughly 3% through 2026, while epoxy resin products are anticipated

to see an additional increase of up to 5%. Labor conditions remain constrained, with an ongoing shortage of skilled installers continuing to pressure the market. As a result, wage rates have increased approximately 15% to 25%. Tariff impacts to date have been limited primarily to solid surface materials. Freight costs continue to rise despite lower fuel prices, with recent increases of 10% to 15%, adding further upward pressure on overall installed costs.

Roofing/Enclosure System



Roofing material pricing expects no material increases anticipated through year end. However, the market continues to face a shortage of qualified roofing and sheet

metal installers, driven in part by more stringent background check and workforce documentation requirements, which is creating labor availability and schedule pressures. While tariffs have not yet impacted current pricing, they remain a risk factor, (especially with steel products) with potential roofing material price increases forecasted in the 3%-5% range entering 2026.

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Storefront/Curtainwall



Glass and glazing costs remain stable, with no significant material shortages reported. Inflationary pressures influence pricing, with standard semi-annual escalations occurring in line with past cycles. Hardware components experience extended lead times of approximately 3–4 weeks due to ongoing supply chain constraints. Tariff uncertainty contributes to pricing volatility, leading vendors to limit price validity to about 30 days.

Framing, Drywall, & Ceiling



The Drywall/Framing subcontractors continue to be heavily influenced by skilled labor shortages, driven by project demand across major metros such as Dallas–Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. Contractors report significant difficulty filling craft positions, with high competition for qualified workers as large commercial, residential, and infrastructure projects vie for the same limited labor pool, leading to upward wage pressure and increased poaching between firms. These systemic workforce constraints are consistent with broader trends showing persistent gaps between job openings and available personnel, despite overall labor force growth in Texas.

Flooring, Tile, & Stone



Carpet and sheet-rolled goods have largely stabilized following prior resilient flooring supply chain disruptions, with major suppliers diversifying sourcing and expanding U.S. capacity to improve availability. For flexible projects, product options are typically available within about 14 days, with manufacturing and shipping lead times of roughly 4–6 weeks for domestic-made and 10–14 weeks for foreign-made to-order goods. No material price increases are anticipated, supporting stable installed pricing. In Texas, labor remains a local challenge, with variation across major markets, reflecting competitive demand and upward pressure on labor costs relative to historical norms. This dynamic contributes to higher installed costs and ongoing scheduling considerations for carpet and tile work.

Fire Protection



Fire Sprinkler piping and fitting pricing are somewhat volatile with recent price increases in the range of 8% to 10%. Several suppliers have shortened pricing periods, in some cases holding pricing for as little as 10 days. Labor conditions continue to present challenges, with a limited availability of experienced personnel driving gradual but consistent wage escalation. Current wage levels exceed those observed in the prior year as heightened competition for skilled labor has led to increased turnover and a more aggressive recruitment environment as firms seek to secure qualified tradesmen.

Plumbing



Plumbing cost have increased this quarter, driven primarily by labor constraints and ongoing material cost volatility. While plumbing material pricing has shown signs of stabilization compared to earlier periods, fixtures, pipe, and fittings continue to experience inflationary pressure, and pricing remains sensitive to supply chain conditions and tariff exposure. Skilled plumbing labor remains in short supply across major Texas markets, resulting in continued wage escalation and elevated subcontractor pricing as firms compete for qualified installers. Lead times have generally normalized but can extend for specialty components or during peak demand periods.

Low Voltage



Lead times for fiber-optic cable and related metal components have increased as manufacturers re-tool production facilities and respond to increased demand driven by large-scale data center projects. This heightened activity has also drawn heavily on available trade labor, contributing to workforce constraints and upward wage pressure as firms compete to retain experienced personnel. Overall, manufacturers have implemented broad-based price increases, generally in the range of 3% to 5%, further contributing to higher installed costs.

Mechanical



HVAC trade costs have remained elevated due to ongoing material and labor pressures, with material pricing for major HVAC equipment and components trending upward. Broader MEP categories are experiencing inflation and extended lead times, particularly for larger or specialty systems, and currently, lead times on piping and valves are rising. The skilled labor shortage in Texas markets continues to affect HVAC, contributing to rising wage rates and reflecting statewide labor shortages in MEP trades. Additionally, regional construction cost data indicates that commercial projects in major metro areas such as Austin, Dallas–Fort Worth, and Houston are facing increasing costs driven by labor scarcity, permitting delays, and heightened demand.

Electrical



Electrical pricing has remained elevated, with copper prices increasing approximately 20% in 2025, driven by demand from the electric vehicle and data center sectors. Aluminum pricing has risen by roughly 30.5% over the same period, while select commodities like steel and PVC have seen modest declines. Tariffs on imported aluminum wire have further contributed to cost escalation. Lead times for critical electrical equipment continue to extend due to tariffs and reliance on imports, with averages of 14–16 weeks for transfer switches, about 34 weeks for generators, and 20–25 weeks for electrical gear. Labor availability is tight but manageable; however, limited training in emerging technologies is widening skill gaps, compounded by a declining pipeline of younger skilled workers as work-from-home paths divert potential entrants from construction trades.

Elevators



Seeing more improved lead times, with standard units currently averaging 8–10 weeks. Modest price increases of approximately 3% are anticipated entering the new year. Labor impacts remain minimal at present but may grow as project backlogs progress, potentially affecting installation schedules and overall project timelines.