Metals and fuel are pushing costs up. Wood, concrete and drywall are holding.

Prices for construction inputs rose 11.7% over the past year, more than double the 5.4% rise in what contractors charge for finished buildings. That gap usually closes through higher bids, so budgets set in early 2026 may need another look.

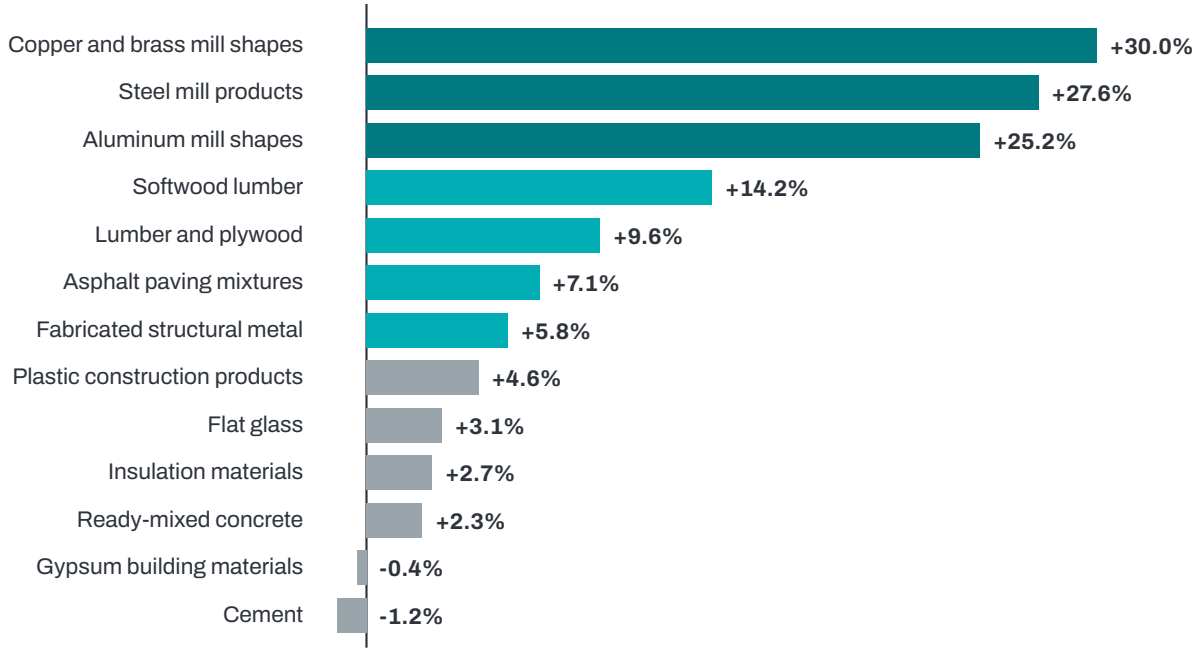
+11.7%
Construction input prices
12 months to Sept. 2026, up 2.1% in September alone

+5.4%
Contractor bid prices
12 months to Sept. 2026, flat in September

$39.20
Average craft wage per hour
Up 4.3% from a year earlier

Price change over 12 months, by material

Producer prices, September 2025 to September 2026



+115% Diesel fuel has more than doubled in a year. It shows up in trucking, sitework, equipment and delivery charges on almost every project.

BTPM Cost Watch

October 2026 · September 2026 data

Material prices in detail

Material	BLS series	1-month change	12-month change
Aluminum mill shapes	WPU102501	-0.1%	**+25.2%**
Asphalt paving mixtures	WPU1394	+0.1%	**+7.1%**
Cement	WPU1322	0.0%	**-1.2%**
Copper and brass mill shapes	WPU102502	+1.4%	**+30.0%**
Fabricated structural metal	WPU107405	+2.4%	**+5.8%**
Flat glass	WPU1311	+0.1%	**+3.1%**
Gypsum building materials	WPU13710102	0.0%	**-0.4%**
Insulation materials	WPU1392	+1.6%	**+2.7%**
Lumber and plywood	WPUSI004011	-0.7%	**+9.6%**
Plastic construction products	WPU0721	-0.1%	**+4.6%**
Ready-mixed concrete	WPU1333	0.0%	**+2.3%**
Softwood lumber	WPU0811	-1.4%	**+14.2%**
Steel mill products	WPU1017	+2.2%	**+27.6%**
#2 diesel fuel	WPU057303	n/a	**+115.2%**

Change in the Producer Price Index for each commodity, not seasonally adjusted. The 1-month change for diesel is not shown because monthly fuel figures swing widely.

Labor

Average craft wage per hour	**$39.20**
Change from Sept. 2025	**+4.3%**
Same measure, all private industries	**+3.3%**
Construction employment	**8.36 million**
Jobs added over 12 months	**+109,000**

Craft workers are production and nonsupervisory employees.

What this means for your project

- **Lock in metals early.** Steel, aluminum and copper are up 25–30%; consider early release packages.
- **Carry a separate escalation allowance** for metal-heavy and sitework scopes.
- **Buy out stable trades now.** Concrete, drywall and insulation are close to flat.
- **Ask for fuel and freight charges** to be shown separately in bids.
- **Review escalation clauses** in contracts signed before mid-2026.

About this update

Prepared by BT Project Management Consulting from public U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data: the Producer Price Index (released October 2026) and Current Employment Statistics. Bid prices are the PPI for final demand construction; input prices are the PPI for inputs to construction industries. Figures are national averages and do not reflect local markets or contract terms. For general planning only; not a cost estimate. For a project-specific budget review, contact bradley@btpmconsulting.com.