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Slight wage increases for common construction jobs

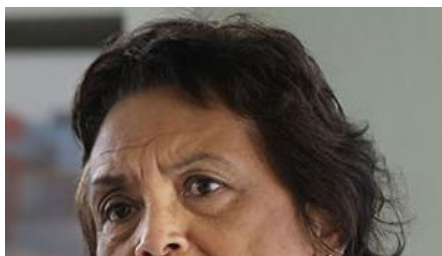
DAILY POST STAFF

13 HRS AGO



WAGE INCREASE: U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services recently approved a wage increase for certain construction jobs including heavy equipment drivers, according to a press release from the governor's office. In this Sept. 5 photograph, workers with a local company work on infrastructure improvement projects on Route 4 in Hagåtña. David Castro/The Guam Daily Post

DAVID CASTRO



A biennial process that reviews H-2B prevailing wage rates for common occupations in the construction industry has led an increase in wages.



Lou Leon Guerrero

“We continue to face a labor shortage even as the demand for construction projects continues to rise. I am pleased that the prevailing wage rates were approved for common construction jobs,” Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero stated. “We have placed more than 1,000 people in skilled apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs since the start of this administration, because we know that skilled labor is a passport to economic success for Guam working families.”

MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services must approve specific wage data and prevailing wage rates used for construction occupations on Guam. USCIS reviewed the government of Guam's proposed rates and issued an approval in a letter to the Director of Labor on Dec. 3. The prevailing wage rate on applications approved prior to implementation of these new rates shall remain in effect for the duration of the existing labor certifications. The following wage rates apply only to H-2B workers and similarly employed U.S. workers on Guam:

- Camp cook: \$11.78
- Carpenters: \$15.48
- Cement masons: \$14.92
- Electricians: \$18.52
- HVAC and refrigeration mechanics: \$18.43
- Construction equipment mechanics: \$18.32
- Operating engineer (heavy equipment operators): \$16.58
- Reinforcing metal workers: \$15.61
- Painters: \$12.86
- Pipefitters: \$16.52

According to the officer of the governor, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services approved Guam's proposed request. These rates will not change again until December 2021.

The three most common H-2B occupations for which H-2B workers are imported saw modest increases in the wage rates. Carpenters and reinforcing metalworkers saw about a 6% increase and cement mason rates were increased by about 4.5%, the release stated. Under the new rates, welders, electricians, HVAC mechanics and construction equipment mechanics all command wages in excess of \$15 per hour when working alongside our H-2B guest workers.

- Plasterers: \$22.89
- Plumbers: \$16.52
- Sheet metal workers: \$14.90
- Welders: \$18.49

Similarly, U.S. workers employed in the same companies and occupations as H-2B workers will see pay increases : workers newly hired or whose contracts have been extended are certified under the new rates later next yea

The new rates only affect new applications filed with the Guam Department of Labor on or after Dec. 13. Currentl approved hires will be paid at the old rates until their labor certification expires.