

WageScape

State of Pay · What employers are advertising this quarter

SKILLED TRADES · Q2 2026

Plumber pays 1.50× what Mechanic pays, at the median.

\$53,188 vs \$35,505

Skilled Trades' widest role-to-role premium this quarter. Mechanic is also the vertical's widest single-role band (2.16×) — plausibly several sub-trades (auto, diesel, industrial) sharing one title, not one true “Mechanic market.”

Postings analyzed: Apr 1 – Jun 30, 2026 · Government comparison: BLS OEWS May 2025

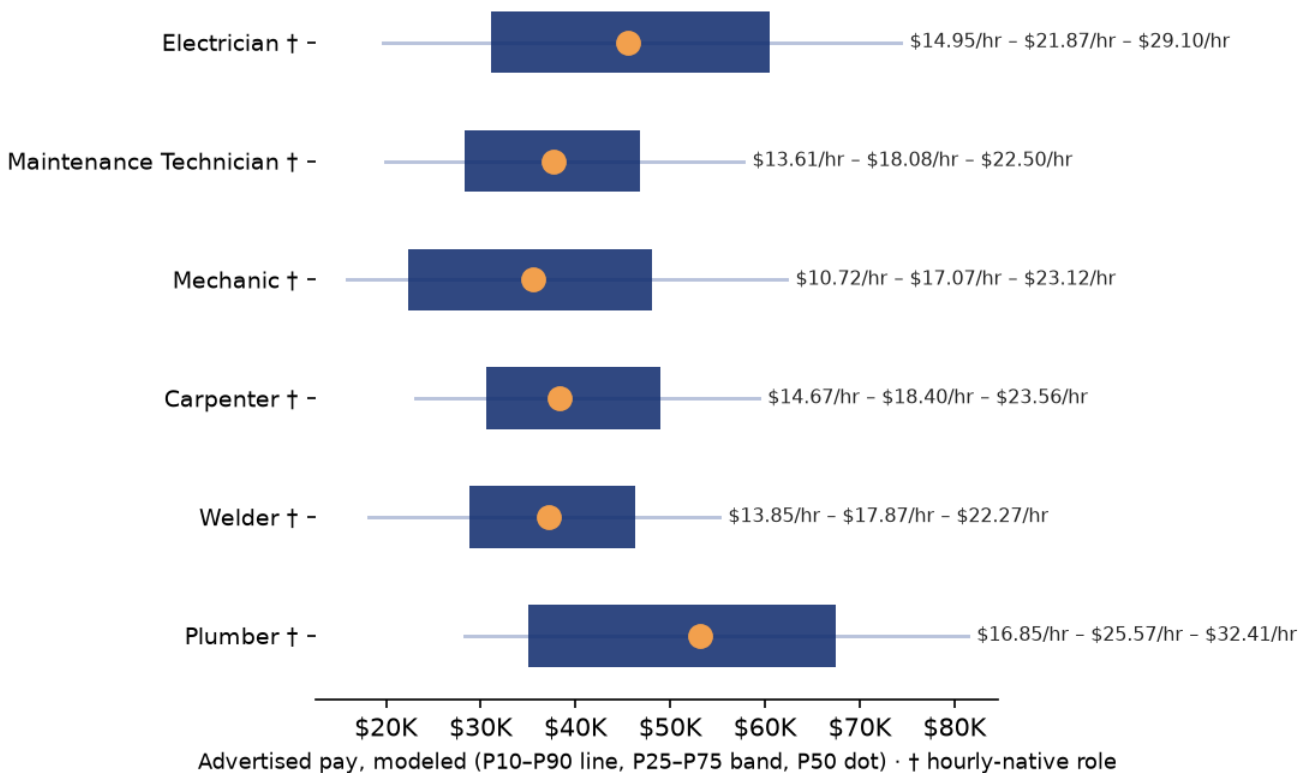
n = 2.2M postings · 6 core roles · 263K hiring companies · listing-weighted · WageScape / MarketTrak

Pay levels are modeled from postings and directional — structure (spread, premiums, geography) is the signal. BLS check and method inside.

SKILLED TRADES · THE PAY SPECTRUM · ADVERTISED, Q2 2026

No role has one market rate

The pay band, role by role — P25 / P50 / P75



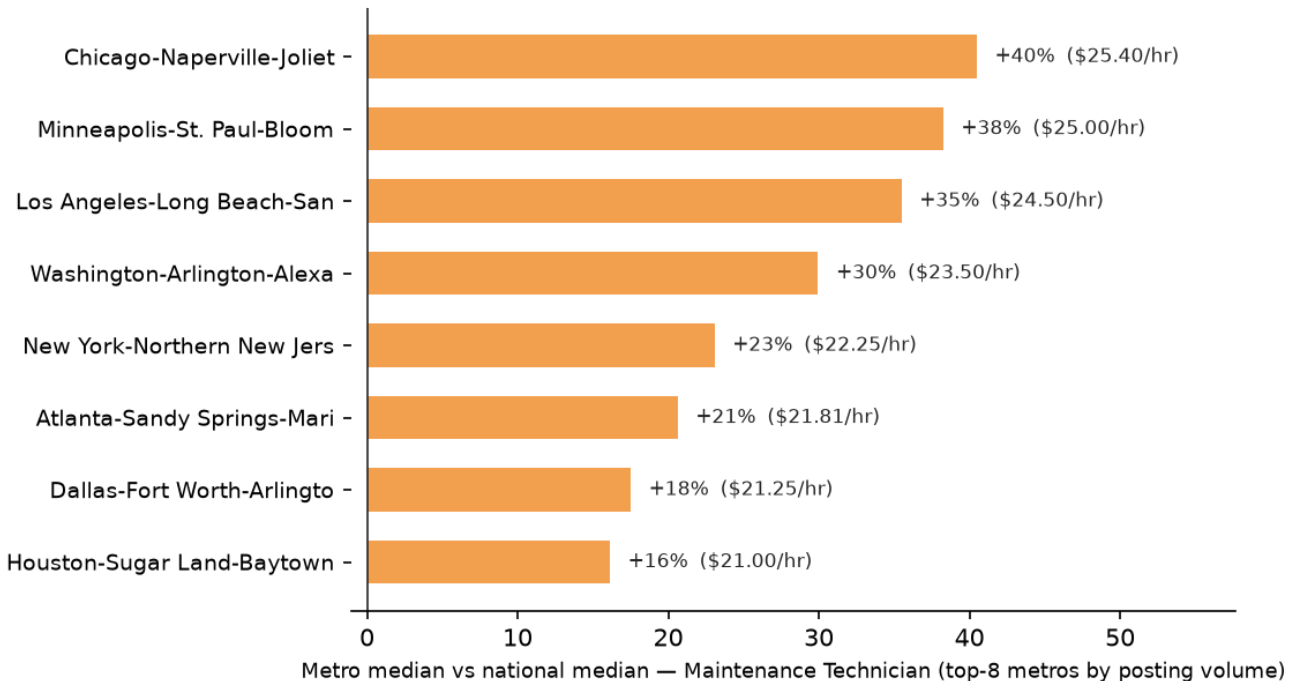
Three structural reads

1. The widest band: Mechanic. P75 (\$23.12/hr) pays 2.2× P25 (\$10.72/hr). A single “market rate” for this role is a fiction — set bands, not points.
2. The tightest band: Carpenter (1.6×). Here the market HAS converged — posting outside \$14.67/hr–\$23.56/hr is a deliberate strategy, not noise.
3. Where the band skews: Plumber's midpoint sits high in its band — the bottom half is 1.3× as wide as the top. Offers above midpoint compress fast; the real competition is \$25.57/hr–\$32.41/hr. Position reqs against the skew, not just the midpoint.

SKILLED TRADES · GEOGRAPHY & DEMAND

The same job does not pay the same everywhere

Where the market pays differently — Maintenance Technician



Across the top-8 posting markets, the Maintenance Technician median runs from \$21.00/hr (Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown) to \$25.40/hr (Chicago-Naperville-Joliet) — a 21% geographic gap inside one role, this quarter. Demand is deep: 738K Maintenance Technician postings from ~79K hiring companies.

What comp teams should do this quarter

- Benchmark to the band, not the point. Quote \$13.61/hr–\$22.50/hr for Maintenance Technician, and decide deliberately where in the band each req should sit.
- Localize before you match. A national median mis-prices Maintenance Technician by up to 21% depending on metro — in premium metros, benchmark to the metro band, not the national band.
- Check your reqs against this quarter's floor. If a posting sits below P25, you are recruiting exclusively from the bottom quartile of advertised offers — make that a decision, not an accident.

The BLS check — we show our work

Every advertised median, next to its government benchmark. Postings measure the hiring market, not the incumbent one: hourly postings quote base starting rates — before differentials, overtime and tenure — and salaried posting cohorts skew junior. Advertised medians therefore typically sit below BLS; the gap is information, not error.

Role	WageScape P50	BLS median	Δ	BLS occupation
Electrician †	\$21.87/hr	\$30.38/hr	-28.0%	Electricians
Maintenance Technician †	\$18.08/hr	\$23.38/hr	-22.7%	Maintenance & repair, general
Mechanic †	\$17.07/hr	\$24.34/hr	-29.9%	Automotive service technicians and
Carpenter †	\$18.40/hr	\$29.12/hr	-36.8%	Carpenters
Welder †	\$17.87/hr	\$25.84/hr	-30.8%	Welders, cutters, solderers, and b
Plumber †	\$25.57/hr	\$30.67/hr	-16.6%	Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfi

BLS figures: OEWS May 2025 national medians (bls.gov); * = May 2024, latest published for that occupation. † hourly-native role, both figures per hour. Deltas computed from the printed values.

Methodology

Source: WageScape / MarketTrak — advertised-posting data aggregated from public job postings. Period: Q2 2026 (single quarter; no period-over-period comparisons are made in this report). Sample: 2.2M postings across 6 core skilled trades roles, 263K hiring companies. National figures are listing-count weighted across metros. Every role is reported as a P25 / P50 / P75 spectrum (P10–P90 in charts); we never publish a lone median. Pay levels are modeled from postings (disclosed wages are rare); hourly-native roles are quoted per hour (annualized at 2,080 hours in charts). Structural signals — spread ratios, role premiums, metro differentials, demand concentration — are ratio-based and robust to level bias. Aggregates only; no individual compensation is shown. Every figure reproduces from a saved, dated query snapshot.

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