What public works cost — October 2026

Ten items that public agencies price in many states, from 4,603 winning bids awarded in the last 12 months. Awarded unit prices, not quotes: every number links to its receipts.

The ten items

ITEM	MEDIAN, LAST 12 MONTHS	MIDDLE HALF	CHANGE VS. PRIOR 12 MONTHS	MONTH OVER MONTH	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	LOCAL VS. STATE DOT	WINNING BIDS (STATES)
Silt Fence per linear foot	$3.00	$2.00–$4.00	+2.7%	-21.7%	– n=6	$2.50 n=686	$4.00 n=207	$3.95 n=40	not enough local awards	939 (14)
Clearing AND Grubbing per acre	$12,000	$5,119–$25,037	+20.0%	0.0%	– n=6	$10,640 n=231	$20,000 n=29	$17,200 n=56	not enough local awards	322 (14)
Topsoil per cubic yard	$37.00	$16.00–$65.00	-7.5%	-5.9%	$60.00 n=31	$13.51 n=85	$40.64 n=92	$95.00 n=33	-30.0% $28.00 local vs $40.00 DOT	241 (13)
Unclassified Excavation per cubic yard	$25.95	$13.93–$50.58	+3.8%	-11.6%	– n=2	$13.18 n=108	$28.50 n=201	$200.00 n=26	+678.0% $194.50 local vs $25.00 DOT	337 (12)
Structural Steel per pound	$9.37	$5.00–$21.60	+33.9%	not enough lettings	– n=9	$6.53 n=86	– n=14	– n=6	not enough local awards	115 (11)
Tack Coat per gallon	$3.50	$2.50–$4.91	0.0%	0.0%	– n=19	$3.20 n=466	$3.75 n=777	– n=0	+148.1% $8.69 local	1,262 (9)

ITEM	MEDIAN, LAST 12 MONTHS	MIDDLE HALF	CHANGE VS. PRIOR 12 MONTHS	MONTH OVER MONTH	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	LOCAL VS. STATE DOT	WINNING BIDS (STATES)
									vs $3.50 DOT	
Mowing per acre	$168.39	$70.00–$400.00	+42.0%	not enough lettings	– n=4	$161.50 n=50	$166.95 n=159	– n=0	not enough local awards	213 (9)
Portable Changeable Message Sign per each	$4,000	$1,500–$8,485	-10.2%	-4.9%	$4,500 n=91	$3,978 n=172	$4,000 n=603	– n=0	not enough local awards	866 (8)
Lime per ton	$250.00	$126.40–$450.00	+12.6%	-7.6%	– n=0	– n=6	$237.50 n=126	– n=0	not enough local awards	132 (7)
Reinforcing Steel per pound	$2.04	$1.50–$3.40	+1.8%	-3.8%	– n=0	$2.00 n=142	$3.75 n=22	– n=12	not enough local awards	176 (6)

How to read this

- **Median, last 12 months**: the middle awarded unit price of winning bids let in the 12 months before the report month; *middle half* is the 25th to 75th percentile.
- **Change vs. prior 12 months**: that median against the 12 months before it, where each period has at least 20 winning bids.
- **Month over month**: the median of the latest three months of lettings against the three months ending one month earlier, shown only where each window has at least 20 winning bids; otherwise “not enough lettings”. Many agencies post tabulations weeks after a letting, so the latest months fill in later.
- **Regions** are the four US Census regions; a region is shown only with 20 or more winning bids.
- **Local vs. state DOT**: the median awarded to cities, counties, districts, authorities and utilities against the median awarded by state DOTs for the same item (last 12 months, or the last 24 where local awards are thin).
- Medians are not adjusted for quantity, spec or location within a state, and are not quotes. Winning bids only; losing bids and engineer’s estimates are never counted.

Receipts

Every figure above is computed from winning bids on the item page linked in its row. The three most recent source documents behind each item:

- **Silt Fence**: ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23
- **Clearing AND Grubbing**: Iowa DOT, 2026-09-29; Iowa DOT, 2026-09-29; Mississippi Department of Transportation, 2026-09-29
- **Topsoil**: Vermont Agency of Transportation, 2026-09-25; City of Fort Worth, 2026-09-17; WisDOT, 2026-09-15
- **Unclassified Excavation**: ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23
- **Structural Steel**: Iowa DOT, 2026-09-29; Iowa DOT, 2026-09-15; INDOT, 2026-09-02
- **Tack Coat**: ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23
- **Mowing**: Mississippi Department of Transportation, 2026-09-29; Mississippi Department of Transportation, 2026-09-22; Iowa DOT, 2026-09-15
- **Portable Changeable Message Sign**: MaineDOT, 2026-09-30; MaineDOT, 2026-09-30; MaineDOT, 2026-09-09
- **Lime**: ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23; ARDOT, 2026-09-23
- **Reinforcing Steel**: Mississippi Department of Transportation, 2026-09-29; Mississippi Department of Transportation, 2026-09-22; Iowa DOT, 2026-09-15

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