

---

# JUST CONSTRUCTION

---

CONSTRUCTION & ENGINEERING  
SPECIALIST RECRUITERS

## DATA CENTRE CONSTRUCTION CAREER PATHS

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE  
TO BUILDING A LASTING  
CAREER



# WHY DATA CENTRE CONSTRUCTION OFFERS EXCEPTIONAL CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

## A sector with unmatched growth, urgency, and earning potential.

Data centre construction isn't just a hot market right now. It's a structural, decade-long shift in how the world's digital infrastructure is built. Driven by AI acceleration, hyperscale expansion, and the relentless demand for cloud computing and data storage, the sector is creating career opportunities that simply don't exist at the same scale anywhere else in construction.

With a \$52B+ construction pipeline in 2026 alone, 82% of firms unable to fill roles, and wages rising at 12-18% annually, specialising in data centre construction today means entering a market that will reward expertise for the next generation. Whether you're entering the industry or transitioning from another construction sector, this guide maps realistic career paths with timelines, salaries, and the skills you'll need at every stage.

**\$52B+**

US DATA CENTRE CONSTRUCTION SPEND IN 2026

**12-18%**

ANNUAL WAGE GROWTH FOR CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS

**82%**

OF FIRMS STRUGGLING TO FILL CRAFT AND SALARIED ROLES

**650K**

PROJECTED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS POSITIONS SECTOR-WIDE BY 2026



**JUST  
CONSTRUCTION**

[just-constructionrec.com](https://just-constructionrec.com)

---

**JUST**  
**CONSTRUCTION**

---

CONSTRUCTION & ENGINEERING  
SPECIALIST RECRUITERS

# UNDERSTANDING DATA CENTRE CAREER TRACKS

Data centre construction offers four primary career tracks, each with distinct progressions, skill requirements, and earning potential. From managing complex project delivery to commanding hyperscale jobsites, every track leads to roles that are among the highest compensated in the construction industry.



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRACK

## Assistant Project Manager / Project Engineer

Entry Point | 0-3 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 2-3 years

\$80K-\$100K

**Your entry into data centre project management. You'll support senior PMs while building foundational knowledge of mission-critical construction, from power infrastructure sequencing to the documentation standards that hyperscale operators demand.**

### How to Advance:

- Deliver 2 projects with measurable outcomes you can speak to
- Earn OSHA 30 and begin Procore certification
- Volunteer for commissioning support roles on active projects



### Key Responsibilities:

- Support RFI, submittal, and document control workflows
- Coordinate subcontractor schedules and daily site activities
- Track project budgets and cost codes against actuals
- Assist with commissioning documentation and punch lists
- Support client and owner communications under senior PM guidance
- Learn Uptime Institute Tier criteria and data centre specific codes

### Skills to Develop:

- Procore, Bluebeam, and MS Project fundamentals
- MEP coordination basics and system interdependencies
- Data centre terminology: PUE, kW density, redundancy tiers
- Change order processing and contract administration basics
- Communication and technical documentation



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRACK

## Project Manager

Mid-Level | 3-7 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 3-5 years

\$115K-\$155K

**You're running data centre projects independently, managing \$20M-\$80M builds with full P&L responsibility. You're the primary client contact, leading cross-functional teams across MEP trades, commissioning agents, and owner's representatives.**

### How to Advance:

- Deliver 3+ successful projects on time and on budget
- Build strong client relationships with at least one major hyperscale or colo operators
- Earn PMP or CCM certification
- Develop BIM and DCIM platform fluency
- Mentor junior team members and demonstrate leadership breadth

### Key Responsibilities:

- Full project ownership from preconstruction through energisation
- Budget management, cost forecasting, and change order negotiation
- Schedule control on fast-track, 24/7 construction programmes
- Coordinate with hyperscale operators, colocation providers, and AHJs
- Lead commissioning plan integration with construction sequencing
- Manage risk on live-facility and phased handover builds

### Know Your Numbers:

- Total project value, budget vs actuals, schedule variance
- Change order percentage, TRIR, and client satisfaction





# PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRACK

---

## Senior Project Manager

\$180k-\$220k

Senior Level | 7-12 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 4-6 years before Director consideration

**You're handling flagship projects: \$80M-\$500M+ hyperscale campus builds, multi-phase colocation expansions, or AI infrastructure campuses with complex power and cooling requirements. You're a trusted advisor to major operators and a mentor to the next generation of PMs.**

### Key Responsibilities:

- Lead hyperscale campus programmes across multiple concurrent phases
- Manage multi-phase energisation, commissioning integration, and CxA coordination
- Drive preconstruction strategy, design-build, and early procurement
- Develop and mentor PM teams across programme
- P&L accountability for major programme portfolios
- Strategic client relationship development at VP and C-suite level

### What Sets You Apart

- Proven track record on 100MW+ campus builds or equivalent complexity
- Deep understanding of power infrastructure, MV switchgear, and generator systems
- Experience navigating utility interconnection, AHJ, and ICFM processes
- Ability to manage owner, GC, and commissioning relationships simultaneously
- CCM, PMP, or equivalent. LEED or sustainability credentials a differentiator



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRACK

---

## VP of Operations / Director of Data Centre Construction

\$220K-\$300K+

Executive Level | 12+ Years Experience

**You're setting strategic direction for the data centre division, overseeing multi-billion-dollar programme portfolios, and shaping the firm's position in the most competitive construction market in the world. Operators and GCs compete aggressively for leaders at this level.**

### Key Responsibilities:

- Oversee multiple Senior PMs and programme portfolios simultaneously
- Strategic business development and hyperscale operator relationship management
- Talent development, succession planning, and pipeline investment
- Full P&L responsibility for data centre division
- Company-wide strategy on mission-critical market positioning
- Executive client engagement with hyperscale and colocation operators

### The Market Reality

- Replacing a VP-level data centre leader costs \$50K-\$75K+ per position after recruitment, onboarding, and productivity loss
- Hyperscale operators and top GCs are investing in long-term incentive plans to retain leaders at this level
- Demand exceeds supply significantly: roles at this level rarely require more than two active conversations before an offer



# SUPERINTENDENT TRACK

## Assistant Superintendent / Field Engineer

Entry Point | 0-3 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 2-4 years

\$85K-\$110K

**You're learning the realities of data centre field supervision: the pace, the precision, and the uncompromising safety culture of mission-critical construction. Supporting experienced superintendents, you're building the site knowledge that no classroom can replicate.**

### How to Advance:

- Build a zero-incident safety record across your first two projects
- Develop working knowledge of generator, UPS, and cooling systems



### Key Responsibilities:

- Daily site inspections, quality checks, and safety compliance
- Coordinate subcontractor crews across electrical, mechanical, and structural trades
- Track material deliveries, equipment access, and site logistics
- Incident reporting, toolbox talks, and site safety culture
- Learn commissioning sequencing and Cx documentation basics
- Support energisation and system testing activities

### Skills to Develop:

- OSHA 30 (required), NFPA 70E electrical safety
- Power distribution and MV/LV systems awareness
- Reading and interpreting MEP, structural, and single-line drawings
- ICRA and containment protocols for live-facility environments
- Procore and field management platform basics



# SUPERINTENDENT TRACK

---

## Superintendent

Mid-Level | 3-8 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 4-6 years

**\$135K-\$175K**

**You're running data centre jobsites. Managing 10–20 subcontractor crews across complex MEP installations, you're responsible for safety, schedule, and quality on builds where the cost of delay runs to hundreds of thousands per day.**

### Key Responsibilities:

- Full jobsite management across all trades and phases
- Daily schedule coordination, lookahead planning, and pull planning sessions
- Safety programme implementation and zero incident culture
- Quality control across structural, MEP, and controls installations
- Coordinate with commissioning agents on pre-functional and functional testing
- Manage phased energisation and parallel construction operations

### What Makes You Drive Market Value:

- Proven on-time delivery record with documented outcomes
- Experience managing 24/7 construction operations on live-facility builds
- Knowledge of MV switchgear, generator, UPS, and cooling system installation
- Ability to coordinate Cx testing without disrupting parallel construction
- Recruiters are actively calling superintendents with 5+ years of DC experience: you will field multiple offers



# SUPERINTENDENT TRACK

---

## Senior/General Superintendent

**\$180k-\$230k**

Senior Level | 8-15 Years Experience

**You're overseeing major campus programmes or multiple simultaneous sites, mentoring the next generation of superintendents, and considered one of the most valuable people in the data centre construction market. At this level, your reputation precedes every conversation with a hiring manager.**

### Key Responsibilities:

- Oversee large-scale hyperscale campuses or multiple concurrent data centre builds
- Manage assistant superintendents and field leadership teams
- Develop and own safety culture, training programmes, and site standards
- Interface directly with hyperscale operator teams and owner's representatives
- Drive commissioning coordination from pre-functional through final acceptance
- Contribute to preconstruction planning, phasing strategy, and schedule development

### The Market For This Role:

- Average salary of a data centre superintendent is \$155K according to DataX Connect's 2025 salary survey, with specialist subcontractor leads regularly above \$170K
- Lead Superintendents at top hyperscale GCs are averaging \$188K
- Completion bonuses on major campus builds of 10-20% of base are now common practice
- Retention incentives tied to 18-month and 36-month milestones on multi-year programmes are becoming standard



# ESTIMATING & PRECONSTRUCTION TRACK

## Assistant Estimator

Entry Point | 0-2 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 2-3 years

\$80k-\$110k

**You're learning the disciplines of quantity takeoff, subcontractor solicitation, and cost assembly for one of the most complex building types in construction. Data centre estimating requires precision: a single missed scope item on a 200MW campus can mean millions in exposure.**

### How to Advance:

- Build a track record of accurate bid submissions with post-bid reconciliation
- Develop specific knowledge of data centre MEP and power cost models



### Key Responsibilities:

- Quantity takeoffs for specific trades, MEP systems, and civil works
- Subcontractor outreach, bid collection, and levelling support
- Data entry, estimate assembly, and bid package preparation
- Market research on equipment lead times, material pricing, and labour rates
- Learn data centre cost databases, historical benchmarks, and power cost modelling

### Skills To Develop:

- Bluebeam, PlanSwift, or On-Screen Takeoff proficiency
- Understanding of data centre cost drivers: power density, redundancy, cooling type
- Generator, UPS, and MV electrical system cost structures
- Familiarity with long-lead equipment procurement cycles



# ESTIMATING & PRECONSTRUCTION TRACK

## Estimator/Senior Estimator/Chief Estimator

**\$80K–\$220K+**

Mid-Senior | 3-12 Years Experience

**From running \$10M–\$50M bids independently to leading preconstruction on \$500M+ hyperscale campus programmes, the estimating track in data centre construction offers one of the most direct paths from technical skill to senior compensation. Demand for estimators with mission-critical experience is severe and growing.**

### Mid-Level: Estimator (\$100k–\$140k)

- Full estimate preparation for \$5M–\$100M data centre projects
- Subcontractor negotiations, buy-out, and scope review
- Value engineering and lifecycle cost analysis
- Conceptual budgeting for early-stage hyperscale programmes
- Transition estimates to project teams at award

### Senior (\$140K–\$180K) / Lead Estimator (\$160K–\$220K+)

- Lead preconstruction on \$100M–\$1B+ campus programmes
- Strategic pricing, risk modelling, and escalation forecasting
- Manage estimating teams across multiple concurrent bids
- Business development support and client-facing preconstruction services
- Develop long-term subcontractor and supplier relationships at scale



# COMMISSIONING & TECHNICAL SPECIALIST TRACK

## Commissioning Engineer (Entry Level)

Entry Level | 1-4 Years Experience | Typical Duration: 3-4 years

\$85K-\$115K

**You're entering the most technically specialised and fastest growing career path in the sector. Commissioning engineers verify that every critical system in a data centre performs exactly as designed before going live. The stakes are absolute: a missed fault at this stage can cost an operator millions in downtime.**

### Certifications to Pursue:

- BICSI DCTECH or DCEP as foundation credentials
- CxA (Commissioning Authority) entry pathway



### Key Responsibilities:

- Execute pre-functional and functional testing on MEP and electrical systems
- Review installation against basis-of-design documentation
- Document test results, deficiency logs, and resolution tracking
- Support Level 1-3 Cx activities under senior engineer oversight
- Coordinate with construction teams on system readiness for testing
- Learn data centre-specific Cx protocols: ASHRAE, Uptime Institute, BICSI standards

### Skills To Develop:

- Power systems: UPS, generators, ATS, MV switchgear operation
- Cooling systems: CRAC, CRAH, chillers, CRAHs, and liquid cooling basics
- Controls and BMS/BAS system fundamentals
- Test equipment operation and documentation standards



# COMMISSIONING & TECHNICAL SPECIALIST TRACK

## Commissioning Engineer (MID)/Commissioning Manager

\$115K-\$215K+

Mid-Senior | 4-10 Years Experience

**From independently leading Cx on individual builds to managing entire commissioning programmes across multi-phase campus delivery, this is where the data centre Cx track diverges dramatically from the rest of the industry on compensation. Experienced Cx professionals are the hardest roles to fill in the entire sector.**

### Mid Cx Engineer (\$115K-\$160K)

- Lead Levels 1-4 Cx on full data centre builds independently
- Develop and manage Cx plans, test scripts, and issue logs
- Mentor entry-level Cx engineers on site
- Coordinate across MEP, controls, and IT infrastructure teams
- Manage Cx scope with construction sequencing on live-facility builds

### Cx Manager / Lead (\$160K-\$215K+)

- Own commissioning programme delivery across multi-phase campus builds
- Manage teams of Cx engineers and coordinate with external CxA authorities
- Interface directly with hyperscale operators on acceptance testing and handover
- Drive AI-infrastructure Cx: GPU density, liquid cooling, and high-load testing
- RCDD, CCP, or BCxP credentials. Virginia/Texas/Arizona markets at top of range



# CAREER TRANSITION STRATEGIES



## FROM GENERAL / COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

**Timeline: 6-12 months to become competitive**

- Complete BICSI DCEP or RCDD fundamentals course to build credibility
- Highlight transferable skills: occupied building experience, complex MEP, phased delivery
- Target smaller colocation or edge builds initially to build DC-specific history
- Network with data centre construction professionals at AFCOM or DCD events
- Consider lateral move at equivalent level to gain the sector experience that pays later



## FROM HEALTHCARE CONSTRUCTION

**Timeline: 3-6 months to become competitive**

- Healthcare construction experience is the strongest transferable background: phased delivery, live-facility operations, and complex MEP all apply directly
- Emphasise ICRA and infection control experience as analogous to Cx protocol discipline
- Target Cx-adjacent roles where patient care continuity maps to uptime requirements
- Salary uplifts of 15–25% on transition are common for experienced healthcare PMs and supers moving into data centre



## FROM FIELD TO TECHNICAL / CX TRACK

**Timeline: 6-18 months (less common transition)**

- Experienced superintendents with power and MEP knowledge are strong Cx candidates: the systems knowledge is already there
- Pursue BICSI DCTECH and CxA pathway certifications while still in field roles
- Volunteer for commissioning support activities on your current projects
- Develop documentation and test scripting skills alongside site experience



## FROM ENGINEERING / DESIGN

**Timeline: Immediate to 6 months**

- MEP engineers and electrical designers have the strongest direct transition path into Cx roles
- Leverage existing data centre design experience to target Cx or technical specialist positions
- Emphasise systems knowledge: power distribution, cooling design, and controls integration
- Network directly within GC and Cx firm organisations you've worked alongside on design-side projects



# THE BOTTOM LINE

---

## THE BEST CAREER DECISION IN CONSTRUCTION RIGHT NOW

In 2026's data centre construction market, the gap between demand and available talent has never been wider. Firms are not just hiring. They are competing, sometimes desperately, for professionals who understand mission-critical delivery. That creates genuine leverage for those who specialise.

Whatever track you choose, the fundamentals are the same: build deep expertise, show up with documented outcomes, and commit to the discipline that data centre construction demands. The market will reward you for it consistently and significantly for years to come.

## EVERY TRACK LEADS SOMEWHERE EXCEPTIONAL

- Real data centre construction expertise, built project by project
- Proven delivery outcomes you can speak to with specific numbers
- Technology and systems fluency that multiplies your value
- A professional reputation that makes hiring managers come to you
- A long-term career in a sector that won't slow down before 2035