



**AGC**  
THE CONSTRUCTION  
ASSOCIATION

# Data Digest

WWW.AGC.ORG

Vol. 24, No. 44 November 18-22, 2024

## October job count climbs in 41 states; ConstructConnect, Dodge differ on direction of starts; ABI rises

Seasonally adjusted **construction employment** rose year-over-year (y/y) from October 2023 to October 2024 in 41 states, fell in eight states and the District of Columbia, and held steady in Vermont, according to AGC's [analysis](#) of Bureau of Labor Statistics data [posted](#) on Tuesday. Texas added the most construction jobs (38,800 or 4.7%), followed by Florida (27,700, 4.4%), Michigan (14,600, 7.7%), and Virginia (12,500 jobs, 5.8%). The largest percentage increases again were in Alaska (19.1%, 3,400 jobs) and Hawaii (15.2%, 5,700), followed by Oklahoma (9.8%, 8,200 jobs) and Michigan. New York lost the most jobs (-9,200, -2.4%), followed by Oregon (-5,100, -4.3%), Maryland (-2,500, -1.6%), California (-1,700, -0.2%), and Minnesota (-1,600, -1.2%). Oregon had the largest percentage loss, followed by New York, Maryland, Connecticut (-1.3%, -800 jobs), and Minnesota. **For the month**, 33 states and D.C. added construction jobs, 13 states lost jobs, and the total was flat in Alaska, Connecticut, Kansas, and Rhode Island. Louisiana added the largest number and percentage of jobs (3,400 jobs or 2.5%). Other states adding a large number of construction jobs include South Carolina (1,300, 1.1%), Utah (1,300 0.9%), and California (1,200, 0.1%). Other states with large percentage gains include South Dakota (2.3%, 700 jobs), New Hampshire (2.2%, 700), and Hawaii (2.1%, 900). The largest losses for the month were in Florida (-5,400 or -0.8%) and North Carolina (-4,300, -1.6%). Hurricanes severely disrupted construction in both states. The largest percentage job losses were in Iowa (-2.1%, -1,800 jobs) and North Carolina. (For D.C., Delaware, and Hawaii, BLS posts combined totals for mining, logging, and construction; AGC treats the changes as all from construction.)

Construction data providers ConstructConnect and Dodge Construction Network reported divergent estimates of the **value of construction starts**. Starts fell 10% y/y in October and 0.6% year-to-date in the first 10 months of 2024 compared to January-October 2023, data provider ConstructConnect [reported](#) today. **Nonresidential building starts** fell 8.8% and 6.3%, respectively. **Heavy engineering (civil) starts** rose 5.1% and 17.5%, respectively. **Residential starts** declined 13.5% y/y and 6.8% year-to-date. Total starts increased 4%, seasonally adjusted, from September to October and 3% year-to-date, Dodge [reported](#) on Thursday. **Nonresidential building starts** grew 14% for the month and 1% year-to-date, **nonbuilding starts** rose 2% in October but were flat year-to-date, while **residential building starts** fell 3% in October but rose 7% year-to-date.

The **Architecture Billings Index (ABI)** increased from 45.7 in September, seasonally adjusted, to 50.3 in October, the first reading above the breakeven 50 mark since January 2023, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) [reported](#) on Wednesday. AIA calls the index "a leading economic indicator of construction activity, providing an approximately 9-to-12-month glimpse into the future of nonresidential construction spending activity." The ABI is derived from the share of responding architecture firms that report a gain in billings compared to the previous month less the share reporting a decline in billings, presented on a 0-to-100 scale. Architecture "firms are feeling more optimistic about revenue projections for 2025," said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker. "Overall, 41% of responding firm leaders expect to see net revenue growth from 2024 to 2025, with 32% projecting growth in the 5% to 9% range." However, the **design contracts** index reading was 45.3, the seventh consecutive reading below 50.

**Housing starts** (units) in October decreased 3.1% from September and 4.0% y/y at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, the Census Bureau [reported](#) on Tuesday. Single-family starts declined 6.9 and 0.5%, respectively. Multifamily (five or more units) starts rose 9.8% for the month but slid 13% y/y. **Residential permits** dipped 0.6% for the month and 7.7% y/y. Single-family permits increased 0.5% for the month but slipped 1.8% y/y. Multifamily permits declined 3.0% from September and 21% y/y. Multifamily units under construction declined for the 13th month in a row, by 3.5% and 19% y/y.

The "number of new **immigrants joining the construction industry** rose substantially in 2022," the National Association of Home Builders [posted](#) on Wednesday. "According to the latest American Community Survey (ACS), the industry managed to attract close to 130,000 new workers coming from outside the U.S. to help with persistent labor shortages. For comparison, this inflow surpasses the combined number of new immigrants who joined the industry in the two years prior to the pandemic. Only during the housing boom of 2005-2006, was the industry absorbing a similar number of new foreign-born workers. Native-born workers remain reluctant to join the industry, with their total count remaining below the record levels of the housing boom of the mid-2000s by over half a million. As a result, the share of immigrants in construction reached a new historic high of 25.5%. In construction trades, the share of immigrants remains even higher, with one in three craftsmen coming from outside the U.S. This is consistent with the earlier ACS data that regularly shows higher shares of immigrants in the construction trades."

Contractors are invited to complete the 2025 AGC/Sage National Construction Hiring and Business Outlook [survey](#).

Data Digest is a weekly summary of economic news. Sign up [here](#). Editor: [Ken.Simonson@agc.org](mailto:Ken.Simonson@agc.org), Chief Economist, AGC. Go here for [Ken's PPT](#) or more [construction data](#).

© 2024 Associated General Contractors of America. License granted for limited use with attribution under Creative Commons Attribution-No Derivatives 4.0 International

(CC BY-ND 4.0) license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>. Warranties disclaimed. Conditions apply.