AGC THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Data DIGest

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31 states add construction jobs in August; housing starts slide; opposition to data centers soars

Seasonally adjusted **construction employment** rose from July to August **in** 31 **states**, fell in 16 states and the District of Columbia and was flat in Delaware, North Dakota and Vermont, according to AGC's analysis of BLS data posted today. Ohio added the most construction jobs (4,600 jobs, 1.7%), followed by Wisconsin (2,800, 1.3%), Virginia (2,400, 1.1%), Missouri (2,200, 1.4%) and North Carolina (2,100, 0.7%). The largest percentage gain occurred in Mississippi (2.6%, 1,400 jobs), followed by New Mexico (2.1%, 2,100), Wisconsin, Ohio and Montana (1.6%, 600). Colorado lost the largest number of construction jobs between July and August (-2,200 jobs or 1.2%), followed by Maryland (-2,000, -1.2%), Massachusetts (-1,400, -0.8%), Alabama (-700, -0.6%) and California (-600, -0.1%). Rhode Island experienced the largest percentage loss (-1.3%, -300 jobs), followed by Maryland, Colorado, West Virginia (-1.1%, -400) and Massachusetts. Between August 2025 and August 2026, 35 states and D.C. added **construction jobs year-over-year** (y/y), while 15 states shed jobs. Ohio added the most construction jobs (17,800 jobs or 6.8%), followed by North Carolina (17,500, 6.3%), Texas (17,400, 1.9%), Louisiana (17,200, 12.7%) and Illinois (13,400, 5.6%). Louisiana posted the largest percentage gain over 12 months, followed by Wyoming (7.1%, 1,600 jobs), Wisconsin (7.1%, 10,500), Ohio and Nebraska (6.7%, 4,300). California lost the most construction jobs y/y (-6,900 jobs or -0.8%), followed by New York (-5,200, -1.3%), Virginia (-4,300, -1.9%), Georgia (-4,000, -1.7%) and Michigan (-4,000, -2.0%). The largest y/y percentage loss was in New Hampshire (-3.7%, -1,200 jobs), followed by Rhode Island (-3.1%, -700 jobs), New Jersey (-2.3%, -800), Michigan and West Virginia (-2.0%, -700).

Housing starts (units) in August slipped 2.6% from April and 1.2% y/y at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, the Census Bureau reported on Thursday. Single-family starts increased 2.6% for the month and 5.2% y/y. Multifamily (five or more units) starts plummeted 23% for the month and 15% y/y. **Residential permits** declined 2.7% from July but rose 3.5% y/y. Single-family permits were down 1.8% for the month but up 1.3% y/y. Multifamily permits slid 3.1% for the month but climbed 9.4% y/y. **Multifamily units under construction** at the end of August dipped 0.3% from July and 2.5% y/y.

Opposition to data centers is spreading rapidly, including in Ohio, one of several states that welcomed data centers until recently. "At least 138 Ohio municipalities and townships have active moratoriums on data centers as of Sept. 17, local government records and news reports show," States Newsroom reported today. "A Bowling Green State University poll released Wednesday found that 78% of Ohioans support data center moratoriums until more information can be gathered about their effects. Seventy-five percent oppose construction in their local communities, and 63% are against construction elsewhere in Ohio."

Year-to-date (YTD) in January through July, "30 **states** and the District of Columbia recorded increases in **multifamily building permits**, while 19 states experienced declines" and Alaska remained unchanged compared to the same months of 2025, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) reported on Tuesday. "The District of Columbia posted the largest percentage increase, with multifamily permits rising [109%,] from 541 to 1,130 units. In contrast, Nevada recorded the steepest decline, with permits falling [42%], from 3,916 to 2,271 units.…Texas, which issued the largest number of multifamily permits, posted a [20.5% YTD] decline….California, the second-highest state, recorded a [26%] increase, while Florida, ranking third, saw multifamily permits decrease by" 31%. Six of the 10 **metro area**s with the most **multifamily permits** YTD experienced increases: New York-Newark-Jersey City, #1 in YTD permits, up 58%; Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W. Va, #6, up 130%; Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, #7, up 16%; and Denver-Aurora-Centennial, #10, up 20%. The largest decline occurred in Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, #8, -33%.

"In 2025, the number of **women employed in the construction industry** rose to around 1.37 million, an increase of about 31,000 from 2024," NAHB reported on Tuesday, based on BLS's Current Population Survey. "Women accounted for 11.3% of total construction employment, the highest share in the past 20 years. The growing presence of women in construction aligns with the expansion of white-collar jobs in the industry. Most "women are employed in occupations such as office and administrative support, management, and business and financial operations. [In contrast, women] comprised only 4% of workers in construction and extraction occupations, 3% in installation, maintenance, and repair occupations, and 6% in production occupations."

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