AGC THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Data DIGest

Vol. 26, No. 40 Oct. 19-23, 2026

Employment rises in 25 states in September; Dodge reports dip in starts; ABI hits four-month low

Seasonally adjusted **construction employment** rose from August to September **in** 25 **states**, fell in 21 states and was flat in Connecticut, Delaware, Kansas, Maine and the District of Columbia, according to AGC's analysis of BLS data posted on Tuesday. Oregon added the most construction jobs (2,000 jobs, 1.8%), followed by Colorado (1,900, 1.0%), Washington (1,500, 0.7%), Illinois (1,300, 0.5%) and South Carolina (1,300, 1.0%). The largest percentage gain occurred in Rhode Island (2.2%, 500 jobs), followed by Wyoming (2.1%, 500), New Mexico (1.8%, 1,000), Oregon and New Hampshire (1.3%, 400). Wisconsin lost the largest number of construction jobs between August and September (-3,300 jobs or -2.1%), followed by Ohio (-3,100, -1.1%), Texas (-2,400, -0.3%) and California (-1,900, -0.2%). Alaska experienced the largest percentage loss (-3.3%, -600 jobs), followed by Wisconsin, Hawaii (-1.7%, -700), North Dakota (-1.3%, -400) and Mississippi (-1.2%, -700). From September 2025 to September 2026, 34 states and D.C. added construction jobs year-over-year (y/y), while 14 states shed jobs. Louisiana added the largest number and percentage of construction jobs (18,800 jobs or 13.9%). Other states that added large numbers of jobs include North Carolina (15,900 jobs, 5.7%), Ohio (15,100, 5.8%), Texas (15,000, 1.7%) and Illinois (14,300, 6.0%). Other states with notable percentage gains include Wyoming (8.4%, 1,900 jobs), Nebraska (7.6%, 4,900), Illinois, Ohio and Kansas (5.8%, 4,300). Georgia lost the most construction jobs y/y (-4,900 jobs or -2.1%), followed by California (-4,800, -0.5%), Virginia (-3,200, -1.4%), New Jersey (-3,100, -1.9%) and Michigan (-3,000, -1.5%). The largest percentage loss was in Alaska (-5.3%, -1,000 jobs), followed by West Virginia (-4.0%, -1,400), New Hampshire (-2.2%, -700), Georgia and New Jersey.

Total **construction starts** slipped 1.5% at a seasonally adjusted annual rate from August to September, Dodge Construction Network reported on Wednesday. "Nonresidential building starts fell 6.3% over the month, residential starts ticked down 0.3% and nonbuilding improved by 5.5%." Compared to the first nine months of 2025, total construction starts were up 14% year-to-date (YTD). **Nonresidential starts** were up 24% YTD, with commercial and industrial construction up 46.3% and institutional starts down 1.8%. **Nonbuilding construction** was up 18% YTD, with electric power/utilities up 70%, miscellaneous nonbuilding up 3.8%, and highways and bridges up 0.9%. Environmental public works declined 4.1% YTD. **Residential starts** fell 1.7% YTD, with single-family starts down 4.5% and multifamily starts up 3.0%.

The **Architecture Billings** Index (ABI) fell from 47.2 in August, seasonally adjusted, to a four-month low of 44.7 in September, the American Institute of Architects reported on Wednesday. The index is "a leading economic indicator that leads nonresidential construction activity by approximately 9-12 months." The ABI is derived from the share of responding architecture firms that report a gain in billings from the previous month less the share reporting a decline, on a 0-to-100 scale. Subindexes (based on three-month moving averages) varied for practice specializations: commercial/industrial, 50.9 (up from 50.1 in August); institutional, 47.6 (up from 46.1); multifamily residential, 42.9 (down from 46.4); and mixed practice, 41.5 (down from 41.9).

Housing starts (units) in September slumped 5.2% from August and 7.4% y/y at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, the Census Bureau reported on Tuesday. Single-family starts decreased 4.6% for the month but rose 2.6% y/y. Multifamily (five or more units) starts tumbled 7.2% for the month and 26% y/y. Multifamily units under construction at the end of September were unchanged from August but down 3.1% y/y. **Residential permits** edged down 0.2% from August and 3.0% y/y. Single-family permits declined 4.0% and 4.8%, respectively. Multifamily permits increased 5.9% and 1.0%.

"Through August, 26 **states** and the District of Columbia recorded increases in **multifamily building permits**, while 24 states experienced declines" YTD, the National Association of Home Builders reported on Oct. 16. "Alabama posted the largest percentage increase, with multifamily permits rising [76%,] from 1,227 to 2,163 units. In contrast, Louisiana recorded the steepest decline, with permits falling [65%], from 2,400 to 829 units." The top three states by number of multifamily permits had mixed results: Texas, down 17%; California, up 25.5%; and Florida, down 28%. The top five **metro area**s with the most **multifamily permits** YTD were similarly varied: New York-Newark-Jersey City, up 50%; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, up 82%; Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, down 12%; Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va., up 78%; and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, down 9.0%.

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
© 2026 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.