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**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT DECLINES IN 99 METRO AREAS IN MARCH FROM 2019 AS INDUSTRY OFFICIALS CALL FOR NEW STATE & FEDERAL FUNDING TO ADD JOBS**

*Laredo, Texas and Lake Charles, La. Have Largest Construction Job Losses While Lewiston, Idaho-Wash. And Dallas-Plano-Irving, Texas Add the Most Jobs; Association Survey Indicates Losses will Spread*

Construction employment declined in 99 out of 358 metro areas from March 2019 to last month as the coronavirus pandemic triggered the first shutdown orders and project cancellations, according to an [analysis](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Metro_Empl_2003_Alpha.pdf) released by the Associated General Contractors of America today. Association officials urged federal and state officials to boost investments in infrastructure to help put more people to work amid rising unemployment levels.

“These new figures foreshadow even larger declines in construction employment throughout the country as the pandemic’s economic damage grows more severe,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “Unfortunately, the data for April and later months are sure to be much worse. In our latest [survey](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Files/Communications/2020_Coronavirus_FifthEditionFinal_total.pdf), more than one-third of firms report they had furloughed or terminated workers—a direct result of growing cancellations.”

The largest percentage decline in construction employment between March 2019 and last month occurred in Laredo, Texas, which lost 19 percent or 800 jobs, followed by Lake Charles, La., which lost 18 percent (4,600 construction jobs). Lake Charles had the largest numerical decrease, followed by New York City, which lost 3,500 construction jobs (2 percent).

Construction employment increased over the year in 205 metro areas and was flat in 54. The largest percentage increases in construction employment occurred in Lewiston, Idaho-Wash. (23 percent, 300 jobs), followed by Walla Walla, Wash. (22 percent, 22 jobs). The largest numerical gain occurred in Dallas-Plano-Irving, Texas (10,200 jobs, 7 percent).

Association officials noted that new infrastructure investments would help offset some of the sudden and dramatic declines to demand for construction that have taken place since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. They noted, for example, that 68 percent of construction firms report in the association’s April 20-23 [survey](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Files/Communications/2020_Coronavirus_FifthEditionFinal_total.pdf) that they have had projects cancelled or delayed during the past two months.

“New infrastructure funding will put more people back to work in high-paying construction jobs in communities throughout the nation,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “New infrastructure funding will also give a needed boost to manufacturing and service sector firms that supply construction employers, all of which have been hard-hit by the coronavirus and the related economic shutdowns.”

View AGC’s coronavirus [resources](https://www.agc.org/coronavirus) and [survey](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Files/Communications/2020_Coronavirus_FifthEditionFinal_total.pdf). View comparative data [here](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/expanded%20summary-coronavirus%20survey%205th%20edition2.0.pdf). View the metro employment [data](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Metro_Empl_2003_Alpha.pdf), [rankings](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Metro_Empl_2003_Rank.pdf), [highs and lows](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Metro_Empl_2003_HighsAndLows.pdf), [top 10](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/Metro_Empl_2003_Top10.pdf).

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