Majority of states add construction employees in September; job openings, hires shrink in October

Contractors are invited to **complete the AGC/Sage 2026 Construction Hiring and Business Outlook survey**. **The survey will close at noon ET Monday, December 15** and results will be released in early January.

Seasonally adjusted **construction employment** rose **from August to September in** 31 **states** and the District of Columbia, declined in 17 states, and was unchanged in Maine and Arizona, according to AGC's analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data posted on Thursday. Texas added the most construction jobs (4,300 jobs or 0.5%), followed by Michigan (4,200, 2.1%) and Indiana (1,800, 1.1%). The largest percentage gain occurred in Michigan, followed by Wyoming (1.7%, 400 jobs) and Iowa (1.5%, 1,300). Florida experienced the largest decline in construction jobs from August to September (-4,400, -0.7%), followed by Mississippi (-2,600, -1.0%) and New York (-2,400, -0.6%). Mississippi lost the highest percentage of jobs for the month, followed by Alaska (-1.5%, -300 jobs), Montana (-1.1%, -400), and West Virginia (-1.1%, -400). On a **year-over-year** (y/y) basis, **construction employment** increased in 27 states and D.C., while 23 states shed jobs. Texas added the most construction jobs (16,400 or 1.9%), followed by Virginia (13,500, 6.1%), Ohio (12,200, 4.9%), and Michigan (11,000, 5.6%). New Mexico had the largest percentage gain over 12 months (12.4%, 6,700 jobs), followed by Idaho (7.5%, 5,400), Alaska (7.1%, 1,300), and Kentucky (6.9%, 6,500). New York lost the most construction jobs during the past 12 months (-16,900 jobs, -4.3%), followed by California (-14,600, -1.6%), Washington (-12,100, -5.4%), New Jersey (-10,000, -6.0%), and Nevada (-5,500, -5.0%). The largest percentage loss was in New Jersey, followed by Washington, Nevada, New York, and Maine (-3.4%, -1,200). (BLS reports combined mining, logging, and construction data for Hawaii, Maryland, and D.C.; AGC treats all jobs as construction.)

There were 213,000 **job openings in construction**, seasonally adjusted, at the end of October, a decrease of 36,000 or 14% y/y, BLS reported on Tuesday. The job openings rate (openings as a share of employment plus openings) fell from 2.9% to 2.5%%, the lowest rate for October since 2015. **Hires** for the full month totaled 313,000, a decrease of 10,000 (3.1%) y/y, while the hires rate (hires as a share of employment) slipped from 3.9% to 3.8%, the lowest October hires rate in the 25-year history of the series. **Layoffs and discharges** declined 16% y/y, from 153,000 to 129,000, and the layoff rate (layoffs and discharges as a share of employment) fell from 1.9% to 1.6%, the lowest October rate yet. **Quits** fell by 11% y/y, from 135,000 to 120,000, and the **quits rate** (quits as a share of employment) fell from 1.6% to 1.4%. The low rates of hires and openings, as well as the rise in the layoff rate, suggest contractors have less need for workers immediately.

The Dodge Momentum Index (DMI)—"a monthly measure based on the three-month moving **value of nonresidential building projects going into planning**, shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year to 18 months"—declined 1.1% in November from a downwardly revised October reading, Dodge Construction Network reported on December 5. "Over the month, commercial planning ticked down 0.1% and institutional planning declined by 3.4%....On the commercial side, activity slowed down for warehouses and hotels, while planning momentum was sustained for data centers, traditional office buildings, and retail stores. On the institutional side, education, healthcare, public, and recreational planning saw weaker momentum, after strong activity in recent months. Planning for religious buildings, however, continued to accelerate. [Y/y,] the DMI was up 50% when compared to November 2024. The commercial segment was up 57% (+36% when data centers are removed) and the institutional segment was up 37%."

ConstructConnect reported on December 3 that its project stress index jumped 20% from October to November. "The surge was driven by a 41.1% jump in **abandonments**, its highest level since a spike in July this year, and a 16.5% rise in on-hold activity. In contrast, **bid date delays** decreased a modest 2.9%....On a [y/y] basis, this month's increase pushed the index 9.9% higher than November 2024 levels. The [y/y] increase stems entirely from abandonment activity, which increased 42.7% compared to last year. Meanwhile, bid date delays fell 8.5% and on-hold activity dropped 8.9% over the same period….Private sector projects saw notable increases in both bid delays and on-hold activity. In comparison, the public sector experienced strong declines in bid date delays and on holds, dropping both indicators well below historic averages. In contrast, the private sector saw a minor improvement in abandonments while the public abandonment activity rose strongly. Both sectors remain well above historic averages for abandonments and have maintained elevated levels throughout most of the year, reflecting the economic uncertainty that has characterized the construction industry in 2025."