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# Construction employment climbs in November; half of metro areas add jobs through September

**Construction employment**, seasonally adjusted, totaled 8,332,000 in in November, an increase of 28,000 from October, according to AGC's analysis of data the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) posted on Tuesday. Construction employment rose by 58,000 (0.7%) year-over-year (y/y), a slightly faster pace than the 0.6% increase in total nonfarm payroll employment. Residential construction employment (at residential building and specialty contractors) declined by 300 in November and by 42,200 (-1.3%) y/y. Nonresidential construction employment (at building, specialty trade, and heavy and civil engineering construction firms) increased by 28,800 for the month and 100,200 (2.0%) y/y. Seasonally adjusted **average hourly earnings** for production and nonsupervisory employees (craft and office) in construction rose 4.3% y/y to $37.83 per hour, outpacing the 3.9% rise for the overall private sector. The industry's wage rate for production workers was 19% above the private-sector rate. The unemployment rate for workers with construction experience was 4.1%, not seasonally adjusted, less than the overall unemployment rate—a sign that there are few experienced workers available to hire.

**Construction employment**, not seasonally adjusted, rose from September 2024 to September 2025 **in** half (180) of the 360 **metro areas** (including divisions of larger metros) for which BLS posts construction employment data, fell in 114 (32%), and was unchanged in 66, according to an analysis AGC released on Wednesday. (For most metros, BLS posts only combined totals for mining, logging, and construction; AGC treats these totals as construction-only.) For the seventh month in a row, the largest job gain was in the Arlington-Alexandria-Reston, Va.-W.Va. metro division (7,900 combined jobs or 9%). Next came the Washington, D.C.-Md. division (6,200 combined jobs, 13%), which also had the largest percentage gain. Owensboro, Ky. had the second largest percentage increase (12%, 200 combined jobs). The largest job loss again occurred in New York City (-9,900 combined jobs, -7%), followed by the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale division (-6,100 combined jobs, -4%). The largest percentage loss, -8%, occurred in Hanford-Corcoran, Calif. (-100 combined jobs); Pueblo, Colo. (-300 combined jobs); Newark, N.J. (-3,200 combined jobs); and Ithaca, N.Y. (-100 combined jobs).

Construction industry **compensation** (wages, salaries, and benefits including required employer contributions) rose 1.2%, seasonally adjusted, in the third quarter (Q3) of 2025 and 3.8% over four quarters (vs. 2.8% a year ago), BLS reported on December 10. **Wages and salaries** increased by 1.3% in Q3 and 4.1% over four quarters (vs. 3.0% a year ago). The latest increases outpaced those in the overall private sector, where compensation rose 0.8% in Q3 and 3.5% over four quarters and wages rose 0.8% in Q3 and 3.6% over four quarters. These results, as well as the data on increases in average hourly earnings, suggest construction pay is rising faster than overall private-sector pay.

The National Football League (NFL), "major collegiate programs and other professional leagues are in the midst of the largest **stadium construction** boom seen in decades," Insurance Business reported on Monday. "Seven major NFL stadium projects are currently underway or planned, representing more than $10 billion in investment, with universities and mixed-use sports districts adding further momentum."

"Boston's **office pipeline for under-construction space** reached almost 4.7 million square feet, ranking first nationally, Yardi Matrix data shows," Commercial Property Executive reported on Tuesday. "The metro was followed by Manhattan (3 million square feet) and Dallas (2.6 million square feet). These are the only markets across the U.S. to surpass the 2 million-square-foot threshold. San Francisco (530,000 square feet) and Chicago (590,000 square feet) had the least underway space among gateway markets."

The **Architecture Billings** Index (ABI) fell to 45.3 in November, seasonally adjusted, from 47.6 in October, 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 compared to the previous month less the share reporting a decline in billings, presented on a 0-to-100 scale. Any score below 50.0 indicates decreasing business conditions. Billings have declined for 13 months in a row and in all but three of the last 38 months. An index tracking the value of newly signed **design contracts** had a reading of 42.7, down from 47.1 in October and the 21st month in a row below 50.

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.