

Contractors add 9,000 jobs in April; input costs jump; job openings shrink in March as hires edge up

Construction employment in April totaled 8,321,000, seasonally adjusted, up by 9,000 from a downwardly revised March total and up by 50,000 (0.6%) year-over-year (y/y), according to AGC's [analysis](#) of data the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [posted](#) on May 8. Nonresidential construction employment climbed by 19,000 for the month (up by 5,600 at building firms, 12,600 at specialty trade contractors, and 800 at heavy and civil engineering construction firms) and 98,600 (2.0%) y/y. Residential construction employment shrank by 10,400 in April (down by 1,500 at residential building firms and 8,900 at specialty contractors) and by 49,200 (-1.5%) y/y. **Labor costs** for construction firms outpaced other sectors: seasonally adjusted **average hourly earnings** (AHE) for production and nonsupervisory employees rose 3.7% y/y for the total private sector vs. 4.8% for construction (i.e., most craft and office workers). The industry's AHE for production workers in April was \$38.73 or 20.2% more than the overall private average.

Input prices for new nonresidential construction rose 1.7% in April and 6.6% y/y, the largest y/y increase since December 2022, according to producer price index (PPI) data BLS [posted](#) on Wednesday. AGC [posted](#) tables and charts of construction-related PPIs. The diesel fuel PPI soared 14% in April and 74% y/y, while the index for liquid asphalt leaped 41% in April and 18% y/y and the index for truck transportation of freight climbed 8.1% and 15%, respectively. PPIs for three key metals used in construction continued to post outsized increases, driven by tariffs as well as the Middle East conflict. The index for aluminum mill shapes rose 4.2% for the month and 37% y/y. The PPI for copper and brass mill shapes climbed 0.9% and 21%, respectively. The index for steel mill products increased 3.8% and 13%, respectively. Readers are invited to report about project timing, materials price changes, and supply chains to ken.simonson@agc.org and to view AGC's Tariff Resource [Center](#) for up-to-date, detailed information about relevant tariffs.

There were 224,000 **job openings in construction**, seasonally adjusted, at the end of March, a decline of 54,000 or -20% y/y, BLS [reported](#) on Tuesday. The job openings rate (openings as a share of employment plus openings) fell from 3.3% to 2.6%. Both the number and the rate were the lowest for March rate since 2017. **Hires** for the full month totaled 308,000, a gain of 8,000 (2.7%) y/y, while the hires rate (hires as a share of employment) inched up from 3.6% to 3.7%. **Layoffs** and discharges fell by 17,000 (-10%) y/y, from 162,000 to 145,000, while **quits** slumped by 23,000 (-14%) y/y, from 162,000 to 139,000. The layoff and quits rates each declined from 2.0% to 1.7%.

Seasonally adjusted **construction employment** rose from February to March in 31 states and the District of Columbia, fell in 14 states and was flat in five states, according to AGC's [analysis](#) of BLS data [posted](#) on May 6. Ohio added the most construction jobs for the month (5,300 jobs or 2.0%), followed by Louisiana (2,900, 2.0%), Florida (2,600, 0.4%), and Virginia (2,100, 0.9%). Delaware experienced the largest percentage gain for the month (4.2%, 1,000 jobs), followed by Louisiana, Ohio, and Nebraska (1.5%, 1,000 jobs). Between March 2025 and March 2026, 33 states and D.C. added construction jobs, 16 states lost jobs, and employment was unchanged in Wyoming. Texas added the most construction jobs y/y (21,600 jobs or 2.4%), followed by North Carolina (11,300, 4.1%), Ohio (11,200, 4.4%), Missouri (7,700, 5.2%), and Louisiana (6,900, 4.9%). Missouri had the largest y/y percentage gain, followed by 4.9% increases in Louisiana, Nebraska (3,100 jobs), and West Virginia (1,700 jobs). California lost the most construction jobs y/y (-9,400 jobs, -1.0%), followed by Florida (-8,700, -1.3%), New York (-7,100, -1.8%), and New Jersey (-3,600, -2.2%). Alaska experienced the largest percentage decline (-6.5%, -1,300 jobs), followed by New Mexico (-4.9%, -2,700 jobs), New Jersey, New York, and Mississippi (-1.7%, -900 jobs).

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”—rose 6.2% in April from a downwardly revised March reading, Dodge Construction Network [reported](#) on May 7. Commercial planning climbed 8.1%, while institutional planning rose 1.5%. “Planning activity for traditional office buildings, data centers, warehouses, hotels, and parking garages grew in April, while retail store planning slowed pace. On the institutional side, education and healthcare planning re-accelerated, while recreational, public, and religious planning slowed[. The] DMI was up 14.1% [y/y]. The commercial segment was up 37.2% (+5.8% when data centers are removed) and the institutional segment was up 28.8%.”