

Construction employment climbs in 32 states in April; Dodge reports increase in most starts

Seasonally adjusted **construction employment** rose from March to April in 32 states, fell in 15 states and was flat in New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Dakota and the District of Columbia, according to AGC's [analysis](#) of BLS data [posted](#) today. Florida added the most construction jobs (6,000 jobs or 0.9%), followed by Texas (3,500, 0.4%), Massachusetts (3,100, 1.8%), North Carolina (2,700, 0.9%), and New Mexico (2,600, 4.9%). The largest percentage gain occurred in New Mexico, followed by Kansas (2.2%, 1,600 jobs), Massachusetts and Montana (1.8%, 700 jobs). New Jersey lost the most construction jobs from March to April (-1,500 jobs, -0.9%), followed by Washington (-1,400, -0.6%), Pennsylvania (-1,100, -0.4%), Georgia (-1,100, -0.5%) and Arkansas (-900, -1.4%). The largest percentage loss was in Maine (-1.9%, -700 jobs), followed by Vermont (-1.2%, -200 jobs), New Jersey, and Rhode Island (-0.9%, -200 jobs). **Year-over-year (y/y) construction employment** rose in 32 states and D.C., fell in 15 states, and was unchanged in New Hampshire, North Dakota and Rhode Island. Texas added the most construction jobs y/y (18,700 jobs or 2.1%), followed by North Carolina (13,600, 4.9%), Ohio (13,500, 4.5%), Louisiana (8,000, 5.8%), Illinois (7,300, 3.0%), and Missouri (7,300, 4.9%). Louisiana had the largest y/y percentage gain, followed by West Virginia (5.7%, 2,000 jobs) and 4.9% increases in North Carolina, Missouri, and Nebraska (3,100 jobs). California lost the most construction jobs y/y (-14,500 jobs, -1.6%), followed by New Jersey (-4,900, -3.0%), Washington (-3,500, -1.6%), Arizona (-3,200, -1.4%), Georgia (-2,300, -1.0%) and Mississippi (-1,800, -3.3%). The largest percentage loss was in Alaska (-5.6%, -1,100 jobs), followed by Mississippi, New Jersey and Arkansas (-1.7%, -1,100 jobs).

Total **construction starts** rose 5.4% year-to-date (YTD) in January-April 2026 compared to the same months in 2025, after increasing 9.0% at a seasonally adjusted annual rate from March to April, Dodge Construction Network [reported](#) on Wednesday. "‘April’s construction starts were robust with only three categories posting month-over-month losses,’ stated Chief Economist Eric Gaus. ‘Large data centers and energy generation supported the growth, but 9 of the 15 categories saw double- or triple-digit growth.’" Nonresidential starts rose 9.1% YTD, with commercial and industrial construction up 30% and institutional starts down 12%. Residential starts were down 4.5% YTD, with single-family starts down 11% and multifamily starts up 7.9%. Nonbuilding starts climbed 12.3%, with 79% growth in “electric power/utilities. The remaining public works sectors, however, are seeing deeper year-to-date declines.”

Housing starts (units) in April declined by 2.8% from March but increased 4.6% y/y at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, the Census Bureau [reported](#) on Thursday. Single-family starts slumped 9.0% for the month and 2.4% y/y. Multifamily (five or more units) starts jumped 14% for the month and 23% y/y. **Residential permits** rose 5.8% from March but dipped 0.2% y/y. Single-family permits were down 2.6% for the month and 5.5% y/y. Multifamily permits soared 22% for the month and 5.3% y/y. **Multifamily units under construction** edged up by 0.4%, from March but declined 9.8% y/y.

The **Architecture Billings Index** (ABI) slipped to 48.3 in April, seasonally adjusted, from 49.8 in March, 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. Scores below 50 indicate decreasing business conditions. Subindexes (based on three-month moving averages) varied for practice specializations: multifamily, 51.5 (up from 50.8 in March); institutional, 51.1 (down from 51.9); commercial/industrial, 48.9 (down from 49.2); and mixed practices, 42.5 (down from 42.6).

“Amid a widespread national slowdown in population growth, midsized cities remained close to the previous year’s patterns between July 1, 2024, and July 1, 2025,” Census [reported](#) on May 14. “Drop-offs in average growth were steeper among the largest cities...Even where the largest cities maintained strong growth, they were often outpaced by smaller cities in the outer portions of the same metro area.” These patterns drive numerous types of construction within metros. “The top five fastest-growing cities in the nation with populations of 20,000 or more were all in Texas, with four of them clustered in the suburbs of the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metro area and the fifth located outside Houston.” Celina, Texas (near Dallas), was the nation’s fastest-growing city (increasing by 24.6%), as it was in 2023.