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Construction jobs increase in April; fewer metros add jobs; spending slips, openings plunge in March

Construction employment, seasonally adjusted, totaled 8,316,000 in April, a gain of 11,000 from March and 143,000 (1.7%) year-over-year (y/y), according to AGC's [analysis](#) of data BLS [posted](#) today. **Residential construction employment** (at residential building and specialty contractors) grew only slightly, rising by 3,400 in April and 5,000 (0.1%) y/y, a considerable decline from the 63,600 jobs (1.9%) added 12 months earlier. **Nonresidential construction employment** (at building, specialty trade, and heavy and civil engineering construction firms) increased by 8,000 for the month and 137,900 (2.9%) y/y, compared to 154,600 (3.3%) a year earlier. Seasonally adjusted **average hourly earnings** for production and nonsupervisory employees (craft and office) in construction rose 4.4% y/y to \$36.96 per hour. In the previous 12 months that measure rose 4.5%.

Construction employment, not seasonally adjusted, rose y/y from March 2024 to March 2025 in 192 (53%) of the 360 **metro areas** (including divisions of larger metros) for which BLS [posts](#) construction employment data, fell in 117 (32%), and was unchanged in 51, according to an [analysis](#) AGC released on Tuesday. In contrast, employment rose in 250 metros (69%) y/y in March 2024. (For most metros, BLS posts only combined totals for mining, logging, and construction; AGC treats these totals as construction-only.) The largest job gains were in Arlington-Alexandria-Reston, Va.-W.Va. (5,400 combined jobs or 6%), followed by Boise, Idaho (4,000 combined jobs, 11%); Cincinnati, Ohio-Ky.-Ind. (3,800 combined jobs, 7%); and New Orleans-Metairie, La. (3,700 construction jobs, 16%). The largest percentage gain—17%—occurred in Anniston-Oxford, Ala. (200 combined jobs) and Las Cruces, N.M. (700 combined jobs), followed by New Orleans-Metairie. The largest loss again occurred in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale division (-8,800 combined jobs, -6%), followed by the Anaheim-Santa Ana-Irvine, Calif. division (-5,100 construction jobs, -5%). The largest percentage loss was in Monroe, Mich. (-17%, -400 combined jobs), followed by Lawton, Okla. (-14%, -300 combined jobs).

Construction spending (not adjusted for inflation) totaled \$2.20 trillion in March at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, down 0.5% from February and up 2.8% year-over-year (y/y), the Census Bureau reported today. The y/y increase was the slowest since 2019. Private **residential construction** fell 0.4% for the month but increased 2.8% y/y. Single-family homebuilding inched up 0.1% for the month, multifamily construction was flat, but owner-occupied improvements fell 1.2%. **Private nonresidential construction** spending fell 0.8% for the month and rose just 1.6% y/y. The largest private nonresidential segment—manufacturing construction—slipped 0.2% for the month and has fallen 2.0% since peaking in June 2024. Power construction fell 0.1%. Commercial construction slid 1.0% (comprising warehouse, -0.9%; retail, -1.2%; and farm, -0.1%). Private “office” construction slumped 1.8% (comprising data centers, 0.1%, and other, -2.9%). **Public construction** spending slipped 0.2% for the month and rose 4.8% y/y. The top three public segments declined for the month: highway and street construction, -0.5%, and educational and transportation structures, both -0.6%.

There were 248,000 **job openings in construction**, seasonally adjusted, at the end of March, down 27% y/y, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on Tuesday. The job openings rate (openings as a share of employment plus openings) fell to 2.9%, the lowest March rate since 2020. Hires for the full month totaled 302,000, down 10% y/y, while the hires rate (hires as a share of employment) fell from 4.1% to 3.6%, the lowest rate for any month in the 25-year history of the series. The steep declines in openings and hires suggest contractors have become more cautious about expanding as the growth in spending slows or declines. But layoffs also fell, by 19% y/y, and the 1.7% layoff rate (layoffs as a share of employment) was the second-lowest March rate in series history, suggesting firms are keeping current workers.

Construction industry compensation (wages, salaries, and benefits including required employer contributions) rose 1.3%, seasonally adjusted, in the first quarter (Q1) of 2025, the most since Q2 2022, BLS [reported](#) on Wednesday. **Wages** rose 1.4%. Over four quarters, compensation rose 2.9% (vs. 3.8% a year ago) and wages rose 2.9% (vs. 4.2% a year ago).

Inflation-adjusted **gross domestic product** (real GDP) fell 0.3% in Q1 at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, the first decline since Q1 2022, the Bureau of Economic Analysis [reported](#) on Wednesday. Real **private nonresidential structures investment** rose 0.4% (commercial and health care, 0.7%; manufacturing structures, -4.5%; power and communication, 5.8%; other structures, -3.3%; and mining exploration, shafts, and wells, 9.1%), after rising 4.4% in Q4 2024. Real **residential fixed private investment** in permanent site structures rose 1.8% (single-family, 5.9%; multifamily -12%).

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