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CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES IN 39 STATES BETWEEN JUNE 2015 AND 2016, BUT HALF OF STATES SHED JOBS FROM MAY TO JUNE AS QUALIFIED WORKERS GROW SCARCE
California and Hawaii Add Most Jobs for the Year, North Dakota Has Biggest Actual and Percentage Declines; Pennsylvania and Delaware Top Monthly List of Gainers, Texas and Maine Have Largest Monthly Decreases

Construction employment increased in 39 states between June 2015 and June 2016, although half the states shed construction jobs between May and June, according to analysis of Labor Department data released today by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials said the flattening of monthly employment gains and losses indicates the urgency of beefing up programs to attract, train and retain construction workers.

“Construction demand is still growing strongly in all regions and among many types of owners,” said Ken Simonson, chief economist for the association. “But contractors appear to be struggling to fill jobs in the short run.” As evidence of the challenge in filling jobs, he noted that recent data show a spike in job openings at construction firms and a huge decline in the number of experienced construction workers available for hire.

Hawaii added the highest percentage of new construction jobs during the past year (15.9 percent, 6,700 jobs), followed by Iowa (15.8 percent, 12,200 jobs), Colorado (8.9 percent, 13,200 jobs) and Oklahoma (8.9 percent, 6,900 jobs). Iowa and Oklahoma set new records for construction employment. California added the most construction jobs (32,300 jobs, 4.5 percent) between June 2015 and June 2016, followed by Florida (25,500 jobs, 5.9 percent), Colorado, Washington (12,500 jobs, 7.2 percent), Iowa and Georgia (12,200 jobs, 7.3 percent).

Construction employment declined over the past 12 months in 11 states and the District of Columbia. North Dakota lost the highest percentage and number of construction jobs for the year (-12.4 percent, -4,300 jobs). Other states with large job losses include Kansas (-3,700 jobs, -6.1 percent) and Alabama (-2,100 jobs, -2.6 percent). Large percentage losses occurred in Wyoming (-6.6 percent, -1,500 jobs), Maine (-6.5 percent, -1,700 jobs) and Kansas.

Twenty-three states and D.C. added construction jobs between May and June, 25 states lost jobs, and employment was unchanged in Illinois and Vermont. Pennsylvania added the most (3,400 jobs, 1.5 percent), followed by Arizona (3,100 jobs, 2.3 percent), Colorado (2,700 jobs, 1.7 percent), Indiana (2,600 jobs, 2.0 percent), Iowa (2,100 jobs, 2.4 percent) and Wisconsin (2,100 jobs, 1.8 percent). Delaware added the highest percentage of construction jobs during the past month (3.4 percent, 700 jobs), followed by New Hampshire (3.3 percent, 800 jobs), Iowa and Arizona.

Texas shed more construction jobs in June than any other state (-2,800 jobs, -0.4 percent), followed by California (-2,100 jobs, -0.3 percent). Maine lost the highest percentage of construction jobs between May and June (-4.7 percent, -1,200 jobs), followed by North Dakota (-4.4 percent, -1,200 jobs).

Association officials said the fact nearly half of the states that added construction jobs over the past 12 months had static or falling employment between May and June shows the widespread need to draw more workers into the industry and provide them the skills to succeed. They noted that 70 percent of firms [reported earlier this year](#) that they are experiencing difficulty finding qualified workers. And they called on elected officials to reform and increase funding for Career and Technical Education, enact immigration reform and take other steps outlined in the association’s [Workforce Development Plan](#).

“Shortages of qualified workers appear to be causing construction employment to stall in many parts of the country, and that lack threatens to affect broader economic conditions,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “Public officials need to act without delay to step up investments in the types of skills-based education programs that enable students to succeed in school and land high-paying jobs in fields like construction.”

View the state employment data by [rank](#) and [state](#). View the state employment [map](#).

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