

CONSTRUCTION JOBS DATA FOR PAST YEAR RELEASED



From October 2011 to October 2012, **employment** in the construction industry dropped in 28 states despite 31 states and the District of Columbia adding jobs over the past month, according to data provided by the Associated General Contractors of America to LoanSafe. Officials from the group said that residential construction gains were undermined by broader business uncertainty caused by the fiscal cliff looming over the country.

“The industry remains stuck in neutral, with close balance each month between the number of states that add or lose construction jobs,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “Despite a strong pickup in homebuilding and multifamily construction, uncertainty about the fiscal cliff appears to be holding back private investment, while public agencies keep trimming construction budgets.”

The states that lost jobs in the construction industry over the past year include the following and their data:

Delaware (-11.0 percent, -2,200 jobs)
Arkansas (-8.4 percent, -3,900 jobs)
Alaska (-8.0 percent, -1,200 jobs)
New York (-4.1 percent, -12,800 jobs)
Pennsylvania (-4.6 percent, -10,400 jobs)
New Jersey (-5.7 percent, -7,400 jobs)
Illinois (-3.6 percent, -6,900 jobs)

From October of 2011 to October of 2012, Simonson said that 21 states along with the District of Columbia added **jobs** in the construction industry. The only state whose construction employment did not change is Vermont. The areas with gains included the following along with their data:

District of Columbia (15.6 percent, 1,900 jobs)
North Dakota (11.8 percent, 3,000 jobs)
Nebraska (10.8 percent, 4,400 jobs)
Texas (8.4 percent, 46,900 jobs)
California (5.0 percent, 27,700)
Indiana (6.0 percent, 7,400)

Out of the 18 states that saw a decrease in construction jobs, Michigan experienced the largest percentage decline, with a -3.7 percent drop. That percentage accounted for a loss of 4,500 jobs in construction. Arkansas followed suit with a -2.9 percent drop, which caused a loss of 1,300 jobs. Idaho made the list with a -2.1 percent drop, which caused 1,400 jobs to disappear. Kentucky finished the list at the bottom with a -2.1 percent drop, which caused the loss of 1,400 jobs in the state.

Michigan also saw the largest number of construction jobs lost, at 4,500 jobs. Michigan was followed by Louisiana, which lost 1,500 jobs, and then Kentucky and Arkansas. Officials from the group have been urging Congress not to hike taxes and not to cut spending because it could hurt the recovery of the economy. The association warned that if a slowdown of the economy occurred again, construction companies would be forced to cut more jobs, which would further damage the industry.

“If Washington officials can’t find a solution to the fiscal cliff, we run the risk of putting the economy into another downward spiral,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “After years of difficult economic conditions, many firms will be forced to **downsize** if the economy begins to shrink.”