THE MONTHLY LABOR BRIEF · WRITTEN FOR OPERATORS · NO NOISE

EDITION 01 · JUNE 2026 · COVERING THE MAY EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Steady, but cooling at the edges.

Labor market signal for operators, once a month. The numbers that matter, what they mean for your workforce decisions, and nothing else.

+172K
May nonfarm payrolls — near April's upwardly revised +179K

4.3%
unemployment, unchanged for an eleventh straight month

7.6M
job openings (April JOLTS), up 731K — a near two-year high

+10%
industrial staffing hours year over year (SIA / Bullhorn), a YTD high

THE READ: LOW-HIRE, LOW-FIRE

Employers are posting roles and holding staff, but hiring cautiously: openings jumped while quits held at 3.0 million and the layoff rate stayed at 1.1%. For an operator, that pattern means two things. The people you have are worth more than the people you might hire — retention beats recruiting when everyone is hiring slowly from the same pool. And the workers worth having are mostly working already, which is why hard seats stay hard. Wages rose 3.4% over the year against 3.8% CPI: real pay is modestly negative, which keeps churn pressure alive at the hourly level even in a cooling market. Long-term unemployed rose to 27.5% of all unemployed — the clearest edge-cooling signal in the report.

THREE SIGNALS WORTH YOUR TIME

01 · INFRASTRUCTURE

The money is moving.

A $580B five-year surface transportation reauthorization advanced out of committee on a bipartisan vote. If it holds, trades, civil, and traffic-control demand firms through 2027 — and the labor pools those projects draw from tighten first.

02 · COST PRESSURE

Inflation moved to the input side.

CPI at 3.8% and an effective tariff rate near 11.8% are raising input and equipment costs. Operators are responding by holding headcount flexible — which is exactly when workforce quality and retention discipline separate the field.

03 · COVERAGE SEASON

Summer tightens security.

The World Cup (June 11 – July 19) and an elevated threat environment are absorbing event, venue, and protective coverage across host regions. If your security vendor is stretched, you'll find out in July. Ask now.

Sources: BLS Employment Situation May 2026 (USDL-26-0786) · BLS JOLTS April 2026 · BLS CPI April 2026 · ADP National Employment Report May 2026 · ASA Staffing Index · SIA/Bullhorn Staffing Indicator · House T&I Committee · The Budget Lab at Yale. Compiled by VeriWorks. Informational only — not economic or financial advice.

NEXT EDITION: JULY, ON BLS RELEASE DAY

Forward it to the operator who needs it.

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