

— EDITION 05 · OCTOBER 2026 · COVERING THE SEPTEMBER EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Hiring slowed. Layoffs did not follow.

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

+29K

September nonfarm payrolls, against a consensus of 84K; unemployment ticked up to 4.2%

−60K

July and August revised down: July's reported gain became a 10K decline

197K

initial jobless claims in the week ending September 26, the lowest since July

≈−0.4%

real hourly pay, estimated: September earnings up 3.0% over the year against August CPI of 3.4%

— THE READ: A SOFTER MARKET, NOT A BREAKING ONE

September missed badly and took the summer down with it. The three-month average is now about 51K a month. But the people already working are mostly staying put: claims are near their lows, August openings held at 7.08 million, and the layoff rate eased to 1.0%. Construction added for a seventh straight month and manufacturing for a fourth. The pressure is on cost, not headcount. The Fed raised rates on September 16 for the first time since 2023, oil spiked past \$130 a barrel mid-month, and real hourly pay is negative. Three consequences for an operator. Retention still beats recruiting, because the labor you would want is mostly employed. Your workforce feels the price squeeze before it shows up in wage demands, so churn risk is higher than the calm claims number suggests. And with permanent headcount getting more expensive to carry, cost structures that flex hold up better than ones that are fixed.

— THREE SIGNALS WORTH YOUR TIME

01 · SKILLED TRADES

The build cycle is still pulling trades.

Specialty trade contractors added jobs for a seventh straight month, and electrical contractors for a sixth through August, the latest available print. Total construction spending rose 0.9% in August to its highest level of 2026. September brought another 2-gigawatt data center groundbreaking in Pennsylvania, and BLS projects about 72,700 electrician openings a year through 2035. If your 2027 scope depends on electricians or specialty trades, the competition for them is not easing.

02 · COST PRESSURE

Rates and energy moved against you together.

The federal funds range is now 3.75% to 4.00%, and the Fed's median projection implies one more increase this year. Gasoline was \$4.47 a gallon in late September, up from \$4.07 a month earlier, and pharmaceutical tariffs extended to all remaining importers on September 29. Freight, packaging, and energy costs weigh on food and light manufacturing. Plan Q4 budgets on today's costs, not last quarter's.

03 · STAFFING DEMAND

Temp headcount fell. Temp hours rose.

Government data shows temporary help employment down 10.9K in September, its largest drop of 2026. Industry data shows light industrial staffing hours up 15% over last year and at their highest since January 2023. One reading is fewer temporary workers working more hours. If your contingent coverage is stretched thin on overtime, that is a fatigue and turnover risk heading into peak season.

Sources: BLS Employment Situation, September 2026 (released October 2, 2026) · Dow Jones consensus via CNBC / Yahoo Finance · The White House, Section 232 pharmaceutical proclamation · BLS JOLTS, August 2026 · BLS CPI, August 2026 · ADP National Employment Report, September 2026 · DOL weekly claims · ASA Staffing Index · SIA/Bullhorn Staffing Indicator · U.S. Census construction spending, August 2026 · Federal Reserve FOMC, September 16, 2026 · EIA via FRED · BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook · Data Center Dynamics. Compiled by VeriWorks. Informational only — not economic or financial advice.

NEXT EDITION: NOVEMBER 6, ON BLS RELEASE DAY

Forward it to the operator who needs it.

Dave Johnson

Chief Commercial Officer
dave@vereworksusa.com
vereworksusa.com