2026 Financial Services Staffing Realignment

Hiring intent is returning. Broad demand has not.

Finance-and-insurance job openings fell from **401,000 to 264,000** year over year in May, yet 74% of finance leaders plan more permanent hiring and 63% plan more contract hiring in H2 2026.[1][3]

264k
May openings
[1]

63%
contract plans
[3]

124.2k
annual openings
[2]

01 · LABOR DEMAND

Broad openings are lower.

Job openings	401k → 264k
Openings rate	5.6% → 3.8%
Hires	147k → 123k
Separations	134k → 127k

BLS JOLTS, May 2025–May 2026. Direct employer openings exclude temporary-help workers from the client industry.[1]

02 · THREE INDUSTRY SHIFTS

401k→264k — **Intent before realised demand**
74% plan more permanent and 63% more contract hiring.[1][3]

52% — **Hybrid, project-led talent**
UK FS hiring firms focusing recruitment on technology; directional, not US data.[8]

+8.9% — **Pipeline improves slowly**
Four-year accounting enrollment rose, while current experienced supply remains constrained.[2][6][7]

PUBLIC STAFFING REALITY · Q1

$538.8M
finance/accounting contract

−4.3%
year over year

Robert Half · Q1 2026 · Source [4]

03 · OPERATING RESPONSE

Build the evidence layer.

01 **Candidate evidence**
Prove systems, controls and project outcomes

02 **Demand signals**
Separate intent from funded orders

03 **Finance exceptions**
Reduce post-placement coordination

30-day evidence baseline

Review historical candidate and job-order records. AI extracts and organises evidence; people control relevance, screening and every employment decision.

BASELINE FIRST · BIAS CONTROLS REQUIRED

FIVE ROI INPUTS | 01 Profiles / orders | 02 Hours spent | 03 Clarifications | 04 Loaded cost | 05 Impact of delay

AI organises, explains and recommends.
People retain every screening and employment decision.

Sources: [1] BLS JOLTS, May 2026. [2] BLS Accountants & Auditors, 2024–34. [3] Robert Half 2026 hiring outlook. [4] Robert Half Q1 2026 results. [6] AICPA enrollment, Jun 2026. [7] AICPA 2025 Trends. [8] KPMG UK FS survey. [9] PMCF Q1 2026 HCM M&A. Full links: www.eq.app/blog/financial-services-staffing-market-report-2026