

# U.S. Staffing Industry Outlook

EVIDENCE CUTOFF: AUGUST 17, 2026 / U.S. GENERAL STAFFING

STRATEGIC VERDICT

Demand is improving, but not enough to justify rebuilding administrative cost ahead of durable volume.

+3.7%

ASA staffing employment YoY

Week of Jul. 13-19

+3.4K

Temporary-help jobs

BLS, July 2026

-104 bps

Calculated gross margin

ManpowerGroup Q1 YoY

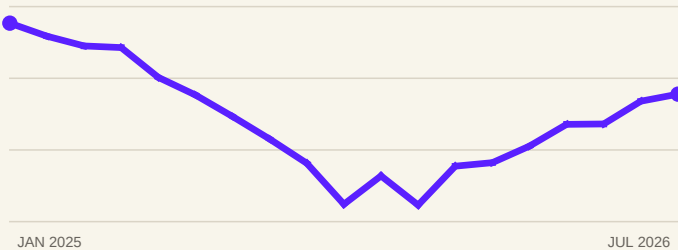
10%

AI across workflows

Bullhorn GRID, global

## Temporary-help employment stabilized

BLS CES, seasonally adjusted, thousands



## Three shifts for leaders

- 01 A modest rebound, not a snapback**  
Keep fixed cost disciplined until demand broadens.
- 02 Volume can recover before margin**  
Track rework, leakage, SG&A intensity, and cash conversion.
- 03 Automation is still front-office heavy**  
Move toward governed exception work in payroll and billing.

CONTAINED FIRST EXPERIMENT

## Four payroll cycles. One branch. Read-only preparation.

SCOPE

Pre-payroll validation for one branch or client group.

WORKER DUTIES

Check fields, assemble evidence, route exceptions.

HUMAN CONTROL

Payroll owner approves corrections and release.

DECISION GATE

Expand only if time falls without more errors.

## ROI framework: agency inputs only

|                         |                                                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Current admin cost      | items x minutes / 60 x loaded hourly cost                |
| Modeled monthly benefit | labor value + correction value - task cost - supervision |
| Modeled ROI             | modeled monthly benefit / total monthly investment       |

Model, not fact: baseline every variable before making a claim.

LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS

- 1 What cost should remain variable?
- 2 Where does rework delay cash?
- 3 What always stays a human decision?

PRIMARY / ORIGINAL SOURCES

ASA Staffing Index (Jul. 28, 2026); BLS Employment Situation and CES 6056132001 (Aug. 7 / Aug. 13, 2026); Census CES-WP-26-25 (Apr. 15, 2026); ManpowerGroup Q1 results (Apr. 16, 2026); Bullhorn GRID 2026; ADP Global Payroll Survey 2026. Vendor surveys are directional; company results are not industry benchmarks.