greenhouse

The Hire Standard

US hiring trends

Fall 2026

Another year, another set of hiring trends and metrics

AI continues to be a major player in the world of recruiting, with AI-first and AI-native technologies and solutions becoming available to recruiters and TA teams. Voice AI, powering conversational AI screening, has arrived and is poised to make a big difference. Outside of a few case studies, it's still too early to tell how that adoption has shifted recruiting metrics as a whole.

So our new The Hire Standard report provides a snapshot of the hiring trends in the US recruiting world with some key metrics YTD August 2026, looking at some changes over the year that can't just be explained by seasonality and delving into key audience bands like segment, hire volume and types of roles to give you more actionable data.

Let's dive in.

Methodology

Greenhouse analyzed recruiting performance data from 9,473 US organizations between January and August 2026, covering 161.8 million applications and 831,933 hires. Benchmarks reflect aggregated performance metrics and sourcing data from companies using the Greenhouse platform. All figures cover complete months only. Per-recruiter metrics are monthly averages. Time-to-fill is measured from requisition open to offer accepted.

9,473	161.8M	831,933
US organizations	Applications	Hires

About our expert



Jeremy Lyons

Co-founder, RecOps Collective

Jeremy Lyons is co-founder of RecOps Collective, a community and consultancy that helps organizations turn complex hiring challenges into scalable, data-informed systems. A second-generation recruiting professional, Jeremy brings more than a decade of experience across talent acquisition and recruiting operations, including work at Verizon Media, Fastly, Wish and SGNL.ai. His approach combines systems thinking, hands-on experimentation, and operational discipline to connect people, processes and technology — helping talent teams work more effectively while improving the experience for candidates and hiring partners.

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Executive summary



194

applications per hire

62

days to fill a role

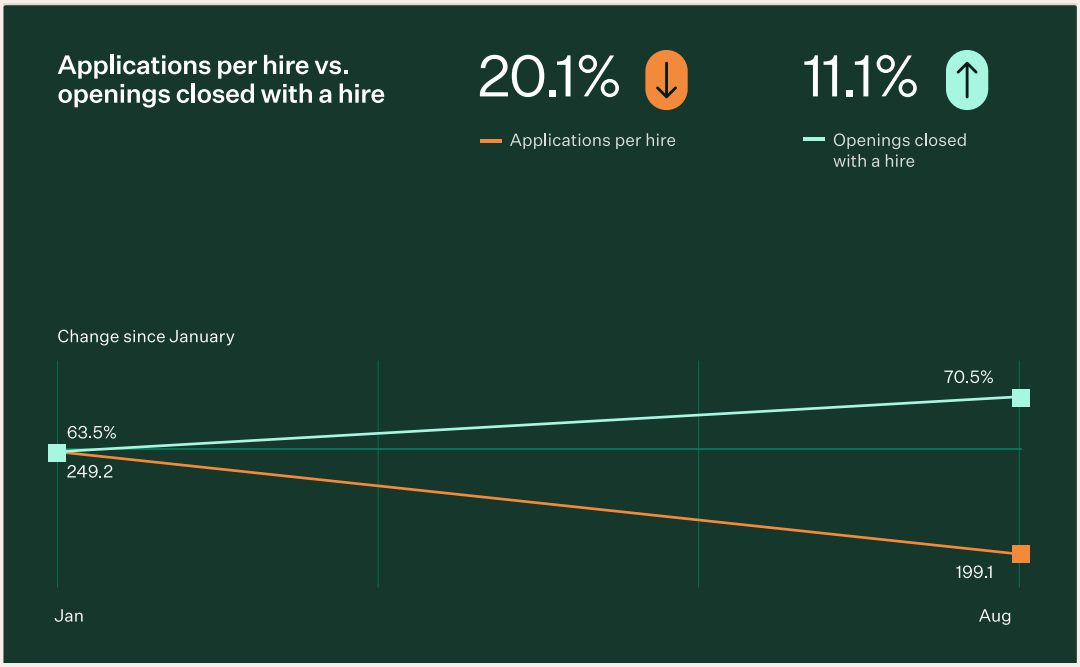
33%

roles unfilled

Out of every 1,000 applications an employer receives, 75 reach an assessment, 32 reach a first interview and 5 end in a hire. This continues the trend we observed last year – applications are overwhelming recruiters and it's impacting overall performance.

Movement over 2026: More output from the same pool

Applications overall were flat, but hires rose 27.7%, meaning TA leaders can forecast recruiter performance within a year, whether impacted by seasonality or other factors.



10.6% ↑

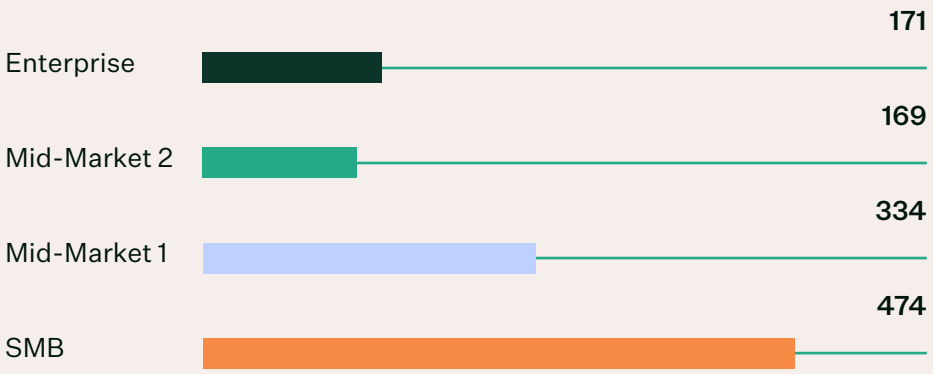
Hires per recruiter (monthly)

21.4% ↑

Hires per org

Company size is the single biggest predictor of hiring performance

Applications per hire

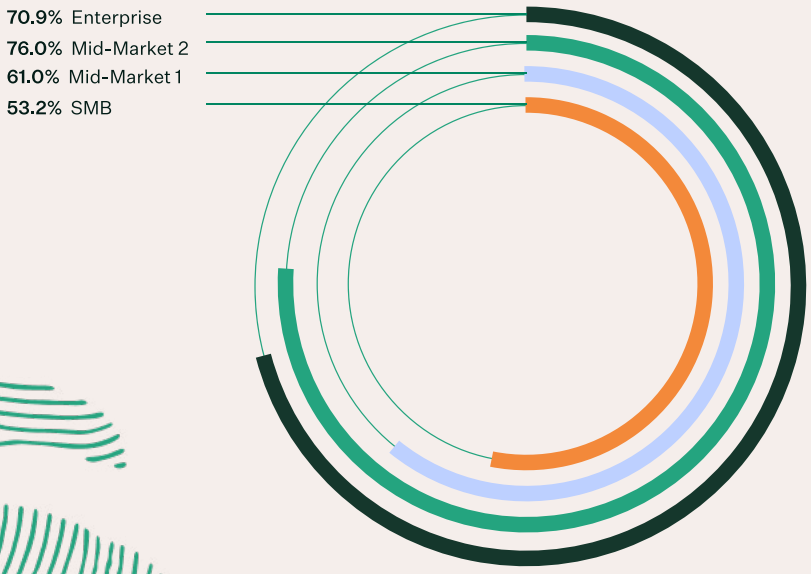




Openings closed with a hire

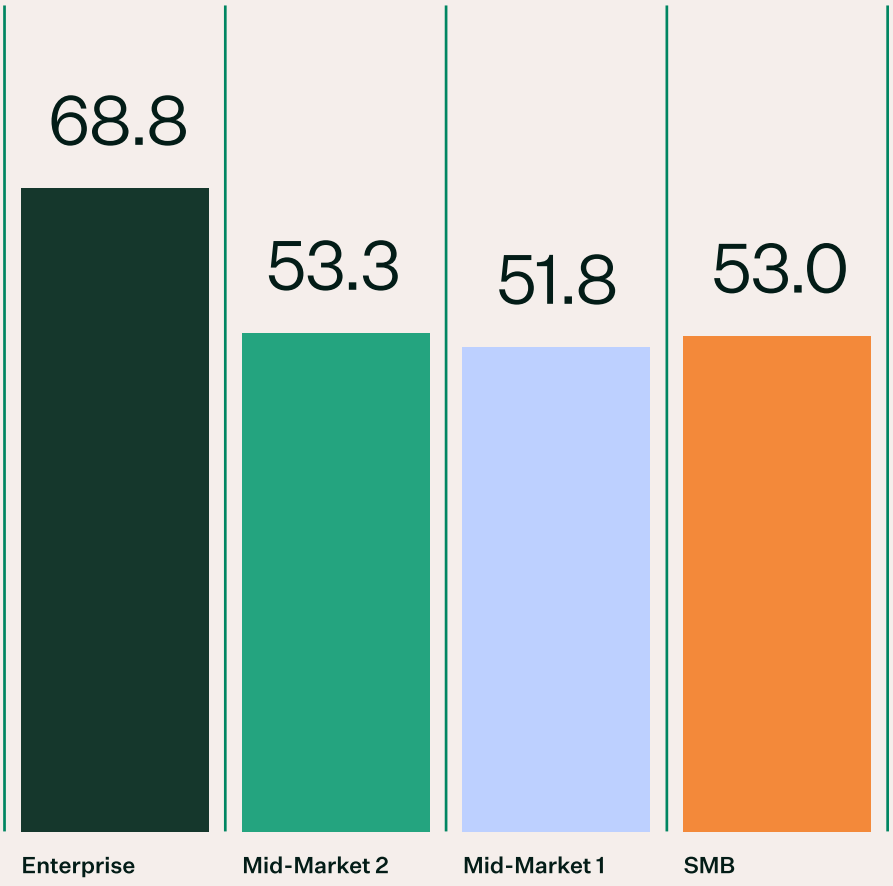
Mid-Market 2 companies seem to perform best across a number of different metrics, including applications per hire and openings closed with a hire. Generally, the larger the company, the better it is at recruiting. Hire volume tells a similar story.

- Employers hiring 500+ a year need 165 applications per hire and fill 72.9% of openings.
- Employers hiring under 50 need 784 applications and fill 25.1% of openings.



Time-to-fill continues to serve as an unclear metric of effectiveness

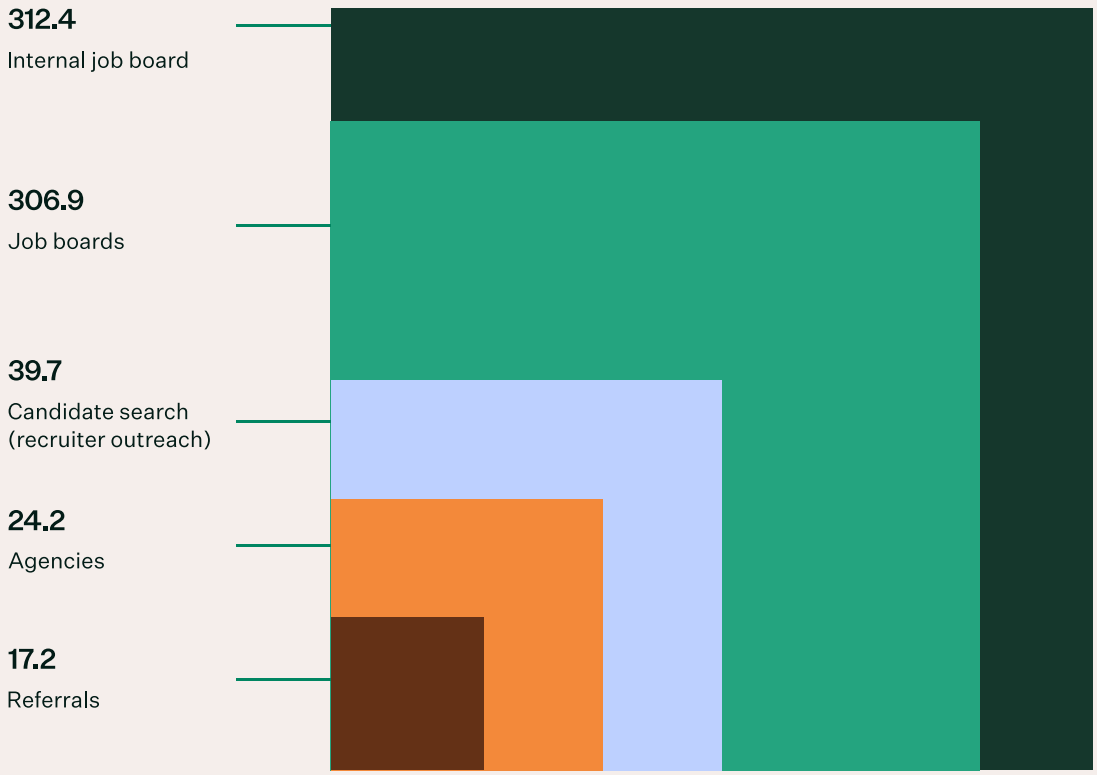
Days to fill a role



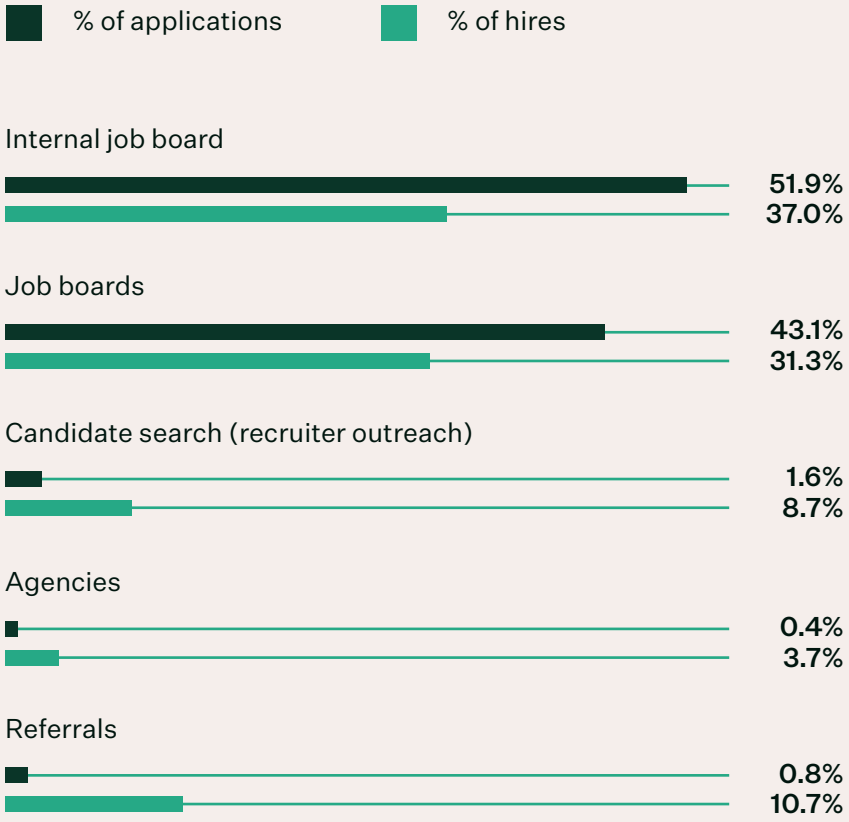
Enterprise organizations take nearly 70 days to fill a role, 15 days longer than any other segment even though they sit at or near the top on every other performance measure. Hiring volume tracks similarly – both MM1 and MM2 companies have the lowest time-to-fill. This further indicates that time-to-fill may not be the best indicator of performance, especially if that time is intentionally taken to ensure the right hire is made.

Sourcing data and a deep dive into job boards can inform recruiter strategy

Applications per hire



% of applications vs. % of hires



As we saw last year, company career sites and job boards make up the majority of both hires and applications but to a differing degree. They also have the highest application-per-hire figure by a significant amount.

Three channels produce a quarter of all US hires despite making up less than 3% of applications. These are referrals, recruiter outreach and agencies, each converting between 17 and 40 applications per hire.

A deeper look within job boards shows that Indeed has a 3.4x better hire conversion rate compared to LinkedIn. LinkedIn carries more than twice the volume, resulting in its poor performance in applications per hire.

The main takeaway

Across every cut of this data, the same constraint keeps surfacing. Human conversation capacity is the limiting factor here, not only affecting efficiency metrics but inserting doubt on the overall effectiveness of the process.

Only 7.5% of applications reach an assessment. For the other 92.5%, the entire evaluation is a resume scan, a document increasingly written with AI, thinning signal at the same time volume is growing. While larger companies with more resources may be better off than those without, they may still see a 50+ day time-to-fill or a sub 80% closing rate and wonder how they can do better.

Structured hiring continues to serve as a saving point for smaller companies. That's how they can adopt some of the benefits of larger companies without having to match their spend of resources. Conversational AI screening may serve companies large and small by directly tackling their pipeline at the very top. This can directly address the 19 days of waiting candidates experience before the first interview (a large-company problem) while also slimming down the sheer number of applications overwhelming resource-strapped teams at small companies.

One thing is certain: the world of hiring has changed yet recruiting seems to be doing the same thing. Change is needed to make sure recruiters are keeping up.

92.5%

of applications get no evaluation beyond a resume scan.

19 days

average wait between applying and a first interview.

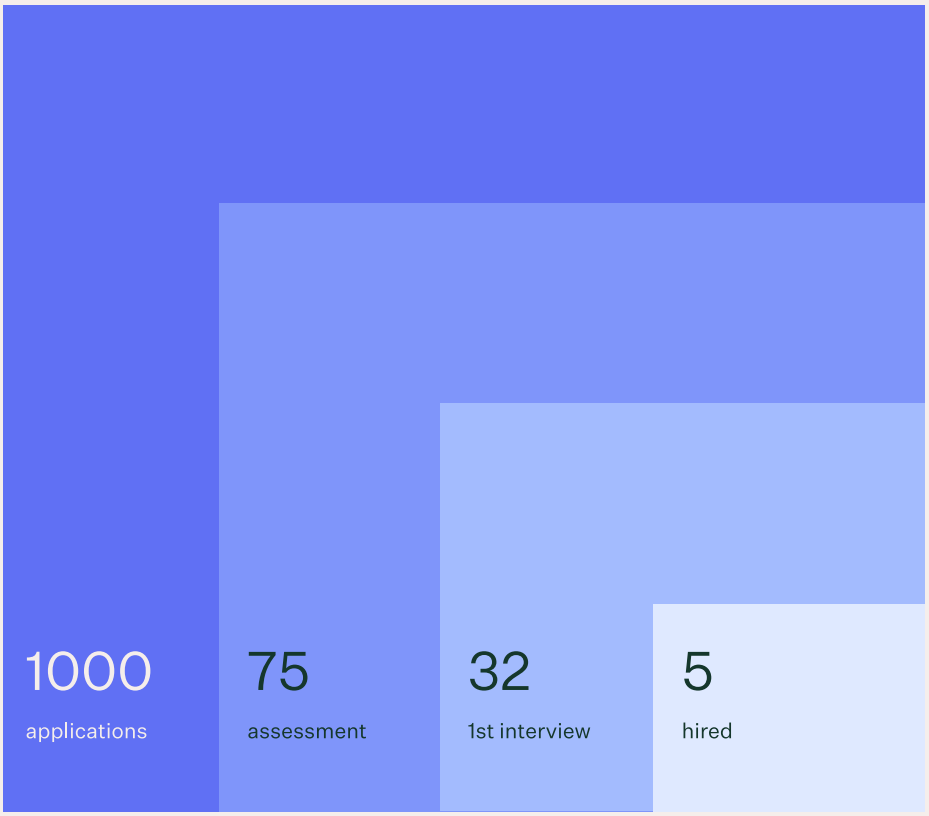
Section 1

What it *takes* to make a hire in the US right now



194 applications.
62 days.
33% roles unfilled.

Out of every 1,000 applications an employer receives, 75 reach an assessment, 32 reach a first interview, and 5 end in a hire.



Candidates wait an average of 19 days between applying and a first interview. That's nearly a third of the 62-day average time-to-fill and an easy place to start addressing time-to-fill, if that's something you and your team are focused on.

The benchmark set

Metric	YTD level
Applications per hire	194.5
Days to fill a role	61.6
Openings closed with a hire	70.9%
Application-to-hire rate	0.54%
Offer-to-hire rate	85.1%
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	2.43
Open reqs per recruiter (monthly)	5.50
Interviews per recruiter (monthly)	26.72
Interviews per job closed	14.27
Applications per org	17,135
Hires per org	88.3

Post conversations, the hire rate is still something to be desired. Overall, 70% of openings close with a hire and recruiters make 2.43 hires a month, roughly 44% of their req load.

Expert question

Only 7.5% of applications reach an assessment and 3.2% reach a first interview. Is that ratio evidence of effective triage, or of a filter doing too much work on too little signal?

> “Without looking at the process, the total numbers and the assessment criteria, it would look like it could be a mix of both but could likely be solved with a screening tool since the entire funnel would be assessed, and then the pass-through numbers would reflect the quality of the applicants.”

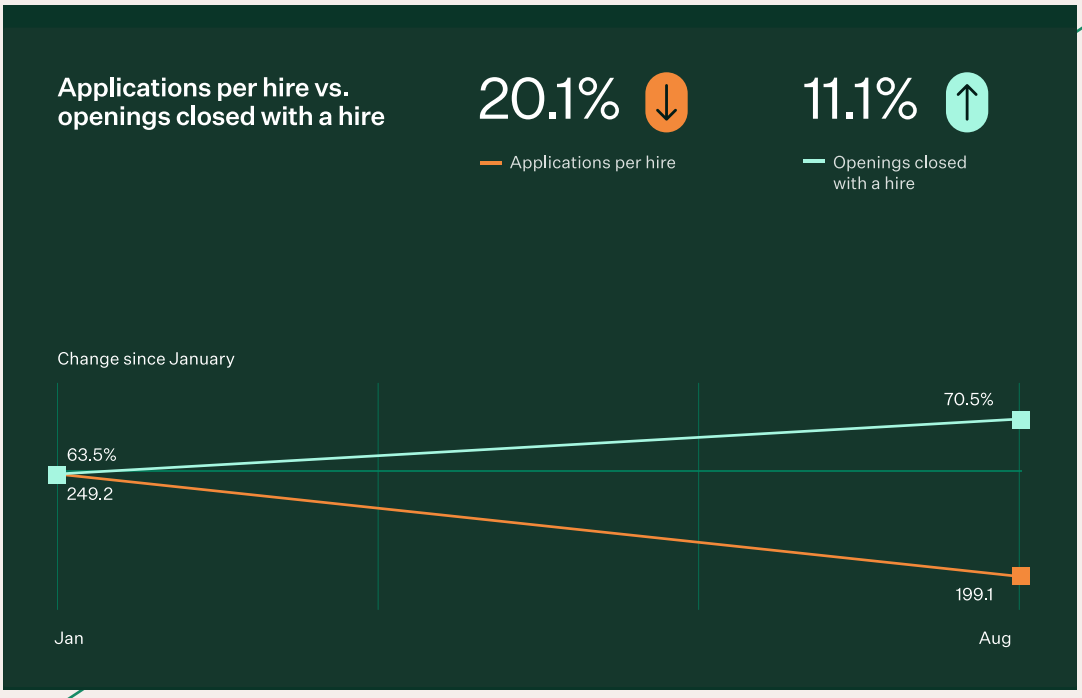
Jeremy Lyons
Co-founder
RecOps Collective

Section 2

Movement over 2026: More output from the same pool



Movement data: January – August 2026



10.6% ↑ Hires per recruiter

12.3% ↓ Open reqs per recruiter

8.3% ↓ Interviews per recruiter

21.4% ↑ Hires per org

Here, we isolated the metrics that showed the most movement over time. From January to August, recruiters' requisition load fell 12.3%, interview load fell 8.3% and hires per recruiter still rose 10.6%. This represents a number of efficiency improvements. More hires were made, the hire rate was higher and applications per hire were overall lower.

Regardless of the reason, if this is a predictable outcome, TA leaders may want to adjust recruiter KPIs depending on whether they're set for H1 or H2 of a given year.

Section 3

Company size is the *biggest* predictor of hiring performance



To get a better sense of how metrics differ across different audience bands, we drilled down into a number of different audience bands. Here's where we landed:

Segment
Segments are classified by employee size.

1,000+
Enterprise

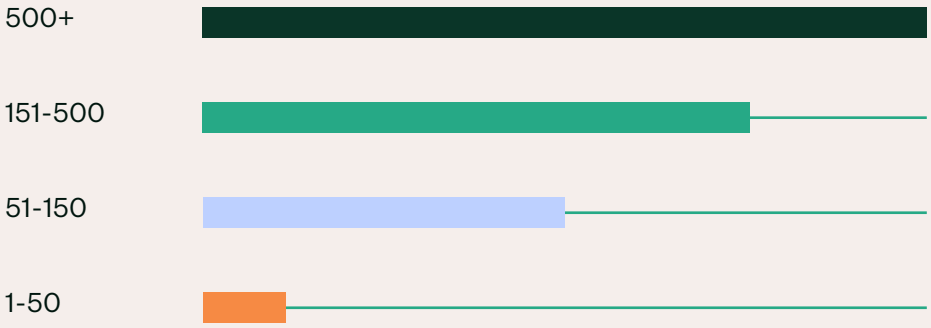
250-1,000
Mid-Market 2

101-250
Mid-Market 1

1-100
SMB

Hire volume band

Organizations grouped by how many people they hire in a year.





By segment

Metric	ENT	MM2	MM1	SMB
Applications per hire	**171.0**	**168.8**	**333.8**	**474.3**
Time-to-fill (days)	**68.8**	**53.3**	**51.8**	**53.0**
% closed with hire	**70.9%**	**76.0%**	**61.0%**	**53.2%**
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	**2.34**	**3.43**	**1.80**	**1.04**
Reqs per recruiter (monthly)	**5.35**	**5.81**	**6.14**	**4.87**

By hiring volume

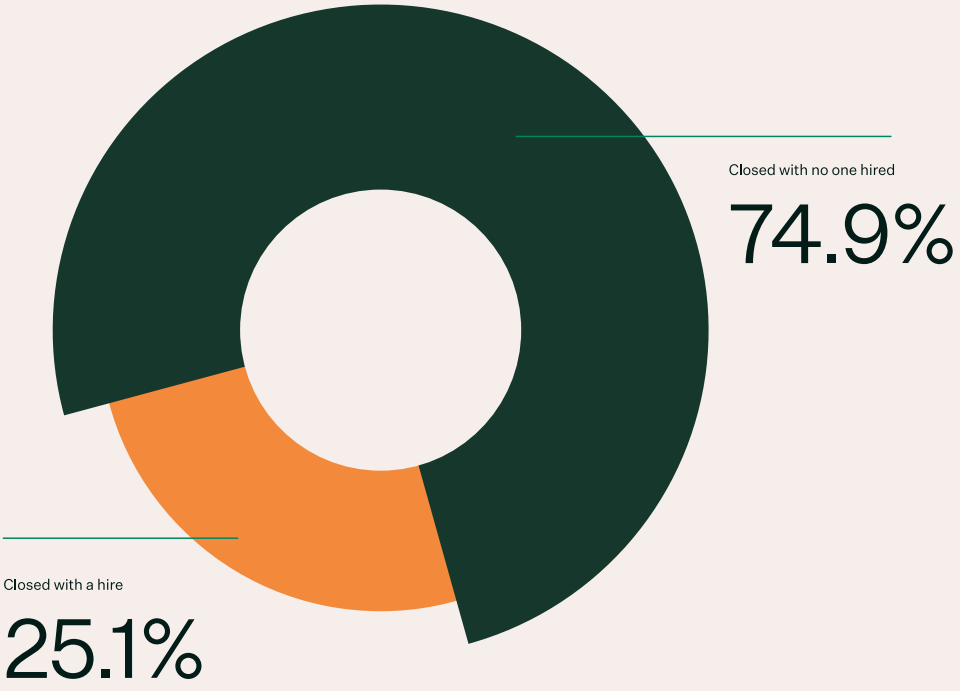
Metric	500+	151-500	51-150	1-50
Applications per hire	**164.8**	**280.9**	**394.8**	**783.9**
Time-to-fill (days)	**62.9**	**52.3**	**56.1**	**60.3**
% closed with hire	**72.9%**	**63.7%**	**55.1%**	**25.1%**
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	**2.71**	**2.23**	**1.38**	**0.55**
Reqs per recruiter (monthly)	**5.27**	**7.05**	**5.74**	**5.06**

We see a very similar trend across these four bands that speak to the size of a company and their annual hire volume. Smaller companies seem to be most affected by applications, with SMB receiving 177% more applications per hire than ENT and holding the lowest closing rate at 53.2% against Mid-Market 2's 76.0%. The lowest hire volume band suffers most on closing rate at 25.1%, and carries the second-longest time-to-fill at 60 days.

Generally, larger companies appear more efficient across a number of different metrics. Enterprise and MM2 have a significantly smaller application per hire rate and take the top two spots on hire per recruiter. Our largest hire volume band also have the highest closing rate percentage. Our data also shows that the screening and interview rates are roughly the same across these bands, meaning that differences arise later in the hiring process.

While this suggests that larger companies have made the most of their resources and more advanced processes, we should mention the one outlier – Enterprise's time-to-fill. It requires nearly 70 days against Mid-Market 1's 51.8, which may be intentional as the largest hire volume has a 62.9-day time-to-fill rate – still the highest of our bands but not by the same margin compared to the other hire bands.

Openings closed by employers hiring 1–50/year



Expert question

Is a longer time-to-fill intentional for Enterprise and how would you recommend optimizing that time even if a more deliberate approach is intentional?

> “Enterprise organizations generally have more approval layers when it comes to a role or an offer, which can intentionally or unintentionally impact the time-to-fill by passing through a department head, finance/FP&A partner, an HRBP and a hiring manager. These groups have their own priorities and asks that might not align with the urgency TA is under to get a person in seat. The delays compound, and while it might be a day here or a day there, they don’t necessarily appear as separate line items when calculating time-to-fill.”

Jeremy Lyons
Co-founder
RecOps Collective

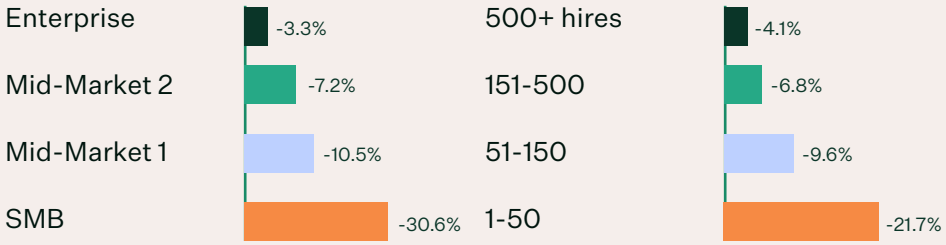
Movement data: Smaller companies improved fastest

Change from January to August 2026

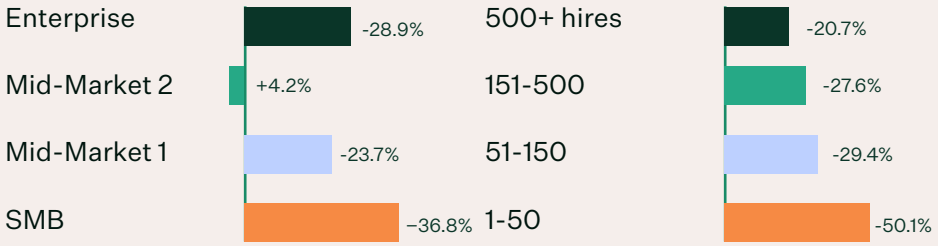
By segment

By hire volume

Time-to-fill



Applications per hire



Hires per recruiter (monthly)



Smaller companies, whether by segment or hire volume, had the highest increase in efficiency over time. SMB cut time-to-fill 30% and increased hires per recruiter by 56%, while the 1-50 hire volume band dropped applications per hire by 50%, nearly doubled their hires per recruiter, and cut time-to-fill 20%.

Generally, all audience bands improved somewhat except for Mid-Market 2. Applications rose over time only slightly, but compared to all other audiences' decrease, it stands out. Hire per recruiter also fell 12.8%. They were the only segment that had a lower hire performance over time.

Increase in hires per recruiter at employers making 1–50 hires a year

93% ↑



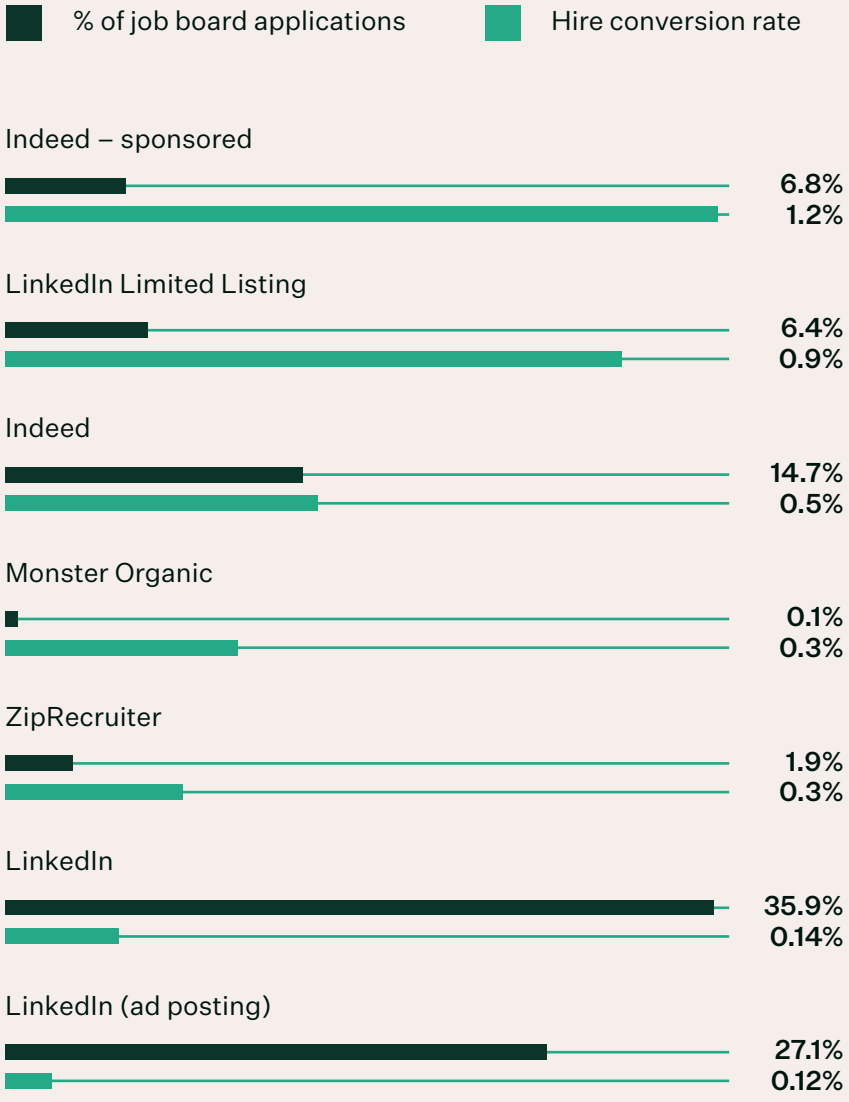
Section 4

Where hires are *really* coming from



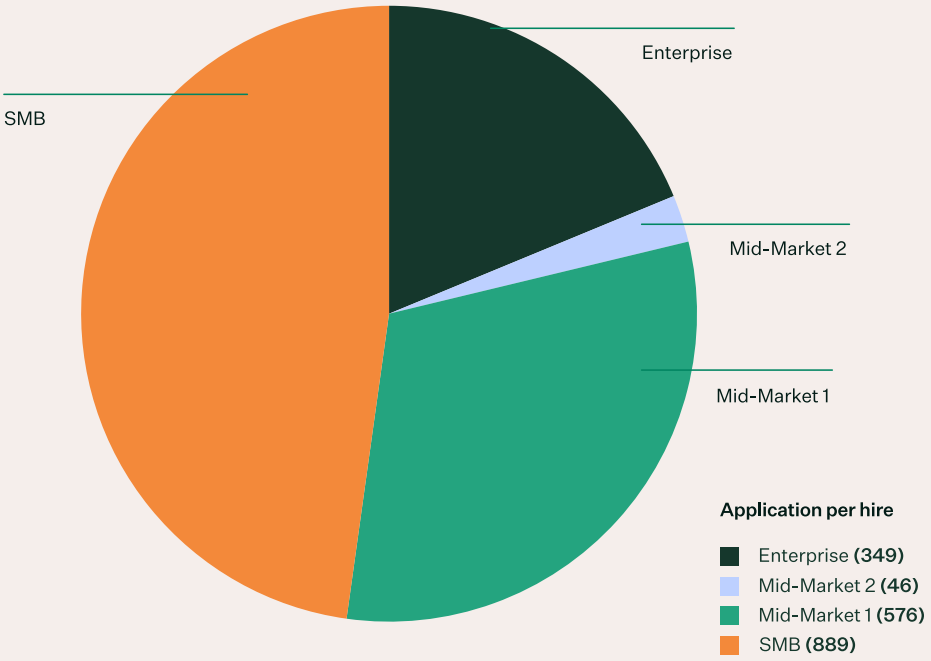
A deep dive on external job boards

% of job board applications vs. hire conversion rate



Overall, paid listings seem to pay off with one apparent exception. LinkedIn's free Limited Listing tier is the second-best performer in our job board data, which makes it look attractive. We dug into the segment data just to be sure.

LinkedIn Limited Listing – applications per hire



The Limited Listing option is really only a strong performer for MM2 organizations while performing considerably worse for all other segments. We recommend avoiding it unless you're an MM2 company.

Channel efficiency by segment

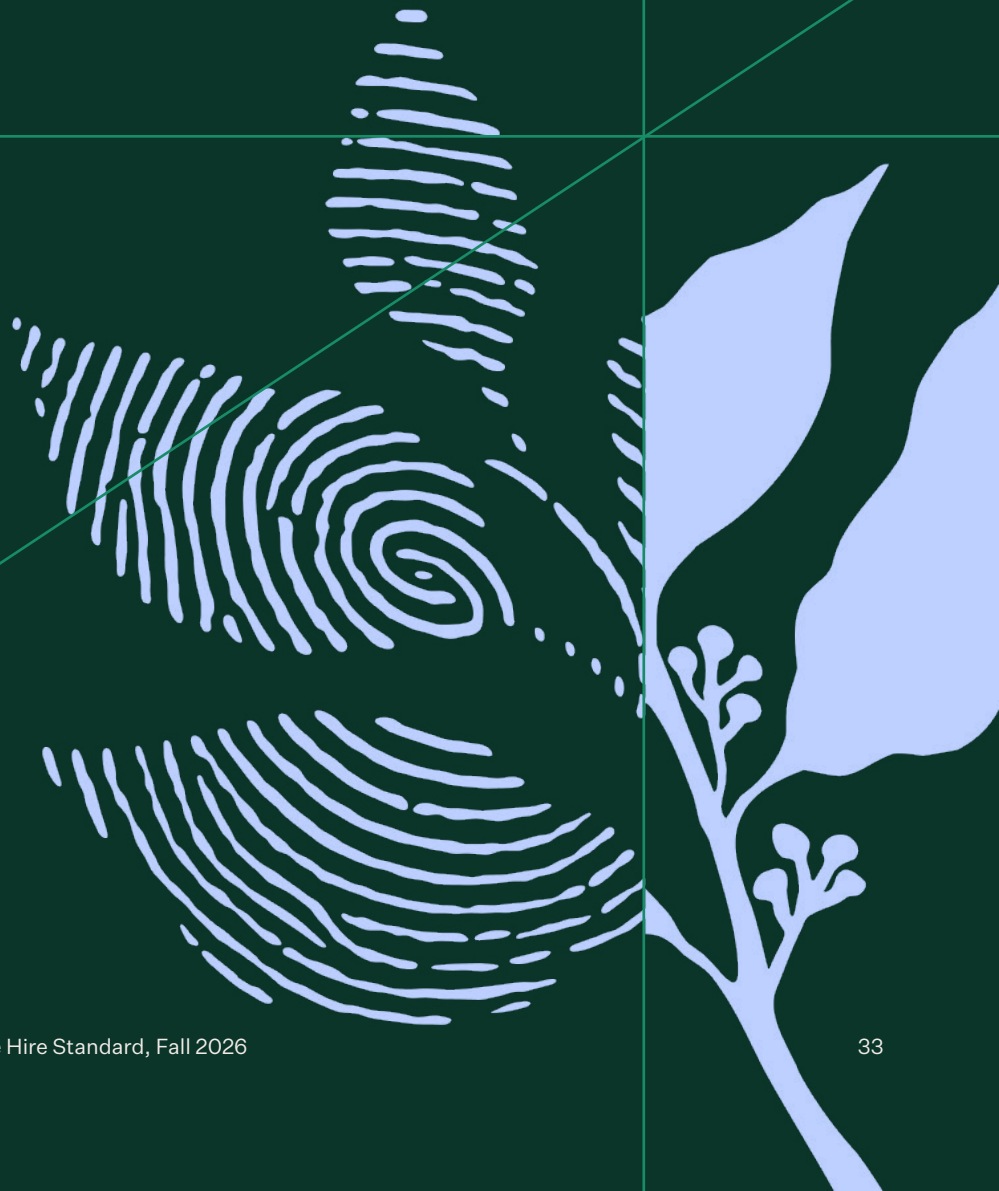
Channel (applications per hire)	ENT	MM2	MM1	SMB
Internal job boards	**230**	**297**	**530**	**941**
Job boards	**287**	**240**	**503**	**658**
Candidate search (recruiter outreach)	**28**	**40**	**56**	**104**
Referrals	**20**	**12**	**10**	**11**
Agencies	**23**	**20**	**26**	**32**
Social media	**127**	**206**	**182**	**217**

Across broader sourcing strategies, smaller companies seem to drag down the overall performance of both internal and external job boards. SMB receives 941 applications per hire against Enterprise's 230. Even with recruiter outreach, SMBs carry a notably high applications-per-hire figure.

Agencies and social media show much smaller size gaps across segments, so smaller companies may want to invest in those sources to improve overall efficiencies. Traditional job boards may be a poorer fit for smaller teams, where it's easy for a single recruiter to get overwhelmed.

Conclusion

The problems are the same, but the solutions are *new*



> “For years, the focus of many recruiters and recruiting leaders has been on finding the person who will fill the open job instead of thinking about the job as a product that needs to be marketed and sold to a customer.
>
> Pivoting to a model where the role is thought of as a product pushes teams to look at their data differently because, instead of post and pray, you think about the specific buyer persona who would want it, and you launch a completely fleshed-out role with the right branding, not something that is changing week over week because something shiny came out.”

Jeremy Lyons
Co-founder
RecOps Collective

From our survey of 1,200 US job seekers

81%

rejected in the past year without speaking to anyone.

2.7x

more likely to opt for an AI interview than withdraw.

65%

said an AI interview let them show their skills well.

~90%

want employers to be upfront about AI in interviews.

How conversational AI screening solves multiple hiring issues

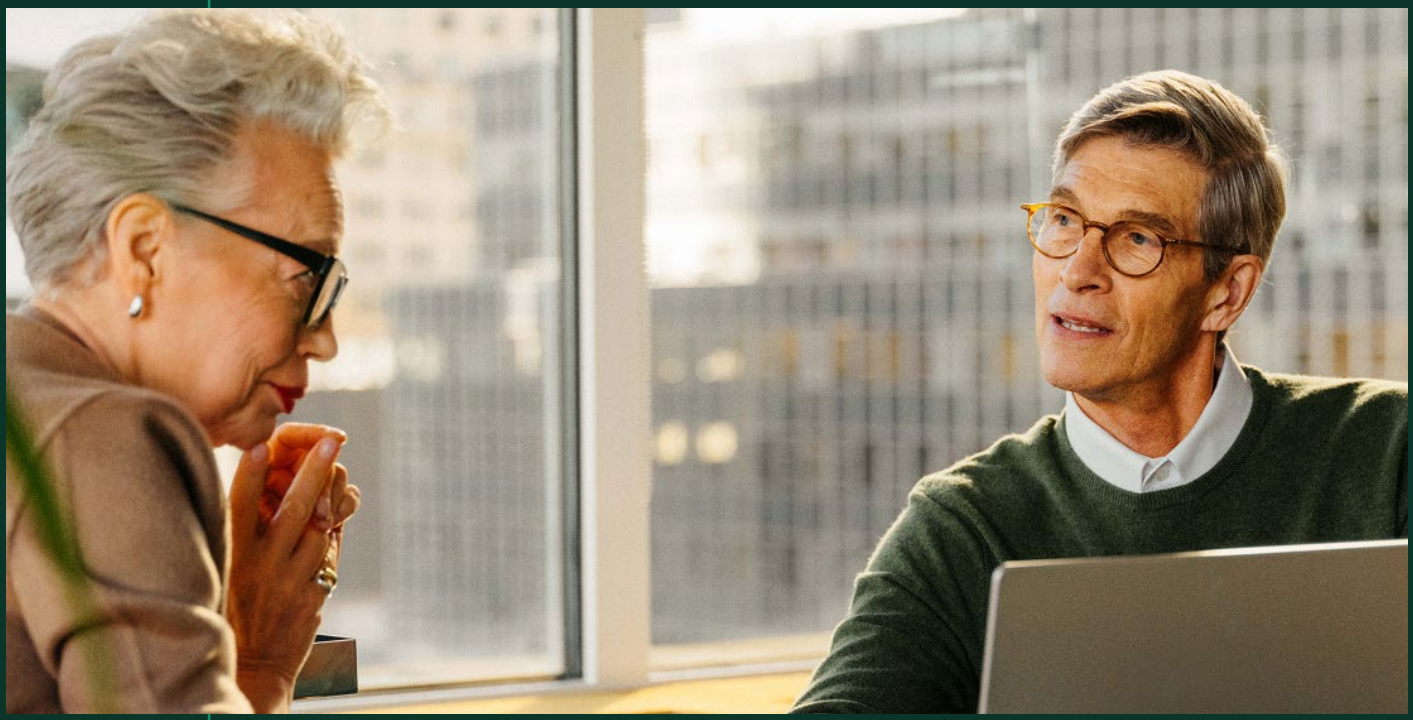
If there's one thing to carry out of this report, it's that the shortage isn't applications, it's addressing the issues that have been present for years. Seasonality shows that recruiters do improve significantly over time with smaller companies making large strides over time. Overall, however, larger companies generally perform much better.

Our data shows similar trends across multiple views. Mid-Market 2 companies and Enterprise organizations, as well as the top two hiring audience bands, scored high marks across most metrics – hires per recruiter, applications per hire and overall hire rate. The only outlier was time-to-fill, where Enterprise had the longest time-to-fill, likely due to intentional processes. We also saw that the gaps in performance didn't occur at the beginning. At the top of the process, companies looked relatively similar, meaning that performance gaps occurred later in the process, after the conversations had happened.

What can we learn about this data and how can recruiting teams better serve candidates while hitting their hire metrics? Managing the top of the funnel is always a strong starting point and it may be worth thinking about new technologies as well as the candidate experience.

Conversational AI screening has emerged as a key solution to, at the very least, address the huge influx of applications recruiters get while also being a tool to address the lack of confidence candidates have in the hiring system. Our recent survey of 1,200 US job seekers found 81% were rejected in the past year without ever speaking to anyone at the company, whether they were human or AI. Over 90% wished they could show employers something their application didn't capture. AI interviewing is already seen as an obvious fix by candidates as well. Candidates were 2.7x more likely to opt for an AI interview than to withdraw if no human interviewer were available, and 65% of those who took an interview said it let them demonstrate their skills well.

Implementation of this tool, particularly on the candidate side, is important. Nearly half of the candidates want to know a human will review their responses and 40% want to know how they'll be evaluated. Nearly 90% want employers to be upfront about using AI in interviews at all.



Three things worth taking into your own planning

As you take into account this data and consider new tools and changes in your process to specifically address your teams' performance, here are three things worth taking into account.

Pick a metric pair, not a metric.

Time-to-fill on its own told us almost nothing in this data. The slowest segment was also among the most effective. By looking at the hire rate of total reqs, time-to-fill starts to become meaningful. The same is true of applications per hire, which looks like an efficiency measure but largely reflects how much inbound volume you receive. A single metric shouldn't be looked at in isolation.

Re-assess your sourcing investment.

Outbound sourcing, agencies and even specific job board listing types perform better depending on your segment or hire volume. You should be re-assessing where your sourcing investment is to ensure you're getting the most out of your spend.

Consider AI interviewing tools.

The 19-day wait before a first interview is the single largest block of addressable time in the process if you are looking to cut down on time-to-fill without compromising on hire quality. How recruiters can leverage AI to be more efficient is a question that has multiple answers, but AI interviewing seems poised to make the most impact. Consider what an AI-powered screening would do to empower and optimize your team.

The benchmarks here describe where teams are. The more useful question is whether the thing you're optimizing is the thing standing in your way. To improve your metrics and learn more about how Greenhouse can help improve your hiring performance, request a demo here.

Appendix

The full dataset

The report above is led with the findings we thought were most useful. This appendix holds everything we measured, without commentary.

Levels and movement answer different questions.

A level tells you where a group stands today while movement tells you which direction it traveled between January and August. An audience band can hold the weakest level in a category and still post the strongest improvement, which is the case across multiple metrics.

Per-recruiter figures are monthly.

Hires, open requisitions and interviews per recruiter are each calculated per recruiter per month, not across the full eight-month window.

Some cuts support fewer metrics than others.

Role type is a property of the job rather than the organization, so organization-level measures like hires per org don't apply to it. Where a figure is absent, it's because the measure doesn't exist for that cut, not because it was omitted.

All figures come from Greenhouse platform data:

covering 9,473 US organizations between January and August 2026 — 161.8 million applications and 831,933 hires. Complete months only; September was excluded as partial.

If you want to compare your own numbers against these, the tables below are the place to do it.

A1. US aggregate benchmarks – YTD levels

Metric	YTD level
Applications per hire	194.5
Days to fill a role	61.6
Openings closed with a hire	70.9%
Application-to-hire rate	0.54%
Offer-to-hire rate	85.1%
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	2.43
Open reqs per recruiter (monthly)	5.50
Interviews per recruiter (monthly)	26.72
Interviews per job closed	14.27
Applications per org	17,135
Hires per org	88.3

A2. US aggregate – January vs. August movement

Metric	Jan	Aug	Change
Applications per hire	249.2	199.1	-20.1%
Openings closed with a hire	63.5%	70.5%	+11.1%
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	2.10	2.30	+10.6%
Open reqs per recruiter (monthly)	5.88	5.16	-12.3%
Interviews per recruiter (monthly)	26.13	23.96	-8.3%
Hires per org	9.1	11.1	+21.4%

A3. Segment levels

Metric	ENT	MM2	MM1	SMB
Applications per hire	171.0	168.8	333.8	474.3
Time-to-fill (days)	68.8	53.3	51.8	53.0
% closed with hire	70.9%	76.0%	61.0%	53.2%
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	2.34	3.43	1.80	1.04
Reqs per recruiter (monthly)	5.35	5.81	6.14	4.87

A4. Segment movement, January - August

Metric	ENT	MM2	MM1	SMB
Time-to-fill	-3.3%	-7.2%	-10.5%	-30.6%
Applications per hire	-28.9%	+4.2%	-23.7%	-36.8%
Hires per recruiter	+18.8%	-12.8%	+21.6%	+56.3%

A5. Hire volume band levels

Metric	500+	151-500	51-150	1-50
Applications per hire	164.8	280.9	394.8	783.9
Time-to-fill (days)	62.9	52.3	56.1	60.3
% closed with hire	72.9%	63.7%	55.1%	25.1%
Hires per recruiter (monthly)	2.71	2.23	1.38	0.55
Reqs per recruiter (monthly)	5.27	7.05	5.74	5.06

A6. Hire volume band movement, January - August

Metric	500+	151-500	51-150	1-50
Time-to-fill	-4.1%	-6.8%	-9.6%	-21.7%
Applications per hire	-20.7%	-27.6%	-29.4%	-50.1%
Hires per recruiter	+6.7%	+31.3%	+49.6%	+93.0%

A7. Role type levels

Metric	On-site	Hybrid	Remote
Applications per hire	128.9	259.3	301.1
Apps per posting	128	206	415
Time-to-fill (days)	68.4	57.4	49.0
Interviews per job closed	11.3	18.1	20.4
Hires per job closed	1.19	1.03	1.80

A8. Role type movement, January - August

Metric	On-site	Hybrid	Remote
Applications per hire	–31.8%	–25.0%	+13.8%
Hires per job closed	+36.3%	+11.8%	-14.8%
Time-to-fill	–4.6%	–15.8%	-14.7%

A9. US sourcing channels

Channel	Apps per hire	% of applications	% of hires
Other	13.1	0.3%	5.5%
Attend events	15.0	0.1%	1.4%
Referrals	17.2	0.8%	10.7%
Agencies	24.2	0.4%	3.7%
Custom	32.3	0.1%	0.5%
Candidate search (recruiter outreach)	39.7	1.6%	8.7%
Social media	162.1	0.5%	0.6%
Job boards	306.9	43.1%	31.3%
Internal job board	312.4	51.9%	37.0%

A10. Job board performance and adoption

Board	Apps per hire	Hire conversion rate	% of job board apps	Employer adoption
Indeed – sponsored	82	1.216%	6.8%	25.2%
LinkedIn Limited Listing	105	0.951%	6.4%	37.3%
Indeed	198	0.506%	14.7%	77.0%
Monster Organic	255	0.392%	0.1%	26.8%
ZipRecruiter	297	0.336%	1.9%	34.9%
LinkedIn	673	0.149%	35.9%	63.0%
LinkedIn (ad posting)	785	0.127%	27.1%	32.3%

A11. Job boards by segment – applications per hire

Board	ENT	MM2	MM1	SMB
LinkedIn Limited Listing	349	46	576	889

A12. All sourcing channels by segment – applications per hire

Channel	ENT	MM2	MM1	SMB
Internal job board	230	297	530	941
Job boards	287	240	503	658
Candidate search (recruiter outreach)	28	40	56	104
Referrals	20	12	10	11
Agencies	23	20	26	32
Social media	127	206	182	217

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