

August 2026

CHALLENGER REPORT

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FOR RELEASE AT 5:30 A.M. ET, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

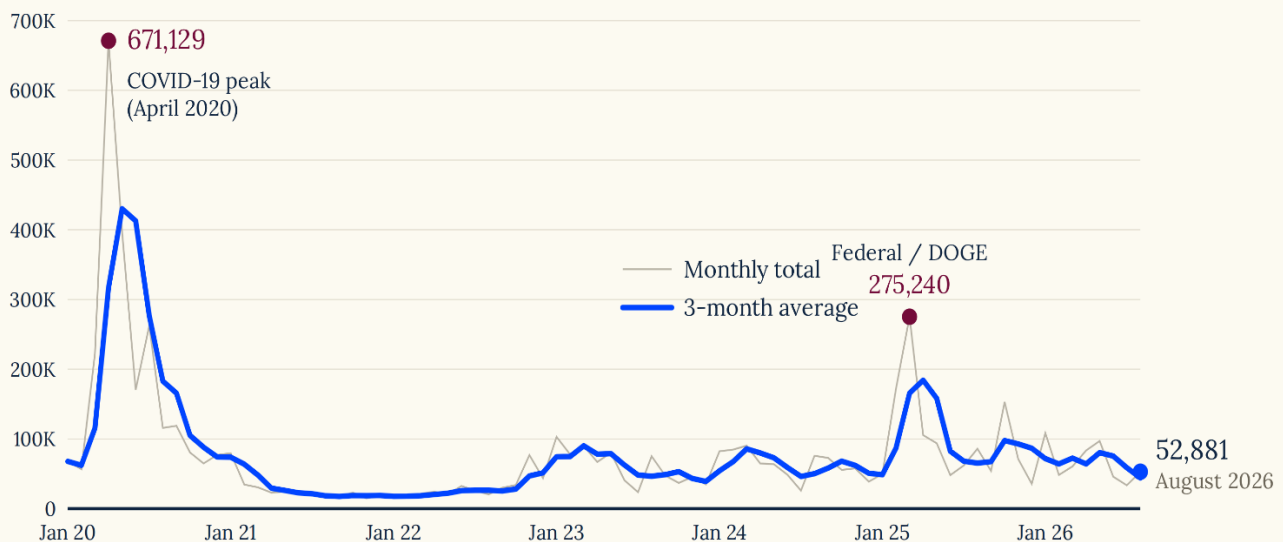
AUGUST LAYOFFS RISE 58% TO 52,881, LOWEST AUGUST SINCE 2022; HIRING PLANS UP 37% OVER LAST YEAR

CHICAGO, September 3, 2026 — U.S.-based employers announced 52,881 job cuts in August, up 58% from the 33,429 cuts announced in July. It is down 38% from the 85,979 layoff plans announced in the same month last year, and marks the lowest August total since 2022, according to a report released Thursday from global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

Through August, employers have announced 529,914 job cuts, down 41% from the 892,362 cuts announced in the first eight months of 2025. Excluding the Government sector, job cut announcements are down 15% (507,685 versus 597,089 through August 2025). It is the sixth time this year cuts are lower than the corresponding month one year earlier, and the lowest January-to-August total since 2022, when 179,506 layoff plans were announced.

U.S. JOB CUTS BY MONTH

Announced layoffs at U.S.-based employers, January 2020–August 2026



Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

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“This is the quietest August since 2022, but is generally on average for the month since the mid-2010s. What we’d like to see with low layoffs is an increase in hiring activity. While companies are making plans to hire more workers than last year, according to our numbers, it doesn’t appear those positions are being filled quickly,” said Andy Challenger, workplace expert and chief revenue officer for Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

WHICH INDUSTRIES CUT THE MOST IN AUGUST?

Consumer Products

Consumer Products led all sectors in August with 10,057 cuts, its heaviest month of the year, driven by announcements at Procter & Gamble and Estée Lauder. The sector has announced 28,574 cuts in 2026, down 20% from the 35,641 announced through August 2025.

Food

Food producers announced 7,982 cuts in August, the second-most of any industry, bringing the year-to-date total to 22,367. That is up 75% from the 12,761 cuts announced in this sector through August 2025. Tyson accounted for nearly a third of the month's total attributed to a historic cattle shortage.

Technology

Technology announced 6,103 cuts in August, its lowest monthly total of 2026, for a year-to-date total of 155,126. That is an increase of 52% from the 102,239 cuts announced in this sector through August 2025. Technology still accounts for 29% of all job cuts announced this year, more than any other industry.

Financial

Financial firms announced 4,286 cuts in August for a year-to-date total of 22,912, down 49% from the 44,986 cuts announced in this sector through August 2025.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications announced 4,113 cuts in August, nearly all from a single restructuring announcement. The sector has announced 7,446 cuts this year, down 62% from the 19,629 announced through August 2025.

Government

Government announced 1,477 cuts in August for a year-to-date total of 22,229, down 92% from the 295,273 cuts announced through August 2025, when federal workforce reductions drove the year's totals.

Transportation

Transportation has announced the second-most cuts among all industries this year with 42,279, up 271% from the 11,381 announced during the same period in 2025, as the sector continues to absorb elevated costs and shifting trade conditions.

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Media & News Cuts

The Media industry announced 480 cuts in August and has announced 4,908 so far in 2026, down 64% from the 13,729 cuts announced during the same period last year.

News, which Challenger tracks as a subset of Media and includes broadcast, digital, and print, announced 416 cuts in August, the highest monthly total since May 2025 when 462 News job cuts were recorded. It is up 222% from the 129 recorded in August 2025. Year-to-date News cuts total 1,727, up 12% from the 1,547 announced through August 2025.

WHICH INDUSTRIES ARE CUTTING THE MOST IN 2026?

Technology leads all industries with 155,126 cuts announced through August, followed by Transportation with 42,279, Health Care/Products with 35,637, Consumer Products with 28,574, and Services with 26,778.

Twenty of the 30 industries Challenger tracks have announced fewer cuts than they did at this point last year. The decline is steepest in Government, down 92%. Retail has announced 13,369 cuts, down 84% from 83,656. Warehousing is down 55% to 18,589, and Telecommunications is down 62% to 7,446.

The increases are concentrated in Technology, up 52%, Transportation, up 271%, FinTech, up 305% to 7,347, and Food, up 75%.

WHY ARE COMPANIES CUTTING?

Restructuring led all reasons for job cuts in August with 16,173 announced during the month, or 31%. It is the highest monthly restructuring since January's 20,044, and the first month since February that Artificial Intelligence did not lead. So far this year, Restructuring has been cited in 73,649 job cut announcements.

Market and Economic Conditions followed for the month with 15,260 cuts for a total of 105,335. Closings accounted for 6,743 in August and 91,373 for the year.

Artificial Intelligence fell to the fourth-most cited reason with 3,462 cuts in August, its lowest monthly total since December 2025 when 142 cuts were attributed to AI. It ends a five-month run, beginning in March, in which AI was the leading monthly reason. So far this year, AI has been cited in 116,175 job cut announcements, approximately 22% of all cuts, and it remains the leading reason year-to-date.

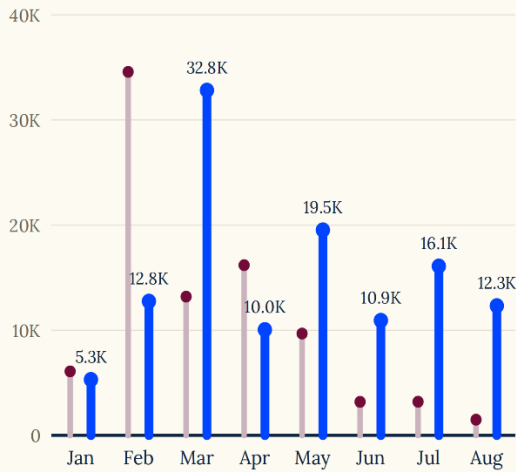
HIRING PLANS IN 2026

ANNOUNCED HIRING PLANS

U.S.-based employers, January–August 2026

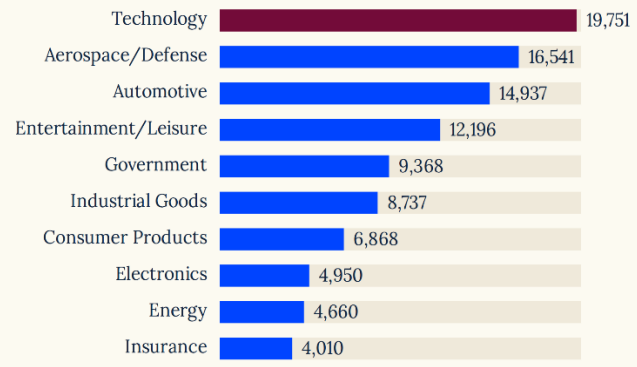
August hiring plans totaled 12,325 — the strongest August since 2022.

Monthly announcements ● 2025 ● 2026



Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas

Top 10 industries hiring, year to date



These 10 industries account for 85% of the 119,825 hiring plans announced this year.

Manufacturing and industrial sectors: **46%** of hiring plans, **15%** of cuts.

Aerospace/defense, industrial goods, automotive, consumer products, energy, construction, apparel and mining.

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Employers announced plans to hire 12,325 workers in August, down 23% from the 16,095 plans announced in July, and up 725% from the 1,494 announced in August 2025. It is the highest August total since 2022, when employers announced 41,985 hiring plans.

So far this year, companies have announced plans to hire 119,825 workers, up 37% from the 87,626 plans announced through August 2025. It is the strongest January-to-August total since 2023.

Aerospace/Defense led all industries in August with 4,025 announced hires, followed by Technology with 2,520 and Industrial Goods with 1,856. For the year, Technology leads with 19,751, followed by Aerospace/Defense with 16,541 and Automotive with 14,937.

“Employers are making plans to add workers, with 46% of those plans coming from manufacturing industries. The questions are how long will it take employers to actually fill these roles and will they find workers with the requisite skills,” said Challenger.

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TABLE 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOP FIVE INDUSTRIES

Year to date

	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Technology	155,126	102,239
Transportation	42,279	11,381
Health Care/Products	35,637	36,437
Consumer Products	28,574	35,641
Services	26,778	55,300

MONTH BY MONTH TOTALS

	2026	2025
January	108,435	49,795
February	48,307	172,017
March	60,620	275,240
April	83,387	105,441
May	97,006	93,816
June	45,849	47,999
July	33,429	62,075
August	52,881	85,979
September		54,064
October		153,074
November		71,321
December		35,553
TOTAL	529,914	1,206,374

Some reductions are announced as a range or over multiple years; Challenger records the announced figure.

LAYOFF LOCATION

	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
California	104,898	135,241
Texas	43,356	36,854
Washington	41,633	28,614
Georgia	39,448	30,364
Michigan	31,960	11,852

Listings are identified by the location of the layoff or corporate headquarters as stated in announcement.

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TABLE 2: JOB CUTS BY INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY	AUG-25	JUL-26	AUG-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026
Aerospace/Defense	657		149	2,761	5,966
Apparel	80	355		1,845	5,257
Automotive	1,151	1,543	2,297	18,034	19,178
Chemical		42	94	2,224	5,212
Construction	272	157	315	4,125	2,868
Consumer Products	2,940	1,597	10,057	35,641	28,574
Education	2,150	13		16,266	15,499
Electronics	132	1,027	414	6,451	5,541
Energy	588	359	93	9,004	2,350
Entertainment/Leisure	1,298	701	865	14,766	11,147
Financial	18,092	3,157	4,286	44,986	22,912
FinTech			225	1,813	7,347
Food	818	1,310	7,982	12,761	22,367
Government	2,979	2,962	1,477	295,273	22,229
Health Care/Products	4,038	1,251	1,211	36,437	35,637
Industrial Goods	762	583	808	7,693	12,423
Insurance	193	89	77	3,623	6,985
Legal				403	
Media	3,933	940	480	13,729	4,908
Mining	19		300	2,320	1,790
Non-Profit	4,325	543	3,844	22,151	11,789
Pharmaceutical	19,112	934	1,029	22,433	14,695
Real Estate	72		611	1,533	932
Retail	3,169	210	423	83,656	13,369
Services	1,862	2,581	2,836	55,300	26,778
Technology	12,988	9,867	6,103	102,239	155,126
Telecommunications	352	1,064	4,113	19,629	7,446
Transportation	1,028	778	531	11,381	42,279
Utility	356	133		2,329	721
Warehousing	2,613	1,233	2,261	41,556	18,589
TOTAL	85,979	33,429	52,881	892,362	529,914

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas

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TABLE 3: JOB CUTS BY REGION, STATE

EAST	AUG-26	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Connecticut		4,260	1,574
Delaware		117	209
Dist. of Columbia	614	11,873	294,696
Maine	291	591	4,811
Maryland	284	3,972	8,475
Massachusetts	1,571	15,463	10,607
New Hampshire	90	180	154
New Jersey	982	27,753	61,760
New York	9,315	31,935	78,440
Pennsylvania	772	13,031	15,088
Rhode Island		162	939
Vermont		739	339
TOTAL	13,919	110,076	477,092

MIDWEST	AUG-26	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Illinois	4,606	20,591	16,640
Indiana	74	3,908	1,852
Iowa	344	3,333	6,401
Kansas		418	2,772
Michigan	1,694	31,960	11,852
Minnesota	549	2,454	6,111
Missouri	255	3,089	4,584
Nebraska		1,435	4,869
Ohio	8,743	17,290	39,491
Wisconsin	357	4,441	2,514
TOTAL	16,622	88,919	97,086

WEST	AUG-26	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Alaska		779	1,712
Arizona	463	3,666	14,454
California	11,176	104,898	135,241
Colorado	904	7,674	4,673
Hawaii	60	1,283	742
Idaho		1,002	330
Montana		132	349
Nevada	93	3,654	2,336
New Mexico		296	203
North Dakota		180	60
Oklahoma		276	1,561
Oregon	1,337	8,896	3,367
South Dakota	2	55	388
Texas	1,326	43,356	36,854
Utah	723	1,503	1,057
Washington	1,183	41,633	28,614
Wyoming		9	28
TOTAL	17,267	219,292	231,969

SOUTH	AUG-26	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Alabama	352	3,667	6,824
Arkansas		1,542	520
Florida	1,083	20,873	18,402
Georgia	1,690	39,448	30,364
Kentucky	1	2,985	3,437
Louisiana	14	599	1,239
Mississippi		1,337	1,056
North Carolina	103	8,341	6,449
South Carolina	697	6,179	2,852
Tennessee	616	18,906	8,923
Virginia	517	6,716	5,160
West Virginia		1,034	989
TOTAL	5,073	111,627	86,215

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas

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JOB CUT ANNOUNCEMENT REPORT**

TABLE 4: JOB CUTS BY REASON

REASON	AUG-26	YTD 2026
Artificial Intelligence	3,462	116,175
Market/Economic Conditions	15,260	105,335
Closing	6,743	91,373
Restructuring	16,173	73,649
Contract Loss	1,284	42,042
Cost-Cutting	1,171	35,873
Acquisition/Merger	3,186	16,254
Voluntary Severance/Buyouts	600	10,419
Bankruptcy	380	9,667
Demand Downturn	119	8,714
Financial Loss	362	3,382
Relocation (Domestic)	392	2,949
Cattle Shortage	2,500	2,500
EV Tax Credit Expiration		2,058
No Reason Provided	75	1,912
DOGE Downstream Impact	620	1,771
Federal Cuts/Shutdown	102	1,456
Technological Update (automation)		1,353
Consolidation	198	1,202
Relocation (International)		686
Natural Disaster	254	490
Tariffs		331
Government Regulations		148
Avian Flu		87
Legal Trouble		76
Technological Update (possibly AI)		12
TOTAL	52,881	529,914

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas

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TABLE 5: QUARTER-BY-QUARTER

YEAR	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
1989	9,850	10,100	24,085	67,250	111,285
1990	107,052	87,686	49,104	72,205	316,047
1991	110,056	76,622	147,507	221,107	555,292
1992*	110,815	85,486	151,849	151,850	500,000
1993	170,615	84,263	194,486	165,822	615,186
1994	192,572	107,421	117,706	98,370	516,069
1995	97,716	114,583	89,718	137,865	439,882
1996	168,695	101,818	91,784	114,850	477,147
1997	134,257	51,309	95,930	152,854	434,350
1998	139,140	131,303	161,013	246,339	677,795
1999	210,521	173,027	173,181	118,403	675,132
2000	141,853	81,568	168,875	221,664	613,960
2001	406,806	370,556	594,326	585,188	1,956,876
2002	478,905	292,393	269,090	426,435	1,466,823
2003	355,795	274,737	241,548	364,346	1,236,426
2004	262,840	209,895	251,585	315,415	1,039,735
2005	287,134	251,140	245,378	288,402	1,072,054
2006	255,878	180,580	202,771	200,593	839,822
2007	195,986	197,513	194,095	180,670	768,264
2008	200,656	275,292	287,142	460,903	1,223,993
2009	578,510	318,165	240,233	151,122	1,288,030
2010	181,183	116,494	113,595	118,701	529,973
2011	130,749	115,057	233,258	127,018	606,082
2012	143,094	139,997	102,910	137,361	523,362
2013	145,041	113,891	128,452	121,667	509,051
2014	121,341	124,693	117,374	119,763	483,171
2015	140,214	147,458	205,759	105,079	598,510
2016	180,920	132,834	121,858	91,303	526,915
2017	126,201	100,799	94,478	97,292	418,770
2018	140,379	104,800	120,879	172,601	538,659
2019	190,410	140,577	133,882	127,687	592,556
2020	346,683	1,238,364	497,215	222,493	2,304,755
2021	144,686	67,975	52,560	56,749	321,970
2022	55,696	77,515	76,284	154,329	363,824
2023	270,416	187,793	146,305	117,163	721,677
2024	257,254	177,391	174,597	152,116	761,358
2025	497,052	247,256	202,118	259,948	1,206,374
2026	217,362	226,242			443,604
AVG (1989–2025)	207,756	181,307	176,025	187,106	752,194

*1992 figures are estimated. The 2026 row reflects completed quarters only; July and August fall in an open third quarter and are excluded.

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TABLE 6: ANNOUNCED HIRING PLANS BY MONTH

MONTH	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
January	5,306	6,089	5,376	32,764	77,630	72,063	23,229	74,040	41,890	136,501
February	12,755	34,580	10,317	28,830	215,127	146,403	88,202	15,279	139,925	25,765
March	32,826	13,198	21,102	9,044	105,224	97,767	824,610	96,368	14,525	127,006
April	10,049	16,191	9,802	23,310	88,622	76,345	285,639	258,302	13,842	61,537
May	19,536	9,683	4,236	7,885	126,083	49,118	38,981	8,663	9,889	77,447
June	10,933	3,191	19,087	13,629	102,897	110,093	75,454	11,946	13,504	40,095
July	16,095	3,200	3,676	12,774	25,506	18,281	246,507	22,316	9,823	88,142
August	12,325	1,494	6,101	7,744	41,985	94,004	160,411	24,937	17,274	14,530
September		117,313	403,893	590,353	380,014	939,790	929,860	459,689	595,997	422,726
October		283,138	266,743	35,202	237,380	52,042	255,198	190,835	130,338	37,387
November		9,074	11,621	15,566	30,203	6,527	185,504	19,063	15,422	61,300
December		10,496	7,999	3,022	51,693	89,984	77,267	26,313	15,999	8,218
TOTAL	119,825	507,647	769,953	780,123	1,482,364	1,752,417	3,190,862	1,207,751	1,018,428	1,100,654
YTD (Jan–Aug)	119,825	87,626	79,697	135,980	783,074	664,074	1,743,033	511,851	260,672	571,023
Monthly average	14,978	42,304	64,163	65,010	123,530	146,035	265,905	100,646	84,869	91,721

The 2026 monthly average covers January through August; all other years are full-year averages.

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JOB CUT ANNOUNCEMENT REPORT**

TABLE 7: ANNOUNCED HIRING PLANS BY INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY	AUG-26	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Aerospace/Defense	4,025	16,541	4,786
Apparel		1,550	218
Automotive	233	14,937	6,221
Chemical		255	70
Construction	149	1,277	932
Consumer Products	463	6,868	3,065
Education		292	40
Electronics	250	4,950	610
Energy	495	4,660	1,070
Entertainment/Leisure	100	12,196	28,234
Financial		930	75
FinTech			2,382
Food	679	3,099	427
Government		9,368	7,056
Health Care/Products	335	1,506	4,197
Industrial Goods	1,856	8,737	4,837
Insurance		4,010	12,800
Legal			
Media			
Mining			900
Non-Profit	100	132	
Pharmaceutical	400	530	400
Real Estate	15	15	
Retail		1,407	250
Services		2,500	298
Technology	2,520	19,751	5,570
Telecommunications	300	300	1,100
Transportation	375	1,355	305
Utility	30	2,199	1,493
Warehousing		460	290
TOTAL	12,325	119,825	87,626

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas