

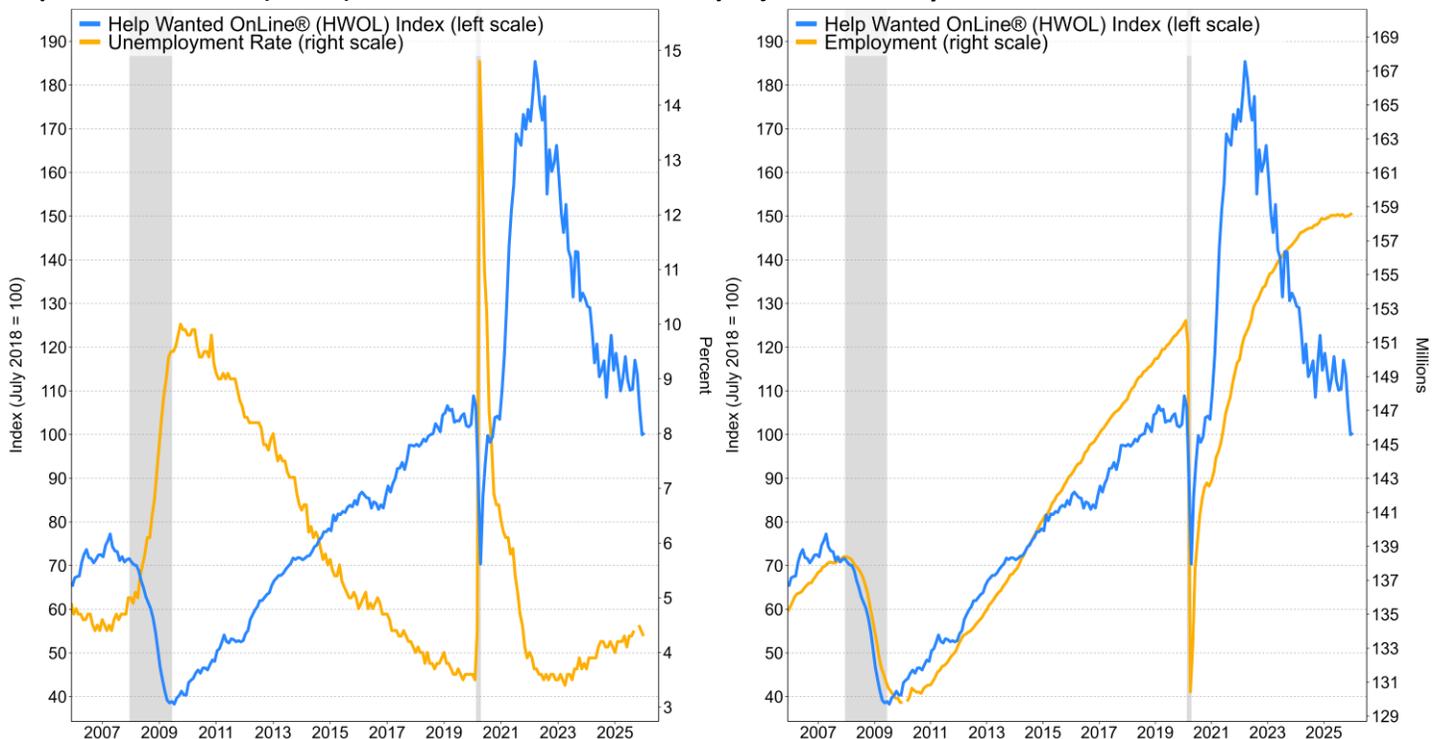
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## Online Labor Demand Increased in January

**NEW YORK, February 17, 2026...** *The Conference Board–Lightcast Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Index* increased in January 2026 to 100.4 (July 2018=100), up from a downwardly revised 100.0 in December. The 0.4% increase between January and December followed a 5.6% decrease between December and November. Overall, the Index is down 15.4% from one year ago.

The HWOL Index measures the change in advertised online job vacancies over time, reflecting monthly trends in employment opportunities across the US. The *Help Wanted OnLine®* Index is produced in collaboration with Lightcast, the global leader in real-time labor market data and analysis. This collaboration enhances the *Help Wanted OnLine®* program by providing additional insights into important labor market trends.

### Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Index: United States, seasonally adjusted, January 2026



Note: Shaded areas represent recessions as determined by the NBER Business Cycle Dating Committee.  
Sources: The Conference Board, Lightcast, Bureau of Labor Statistics

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The release schedule, national historic table and technical note are available on The Conference Board website, <http://www.conference-board.org/data/helpwantedonline.cfm>. The underlying data for The Conference Board HWOL is collected by Lightcast.

**Table 1. HWOL Data Series: Total ads by Census Division, seasonally adjusted, January 2026**

Area <sup>1</sup>	Total Ads <sup>2</sup> (Thousands)	Area <sup>1</sup>	Total Ads <sup>2</sup> (Thousands)
<b>United States</b>	<b>7,450.6</b>	South Atlantic	1,499.8
New England	455.1	East South Central	390.6
Middle Atlantic	867.6	West South Central	825.6
East North Central	1,057.7	Mountain	599.4
West North Central	561.8	Pacific	1,001.0

**Source: The Conference Board, Lightcast**

1. Census Divisions defined by the U.S. Census Bureau
2. Ad levels are seasonally adjusted and may not add up to the total US count

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**Table 2. HWOL Data Series: Total ads by State, seasonally adjusted, January 2026**

State	Total Ads <sup>1</sup> (Thousands)	State	Total Ads <sup>1</sup> (Thousands)
Alabama	93.6	Montana	30.1
Alaska	22.2	Nebraska	50.3
Arizona	158.4	Nevada	64.9
Arkansas	60.6	New Hampshire	54.1
California	675.9	New Jersey	216.3
Colorado	155.9	New Mexico	53.4
Connecticut	90.7	New York	372.3
Delaware	29.7	North Carolina	245.9
Florida	445.1	North Dakota	26.7
Georgia	221.3	Ohio	259.4
Hawaii	33.6	Oklahoma	75.3
Idaho	46.8	Oregon	107.5
Illinois	293.8	Pennsylvania	279.7
Indiana	145.8	Rhode Island	29.2
Iowa	76.9	South Carolina	119.7
Kansas	80.6	South Dakota	26.3
Kentucky	85.3	Tennessee	151.9
Louisiana	83.4	Texas	607.2
Maine	38.7	Utah	74.9
Maryland	140.3	Vermont	27.3
Massachusetts	213.8	Virginia	226.5
Michigan	213.9	Washington	164.9
Minnesota	145.6	West Virginia	35.2
Mississippi	60.1	Wisconsin	144.3
Missouri	156.0	Wyoming	15.1

**Source: The Conference Board, Lightcast**

1. Ad levels are seasonally adjusted and may not add up to the total US count

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**Table 3. HWOL Data Series: Total ads by selected MSAs, seasonally adjusted, January 2026**

MSA <sup>1</sup>	Total Ads <sup>2</sup> (Thousands)	MSA <sup>1</sup>	Total Ads <sup>2</sup> (Thousands)
Birmingham, AL	24.7	Kansas City, MO	67.9
Phoenix, AZ	117.9	St. Louis, MO	71.5
Tucson, AZ	20.2	Las Vegas, NV	39.9
Los Angeles, CA	220.9	Buffalo, NY	22.4
Riverside, CA	57.0	New York, NY	378.6
Sacramento, CA	41.1	Rochester, NY	24.5
San Diego, CA	62.0	Charlotte, NC	69.3
San Francisco, CA	112.0	Cincinnati, OH	51.2
San Jose, CA	55.4	Cleveland, OH	49.7
Denver, CO	89.8	Columbus, OH	58.3
Hartford, CT	37.1	Oklahoma City, OK	32.4
Washington, DC	168.2	Portland, OR	64.7
Jacksonville, FL	35.5	Philadelphia, PA	136.5
Miami, FL	129.3	Pittsburgh, PA	59.7
Orlando, FL	57.5	Providence, RI	40.8
Tampa, FL	73.0	Memphis, TN	24.7
Atlanta, GA	133.8	Nashville, TN	62.0
Honolulu, HI	22.3	Austin, TX	73.8
Chicago, IL	212.6	Dallas, TX	195.5
Indianapolis, IN	57.4	Houston, TX	119.1
Louisville, KY	30.6	San Antonio, TX	46.6
New Orleans, LA	22.6	Salt Lake City, UT	39.0
Baltimore, MD	76.1	Richmond, VA	43.4
Boston, MA	165.9	Virginia Beach, VA	46.0
Detroit, MI	94.3	Seattle-Tacoma, WA	97.6
Minneapolis, MN	97.7	Milwaukee, WI	42.8

**Source: The Conference Board, Lightcast**

1. Metropolitan areas are based on 2013 OMB county-based Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) definitions
2. Ad levels are seasonally adjusted and may not add up to the total US count

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## PROGRAM NOTES

The June 2025 data release reflects an update to our job board coverage as a few job boards made changes to their access policy. To minimize any impact, and improve and supplement our job board coverage, we have broadened and updated our job board coverage.

Prior to 2020, The Conference Board constructed the HWOL Index based solely on online job ads over time. Using a methodology designed to reduce non-economic volatility contributed by online job sources, the HWOL Index served an effective measure of changes in labor demand over time.

Beginning January 2020, the HWOL Index was refined as an estimate of change in job openings (based on BLS JOLTS), using a series of econometric models which incorporate job ads with other macroeconomic indicators such as employment and aggregate hours worked. By adopting a modeled approach which combines other data sources with data on online job ads, the HWOL Index more accurately tracks important movements in the labor market.

**HWOL Annual Revision.** With the April 2025 press release, the HWOL program has incorporated its annual revision, which helps ensure the accuracy and consistency of the HWOL Data Series. This year's annual revision includes updates to the Occupational coding and the Geographical coding for the HWOL Data Series from January 2015-forward. The HWOL Index has also been updated from January 2020-forward.

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**The Conference Board-Lightcast Help Wanted OnLine®** (HWOL) Index measures changes over time in advertised online job vacancies, reflecting monthly trends in employment opportunities across the US. The HWOL Data Series aggregates the total number of ads available by month from the HWOL universe of online job ads. Ads in the HWOL universe are collected in real-time from over 50,000 online job domains including traditional job boards, corporate boards, social media sites, and smaller job sites that serve niche markets and smaller geographic areas.

Like The Conference Board's long-running Help Wanted Advertising Index of print ads (which was published for over 55 years and discontinued in July 2008), **Help Wanted OnLine®** measures help wanted advertising—i.e. labor demand. The HWOL Data Series began in May 2005 and was revised in December 2018. With the December 2018 revision, The Conference Board released the HWOL Index, improving upon the HWOL Data Series' ability to assess local labor market trends by reducing volatility and non-economic noise and improving correlation with local labor market conditions.

In 2019, Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass) joined the **Help Wanted OnLine®** program as the new sole provider of online job ad data for HWOL. With this partnership, the HWOL Data Series has been revised historically to reflect a new universe and methodology of online job advertisements and therefore cannot be used in conjunction with the pre-revised HWOL Data Series. The HWOL Data Series begins in January 2015 and the HWOL Index begins in December 2005. HWOL Index values prior to 2020 are based on job ads collected by CEB, Inc.

Those using this data are urged to review the information on the database and methodology available on The Conference Board website and contact us with questions and comments. Background information and technical note and discussion of revisions to the series are available at: <http://www.conference-board.org/data/helpwantedonline.cfm>.

### About The Conference Board

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### About Lightcast

As the global leader in labor market analytics, Lightcast illuminates the future of work with data-driven talent strategies. Formerly Emsi Burning Glass, Lightcast finds purpose in sharing the insights that build communities, educators, and companies, and takes pride in knowing our work helps others find fulfillment, too. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, and Moscow, Idaho, Lightcast is active in more than 30 countries and has offices in the United Kingdom, Italy, New Zealand, and India. Lightcast is backed by global private equity leader KKR. <https://lightcast.io/>

### Help Wanted OnLine® Publication Schedule

<u>Data for the Month</u>	<u>Release Date</u>
February 2026	March 11, 2026
March 2026	April 8, 2026
April 2026	May 13, 2026
May 2026	June 10, 2026
June 2026	July 8, 2026
July 2026	August 12, 2026
August 2026	September 9, 2026
September 2026	October 7, 2026
October 2026	November 12, 2026
November 2026	December 9, 2026

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