



KEY CHANNEL PARTNER OF THE MONTH



Job Market Stays Sturdy But Pay Pressure is Still On, Economists Say

Employers may be especially hesitant to make big moves as they await signals from the new administration, one expert said.

Total nonfarm payroll rose by 143,000 in January, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and unemployment dropped to 4%, with gains largely in healthcare, retail and social assistance.

Economists praised the ongoing sturdiness of the market – but many also pointed to potential cracks forming, particularly in other metrics.

“Today’s jobs report reflects a market that continues to show sluggishness and remains challenging for those looking for new jobs. 2025 is shaping up to be another year of significant changes,” Ger Doyle, U.S. country manager at ManpowerGroup said in a statement. “Our real-time data show total open job postings declined 3%, indicating a slight contraction in overall job demand.”

Employers may be especially hesitant to make big moves as they await signals from the new administration, Doyle continued.

Additionally, pay pressure is still on for employers, Julia Pollak, chief economist at ZipRecruiter, said in a statement. As long as joblessness remains low and the economy continues to run at a stronger-than-expected pace, wages are likely to remain high, she continued.

The 2025 labor market may also run right into a number of demographic issues, particularly an aging workforce and ongoing struggles around immigration with the new administration, experts previously told HR Dive.

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“Employers’ ability to maintain a ‘business as usual’ attitude in the face of political noise, rapid policy adjustments and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty has so far helped the overall labor market – and economy – maintain an even keel over the past few months,” Cory Stahle, Indeed Hiring Lab economist, said in a statement. “But past returns are no guarantee of future results, especially in this fast-moving, often volatile age.”

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Trump Issues Executive Order to Boost AI

President Donald Trump issued an executive order on artificial intelligence requiring a review of “existing AI policies and directives that act as barriers to American AI innovation.”

The executive order instructs the executive branch agencies to review all relevant policies, directives, regulations, and actions taken by the Biden administration and identify areas for suspension, revision, or rescission.

Employment-related materials that could come under scrutiny include guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

“President Trump’s AI executive order does not directly impact private-sector employers at this time, but employers should assess their AI use and the impact of AI systems in the workplace upon employees and applicants,” said Bradford J. Kelley, an attorney in the Washington, D.C., office of Littler.

We’ve rounded up articles from SHRM to provide more context on the news.

Obstacle to Innovation

On Jan. 20, Trump rescinded former President Joe Biden’s October 2023 executive order on AI, which sought to develop security standards for AI and introduce consumer and worker protections.

The Biden executive order directed the federal government to assess the impact of AI on the workforce, prevent discrimination resulting from the use of AI tools, and support upskilling programs that help workers develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the AI economy.

The directive was criticized by some technology firms and Republicans as hindering AI innovation.

Speedy Response

Biden’s order was issued quickly in the wake of the spread of generative AI (GenAI) and in the absence of any U.S. legislation setting guardrails for AI development.



The executive order contained several measures related to employment, including working toward best practices to address job displacement, creating labor standards regarding workplace discrimination, and regulating data collection. The order sought to accelerate the hiring of AI professionals as part of a talent surge and to streamline the immigration process for highly skilled foreign students and workers so they could add their talents to the U.S. AI workforce.

AI Employment Regulations Make Compliance ‘Very Complicated’

While federal action has mostly been at an awareness-raising and guidance level, state legislatures have begun implementing laws aimed at curbing AI-driven discrimination.

During the SHRM Workplace Law Forum 2024 in Washington, D.C., an expert panel discussed the shifting regulatory landscape around AI in employment and some basic ways to mitigate risk.

The AI Agents Are Coming

AI is rapidly transforming the HR technology market and will penetrate every area of HR, including recruitment, learning and development, employee experience, and day-to-day HR service delivery. The emergence of agentic AI—an evolution from AI-powered chatbots that answer questions to AI agents that take actions based on those exchanges—will lead to it being increasingly integrated across HR systems.

Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace

This SHRM resource can help employers and employees successfully manage GenAI and other AI-powered systems at work.

www.shrm.org



5 Benefits for Your Workplace Wellness Strategy

Creating a health-conscious workplace is good for everyone. It fosters a culture of care and respect, and it leads to greater employee satisfaction and productivity. If you work in benefits or HR, consider offering these health initiatives and benefits at your company.

On-site medical screenings

Providing on-site medical screenings is an excellent way to encourage preventive care among employees. These screenings can detect nascent health concerns, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or cholesterol levels, allowing employees to seek timely treatment.

According to the CDC, early detection and prevention strategies can significantly lower the likelihood of chronic disease and associated healthcare costs. By making health assessments convenient, your company can encourage routine checkups and improve overall workplace health.

In-office workout center

Daily activity is fundamental to health, but most office employees don't move around enough during the week. An on-campus workout center makes it easier for employees to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

Exercise not only boosts energy levels but also improves mental clarity and mood. By filling a gym with quality exercise equipment and hosting engaging fitness classes, your company can promote healthier lifestyles and increase focus on the job.

Consider incentives like group training sessions or yoga classes to enhance engagement with wellness programs.

Massage services

Stress is a leading cause of burnout and decreased productivity in the workplace. Offering in-office massage services can help employees manage stress, relieve muscle tension, and improve overall well-being.

Even brief massage sessions reduce anxiety and improve circulation. By including this initiative, your company can demonstrate it prioritizes mental and physical health while making the workplace a more enjoyable environment.

Healthy cafeteria food

The availability of nutritious meal options in the workplace improves employee performance and energy levels. A cafeteria that serves healthy food choices, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins, promotes better eating habits and boosts daily productivity. Consider implementing subsidized meals or meal vouchers to make healthy eating accessible and sustainable for employees.

Free counseling services

Mental health support is a key consideration for modern workplaces. Offering free counseling services through employee assistance programs (EAPs) or on-site counselors helps employees address challenges like stress, anxiety, or other personal life issues. Such services build mental health into your company's culture and improve employee well-being.

These health initiatives and benefits are important to offer at your company because they show employees that their wellness matters. Prioritizing these strategies fosters long-term loyalty and supports a more engaged and resilient team.

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