deputy

US Hourly Work Index

OCTOBER 2026 EDITION

A detailed look into the state of hourly work across healthcare, hospitality, retail and services in the United States.

Built from Deputy's world of work and industry insights data, analyzing month-on-month changes in the metrics that matter most.



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The “Hourly Work Index” by Deputy is a detailed look into the state of hourly work across healthcare, hospitality, retail and services in the United States, built from Deputy’s world of work and industry insights data.

THE MONTH IN FOUR NUMBERS

October at a glance

AVERAGE HOURLY PAY · ALL SECTORS

$19.62 ▼ 0.3% MoM

Hourly pay held broadly flat. Healthcare was the standout, with hourly pay up 2.5% to $23.20, while Retail (▼ 0.9%) and Services (▼ 0.3%) edged down.

HOURS WORKED · ALL FOUR SECTORS

17.6M ▲ 2.3% MoM

Hours increased after two consecutive monthly decreases (▼ 1.6% in August, ▼ 2.6% in September). Every sector worked more hours, led by Retail (▲ 3.4%).

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER · ALL SECTORS

▼ 8.8% Month-on-month

Terminations decreased for a second consecutive month, the largest decrease since February. New hires also decreased, down 5.0%.

PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING

9.0 days ahead ▲ 19.4% MoM

The most notice recorded this year, up from 6.5 days in January. Every sector gave more notice than in September.

SECTOR · BY THE NUMBERS

Healthcare

AVG SHIFTS / EMPLOYEE

6.0

▲ 3.3%

AVG HOURS / EMPLOYEE

46.2

▲ 3.4%

AVG SHIFT LENGTH (HRS)

7.71

— 0.1%

NEW HIRES (% CHANGE)

▼ 34.0%

vs September

EXITS (% CHANGE)

▼ 16.9%

vs September

PREDICTABILITY (DAYS)

13.9

▲ 12.7%

AVG SHIFT PAY ($USD)

$181.29

▲ 2.8%

AVG HOURLY PAY ($USD)

$23.20

▲ 2.5%

Healthcare led on pay in October, with hourly pay up 2.5% to $23.20 and pay per shift up 2.8%, the largest increases of any sector. Employees also worked more, with shifts per employee up 3.3% and hours up 3.4%. Hiring cooled after September's 29.5% increase, with new hires down 34.0%, while exits decreased 16.9%. At 13.9 days, Healthcare still schedules further ahead than any other sector.

SECTOR · BY THE NUMBERS

Hospitality

AVG SHIFTS / EMPLOYEE

18.6

▼ 0.4%

AVG HOURS / EMPLOYEE

77.1

▲ 1.6%

AVG SHIFT LENGTH (HRS)

4.16

▲ 2.1%

NEW HIRES (% CHANGE)

▲ 8.1%

vs September

EXITS (% CHANGE)

▼ 18.2%

vs September

PREDICTABILITY (DAYS)

6.8

▲ 24.2%

AVG SHIFT PAY ($USD)

$83.28

▲ 2.3%

AVG HOURLY PAY ($USD)

$18.51

— 0.1%

Hospitality worked longer shifts rather than more of them: shifts per employee dipped 0.4%, but shifts lengthened 2.1% to 4.16 hours, lifting hours per employee 1.6%. It was the only sector where hiring increased (▲ 8.1%), while exits decreased 18.2%, the largest decrease in the Index. Notice increased 24.2% to 6.8 days, the largest increase of any sector, but Hospitality still has the shortest planning horizon.

SECTOR · BY THE NUMBERS

Retail

AVG SHIFTS / EMPLOYEE	AVG HOURS / EMPLOYEE	AVG SHIFT LENGTH (HRS)	NEW HIRES (% CHANGE)
10.5	77.1	7.32	▼ 12.2%
▲ 2.3%	▲ 2.5%	▲ 0.2%	vs September

EXITS (% CHANGE)	PREDICTABILITY (DAYS)	AVG SHIFT PAY ($USD)	AVG HOURLY PAY ($USD)
▲ 5.7%	9.5	$120.50	$17.82
vs September	▲ 18.6%	▼ 0.7%	▼ 0.9%

Retail recorded the largest increase in total hours of any sector (▲ 3.4%), with shifts per employee up 2.3% and hours per employee up 2.5%. It was also the only sector where exits increased (▲ 5.7%), while new hires decreased 12.2%, so more of the work is falling on existing staff heading into the holiday peak. Hourly pay decreased 0.9%, the largest decrease in the Index. Notice increased 18.6% to 9.5 days, the second-longest planning horizon.

SECTOR · BY THE NUMBERS

Services

AVG SHIFTS / EMPLOYEE	AVG HOURS / EMPLOYEE	AVG SHIFT LENGTH (HRS)	NEW HIRES (% CHANGE)
12.1	72.8	6.02	▼ 10.3%
▲ 1.7%	▲ 1.4%	▼ 0.4%	vs September

EXITS (% CHANGE)	PREDICTABILITY (DAYS)	AVG SHIFT PAY ($USD)	AVG HOURLY PAY ($USD)
▼ 4.5%	8.7	$133.08	$18.85
vs September	▲ 22.7%	▼ 0.4%	▼ 0.3%

Services saw steady growth in work, with shifts per employee up 1.7% and hours per employee up 1.4%, and was the only sector where shifts got shorter (▼ 0.4%). Turnover eased, with exits down 4.5%, but hiring slowed too, with new hires down 10.3% after an 11.8% increase in September. Notice increased 22.7% to 8.7 days, the second-largest increase in the Index.

EMERGING TRENDS

Month-on-month changes

Looking at the run of monthly data since January, three trends stand out in October.

01

Existing teams absorbed the rebound

Hours worked increased 2.3% to 17.6M after two months of decreases, yet new hires fell 5.0%. Hours per employee rose 3.1%, so the extra work went to people already on the team rather than to new starters.

02

Businesses are holding on to people

Terminations fell 8.8%, a second consecutive decrease. With hiring also down, businesses are leaning on stable teams heading into the holidays. Retail is the exception, with exits up 5.7% and new hires down 12.2%.

03

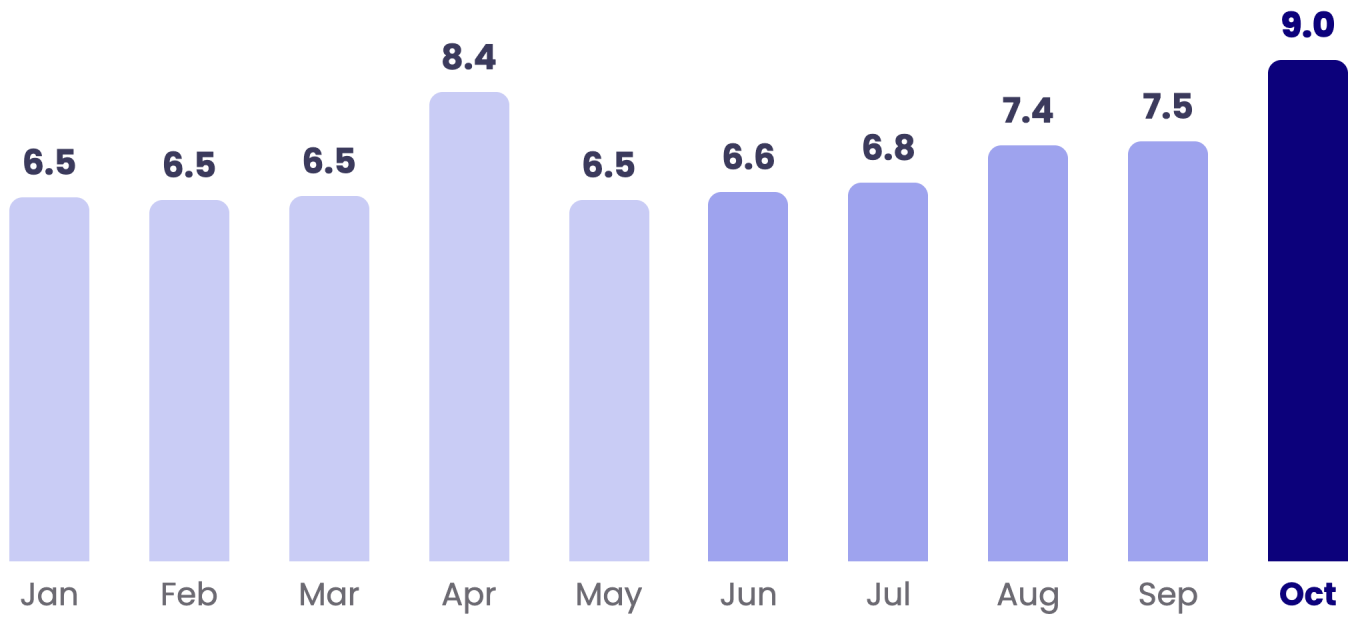
Notice reached a new high

Workers now see their schedule 9.0 days ahead, up from 6.5 in January after five straight monthly increases. The biggest jumps came in Security Services (▲ 74% to 8.3 days) and Childcare (▲ 50% to 11.6), while Cafes, the largest sub-sector, rose 25% to 6.1 days.

PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING · OCTOBER 2026

Notice has increased five months in a row

Average days between a shift's last schedule update and the shift starting, all sectors.



Darker bars mark the five consecutive monthly increases, June to October. April's spike came from a one-off jump in Retail (15.0 days).

+2.5

MORE DAYS' NOTICE THAN IN JANUARY

Healthcare	**13.9** ▲ 12.7%
Retail	**9.5** ▲ 18.6%
Services	**8.7** ▲ 22.7%
Hospitality	**6.8** ▲ 24.2%

Days of notice in October, and change vs September.

PREDICTABILITY · OCTOBER 2026

Who is scheduling furthest ahead

SUB-SECTOR	SECTOR	SEP	OCT	CHANGE
Hospitals	Healthcare	18.4	22.0	▲ 20%
Vets & Animal Health	Healthcare	16.8	20.3	▲ 21%
Outpatient Care Centers	Healthcare	22.4	18.3	▼ 18%
Medical Clinics	Healthcare	15.0	16.6	▲ 10%
Pharmacies	Retail	12.4	15.3	▲ 23%
Dentists	Healthcare	18.7	14.2	▼ 24%

SHORTEST NOTICE

Accommodation	Hospitality	4.7	5.5	▲ 18%
Employment Services	Services	3.5	4.9	▲ 40%

Average days between a shift's last schedule update and the shift starting. Sub-sectors with 8,000+ shifts.

9.0 days, all sectors

▲ 19.4% on September

Hospitals lead the way

At 22.0 days, hospitals schedule more than three weeks ahead, up 20% on September.

Healthcare fills five of the top six

Pharmacies are the only non-healthcare entry, up 23% to 15.3 days.

Appointment care pulled back

Dentists (▼ 24%) and outpatient care (▼ 18%) gave less notice, against the wider trend.

QUOTE · COMMENTARY

Schedules are being set earlier than at any point this year

9.0

Days of notice

The all-sector average in October, up from 6.5 days in January.

▼ 8.8%

Fewer terminations than in September.

"Hourly workers are seeing their schedules earlier than at any point this year, with an average of 9.0 days' notice in October, up from 6.5 days in January. Every sector gave more notice than in September.

That certainty matters. When people know their hours more than a week ahead, they can plan childcare, study and second jobs around work. Predictable schedules are one of the simplest ways to support retention, and October's 8.8% decrease in terminations is an encouraging sign.

Heading into the holiday season, businesses that publish schedules early will be best placed to keep the teams they have."



Star Levandowski

SVP People & Operations, Deputy

ABOUT THE INDEX

US Hourly Work Index

The data methodology and processing standards powering the US index for hourly workforce insights.

Data foundations

Uses high-fidelity, anonymized and aggregated customer and user data directly from Deputy, the leading global people platform for hourly work.

Statistical normalization

The raw data has been mathematically normalized to account for seasonality and the natural demand fluctuations of workforces throughout the week (e.g. weekdays vs. weekends).

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Thriving workplaces in every community