Hiring Lab

Economic Research by Indeed

2026 Q2 US Retail Labor Market Update

The Retail vertical continued to mirror the rest of the labor market in the second quarter of 2026 in terms of job postings, but other trends are diverging. Job postings in most categories are down over the year, while Retail wage growth is picking up and the quits rate has risen in the Retail Trade and Leisure & Hospitality industries.

Indeed Job Postings

Retail category job postings slide with the rest of the labor market

Indeed job postings, through July 17, 2026

Occupational category	% change in past year	% change from Feb 01, 2020
Hospitality & Tourism	-1.7	-14.2
Retail	-4.9	-10.5
Food Preparation & Service	-6.1	-7.2

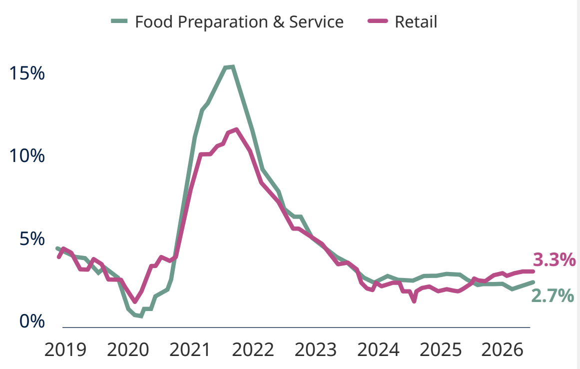
Source: Indeed

- Overall US job postings on Indeed appear to have stabilized near pre-pandemic levels, dipping just 2.3% in the year to July 17, 2026, and standing just over a percentage point above its February 2020 level.
- Job postings in the Retail vertical continue to mirror the overall labor market, with all categories declining over the past year
- Demand for workers is weaker in the Retail vertical, with all categories below pre-pandemic levels, led by Hospitality & Tourism, down just over 14%.

Retail Wage Growth

Retail wage growth picks up steam

Year-over-year growth in posted wages, 3-month average, January 2019 - May 2026



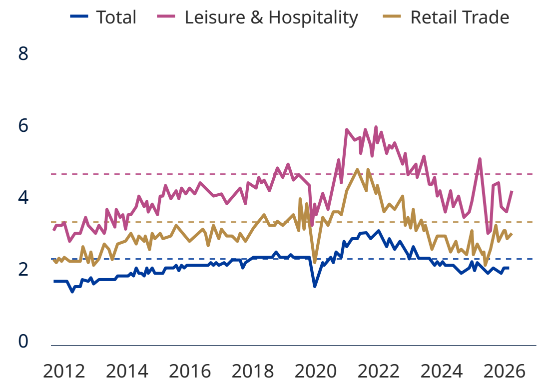
Source: Indeed

- Wage growth for the overall labor market clocked in at 2.4% in the year leading to May 2026.
- Both Food Preparation & Service and Retail wage growth are outpacing the labor market average, at 2.7% and 3.3%, respectively.
- Retail wage growth has consistently edged higher over the past 18 months, while Food Preparation & Service has remained flat.

Retail Quits

Retail quits picking up, but still below recent averages

Quits rate, %, seasonally adjusted, through May 2026, dashed line = 2019 average

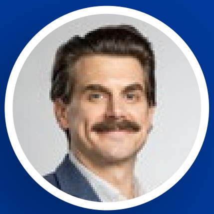


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Reduced quits is a main feature of the current labor market, as workers hold on tight to the jobs they have, leaving the quits rate well below its 2019 average.
- The quits rate for the overall labor market has remained flat; however, the Leisure & Hospitality and Retail Trade industries are experiencing a slight uptick.
- While these rates remain below their 2019 averages, the upticks may be signs that workers feel better about their prospects for finding new jobs.

About Our Quarterly Sector Reports

Hiring Lab analyzes the latest Indeed data each quarter to provide labor market insights for the Transportation, Retail, Business-to-Business, Tech, and Healthcare sectors. We examine trends in job postings, wage growth, worker churn, and occupational categories to inform employers and job seekers about changes in employment across these sectors.



About Daniel Culbertson

Daniel is a senior economist with Indeed Hiring Lab, focused on the US labor market. He regularly provides labor market insights to Indeed's customers and has deep expertise in analyzing labor market trends across vertical industries. Previously, Daniel specialized in regional analysis and forecasting as an economist with Moody's Analytics. He holds a Master's Degree in Economics.

About Indeed Hiring Lab

Indeed Hiring Lab creates innovative data insights on the global labor market that inspire new conversations about the state of work. As the economic research arm of Indeed, the world's number one job site, Hiring Lab is driven by a team of leading economists and data scientists who provide real-time thought leadership on global labor market conditions, including hiring trends, salary information, popular skills, and employer benefits. Hiring Lab analyzes millions of data points across time collected from Indeed's proprietary job postings, resumes, and job seeker behaviors to reveal emerging trends in the United States and across the world.

The unique insights generated by Hiring Lab inform talent management, employment, and labor policy decisions for businesses, researchers, academics, and job seekers alike. Hiring Lab partners with a range of policy-making organizations and NGOs, including the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the Bank of Canada, to produce timely, incisive research. Hiring Lab data is also regularly cited in prominent business publications such as The Wall Street Journal, CNN, Reuters, The Globe and Mail, Der Spiegel, and The Financial Times. Hiring Lab economists regularly speak about labor market trends at leading industry, policy, and academic conferences.

For more labor market insights from Indeed Hiring Lab, please visit hiringlab.indeed.com or data.indeed.com to view fresh labor market data across various global markets.