Workforce Report

icims Insights

SEPTEMBER 2025

Focus: Frontline Hiring

Award-winning data program

DATA BREAKTHROUGH AWARD 2024
DATA SCIENCE SOLUTION OF THE YEAR

DATA BREAKTHROUGH AWARD 2025
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE SOLUTION PROVIDER OF THE YEAR

BIG PICTURE:

September Workforce Report

Market misalignment persists. In August, application volume remained elevated, while hires and openings declined year over year — signaling a continued disconnect between employer demand and candidate activity.

Frontline gains momentum. The hourly job market showed a slightly brighter picture, with applications up, openings inching higher and hires down year over year but beginning to rebound.

Workforce in transition. This month's report examines labor market activity, with a focus on how frontline jobs in healthcare and manufacturing — from line operators to food service staff — are influencing today's workforce.

BY THE NUMBERS:

The frontline labor market is showing greater resilience than the overall market, with applications climbing 23%, openings up 1% and hires down 2% year over year (YoY).

Healthcare is driving momentum in the hourly labor market, with YoY growth across applications (+29%), openings (+10%) and hires (+8%).

Manufacturing is facing supply–demand gap, with applications for hourly roles climbing 26% YoY as openings (-6%) and hires (-7%) decline.

iCIMS Insights Workforce Reports monitor monthly labor market activity based on hundreds of millions of applicants and millions of users. Organizations can use this data as a measuring stick to anticipate and adapt to ever-changing workforce dynamics.

All data is pulled from our platform at the end of the month. Fluctuations in data month to month may occur based on changes in sample size and other factors.

Labor market shows mixed signals

iCIMS Insights quick take:

The labor market remains stalled in a tug-of-war. Application activity is up year over year, but hiring continues to slide.

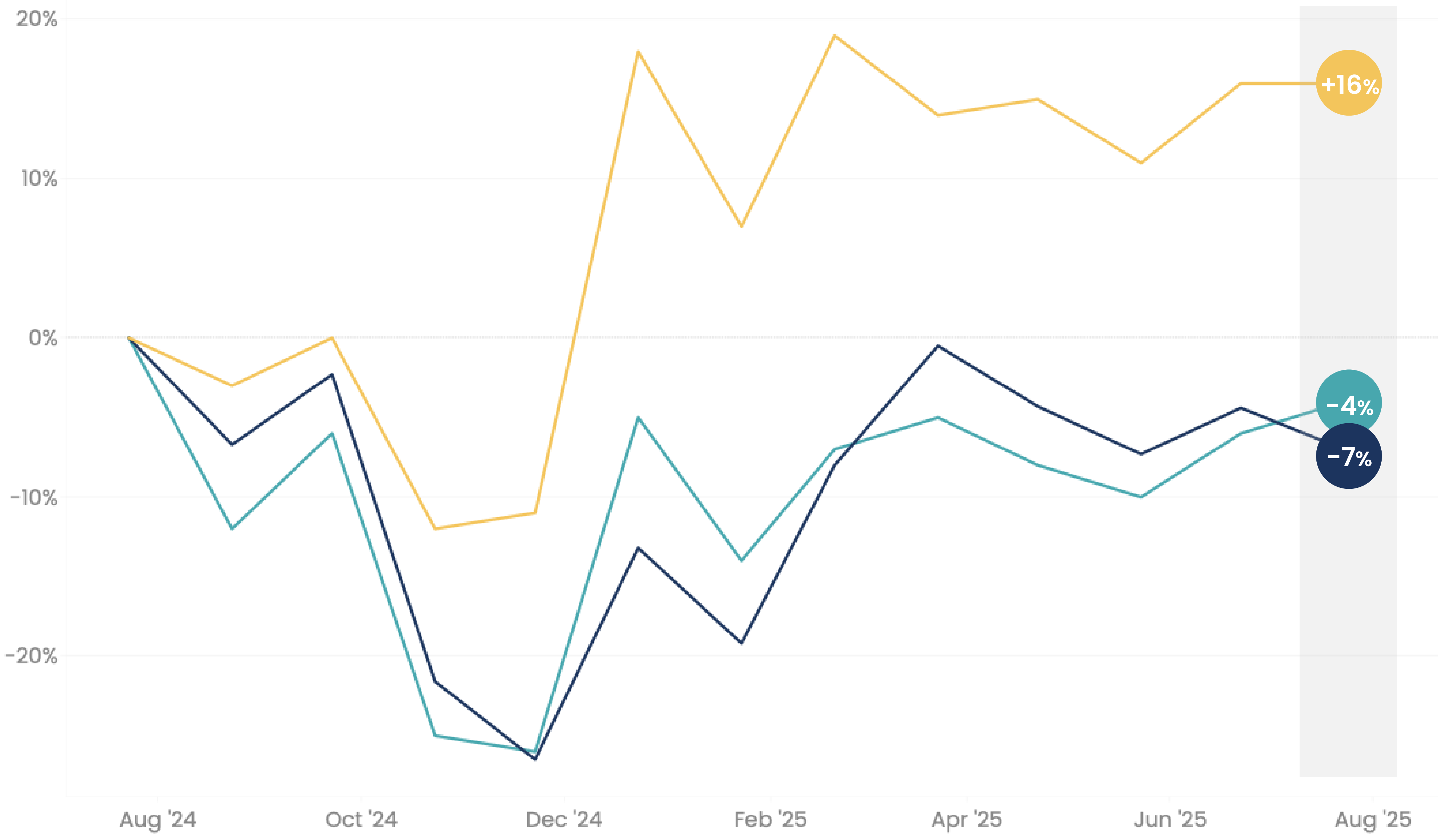
- **Candidates are keeping pace**: Application volume remains elevated year over year, but activity held flat from July to August, signaling steady candidate demand.
- **Testing the waters?** Openings fell 4% year over year in August but ticked up from July. Employers may be starting to post more jobs, but weak hiring shows they're still hesitant to commit.
- **Employer caution is looming:** Speculation about Fed rate cuts could be amplifying uncertainty and muting employer confidence. For talent teams that are delaying hiring decisions until the market outlook is clearer, use this time to build pipelines, strengthen your employer brand and get ahead when hiring resumes.

Since August 2024

16% Job applications

-4% Job openings

-7% Hires



PLATFORM INDICATORS

Job openings, applications and hires
August 2024–August 2025

September Insights zeroes in on frontline hiring with a first look at the **iCIMS 2025 State of Frontline Hiring Report**, launching September 16.

We pair those takeaways with fresh, proprietary platform trends on hourly workers, including recent shifts in application and hiring activity across healthcare and manufacturing.

Trent Cotton,
Head of Talent Acquisition Insights & Analyst Relations, iCIMS

"Even as the broader market cools, the hourly market remains urgent, though candidate interest is beginning to level off.

If this trend continues, pressure will shift from the screening and interview stages to the top of the funnel as supply tightens.

Now's the time to clear bottlenecks to meet the hiring needs of today and the future."

Hourly labor market shows strength amid uncertainty

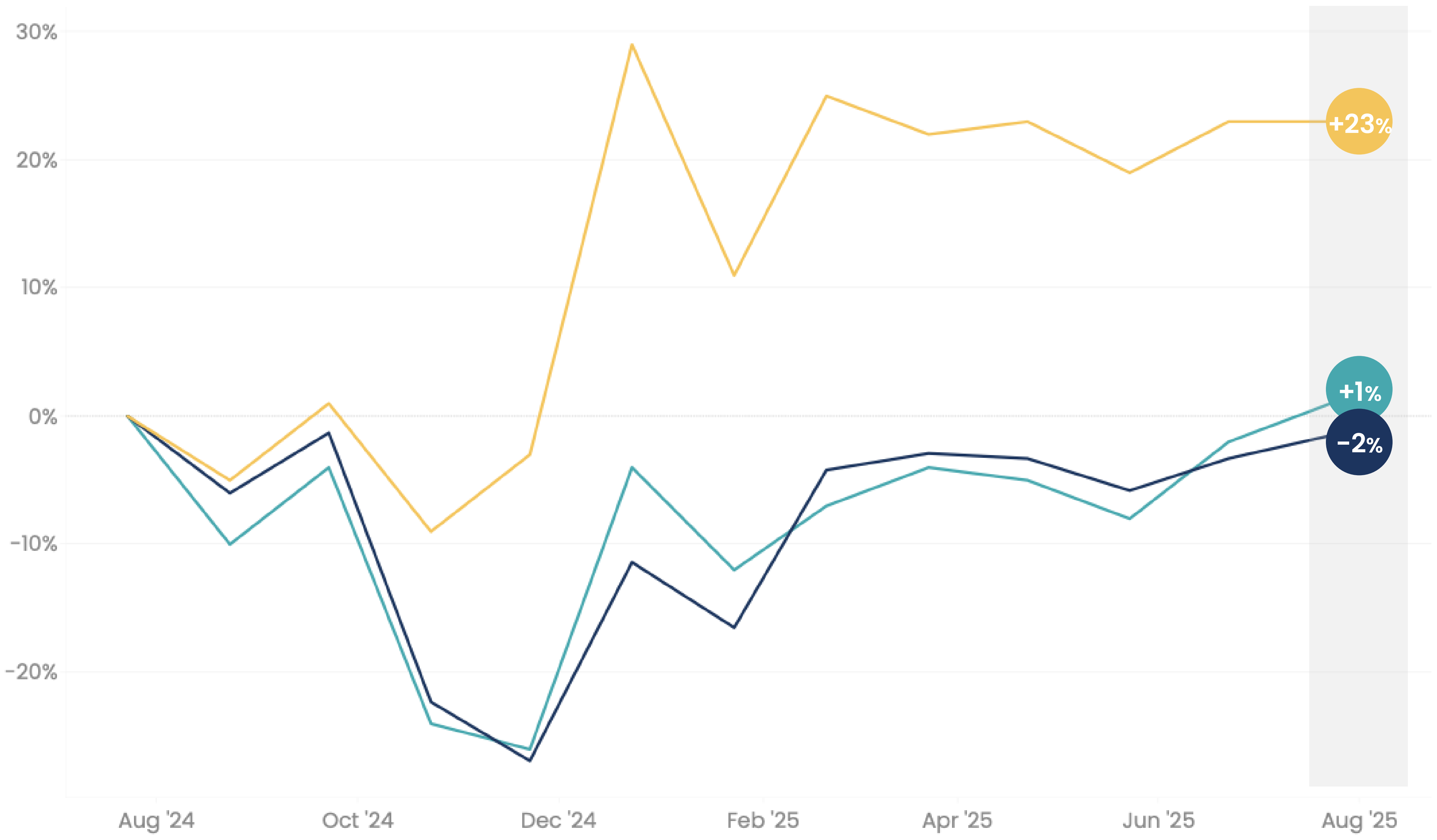
iCIMS Insights quick take:

The hourly job market is showing signs of resilience as candidate interest stays high and hiring trends improve.

- **Applicant interest is holding:** Like the overall labor market, applications for hourly roles climbed year over year but leveled off month to month, signaling durable candidate interest.
- **Openings are peaking:** Hourly job postings are up 1% since last year and hit a 12-month high in August., showing employers are opening new roles, even as caution dominates sentiment.
- **Hires are rebounding slowly:** Hiring activity is still below last year but improving month over month. Employers appear to be turning to hourly jobs as a flexible alternative to full-time hires as economic uncertainty lingers.

Since August 2024

23% ↑ Job applications	1% ↑ Job openings	–2% ↓ Hires



HOURLY PLATFORM INDICATORS

Job openings, applications and hires
August 2024–August 2025

Frontline hiring urgency meets friction

iCIMS Insights quick take:

Urgency to fill frontline positions is high, but bottlenecks in the process are slowing hiring.

- **Frontline hiring under pressure:** 9 in 10 frontline hiring managers say filling roles is urgent, with 62% citing candidate quality as a leading obstacle.
- **Friction across the funnel:** One-third of hiring managers say interviews are the biggest drop-off point in the hiring process.. Yet high application abandonment from workers suggests the friction is at the top of the funnel.
- **Wake-up call:** 69% of frontline workers believe employers "always" or "sometimes" ignore what job seekers want in the hiring experience. This message for talent teams is loud: ignore candidate-first experiences, and your pipeline will begin to feel the squeeze.

6 out of 10 have started but **not finished** an application

TOP REASONS WHY:

1. 50% **say it's too lengthy/time consuming**
2. 35% **feel they lack the qualifications**
3. 31% **cite the lack of pay transparency**

Source: iCIMS 2025 State of Frontline Hiring

Hourly healthcare: Strong interest in roles but hires dipping

iCIMS Insights quick take:

Applications and openings are climbing, but hires dipped — showing the real challenge is converting interest into hires.

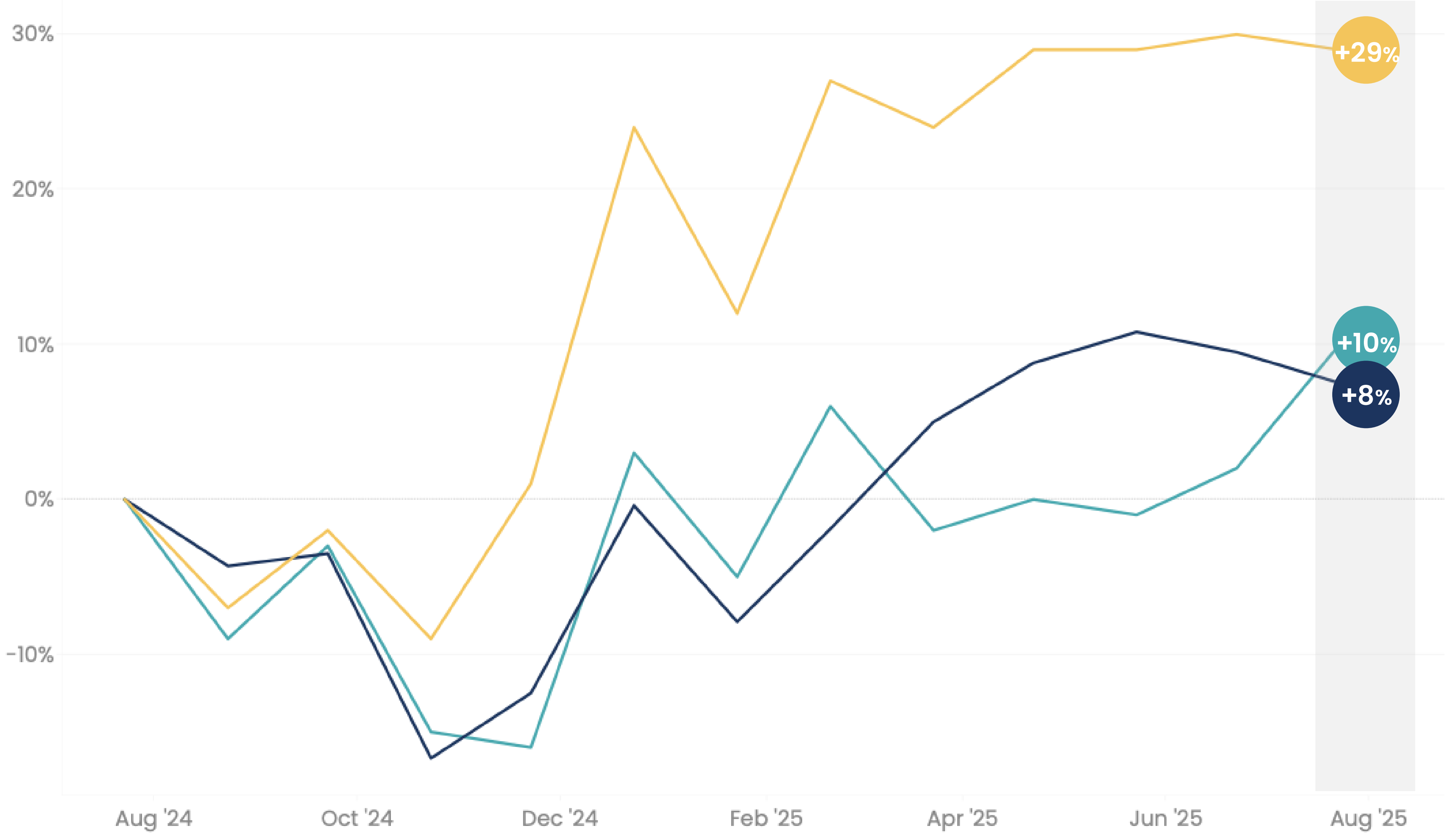
- **Demand is staying positive:** Healthcare continues to add jobs nationally, keeping hourly demand resilient even as other sectors cool.
- **Interest is outpacing hiring:** Applications have grown over three times more than hires (+29% vs. +8%), pointing to screening and interview bottlenecks rather than a sourcing problem.
- **The takeaway:** Rising openings (up 8% since July) alongside softer hiring signals a conversion gap — streamlining steps and locking in manager availability will be critical to turn interest into hires.

Since August 2024

29% Job applications

10% Job openings

8% Hires



HOURLY HEALTHCARE PLATFORM INDICATORS

Job openings, applications and hires
August 2024–August 2025

Late-stage losses, not no-shows, hamper healthcare hiring

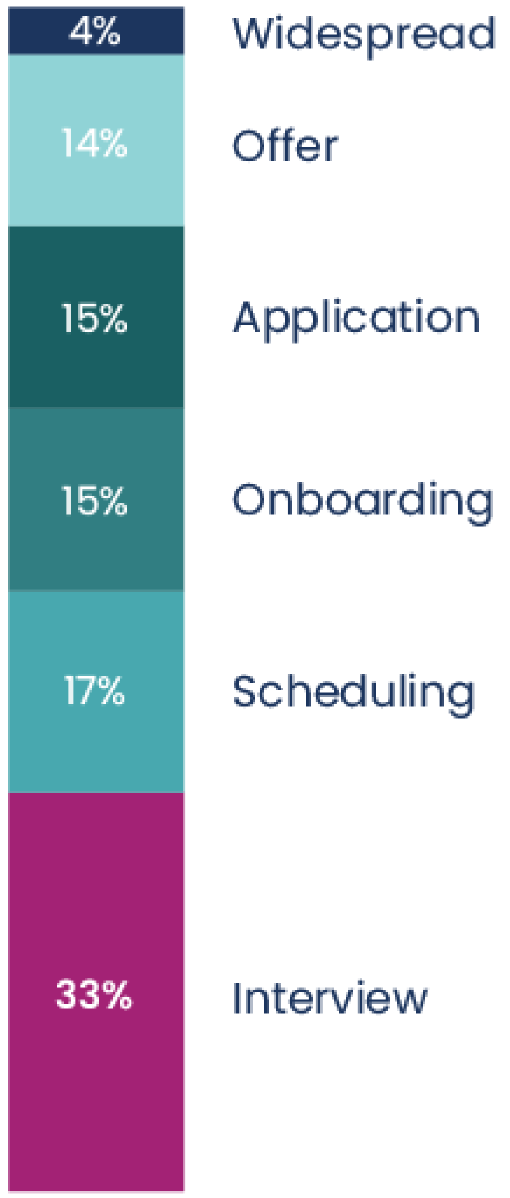
iCIMS Insights quick take:

With urgency highest in healthcare, most fallout happens after apply — at interview and offer — while true no-shows are uncommon and driven mainly by logistics.

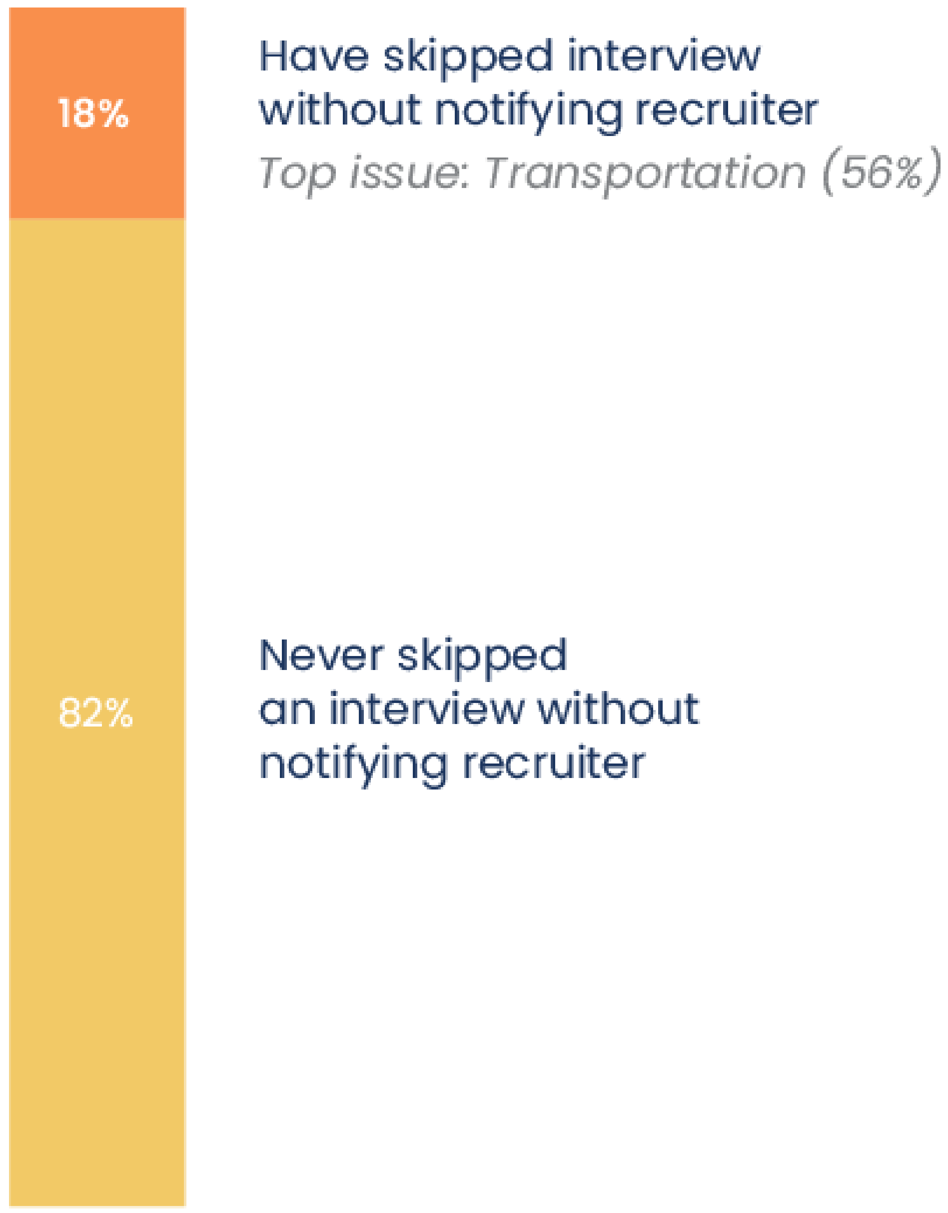
- **Urgency is leading the pack:** 96% of healthcare hiring managers say filling roles is urgent and that candidate quality (47%) is the top challenge.
- **Friction is building late:** Hiring managers report the biggest drop-off is at the interview (33%) and offer (14%) stages — the highest offer-stage loss of any sector in our survey. hiring managers put faster offer approvals (35%), AI resume screening and candidate matching (31%) and automated scheduling (30%) at the top of the list of ways to speed hiring.
- **Not a no-show story:** 82% of workers haven't missed an interview without notifying a recruiter. Among the 18% who have, transportation is the top reason (56%).

Healthcare: Losing candidates to process friction

Source:
[iCIMS 2025 State of Frontline Hiring]



Where candidates drop according to hiring managers



Worker interview no-show

Manufacturing applications rise, but hiring remains cautious

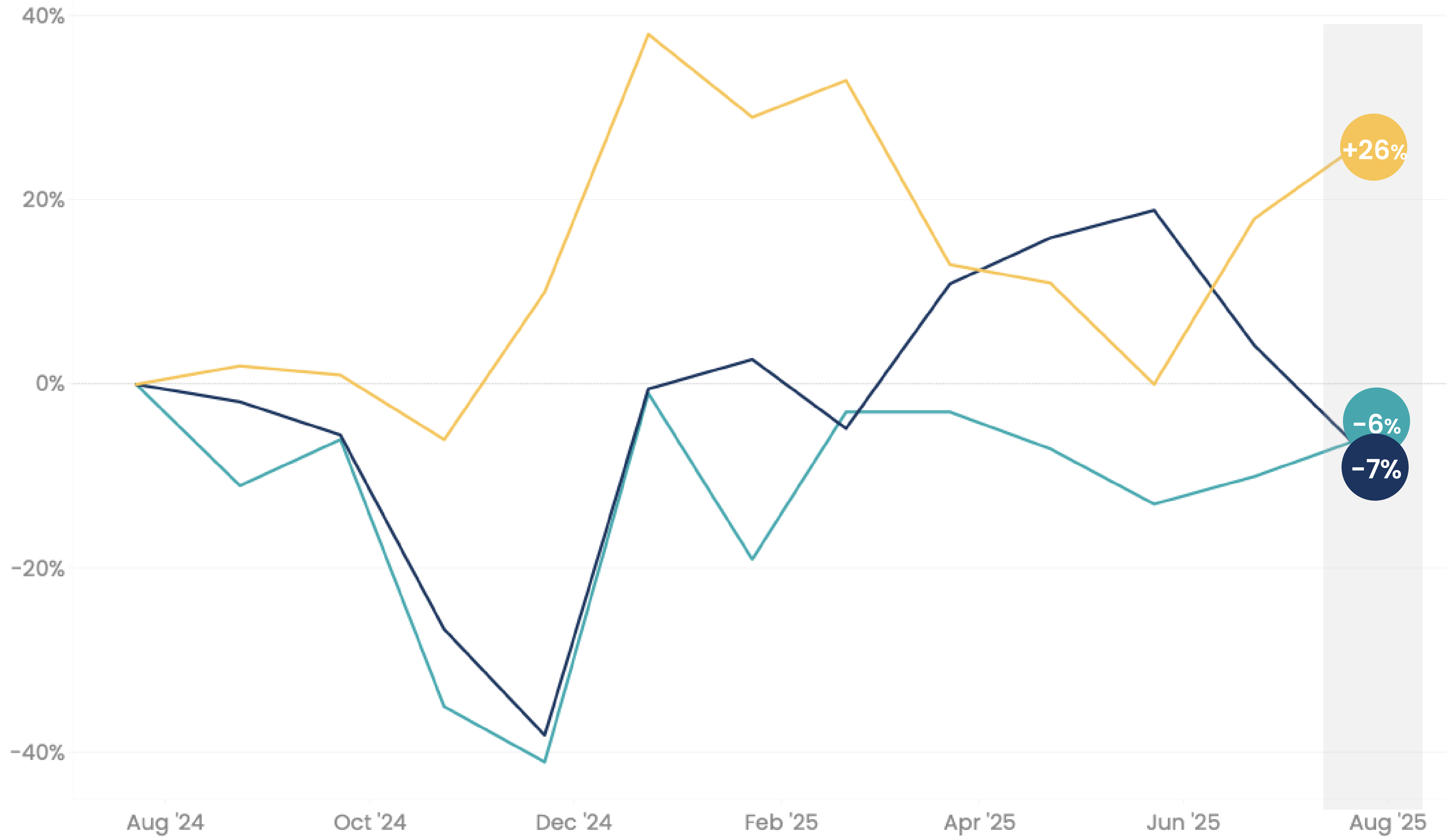
iCIMS Insights quick take:

Applications are climbing again after months of decline, but market uncertainty could be holding employers back.

- **Applicant rebound:** After trending down for much of the year, manufacturing applications jumped 26% since June, signaling renewed worker interest.
- **Hiring slides:** Despite the rebound, hires fell 11% month over month, suggesting employers are hesitant to commit.
- **The economy:** Economic pressure and uncertainty may be driving employers to delay decisions, keeping openings and hires muted even as candidates return.

Since August 2024

26% Job applications | **-6%** Job openings | **-7%** Hires



HOURLY MANUFACTURING PLATFORM INDICATORS

Job openings, applications and hires
August 2024–August 2025

Finding the right fit in manufacturing is hard for workers — and employers

iCIMS Insights quick take:

A disconnect is fueling frustration: managers cite poor candidate quality, while workers struggle to find roles that fit.

- **Candidate quality gap widens:** 74% of hiring managers say candidate quality is their biggest challenge and that AI tools (32%) would help them source top talent.
- **Workers feel mismatched:** Only 17% of frontline workers say they "always" find jobs that meet their needs. But when they do, manufacturing workers are most likely to accept a job within 48 hours of applying or interviewing for the role (77%).
- **Missed connections:** Employers and job seekers are talking past each other, indicating that clarity in job roles and requirements could help bridge the divide.

Manufacturing: Missed connections and lost opportunities

Source: iCIMS 2025 State of Frontline Hiring

TREND WATCH

With tariffs expected to prompt more domestic factory openings, demand for frontline manufacturing workers in the US may continue to increase. Employers need to be equipped with insights to secure and retain the talent they need as market dynamics shift.

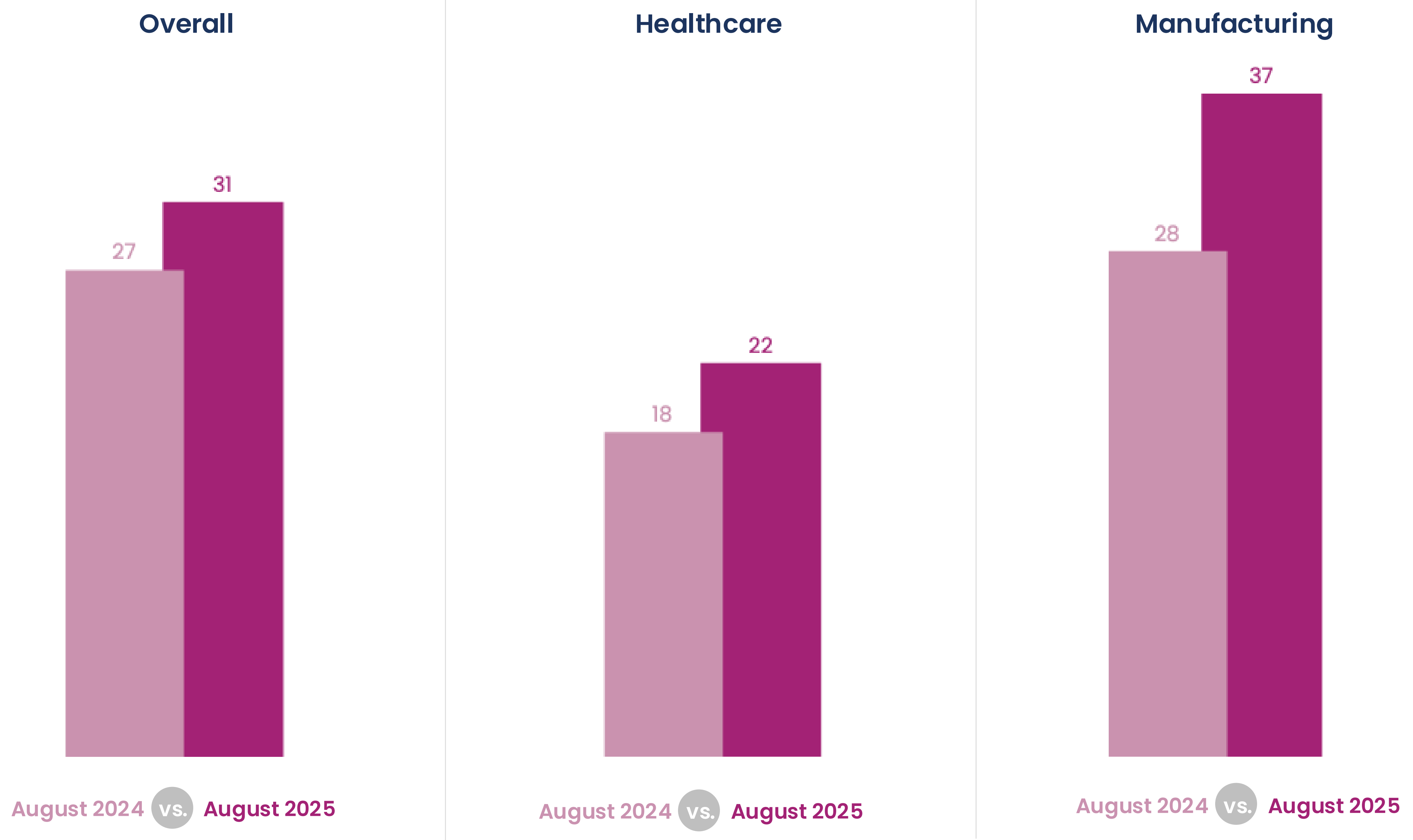
Applicants climb but hiring speed hasn't budged

iCIMS Insights quick take:

Applicants per opening (APO) is climbing across industries— but employers aren't moving faster to capture interest.

- **Applicant pool is swelling:** Manufacturing APO climbed from 28 to 37, healthcare from 18 to 22 and the market-wide hourly benchmark rose from 27 to 31 year over year.
- **Conversion is lagging:** Even with more candidates per opening, hiring activity has remained unchanged — time to fill is still stuck near 39 days. Could it be the influx of applicants that's stalling hiring decisions?
- **Implication for TA teams:** Rising applicant interest is an opportunity, but only if employers streamline processes and speed up decisions.

HOURLY WORKERS — APPLICANTS PER OPENING



HOURLY WORKERS TIME TO FILL

39 days on average year over year

FROM INSIGHTS TO IMPACT

Tailored takeaways for business, HR and talent leaders

Whether you lead people, run operations or shape strategy, use these data-backed insights to align teams, reduce friction and move faster on your goals.

FOR THE Talent Leaders

- **Adopt AI to streamline application and screening.** This will help reduce candidate drop-off and help ensure qualified talent isn't missed as high applicant volumes persist.
- **Reassess friction points in the application process.** Even when managers believe applying is easy, candidate drop-off suggests hidden barriers that need action — review and streamline each step for clarity and speed.

FOR THE CHROs

- **Empower managers with better tools.** Provide hiring teams with user-friendly technology, including AI solutions, to streamline applicant screening and reduce manual workload — especially as high volumes stress current processes.
- **Address process disconnects.** Gather ongoing feedback from recruiters and candidates to spot application pain points early, then adjust workflows and resources to help managers keep pace with rising applicant-to-opening ratios.

FOR THE CXOs

- **Give hiring managers the tools they need to move fast to hire top talent.** Friction is most often caused by a disconnect between need and speed.
- **Invest in AI for efficiency.** Automating early candidate evaluation tackles bottlenecks and helps ensure more qualified hires without sacrificing speed.

Want more great insights?

iCIMS 2025 State of the CHRO Report

The role of HR has never been more strategic. Learn how 1,000 CHROs and chief people officers are navigating the shift and how 500 CIOs see HR navigating TA tech in **iCIMS 2025 State of the CHRO Report**.

iCIMS Talent Experience Report

Explore what candidates want right now and how talent acquisition pros are delivering those experiences in our second annual **Talent Experience Report**.

Prompt AI like a pro

GenAI chatbots are a great tool to speed up day-to-day recruiting tasks. But to get the most out of AI, you need to learn the art of prompting. **Learn five tips** to prompt AI in a way that elicits helpful and useful responses in this tip sheet.

About iCIMS

iCIMS is a leading provider of talent acquisition technology that enables organizations everywhere to build winning workforces.

Visit www.icims.com to learn more.

Data Breakthrough Awards:
2025 Business Intelligence Solution Provider of the Year

Workforce data is vital to driving business forward.

iCIMS Insights provides data that is:

- Current
- Cross-industry
- Dual-focused on employer and job seeker intentions and activity

Data derived from:

- 3.3M+ global platform users
- 223M+ applications in 2024
- 630M+ candidate profiles
- 5.4M+ hires in 2024