



Half of US Companies Brace for a Turnover Surge in 2026 — and the Price Tag Just Hit \$45,236 Per Employee

Cost of turnover jumps nearly \$10K in one year as employers also expect to raise wages.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Jan. 28, 2026 — Hiring leaders across the country are sounding the alarm as half expect employee turnover to climb in 2026, marking a steep rise from recent years. A new Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey shows turnover expectations jumped from 39% in fall 2024 and 33% in fall 2023 to an eye-catching 50% in 2026.

The financial implications are also escalating.

The average cost of turnover has risen to \$45,236, up sharply from \$36,723 last year, signaling mounting pressures on companies already navigating a competitive labor landscape.

Larger organizations are expressing the most significant concern: 64% of companies with 500 or more employees expect turnover to rise, compared with significantly lower expectations among smaller businesses.

Drivers Behind the Expected Turnover

Among employers anticipating higher turnover in 2026:

- 37% point to increased workplace demands leading to more vacancies, up from 29% in fall 2024.
- 35% cite a competitive job market, rising from 23% last year.
- 32% attribute potential turnover to better pay and benefits offered elsewhere.
- 29% expect more employees to switch careers, an increase from 22% in fall 2024.

Wages Likely to Rise as Employers Respond



Despite concerns about turnover, most hiring managers report that wages are poised to increase. Seventy-five percent expect their company's average wage to rise in 2026, while 18% foresee no change.

Job seekers hold a slightly more reserved view:

- 46% expect wages to increase.
- 40% expect wages to stay the same.

[Payscale's 10th annual salary budget survey](#) shows U.S. employers plan to allocate an average 3.5% salary increase for 2026, which is nearly the same as the 3.6% average increase given in 2025.

"These findings reinforce something leaders have known intuitively for years — strong company culture isn't just good for people. It's good for business," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, President and Chairman of Express Employment International. "When employees feel supported and connected to a healthy work environment, turnover naturally declines. In a year when the cost of replacing a single employee continues to climb, culture has become one of the most financially sound investments any organization can make."

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 3 to 19, 2025, among 1,002 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 7 to 20, 2025, among 1,003 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

About Robert (Bob) Funk Jr.

Robert (Bob) Funk Jr. is the Chief Executive Officer, President and Chairman of Express Employment International, a global staffing franchisor founded and headquartered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He leads a portfolio of workforce solution brands, including the flagship Express Employment Professionals franchise, along with several affiliated brands

serving specialized markets. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, employing more than 11 million people globally since its inception. For more information, visit [ExpressPros.com](https://www.expresspros.com).