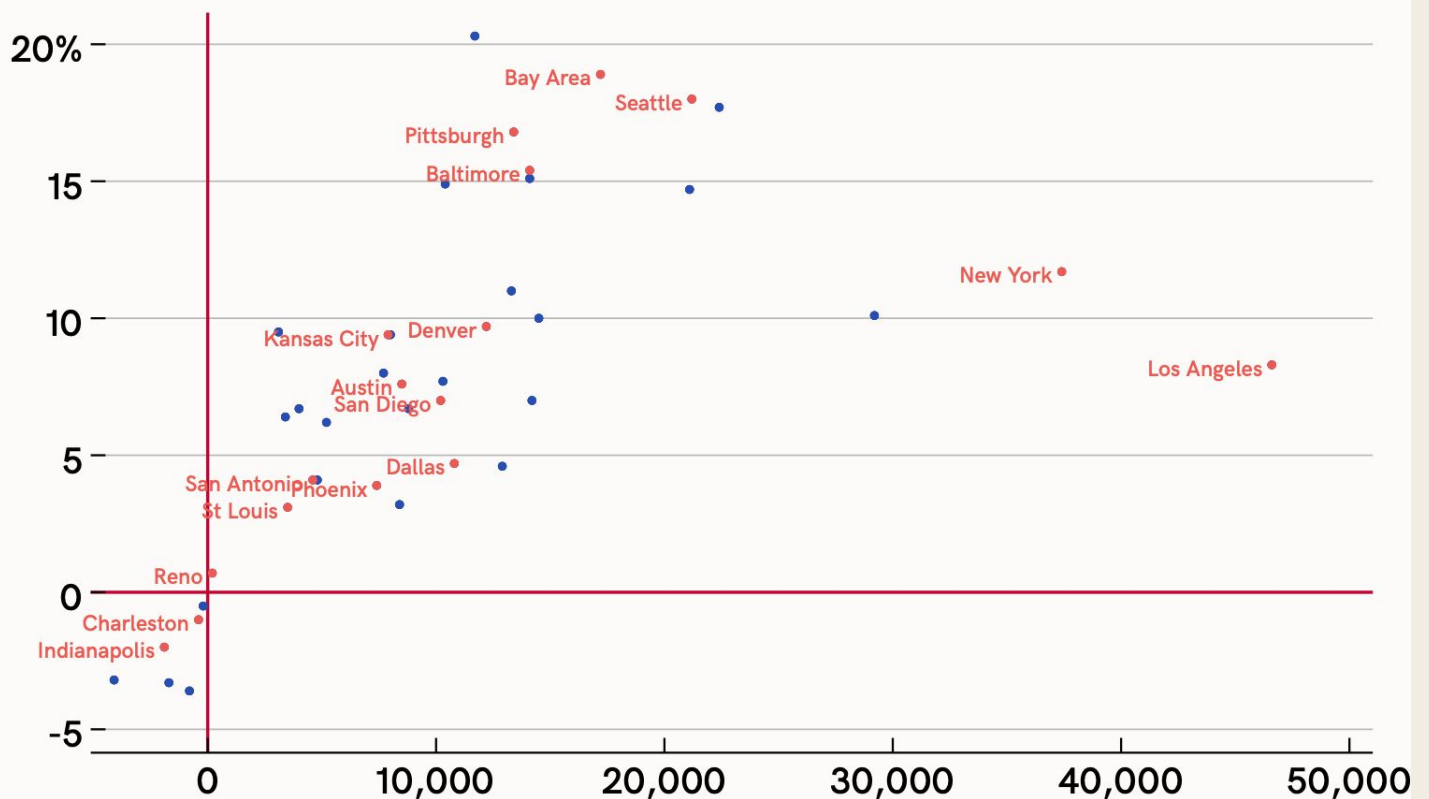


Where are labor shortfalls worst?

Restaurants still face labor shortfalls of up to 20% versus pre-pandemic trends

Gaps between trend employment and actual employment at food services and drinking places



Source: Instawork calculations from Bureau of Labor Statistics data

Though employment in hospitality has largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, a growing economy means labor shortfalls continue. Adjusted for inflation, spending on food services was 11% higher in 2023 than in 2019. So simply returning to pre-pandemic employment levels is not enough to meet demand, unless employees can be 11% more productive. The chart above shows how actual payrolls compare to payrolls predicted by pre-pandemic trends in the industry, with shortfalls measured in both absolute and percentage terms.

Labor shortfalls are still common around the nation but are particularly acute in coastal metro areas. The Bay Area and Seattle have two of the biggest gaps in percentage terms. Only a handful of markets, including Charleston, Indianapolis, and Reno, are back on the pre-pandemic trend.

Questions? Contact Instawork's Chief Economist, Daniel Altman, at press@instawork.com

Hourly pay rates for flexible labor

The rates below are averages of hourly rates paid to Instawork Pros for completed shifts in the 90 days prior to 1 April 2024. All the shifts were at businesses in accommodation and food services.

Metro area	Bartender	Server	Prep cook	Line cook	Dishwasher
Atlanta, GA	\$18.39	\$17.87	\$17.38	\$19.75	\$17.13
Austin, TX	20.29	22.04	19.00	21.27	18.11
Baltimore, MD	19.22	19.97	17.99	19.47	16.70
Bay Area, CA	27.94	26.97	22.33	27.58	21.66
Boston, MA	20.91	24.47	21.60	26.40	20.13
Charlotte, NC	19.30	17.93	15.96	18.14	16.20
Chicago, IL	21.89	22.99	18.96	21.03	18.32
Dallas, TX	18.27	20.81	18.48	20.22	18.28
Detroit, MI	18.82	18.64	17.12	19.67	17.01
Houston, TX	20.44	18.67	16.25	17.46	16.97
Inland Empire, CA	26.87	24.11	20.27	23.27	19.74
Kansas City, MO	20.27	18.32	16.90	18.62	15.81
Los Angeles, CA	26.12	23.95	21.97	25.30	20.15
Miami, FL	22.65	23.43	19.62	20.06	16.96
Milwaukee, WI	17.19	19.35	18.83	20.74	17.09
Nashville, TN	18.92	20.70	18.86	20.11	18.01
New York, NY	24.87	23.67	22.37	24.08	19.70
Philadelphia, PA	20.96	20.66	20.21	21.73	18.31
Pittsburgh, PA	17.79	17.51	15.99	19.85	15.21
Providence, RI	20.10	20.46	19.45	22.02	18.86
Sacramento, CA	19.93	21.54	20.61	30.29	25.77
San Antonio, TX	18.38	17.95	16.77	16.75	14.64
San Diego, CA	21.39	21.15	20.08	21.24	19.08
Seattle, WA	25.41	23.59	23.12	25.25	21.85
Tampa, FL	17.75	17.22	17.27	18.88	16.55
Washington, D.C.	22.70	20.97	21.13	23.25	18.72

[Source: Instawork transaction data](#)

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