

2026

State of Accounting and Finance





Industry Insights and Statistics

The profession is at an inflection point. The core fundamentals still matter, but the environment around them is changing quickly. Demand is moving toward professionals who can think strategically, work comfortably with technology, wrangle data, and collaborate across the business. Finance and accounting talent is no longer viewed only as compliance-focused; they are increasingly expected to act as business partners, data interpreters, and strategic advisors.

2025 Q3 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Accountants & Auditors	2.5%
Bookkeepers	4.5%
Financial Analyst	2.5%
Compliance Officers	2.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

2023-2033 JOB OUTLOOK

Accountants & Auditors	6.0%
Finance Managers	17.0%
Financial Analyst	9.0%

INDUSTRY KEY DRIVERS

- **Shift from Compliance to Advisory:** Finance is moving past backward-looking reporting. The real value now lies in professionals who can deliver forward-looking insights, shape strategy, and influence decision-making.
- **Automation and AI Speed Up:** By 2030, a large share of routine tasks (AP/AR, reconciliations, standard reporting) will be automated. Finance operations will increasingly rely on technology plus human oversight, driving demand for analytically strong, tech-savvy talent.
- **Persistent Talent Shortages:** With Baby Boomers retiring and fewer graduates choosing traditional accounting paths, the talent pool remains constrained. Companies will need to tap non-traditional profiles, invest in reskilling, and selectively outsource to cover key needs.
- **Ongoing Market Volatility:** Political and economic instability make short-term forecasting harder—but also more critical. Organizations that can plan and pivot quickly will have a clear edge.
- **Data Fluency Becomes Non-Negotiable:** The ability to work with complex data, support real-time decisions, and clearly communicate insights across functions is becoming a core requirement, not a nice-to-have.
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MOST IN-DEMAND ROLES

- Financial Analysts (especially in FP&A, forecasting, M&A)
- Controllers (with ERP and compliance expertise)
- Internal Auditors
- CFOs (with private equity and scaling experience)
- Staff Accountants/Senior Staff Accountants
- CPA (75% of CPA holders have reached retirement age)
- Accounts Payable (administrators, clerks, specialists)
- Accounts Receivable (administrators, clerks, specialists)



ROLES ON THE RISE

- Financial Systems Analysts/Financial Systems Managers (managing finance-side automation tools and integrations)
- Fractional CFOs/Controllers (flexible executive support for startups and mid-sized businesses)
- Field & Business Level Financial Analysts (Specialists in forecasting, financial predictability, and optimization to drive business performance and informed decision-making)

HIRING TRENDS

Employers in the accounting and finance sector are increasingly recognizing the value of soft skills in their teams, with 93% of hiring leaders citing them as essential in hiring decisions.

- Communication and Interpersonal Skills
- Critical Thinking
- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Emotional Intelligence and Empathy
- Continuous Learning and Professional Development

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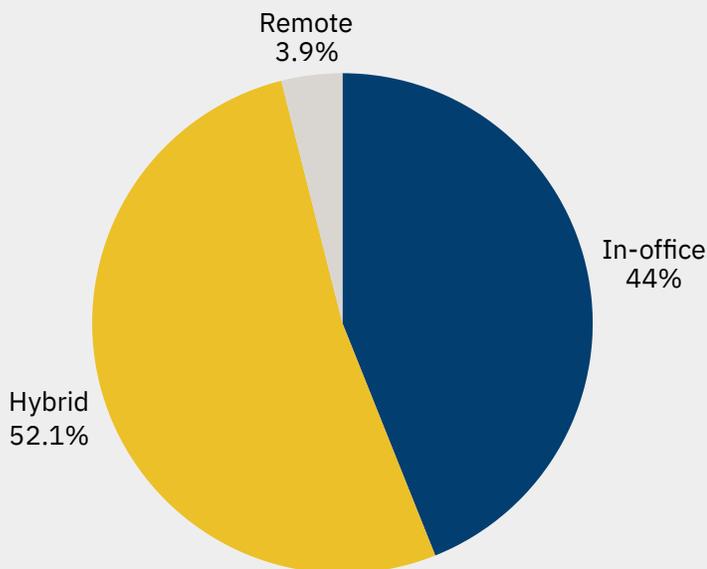


HIRING TRENDS

- **61%** of CFO and finance leaders plan to raise pay by at least **4%** in 2026, equal to 4% in 2025, down from **71%** in 2024 and **86%** in 2023.
- **76%** of CFO's report significant talent shortages within their F&A teams.
- Midsized firms in 2025 reported three main areas of concern: **54%** say retaining employees is their top challenge, **43%** point to keeping up with regulatory changes, and **38%** are focused on staying current with technology.

IMR Phoenix Job Listings by Work Arrangement

● In-office ● Hybrid ● Remote



➤ Flexibility and work life balance remains top of mind for jobseekers in 2025/2026

➤ Big Four Accounting Firms report a 3 day in-office model

➤ Accounting job offers on Glassdoor and LinkedIn: 27% Hybrid, 71% on-site, 2% Remote

➤ Consensus for Q1 2026 job creation points towards a cooling but stable labor market, continuing the "low-hire, low-fire" trend of late 2025

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IMPACT OF AI IN ACCOUNTING

The AI market in accounting is projected to grow from \$6.68 billion in 2025 to \$37.6 billion by 2030, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 41.27%.

AI in the Accounting Market

CAGR of 41.27%



➤ 56% of leaders believe AI will fundamentally change their business within the next year.

➤ 68% of leaders believe generative AI tools, like ChatGPT, could improve tax work.

➤ AI use in accounting is projected to expand by 30% each year between 2023 and 2028.

TASKS BEING AUTOMATED

- Invoice processing and routing
- Expense report approvals
- Bank reconciliation
- Variance analysis alerts
- Consolidation and close processes
- Basic tax filings and compliance alerts



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Integrated Management Resources

Our firm specializes in professional and executive search within the accounting, finance, sectors, with a focus on placing mid- to executive-level talent formerly of public accounting. Our associates bring deep, hands-on experience across a wide range of functional areas, along with specialized expertise in recruiting for these industries. Our 30+ years of experience combined with a local Phoenix presence makes us the preferred choice for hiring Accounting and Finance talent.

OUR SERVICES

Hiring the best talent is far too important to leave to guesswork. We specialize in connecting you with serious, highly qualified professionals, lowering the risk of bad hires and helping you build a team that actually moves the needle. With deep knowledge of the local market and a strong, established network, we're not just filling openings - we're helping you make the right hire the first time. Our consultative approach makes every addition to your team a strategic asset, positioning you for long-term success.

- **Executive Search:** Finding top-level talent for your C-suite and leadership positions.
- **Professional Search:** Sourcing highly skilled professionals for roles across finance and accounting.
- **Contract/Project-Based Work Search:** Flexible talent solutions for short-term or specialized projects.