



THE JOB MARKET TO 2035

Plenty of work, fewer ways in

How the job market could change over the next ten years. Ten people of different ages, jobs and countries show what the change means for workers. Their stories cover who loses work first and how long the search takes. They also cover what the next job pays and which retraining pays off.

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Abstract

Background. Official projections have paid work growing to 2035 in the United States and the EU^{34,118}. The first measured effect of AI is on hiring. Employment of US workers aged 22 to 25 in highly AI-exposed jobs is about 19% below trend². Experienced workers in the same jobs show no comparable gap².

Approach. Ten people, each standing for a group of workers in the US, Germany or Romania, are followed from 2026 to 2030 and into three scenarios for 2035^{S6}. Their paths apply published figures on job loss, time out of work, pay in the next job and the measured results of retraining. Steps no source states, such as the year a person is laid off, are marked S and listed as speculation.

Findings. Beginners and clerks meet the change first. Half of unemployed Americans had been looking for 2.6 months or more in August 2026⁶. Only 49% of long-tenured laid-off workers re-employed full time earned as much as before³¹. Home care jobs grow fastest, 18% to 2035⁵¹. The median aide earns about \$2,980 a month before tax, about 70% of the national median wage^{56,62}. Retraining aimed at specific sectors pays: in randomized trials it raised earnings by 11 to 40%⁹. Licensed professions are predicted to keep their headcount to 2030, with low confidence^{S18}. No source found in this research names AI as the cause of Germany's factory job losses¹¹⁰.

Scope. Figures are as published by 23 September 2026 and cover the US and the EU, with Germany and Romania in detail. Exposure to AI measures how much of a job's tasks the tools overlap with and does not forecast job losses³. The three scenarios show how the evidence could play out; none is a forecast.

Milestones to 2035

2026 ●	2027 ●	2028 ●	2029 ●	2030 ●	2035 ●
MEASURED Employment of US workers aged 22 to 25 in highly AI-exposed jobs: about 19% below trend in June ²	RULE Germany's short-time work allowance runs for at most 12 months from 1 January, down from 24 ¹¹¹	COMPANY PLAN Deliveries begin under Romania's EUR 5.7 billion Rheinmetall order, expected to create thousands of jobs, over half of production in Romania ²²	STRAIGHT LINE The employment gap for US workers aged 22 to 25 in exposed jobs passes 30% around March, from two differently measured readings ²⁹	PROJECTION, CEDEFOP Romanian manufacturing employment growing 2.3% a year since 2023 ²⁷	PROJECTION, BLS 5.9 million more US jobs than in 2025, a 3.5% rise in total US employment ³⁴
MEASURED The best AI agent completes 15.8% of the paid freelance projects in the Remote Labor Index, July ⁴⁸		STRAIGHT LINE The best AI agent passes 50% of those projects around March, if the 2025 to 2026 trend holds ⁴⁹		PRO-RATED About 380,000 fewer US office and administrative support jobs than in 2025 ³⁵	PROJECTION, CEDEFOP EU-27 employment over 4% above its 2023 level ¹¹⁸
				PRO-RATED About 8.6% more US home health and personal care aide jobs than in 2025 ⁵⁸	PROJECTION, BLS 847,300 more US home care aide jobs, up 18%; 752,100 fewer office support jobs, down 4.0% ^{34,51}
				PREDICTION, LOW CONFIDENCE Licensed professions keep their headcount while their tasks change ^{S18}	PROJECTION, BLS US jobs for software developers up 10%, truck drivers up 4%, customer service reps down 5% ^{32,74,106}

Key takeaways and contents

	Ten people, 2026 to 2035, and three futures	p. 4
1	Young people find it harder to get a first job in work exposed to AI Employment of US 22 to 25 year olds in highly AI-exposed jobs is about 19% below the pace of their peers in less-exposed jobs. Experienced workers show no comparable gap. ²	p. 5
2	Office jobs are shrinking, and many laid-off workers earn less in their next job US office support jobs are projected to shrink 4.0% by 2035. In 2026, 49% of workers laid off after three or more years earned as much in a new full-time job. ^{31,34}	p. 11
3	US home care jobs are projected to grow, but the typical aide earns about \$2,980 a month US home care aide jobs are projected to grow 18% by 2035. The median aide earns about \$2,980 a month before tax, against about \$4,250 for the median US worker. ^{51,56,61}	p. 16
4	Companies hire fewer junior software developers, while experienced staff hold steady Employment of US software developers aged 22 to 25 fell nearly 20% from its late-2022 peak. Experienced workers in highly AI-exposed jobs show no comparable gap. ^{2,5}	p. 20
5	Freelance illustrators and writers are losing income to AI On Upwork, image freelancers lost 9.4% of their income after image generators arrived. Writing freelancers lost 5.2% of their monthly earnings after ChatGPT. ⁸⁴	p. 25
6	In-house lawyers are the fastest-growing part of Germany's legal profession In Germany, lawyers admitted only as in-house counsel rose 11.45% in the year to January 2025. Lawyers with a standard single admission fell 0.63%. ⁹⁶	p. 29
7	Robots take over warehouse work, and German car plants cut jobs for reasons not traced to AI Packages per Amazon employee rose about 22-fold in a decade. German car-industry jobs fell 6.3% in a year, and one search in this research found no source blaming AI. ^{100,102,110}	p. 32
	Conclusions: Official forecasts show more jobs in 2035, but a first job may get harder to find BLS projects 5.9 million more US jobs by 2035. Yet employment of US workers aged 22 to 25 in highly AI-exposed jobs was about 19% below trend in June 2026. ^{2,34}	p. 37
	Sources and speculation	p. 45

Ten people from 2026 to 2035

The ten people below are invented. Each one stands for a large group of workers. Their stories follow the published figures for that group. The dates and choices in them are illustrations, marked S.



Ten people, 2026 to 2035. Young people and clerks meet the change first. Care work holds. New defense orders open factory work in Romania. Licensed work is predicted to hold, with low confidence. Europe loses factory jobs, and no source found in this research names AI as the cause. Dated events are suppositions. Sources: [2, 22, 34, 51, 102, 110, S1, S10, S11, S12, S13, S15, S16, S18, S19, S20, S21, S3, S4, S5, S8, S9](#)

Jake, 23. Graduate, Columbus, Ohio. Finished a business degree in 2026 and wants an analyst job with a desk, a salary and a future. Afraid of spending his twenties in jobs that never needed the degree he is still paying for.

Andreea, 21. Small town near Mediaș, Romania. Left school after the baccalaureate and has found neither work nor a course that leads to any. Wants to earn her own money without leaving home. Afraid there is nothing for her here.

Denise, 44. Customer service, Louisville, Kentucky. Eleven years on the phones for an insurer, a son in community college, a mortgage. Good at calming angry people. Afraid of starting over at her age.

Thomas, 41. Accounts clerk, Leipzig. Books invoices and reconciles payments for a mid-sized wholesaler. Careful, reliable, the person colleagues ask. Has watched software take over a little more of his week every year.

Rosa, 52. Home health aide, Arizona. Visits five older clients a day to help them wash, dress and eat. Never short of work. Always short of money, and her back is starting to tell her about the lifting.

Radu, 34. Software developer, Bucharest. Leads a team building software for foreign clients. Uses AI tools every day and still reviews every line. Wonders who will replace him when nobody is hiring the juniors he once was.

Katrin, 47. Lawyer, Kassel. The one employed lawyer in a small practice handling tenancy and dismissal cases. Loves the courtroom days. Afraid the practice will close when its owner retires.

Léa, 31. Illustrator and copywriter, Berlin. Freelance for eight years, living on commissions from agencies and small brands. Loves the work. Watches clients try AI images first and call her second.

Jürgen, 57. Auto-parts plant, near Stuttgart. Has worked the same line for twenty years and knows every machine on it. Wants to reach retirement in the job he knows. The plant has cut his hours.

Marcus, 36. Warehouse worker, Indiana. Picks and packs in a fulfillment center where robots now move the shelves. Wants a job with better pay and fewer night shifts. Has been looking at truck-driving courses.

Three futures for 2035

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows.

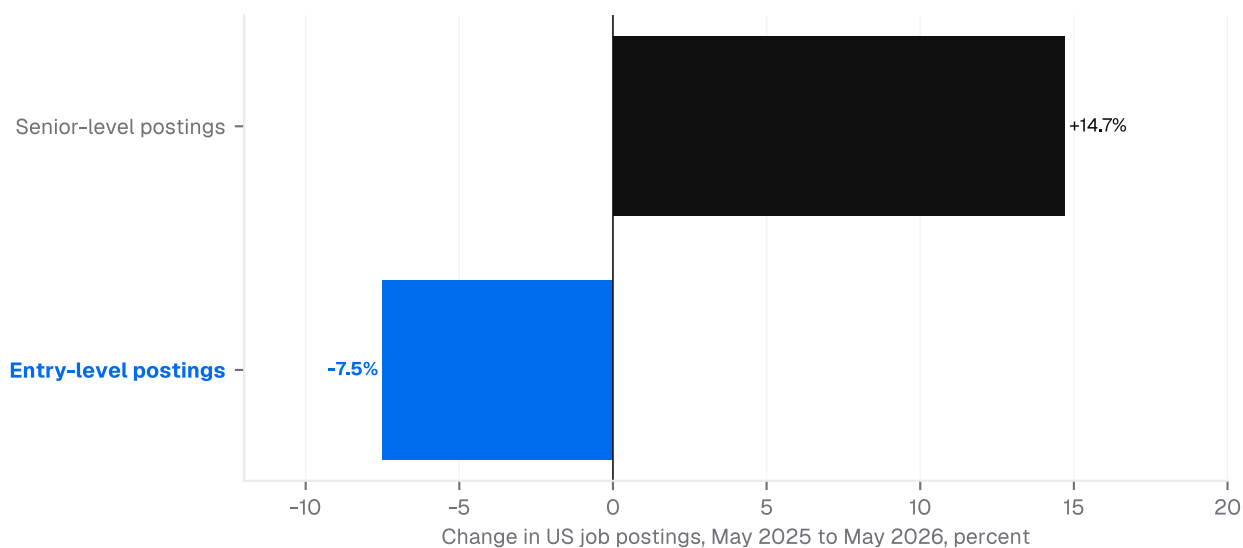
Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. ^{S6}

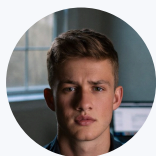


Young people find it harder to get a first job in work exposed to AI

In the US, employment of 22 to 25 year olds in highly AI-exposed jobs is about 19% below the pace of their peers in less-exposed jobs. Experienced workers in the same jobs show no such gap. In Romania, 19.2% of 15 to 29 year olds neither work nor study, the highest share in the EU. Romanian firms also use AI less than firms anywhere else in the EU.



In the year to May 2026, US senior-level job postings on Indeed rose 14.7% while entry-level postings fell 7.5%.¹



Jake, 23. A 2026 business graduate back in his parents' house outside Columbus, Ohio, afraid of spending his twenties in jobs that never needed his degree.



Andreea, 21. Left school after the baccalaureate in a small town near Mediaș, has found neither work nor a course, and fears there is nothing for her here.

19%

lower employment for US 22 to 25 year olds in highly AI-exposed jobs than if it had kept pace with young workers in less-exposed jobs²

24%

of jobs worldwide have some exposure to generative AI; in high-income countries, one in three³

19.2%

of Romanians aged 15 to 29 neither working nor studying in 2025, the EU's highest; EU average 11.0%, lowest the Netherlands at 5.3%⁴

1. Indeed Hiring Lab, "The labor market is tilting toward seniority" (2026-07-23). <https://hiringlab.indeed.com/2026/07/23/the-labor-market-is-tilting-toward-seniority/>

2. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update" (2026-08-12). <https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/canariesaug26/>

3. International Labour Organization, "Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure (Working Paper 140)" (2025-05). https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/WP140_web.pdf

4. Eurostat, "Young people neither in employment nor in education or training, 2025" (2026-05-28). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260528-2>

Employers ask for experience and post fewer beginner jobs

2026

Jake's degree certificate is still in its cardboard tube. Every morning he opens the job sites and filters for "entry level." The list is shorter than it was when he started his final year.

The postings bear him out. On Indeed, US entry-level job postings in May 2026 were down 7.5% from a year earlier, while senior-level postings were up 14.7%¹. That split is new. Entry, mid and senior postings moved together from 2019 until early 2026. Then senior postings rose sharply¹.

The gap is widest for the young, in the jobs most exposed to AI

Exposure to AI is common. One in four jobs worldwide (24%) has some exposure to generative AI, and one in three in high-income countries³.

The clearest measure of what that exposure does to beginners comes from payroll records. Researchers at the Stanford Digital Economy Lab compare young workers in highly AI-exposed occupations with young workers in less-exposed ones. By June 2026, employment of 22 to 25 year olds in the highly exposed jobs was about 19% below where it would be had it kept pace with the less-exposed group². Experienced workers in those same jobs show no comparable gap².

The gap was already visible nine months earlier. A September 2025 reading, measured a different way, found a 16% relative decline in employment for the youngest workers in the most exposed jobs⁵.

Jake searches for about two and a half to six months^{S1}. That puts him between two US figures for August 2026: the median spell of unemployment in progress, about 2.6 months, and the mean, about 6.1^{6,7}. The job he takes does not need his degree^{S2}. He has plenty of company: 42% of recent US college graduates were underemployed in the second quarter of 2026, in work that does not require a degree⁸.

2027

A year on, Jake signs up for a sectoral training program^{S3}. Such programs train people for jobs in specific industries where local demand is strong. In randomized trials of several of them, earnings rose 11 to 40% after training ended⁹. At Per Scholas, one WorkAdvance provider, earnings in the seventh year were still 14% above the control group's¹⁰.

1. Indeed Hiring Lab, "The labor market is tilting toward seniority" (2026-07-23). <https://hiringlab.indeed.com/2026/07/23/the-labor-market-is-tilting-toward-seniority/>

3. International Labour Organization, "Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure (Working Paper 140)" (2025-05). https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/WP140_web.pdf

2. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update" (2026-08-12). <https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/canariesaug26/>

5. Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence" (2025-11-13). https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/app/uploads/2025/11/CanariesintheCoalMine_Nov25.pdf

S1. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jake searches for about two and a half to six months after graduating in 2026, between the US median and mean spell of unemployment in progress. Extends Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS.

6. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [120]: The median US spell of unemployment in progress was about 2.6 months in August 2026.

7. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [121]: The mean US spell of unemployment in progress was about 6.1 months in August 2026.

S2. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jake's first job does not require his degree. Extends Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

8. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, "The Labor Market for Recent College Graduates" (2026 (Q2 data)). <https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market>

S3. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jake enters a sectoral training programme in 2027. Extends Economic Mobility Corporation (Roder, Elliott), MDRC, NBER (Katz, Roth, Hendra, Schaberg).

9. NBER (Katz, Roth, Hendra, Schaberg), "Why Do Sectoral Employment Programs Work? NBER w28248" (2020-12). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w28248>

10. MDRC, "Employment and Earnings Effects of the WorkAdvance Demonstration After Seven Years" (2022-03). <https://www.mdrc.org/work/publications/employment-and-earnings-effects-workadvance-demonstration-after-seven-years>

The payoff can start with a loss. Year Up participants earned \$5,338 less than the control group in the year after they enrolled¹¹. Jake's target is a market research analyst post, where US median pay was \$78,760 in May 2025¹².

In Romania, one young person in five is out of work and school, in the EU country where firms use AI least

2026

Andreea's town, near Mediaş in Sibiu County, has a bus to the county seat twice a day. Most of her classmates have left. The ones who stayed help out at home or wait for seasonal work.

No country in the EU has a higher share of young people neither in work nor in education or training. In 2025, 19.2% of Romanians aged 15 to 29 were in neither⁴. The share was 11.0% across the union⁴ and 5.3% in the Netherlands, the lowest⁴.

Only 5.21% of Romanian firms with ten or more staff used AI in 2025, the lowest share in the EU, against 19.95% of firms across the union¹³.

The share of young people out of work and school is lowest in cities, at 7.2% of 15 to 29 year olds¹⁴. It is highest in rural areas, at 27.7%¹⁴. A young person in the countryside is about 3.8 times as likely to be out of both as one in a city¹⁵.

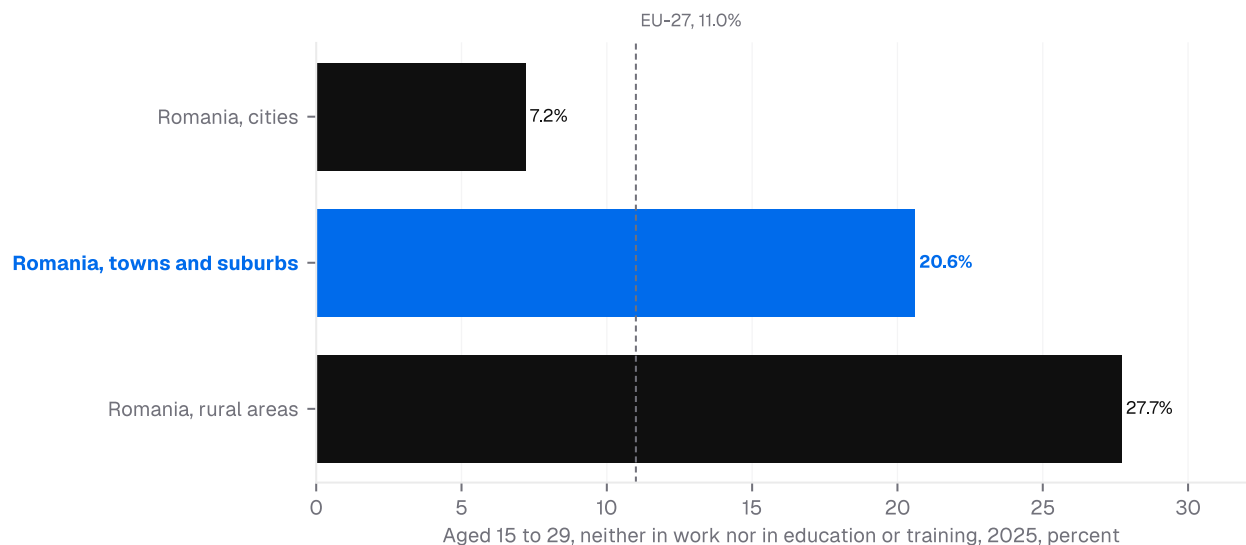


Exhibit 1.2. In Romania's towns and suburbs, 20.6% of young people are neither working nor studying, far above the city rate and the EU's 11.0%. People aged 15 to 29 not in employment, education or training, by degree of urbanization, Romania and EU-27, 2025. Sources: ^{4,14}

11. Policy Impacts Library (secondary), "Year Up (summary of Fein and Hamadyk 2018)" (accessed 2026-09-23). <https://policyimpacts.org/policy-impacts-library/year-up/>

12. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Market Research Analysts" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/market-research-analysts.htm>

4. Eurostat, "Young people neither in employment nor in education or training, 2025" (2026-05-28). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260528-2>

13. Eurostat, "Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises (Statistics Explained)" (2025-12). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Use_of_artificial_intelligence_in_enterprises

14. Eurostat, "Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by degree of urbanisation (edat_ifse_29)" (2026). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat_ifse_29/default/table?lang=en

15. Computed from Eurostat [14]: Romania's rural NEET rate was about 3.8 times the city rate in 2025.

Support is thin. A school leaver who qualifies for unemployment support receives about 330 lei a month for six months¹⁶. The gross minimum wage is 4,325 lei a month from July 2026¹⁷. The national employment agency, ANOFM, runs training courses. People under 25 made up only 12.1% of the unemployed it trained in 2024¹⁸.

Leaving is the familiar route. On 1 January 2024, 1.07 million Romanian citizens lived in Italy, about 776,000 in Germany and 620,000 in Spain¹⁹. Two of Andreea's cousins are among them, and each call ends with the same question about when she will join them.

A defense order brings factory work within reach of home

2027

Andreea decides to stay. ANOFM's qualification and requalification courses are free for the unemployed²⁰. At one of its regional training centers, a level-3 course lasts 720 hours, and welding is among the courses offered²¹. In 2027 she registers with the agency and completes the course as a welder^{S4}. For most of a year she takes the early bus, and the smell of hot metal follows her home.

2028

In 2028 Rheinmetall Automecanica in Medias hires her as a welder^{S5}. The company is Rheinmetall's Romanian subsidiary, based in the town²². Romania has placed a €5.7 billion order with Rheinmetall for Lynx combat vehicles, vessels and air defense systems. Rheinmetall expects the order to create thousands of new jobs²². Deliveries are scheduled from 2028 to 2030²², and over 50% of the production is to take place in Romania or with local companies²². Hanwha Aerospace projects that its own defense investment in Romania will support more than 9,400 direct and indirect jobs²³.

These are company plans, announced in June 2026. Weeks earlier, a press report said Rheinmetall had asked to lower the share of production planned for Romania²⁴. The buyer, the Romanian state, ran the EU's largest government deficit in 2025, 7.9% of GDP²⁵.

16. Computed from Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale [122], ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency) [123]: Romania's unemployment indemnity for school leavers is about 330 lei a month for 6 months.

17. StartupCafe.ro (press, citing HG 146/2026), "Salariul minim brut crește de la 1 iulie 2026 la 4.325 lei" (2026). <https://startupcafe.ro/salariul-minim-brut-creste-de-la-1-iulie-2026-la-4-325-lei-cat-va-fi-netul-si-ce-cost-total-vor-suporta-firmele-creste-si-punctul-de-amenda-101690>

18. ANOFM, "Raport de activitate al ANOFM pentru anul 2024" (2025). <https://www.anofm.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Raport-de-activitate-al-ANOFM-pentru-anul-2024.pdf>

19. Eurostat, "Population on 1 January by citizenship (migr_pop1ctz)" (2026). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_pop1ctz/default/table?lang=en

20. ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency), "Programe de formare profesionala pentru persoanele aflate in cautarea unui loc de munca" (n.d.). <https://www.anofm.ro/programe-de-formare-profesionala-pentru-persoanele-aflate-in-cautarea-unui-loc-de-munca/>

21. ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency), "Programe de formare profesionala autorizate, CRFPA Dolj" (n.d.). <https://www.anofm.ro/crfpa-dolj/programe-de-formare-profesionala-autorizate/>

S4. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Andreea registers with the employment agency in 2027 and completes a free 720-hour qualification course as a welder. Extends ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency).

S5. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Andreea is hired as a welder at Rheinmetall Automecanica in Medias in 2028, as work on Romania's Lynx order ramps up. Extends Rheinmetall AG (company press release).

22. Rheinmetall AG (company press release), "Major historic international contract for Rheinmetall: Romania orders Lynx combat vehicles, vessels and air defence systems worth a total of EUR 5.7 billion" (2026-06-02). <https://www.rheinmetall.com/en/media/news-watch/news/2026/06/2026-06-02-major-historic-contract-in-romania-worth-5-7-billion>

23. Defence Industry Europe (press), "Hanwha Aerospace plans 1.3 billion euro investment to expand defence production and technology transfer in Romania" (2026). <https://defence-industry.eu/hanwha-aerospace-plans-e1-3-billion-investment-to-expand-defence-production-and-technology-transfer-in-romania/>

24. Defence Industry Europe (press), "Romania SAFE programme: billions to boost Western defence giants amid marginal domestic industry participation" (2026-05-15). <https://defence-industry.eu/romania-safe-programme-billions-to-boost-western-defence-giants-amid-marginal-domestic-industry-participation/>

25. Eurostat, "Euro area and EU government deficit and debt, 2025" (2026-04-22). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-euro-indicators/w/2-22042026-ap>

The industry she joins is shrinking and expected to grow. Romanian manufacturing lost 17,500 employees in 2025, the largest fall of any activity²⁶. Even so, Cedefop projects manufacturing employment in Romania to grow 2.3% a year over 2023 to 2030²⁷. Average net pay in Romanian manufacturing was 5,161 lei a month in March 2025²⁸. With her first wages Andreea pays her share of the household bills, and she stops answering her cousins' question.

Three futures for Jake and Andreea

Where Jake and Andreea stand in 2035 depends on which of three futures unfolds. Each is a way things could go, and none is a forecast.

26. Agerpres (citing INS), "Castigul salarial mediu net la nivel national a crescut anul trecut cu 307 lei, la 5.266 lei" (2026-09-25). <https://agerpres.ro/economic/2026/09/25/castigul-salarial-mediu-net-la-nivel-national-a-crescut-anul-trecut-cu-307-lei-la-5-266-lei-statisti-1596928>

27. Cedefop, "2025 skills forecast: Romania" (2025). https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/skills_forecast_-_romania_2025.pdf

28. Ziarul Financiar (press, citing INS), "Industria prelucratoare a atins in martie 2025 o borna simbolica: salariul mediu net a depasit pentru prima data 1.000 de euro" (2025-05-26). <https://www.zf.ro/companii/industria-prelucratoare-atins-martie-2025-born-simbolica-salariul-22817085>

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows^{S6}. Jake's training pays off, and he moves from his first job into analyst work^{S7}. Andreea is still welding at Mediaş^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs^{S6}. Jake is one of them and reaches analyst work through his current employer, a few years behind his plan^{S7}. The plant keeps its skilled welders after the 2028 to 2030 deliveries as manufacturing grows, and Andreea stays^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back^{S6}. A straight line through two differently measured readings would carry the young workers' employment gap past 30% around March 2029²⁹. A line through two points forecasts nothing. Canadian graduates who started work in a recession saw lower earnings for ten years³⁰. Jake stays in work that does not need his degree, and his pay trails for years^{S7}. The recession and a tighter state budget squeeze orders once deliveries end in 2030, and Andreea's job depends on new orders^{S7}.

If you are starting out

Employers are asking for experience. In the US, senior job postings rose 14.7% in a year while entry-level postings fell 7.5%¹.

Training built around local industries has a measured payoff. Sectoral programs raised earnings by 11 to 40% after training in randomized trials⁹.

Budget for a lean first year. Year Up participants earned \$5,338 less than the control group in the year after they enrolled¹¹.

In Romania, the odds depend on where you live. Young people in rural areas are about 3.8 times as likely as those in cities to be out of work and school¹⁵.

A trade course costs nothing but time. In Romania, the employment agency's qualification courses are free for the unemployed²⁰. At one of its regional centers a level-3 course runs 720 hours²¹.

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

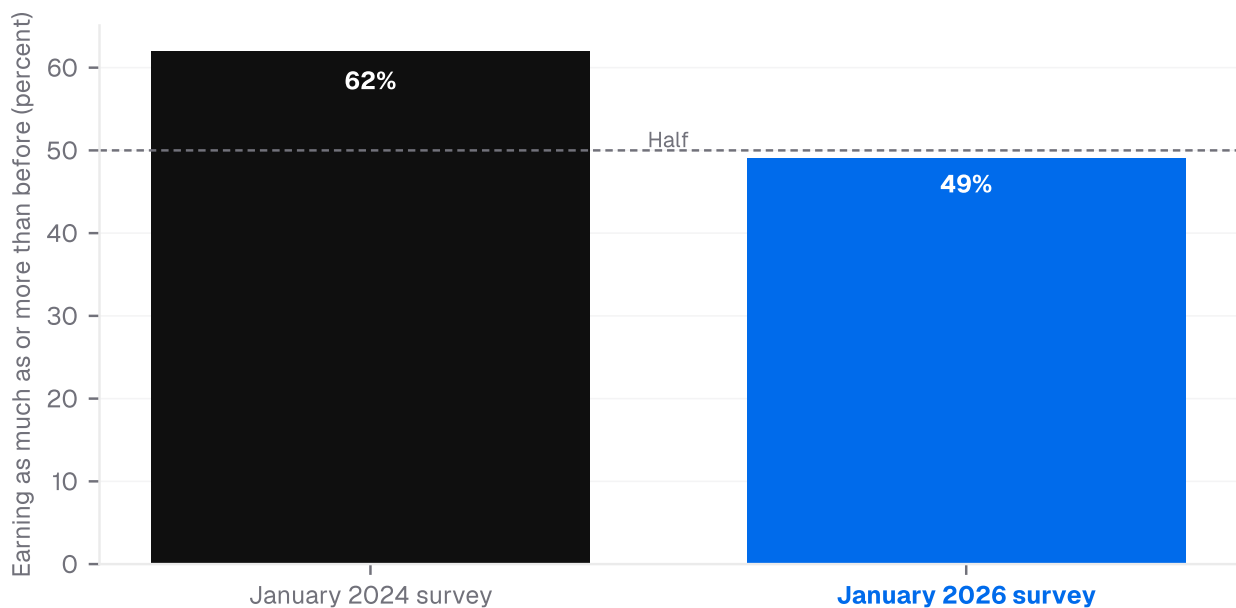
29. Computed from Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen) [5], Stanford Digital Economy Lab [2]: On a straight line through two differently measured readings, the US entry gap for workers aged 22 to 25 in exposed occupations passes 30% around March 2029.

30. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics (Oreopoulos, von Wachter, Heisz), "The Short- and Long-Term Career Effects of Graduating in a Recession" (2012-01). <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257%2Fapp.4.11>



Office jobs are shrinking, and many laid-off workers earn less in their next job

US office support and customer service jobs are projected to shrink by 2035. In a 2026 US survey, 49% of workers laid off after three or more years who found full-time work earned as much as before. In 2024 the share was 62%.



In the US government's January 2026 survey, fewer than half of Americans laid off after three or more years in a full-time job, who found new full-time work, earned as much as before. In 2024 the share was 62%.³¹



Denise, 44. Customer-service representative for an insurer in Louisville, Kentucky, eleven years on the phones. She wants to see her son through community college and dreads starting again at the bottom.



Thomas, 41. Accounts clerk in the back office of a mid-sized wholesaler in Leipzig, Germany. Careful and reliable, the person colleagues ask. He worries that what he does well is what software does best.

49%

of long-tenured laid-off Americans re-employed full time kept their pay, 2026³¹

-5%

projected change in US customer-service jobs, 2025 to 2035³²

60%

of previous net pay, German unemployment benefit³³

31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Displaced Workers Summary (January 2026 supplement)" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disp.nr0.htm>

32. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Customer Service Representatives" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/customer-service-representatives.htm>

33. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer" (2026). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/arbeitslos-arbeit-finden/arbeitslosengeld/finanzielle-hilfen/arbeitslosengeld-anspruch-hoehe-dauer>

Clerical work is the most exposed to AI, and US projections have it shrinking

2026

At five to eight, Denise logs in and puts on her headset. The first caller wants to know why a claim was turned down. She finds the reason in four minutes, explains it twice, and types a note. Her supervisor has started mentioning a new system.

Customer service representatives in the US earn a median of \$44,770 a year³². The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the number of these jobs to fall 5% between 2025 and 2035³². Employment in office and administrative support as a whole is projected to shrink 4.0% over the same decade, the fastest decline of any major group of jobs³⁴. At a steady pace, that is about 380,000 fewer office jobs by 2030³⁵.

The International Labour Organization ranks clerical work as the most exposed to generative AI, meaning more of its tasks overlap with what the tools can already do³. Exposure measures that overlap. It does not forecast job losses. Women carry more of it. Worldwide, 4.7% of women's jobs sit in the highest exposure band, against 2.4% of men's³.

In Leipzig, Thomas matches invoices to payments. Since spring, a program proposes each match and he clicks to approve it. Most days he approves nearly all of them.

Across the EU, 19.95% of firms with ten or more staff used AI in 2025¹³. In Romania 5.21% of such firms did, the lowest in the EU and about a quarter of the EU level^{13,36}. A clerk doing Thomas's job in Iași, in eastern Romania, works where the tools are far rarer.

Seven in ten laid-off sales and office workers find work again

2027

Denise's team is cut in 2027^{S8}. The meeting takes twenty minutes. She carries a box to the parking lot and sits in the car for a while before starting the engine.

She is one of many. From 2023 to 2025, 3.3 million US workers lost jobs they had held for at least three years³¹. By January 2026, 69.2% of those who came from sales and office jobs were working again³¹. Among all such workers aged 25 to 54, 72.9% were³¹. About seven in ten were back at work, and three in ten were not.

Denise looks for several months^{S9}. In August 2026 the median American still out of work had been looking for about 2.6 months⁶. The average was about 6.1 months, because a minority stays out far longer⁷.

32. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Customer Service Representatives" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/customer-service-representatives.htm>

34. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections, 2025 to 2035 (news release)" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>

35. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [34]: Pro-rated to 2030, US office and administrative support loses about 380,000 jobs from 2025.

3. International Labour Organization, "Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure, Working Paper 140" (2025-05-20). https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/WP140_web.pdf

13. Eurostat, "Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises (Statistics Explained)" (2025-12). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Use_of_artificial_intelligence_in_enterprises

36. Computed from Eurostat [13]: Romania's enterprise AI use was about 26% of the EU level in 2025.

S8. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise's customer-service team is cut in 2027. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Displaced Workers Summary (January 2026 supplement)" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disp.nr0.htm>

S9. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise is out of work for several months, between the median and the mean spell. Extends Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS.

6. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [120]: The median US spell of unemployment in progress was about 2.6 months in August 2026.

7. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [121]: The mean US spell of unemployment in progress was about 6.1 months in August 2026.

Unemployment insurance (the state benefit paid to laid-off workers while they look) is thin. On average it replaced under 40% of lost wages in 2021, about \$1,405 a month³⁷. In 2023, fourteen states paid it for fewer than 26 weeks, and Kentucky for at most 16³⁸. Denise does the sums at the kitchen table and cancels the streaming service first.

At the county job center an adviser sits with her for an hour and goes through her résumé line by line. That kind of help has measured results. In a national trial of the federal job-training program, adults and laid-off workers were offered one-on-one staff help. Over 30 months they earned about \$7,100, or 20%, more than those without that help³⁹.

Fewer than half get their old pay back

Pay is where a layoff leaves its mark. In the January 2026 survey, Americans were asked about a full-time job they had held for at least three years and lost. Of those who found another full-time job, 49% earned as much as before or more³¹. The rest earned less. In the January 2024 survey, 62% had kept their pay³¹. The two surveys cover different groups of laid-off workers, two years apart.

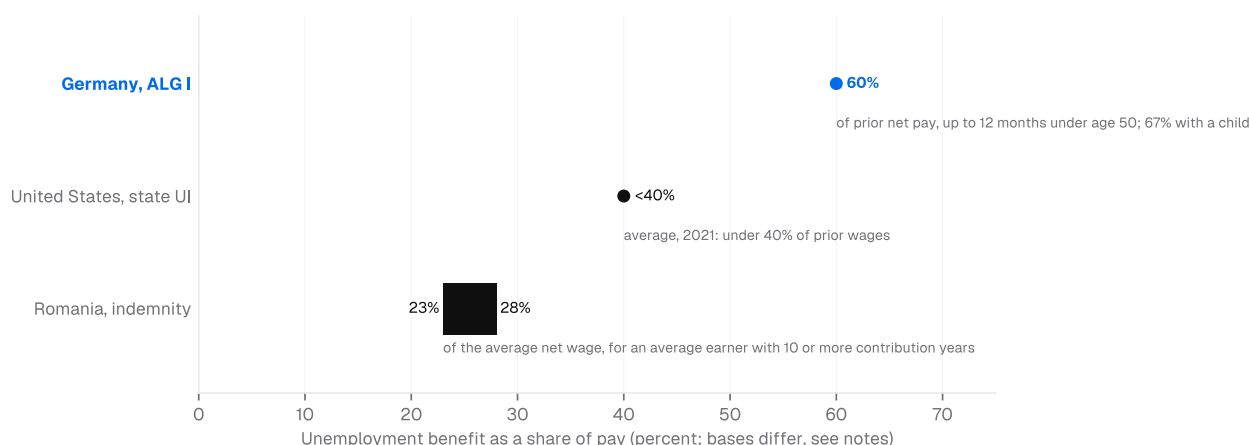
Near the end of her search, Denise weighs two roads. She can keep applying for desk jobs in a shrinking field, or start over in care, the work the adviser keeps pointing to. She has not chosen yet.

Germany's cushion is thicker, and it pays for retraining

2028

Thomas's employer merges its back office with a sister company's in 2028, and his post goes^{S10}. He is told on a Monday. On Tuesday he is at the employment agency with a folder of certificates.

Germany's unemployment insurance, Arbeitslosengeld I (ALG I), pays 60% of previous net pay, as the agency calculates it, or 67% for a parent³³. Under age 50, Thomas can draw it for at most 12 months³³. After that comes Bürgergeld, the means-tested basic benefit: €563 a month for a single adult in 2026⁴⁰. The limit matters. In 2024, 28.6% of Germany's unemployed had been out of work for a year or more⁴¹.



37. National Employment Law Project (advocacy), "Unemployment insurance benefit amounts" (2023-11-06). <https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/benefit-amounts/>

38. National Employment Law Project (advocacy), "Unemployment insurance benefit duration" (2023-11-08). <https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/benefit-duration/>

39. Mathematica, "New study finds positive impacts of staff assistance, inconclusive evidence of training effectiveness" (2019-01). <https://www.mathematica.org/news/new-study-finds-positive-impacts-of-staff-assistance-inconclusive-evidence-of-training-effectiveness>

S10. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Thomas's employer consolidates its back office and dismisses him in 2028. Extends International Labour Organization.

33. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer" (2026). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/arbeitslos-arbeit-finden/arbeitslosengeld/finanzielle-hilfen/arbeitslosengeld-anspruch-hoehe-dauer>

40. Die Bundesregierung, "Nullrunde beim Bürgergeld" (2025). <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/nullrunde-buergergeld-2383676>

41. Eurostat, "Long-term unemployment by sex and age, annual data (une_ltu_a)" (2026-09-10).

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une_ltu_a/default/table?lang=en

Exhibit 2.2. A laid-off German keeps 60% of net pay for up to a year; the US average was under 40% of wages. Benefit as a share of pay; the bases differ by country. Sources: ^{33,37,42,43}

In Romania, the indemnity comes to about 23 to 28% of the country's average net wage^{42,43}. That is for a worker on the average wage with 10 or more years of contributions.

Thomas takes publicly funded training after his dismissal^{S11}. Germany offers two kinds. Short courses update a worker's skills. Six months after finishing, trainees were 12 percentage points more likely to hold an unsubsidized job than comparable people who did not train. Of those, 45% were working⁴⁴. An Umschulung, a full retraining into a new trade, usually lasts two years⁴⁵. Within four years of starting one, men's employment rises by almost 18 points and women's by up to 28⁴⁶.

By 2035, Denise has left the desk in every future, and Thomas's path turns on a recession

2035

The official US projections have customer-service and office jobs shrinking to 2035^{32,34}. Three futures^{S6} differ on how fast AI tools spread, who is hired into exposed office work, and whether a recession comes. Denise stands in the same place in all three. She left the phones for care years before 2035, so the fork decides the desks she left and Thomas's path^{S7}.

42. Computed from ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency) [123], Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale [122], Agerpres (citing INS) [124]: The 10 to 19 contribution-year indemnity is about 23% of Romania's average net wage.

43. Computed from ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency) [123], Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale [122], Agerpres (citing INS) [124]: The 20 or more contribution-year indemnity is about 28% of Romania's average net wage.

S11. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Thomas takes publicly funded training after his dismissal. Extends Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

44. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Geschäftsbericht 2024" (2025). https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/datei/geschaeftsbericht-2024_ba052936.pdf

45. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Beruf wechseln: Rahmenbedingungen" (accessed 2026-09-23). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/karriere-und-weiterbildung/beruf-wechseln/rahmenbedingungen>

46. IAB-Forum (Kruppe, Lang), "Geförderte berufliche Weiterbildung von Arbeitslosen: abnehmende Eintritte trotz positiver Wirkung" (2023-02-20). <https://iab-forum.de/gefoerderte-berufliche-weiterbildung-von-arbeitslosen-abnehmende-eintritte-trotz-positiver-wirkung/>

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and desk work changes slowly^{S6}. Most customer-service and office desks remain. Thomas has retrained and is back at work^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, which have total US employment growing 3.5% over the decade and office support employment shrinking 4.0%³⁴. Firms hire fewer beginners into exposed office work and keep the staff they have, the pattern already measured among young US workers². Thomas has retrained and holds his new job^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back^{S6}. On a benchmark of real paid freelance work, the best agent completed 2.5% of projects in October 2025 and 15.8% in July 2026^{47,48}. A straight line through the two passes 50% of projects around March 2028, and a line through two points forecasts nothing⁴⁹. Thomas's search runs into the recession^{S7}. In German records, the earnings a worker loses with a job are large and lasting, and they nearly double in a downturn⁵⁰.

If your job is at a desk

Expect the search to take months. Half of unemployed Americans had been looking for about 2.6 months or more in August 2026⁶. The average spell was about 6.1 months⁷.

Plan for a pay cut. In 2026, only 49% of long-tenured laid-off workers re-employed full time earned as much as in their lost job³¹.

Ask for a person at the job center. Access to one-on-one help from job-center staff raised earnings by about \$7,100 over 30 months in a national trial³⁹.

Know when your benefit ends. In Germany, ALG I runs at most 12 months if you are under 50³³. In 2023, fourteen US states paid benefits for fewer than 26 weeks³⁸.

In Germany, a full retraining raises employment over years. An Umschulung usually takes two years⁴⁵. Within four years it raises employment by almost 18 points for men and up to 28 for women⁴⁶.

2. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update" (2026-08-12). <https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/canariesaug26/>

47. Scale AI Labs, "Remote Labor Index" (2025-10-28). <https://labs.scale.com/papers/rii>

48. Center for AI Safety, "A Significant Increase in Digital Labor Automation" (2026-07-01). <https://safe.ai/blog/significant-increase-in-digital-labor-automation>

49. Computed from Scale AI Labs [47], Center for AI Safety [48]: On a straight line, the Remote Labor Index best automation rate passes 50% around March 2028.

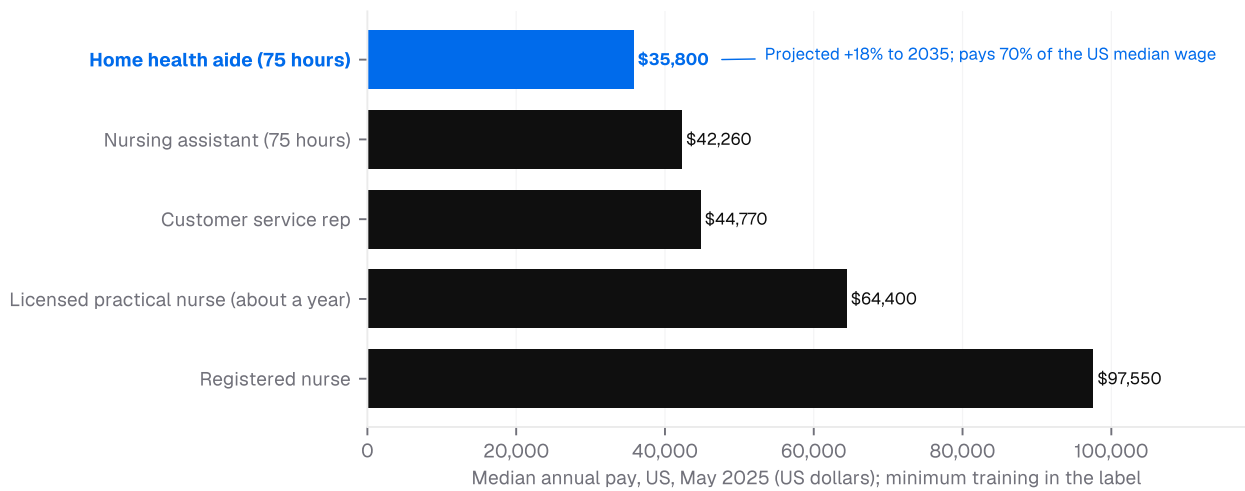
50. NBER (Schmieder, von Wachter, Heining), "The Costs of Job Displacement over the Business Cycle and Its Sources: Evidence from Germany, NBER w30162" (2022-06). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w30162>



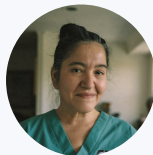
CHAPTER 3 · ROSA AND DENISE

US home care jobs are projected to grow, but the typical aide earns about \$2,980 a month

US home health and personal care aide jobs are projected to grow 18% from 2025 to 2035. The median aide earns about \$2,980 a month before tax. That is about 70% of the median US wage.



Home health aides earn the least of the jobs shown. A practical nurse, after about a year of training, earns more than a customer service rep.^{51,52,53,54,55}



Rosa, 52. Home health aide in Arizona, five older clients a day. Wants to work until she can retire. Afraid her back will give out first.



Denise, 44. Eleven years on the phones for an insurer in Louisville, Kentucky, now looking at care work. Wants her old income back. Afraid of starting over at her age.

\$2,980

Median aide pay per month, before tax, 2025⁵⁶

+18%

US aide jobs, projected, 2025 to 2035⁵¹

20% less

Median aide pay against the customer service median⁵⁷

51. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Home Health and Personal Care Aides" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home-health-aides-and-personal-care-aides.htm>

52. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Nursing Assistants and Orderlies" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nursing-assistants.htm>

53. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/licensed-practical-and-licensed-vocational-nurses.htm>

54. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Registered Nurses" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>

55. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [32, 53]: A US customer service representative becoming a licensed practical nurse would earn about 44% more, at occupation medians.

56. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51]: The median US home health and personal care aide earns about \$2,980 a month before tax (May 2025).

57. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [32, 51]: A US customer service representative moving to home health aide work would earn about 20% less, at occupation medians.

2026

Home care is projected to grow, and an AI assistant can help with little of it

Rosa's first visit starts at seven. Mr. Alvarez needs help into the shower, then breakfast, then his pills sorted for the week. By the fifth client her lower back aches. Next week is already full.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment of home health and personal care aides to grow 18% from 2025 to 2035. That is much faster than the average for all occupations⁵¹. That is 847,300 more jobs⁵¹. At an even pace, aide employment in 2030 would be about 8.6% above its 2025 level⁵⁸. Health care support and health care practitioner jobs together are projected to supply almost one third of all new US jobs in that decade³⁴.

An AI assistant can help with little of Rosa's day. Microsoft researchers scored occupations on how much of their work such an assistant can help with. Home health aides and nursing assistants score 0.04 on a 0 to 1 scale, against 0.33 for information and record clerks⁵⁹. The same BLS projection has desk work shrinking. Office and administrative support employment falls 4.0% over the decade, or 752,100 jobs³⁴, and customer service representative employment 5%³².

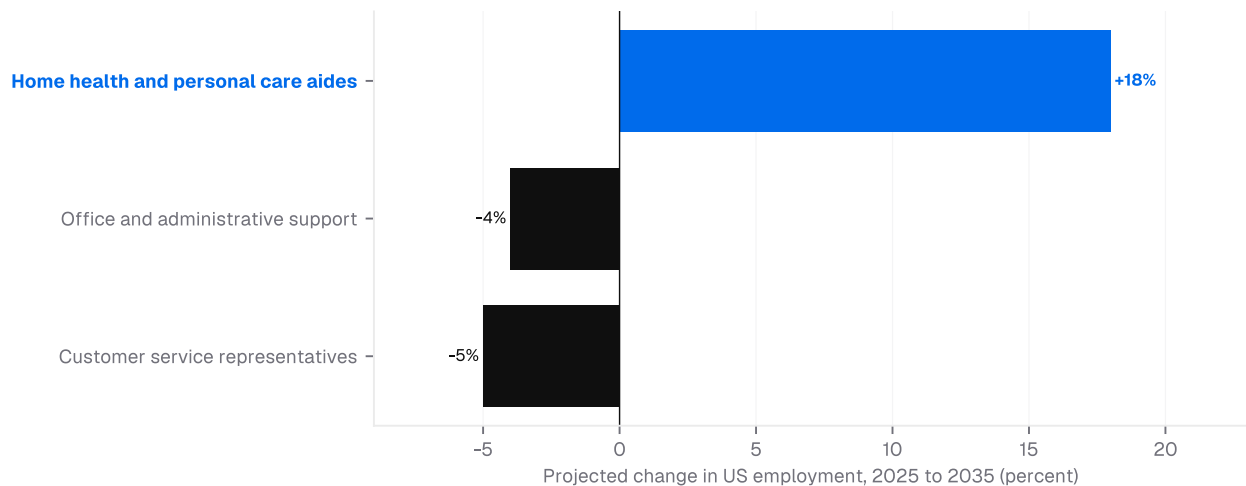


Exhibit 3.2. Care grows while desk work shrinks, in the same official US projection. Projected change in US employment, 2025 to 2035. Sources: ^{32,34,51}

Aide pay sits at 70% of the US median wage

Rosa earns what the typical aide earns: \$17.21 an hour, or \$35,800 a year⁵¹. That is about \$2,980 a month before tax⁵⁶. The median US worker earns \$24.51 an hour⁶⁰, or about \$4,250 a month⁶¹. The median aide earns about 70% of the national median wage⁶².

51. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Home Health and Personal Care Aides" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home-health-aides-and-personal-care-aides.htm>

58. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51]: Pro-rated to 2030, US home health and personal care aide employment grows about 8.6% from 2025.

34. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections, 2025 to 2035 (news release)" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>

59. Microsoft Research (Tomlinson et al), arXiv 2507.07935, "Working with AI: Measuring the Applicability of Generative AI to Occupations" (2025-12-22). <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2507.07935>

32. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Customer Service Representatives" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/customer-service-representatives.htm>

56. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51]: The median US home health and personal care aide earns about \$2,980 a month before tax (May 2025).

60. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2025, Table 1" (2026). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.t01.htm>

61. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [60]: The median US worker earns about \$4,250 a month before tax (May 2025).

62. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51, 60]: A US home health aide's median hourly pay is about 70% of the national median wage.

Aide pay has risen faster than pay overall, from a low base. The median aide earned \$12.15 an hour in May 2019 and \$14.51 in May 2022^{63,64}. Between 2019 and 2025 the median aide wage rose about 41.6%, against about 28.1% for the median across all US occupations⁶⁵. After inflation, that was a gain of about 12.8% for aides and about 2.0% for all occupations⁶⁶. Aide pay went from about 63.5% of the all-occupation median to about 70%⁶⁷.

PHI, which studies the direct care workforce, attributes the recent raises largely to state and federal Medicaid investment⁶⁸. Medicaid pays for 68% of US spending on home and community-based services⁶⁸.

On Sunday Rosa does the numbers on the back of an envelope: rent, gas for the car between clients, something for her granddaughter's birthday. Nothing is left for the dentist.

Pay rises with each rung of training. Nursing assistants earn a median \$42,260 a year⁵², licensed practical nurses \$64,400⁵³ and registered nurses \$97,550⁵⁴. The first rung is short: federal rules require at least 75 clock hours of training for a nurse aide⁶⁹. Community colleges typically charge \$500 to \$1,200 for the course, according to one industry guide⁷⁰. A practical nursing program, the next rung, typically takes about a year⁵³.

2027

For a laid-off customer service worker, care starts with a pay cut

Denise sits in a community college hallway in Louisville, a folder of forms on her knees. Her insurer cut her team this year⁶⁸, and she has been out of work for months⁶⁹. The aide course is the fastest door she can find.

Her search runs past the median⁶⁹. In August 2026 the typical US spell of unemployment in progress had lasted about 2.6 months at the median and 6.1 months on average^{6,7}.

Her old job paid about the customer service median, \$44,770 a year³². At occupation medians, home health aide work pays about 20% less than customer service work⁵⁷. Nursing assistant work, one rung up, pays about 6% less than customer service work⁷¹.

63. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "May 2019 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, United States" (2020-03).

https://www.bls.gov/oes/2019/may/oes_nat.htm

64. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "May 2022 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, United States" (2023-04).

https://www.bls.gov/oes/2022/may/oes_nat.htm

65. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51, 60, 63]: US home health aide median hourly pay rose about 41.6% from May 2019 to May 2025, against about 28.1% for all occupations.

66. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51, 60, 63, 125, 126]: After inflation, US home health aide median pay rose about 12.8% from May 2019 to May 2025, against about 2.0% for all occupations.

67. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51, 60, 63]: US home health aide median pay rose from about 63.5% of the all-occupation median in May 2019 to about 70.2% in May 2025.

68. PHI, "Direct Care Workers in the United States: Key Facts 2025" (2025-09). <https://www.phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PHI-DCW-Key-Facts-Report-2025.pdf>

52. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Nursing Assistants and Orderlies" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nursing-assistants.htm>

53. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/licensed-practical-and-licensed-vocational-nurses.htm>

54. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Registered Nurses" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>

69. Cornell Legal Information Institute (U.S. regulation), "42 CFR 483.152, Requirements for approval of a nurse aide training and competency evaluation program" (current). <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/42/483.152>

70. www.registerednursing.org (industry guide), "CNA certification" (2026-09-15). <https://www.registerednursing.org/certified-nursing-assistant/certification/>

S8. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise's customer-service team is cut in 2027. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

S9. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise is out of work for several months, between the median and the mean spell. Extends Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS.

6. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [120]: The median US spell of unemployment in progress was about 2.6 months in August 2026.

7. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [121]: The mean US spell of unemployment in progress was about 6.1 months in August 2026.

57. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [32, 51]: A US customer service representative moving to home health aide work would earn about 20% less, at occupation medians.

71. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [32, 52]: A US customer service representative moving to nursing assistant work would earn about 6% less, at occupation medians.

Most people in her position find work again: 69.2% of long-tenured US workers who lost sales and office jobs were working at the January 2026 survey³¹. Pay is another matter. Across all occupations, about half of long-tenured workers who moved from one lost full-time job to another earned less than before. The other 49% earned as much or more³¹.

Her first client is a retired teacher who calls her by the wrong name all morning. Eleven years of calming angry callers turn out to be good training for this. The paycheck is smaller.

The raise is two rungs up, and about a year of school away

Denise completes the 75 hours of aide training that federal rules require⁷² and works as an aide. Then she enrolls in a practical nursing program of about a year^{53, S12}. At occupation medians, a licensed practical nurse earns about 44% more than a customer service representative⁵⁵.

Her son is in community college too, so on weeknights the kitchen table holds two sets of homework. She studies anatomy with flashcards in one hand and a coffee going cold in the other. The mortgage does not wait for the program to end.

Some of the help on offer has been tested. In a randomized trial of the federal workforce system, some job seekers had access to one-to-one staff help. Over 30 months they earned about \$7,100, or 20%, more than those without it³⁹. Evidence that the programs' funded training raised employment or earnings was inconclusive³⁹. Project QUEST, a San Antonio training program, was followed for eleven years in a randomized trial. Its participants earned \$31,395 more than the control group over the whole period⁷³.

2030

After 55, a lost job is harder to replace

Rosa is 56 and still in home care. She took the nursing assistant course in the evenings and moved up one rung^{S13}. The lifting is the same.

If her back gives out, her age works against her. Among long-tenured US workers who lost a job, 57.3% of those aged 55 to 64 were working again at the January 2026 survey³¹. Among those aged 25 to 54 it was 72.9%³¹. In the older group, those not working include people who left the labor force.

By 2035, both women work in care

In 2035 Rosa is 61 and Denise 53. Three futures for that year differ on how fast AI spreads and whether a recession hits^{S6}.

31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Displaced Workers Summary (January 2026 supplement)" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disp.nr0.htm>

72. Cornell Legal Information Institute (U.S. regulation), "42 CFR 484.80, Home health aide services" (current).

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/42/484.80>

S12. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise certifies as a home health aide and later enrolls in a practical nursing programme. Extends Cornell Legal Information Institute (U.S. regulation), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

55. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [32, 53]: A US customer service representative becoming a licensed practical nurse would earn about 44% more, at occupation medians.

39. Mathematica, "New study finds positive impacts of staff assistance, inconclusive evidence of training effectiveness" (2019-01).

<https://www.mathematica.org/news/new-study-finds-positive-impacts-of-staff-assistance-inconclusive-evidence-of-training-effectiveness>

73. Economic Mobility Corporation (Roder, Elliott), "Eleven-Year Gains: Project QUEST's Investment Continues to Pay Dividends" (2021-09).

<https://economicmobilitycorp.org/eleven-year-gains-project-quests-investment-continues-to-pay-dividends/>

S13. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Rosa stays in home care through 2030 and trains as a nursing assistant. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cornell Legal Information Institute (U.S. regulation).

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly. Rosa works as a nursing assistant, and Denise as a licensed practical nurse^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, which add 847,300 home health and personal care aide jobs by 2035⁵¹. People already in work keep their jobs, and both women stay in care, Denise as a practical nurse^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Both women are in care by then^{S7}, and Rosa's job scores 0.04 out of 1 on what an AI assistant can help with, against 0.33 for information and record clerks⁵⁹. If she loses it at 61, she is in the age group that finds work again less often^{31,S7}.

If you work in care, or are thinking of moving into it

The work is projected to be there. US home health and personal care aide jobs are projected to grow 18% from 2025 to 2035, or 847,300 jobs⁵¹.

The first step pays less than customer service, but aide pay is rising. Home health aide work pays about 20% less than customer service work, at occupation medians⁵⁷. Median aide pay rose about 41.6% from 2019 to 2025, against about 28.1% for all US occupations, gains PHI attributes largely to Medicaid money^{65,68}.

The first rung is short and cheap. Aide courses take at least 75 hours under federal rules⁷². A nurse aide course at a community college typically costs \$500 to \$1,200, according to one industry guide⁷⁰.

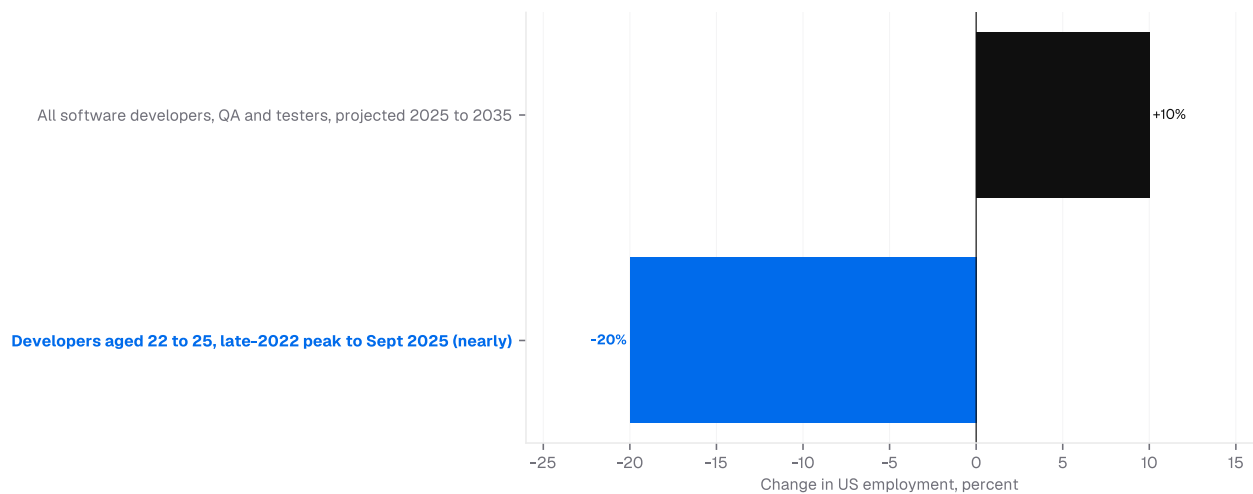
The raise is further up. A practical nursing program takes about a year⁵³. The job it leads to pays about 44% more than customer service work, at medians⁵⁵.

Ask for a person as well as a course. Job seekers with one-to-one staff assistance earned about \$7,100 more over 30 months than those without it³⁹.

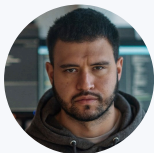
S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

Companies hire fewer junior software developers, while experienced staff hold steady

Employment of US software developers aged 22 to 25 fell nearly 20% from its late-2022 peak to September 2025. Entry-level roles were 4.5% of US software job postings in early 2026. Experienced workers in highly AI-exposed US jobs show no comparable employment gap.



BLS projects US software jobs to grow 10% from 2025 to 2035, yet employment of developers aged 22 to 25 fell nearly 20% from its late-2022 peak to September 2025.^{5,74}



Radu, 34. Software developer in Bucharest, leading a team that builds software for foreign clients. He wants to stay the one who decides what ships, and he worries about who comes after him.

Nearly -20%

Employment of US developers aged 22 to 25, late-2022 peak to Sept 2025⁵

4.5%

Share of US software job postings open to entry-level candidates, early 2026¹

+10%

BLS projection for US software developer, tester and QA jobs, 2025 to 2035⁷⁴

5. Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence" (2025-11-13). https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/app/uploads/2025/11/CanariesintheCoalMine_Nov25.pdf

74. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Software Developers, Quality Assurance Analysts, and Testers" (accessed 2026-09). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/software-developers.htm>

1. Indeed Hiring Lab, "The labor market is tilting toward seniority" (2026-07-23). <https://hiringlab.indeed.com/2026/07/23/the-labor-market-is-tilting-toward-seniority/>

A senior developer's job changes shape and keeps its size

2026

Nine in the morning, Bucharest. Radu has a queue of code changes waiting for his review. An AI assistant drafted most of them and his colleagues cleaned them up. He reads, asks two questions, sends one back, and approves the rest.

His work is shifting toward reviewing and directing code a machine wrote^{S14}. One large firm puts the shift in bold terms. Google's chief executive said in October 2024 that AI wrote more than a quarter of the company's new code⁷⁵. In April 2026 the same executive put AI's share of new code at 75%⁷⁶. Those are claims about one company, made by its boss.

Careful measurement is less flattering. In a randomized trial in early 2025, the research group METR gave 16 experienced open-source developers 246 real tasks, with chance deciding whether AI tools were allowed⁷⁷. With the tools, they took 19% longer to finish than without them⁷⁷. Whether experienced people finish faster is still open.

Radu is well paid by Romanian standards. In June 2026, people in programming and IT consulting took home 13,474 lei a month on average, about 2.3 times the national average^{78,79}.

His trade lost a tax break before AI changed his days. From January 2025 income, Romania ended the income tax exemption for software development employees⁸⁰. In a survey of member firms of ANIS, the Romanian software industry association, 63.2% of firms said the partial phase-out that preceded it hurt their 2024 finances⁸¹. Just 34.2% of member firms grew their teams that year⁸¹.

Experienced workers hold on, and the youngest developers are down nearly a fifth

Across the US jobs most exposed to AI, experienced workers show no comparable employment gap². The young do. Among workers aged 22 to 25 in those jobs, employment is about 19% below where it would be had it kept pace with less exposed work². For software developers of that age, US payroll data show employment down nearly 20% from its late-2022 peak by September 2025⁵.

Postings tell the same story from the hiring side. Entry-level positions made up 4.5% of US software job postings in early 2026¹. Across all US occupations, entry-level postings fell 7.5% in the year to May 2026, while senior-level postings rose 14.7%¹. Firms still hire, and more of their postings ask for people who already know the work.

S14. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Radu's work shifts toward reviewing and directing AI-generated code. Extends Semafor (press, reporting a CEO statement), METR.

75. Yahoo Finance (press, reporting a CEO statement), "Google CEO says more than 25% of new code is AI-generated" (2024-10-30). <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/google-ceo-says-more-25-202927484.html>

76. Semafor (press, reporting a CEO statement), "Google CEO says 75% of company's new code is AI-generated" (2026-04-24).

<https://www.semafor.com/article/04/24/2026/google-ceo-says-75-of-companys-new-code-is-ai-generated>

77. METR, "Measuring the Impact of Early-2025 AI on Experienced Open-Source Developer Productivity" (2025-07-10). <https://metr.org/blog/2025-07-10-early-2025-ai-experienced-os-dev-study/>

78. Capital.ro (press, citing INS), "Salariul mediu net a urcat la 5.734 de lei în iunie 2026" (2026). <https://www.capital.ro/salariul-mediului-net-a-urcat-la-5-734-de-lei-in-iunie-2026-ins-arata-care-sunt-domeniile-cu-cele-mai-mari-si-cele-mai-mici-castiguri.html>

79. Computed from Capital.ro (press, citing INS) [78], Agerpres (citing INS) [124]: Romanian programming and IT consultancy net pay was about 2.3 times the national average in June 2026.

80. Vialto Partners (tax adviser), "Romania: 2025 income tax and social security changes based on the Government's Emergency Ordinance no. 156/2024" (2025). <https://vialtopartners.com/regional-alerts/romania-employment-tax-2025-income-tax-and-social-security-changes-based-on-the-governments-emergency-ordinance>

81. Business Forum (press, reporting an ANIS industry survey), "Fiscal instability hits IT industry (ANIS Sentiment Survey 2024)" (2025-01-15). <https://www.businessforum.ro/industry/20250115/fiscal-instability-hits-it-industry-feeling-effects-of-tax-decisions-and-anticipates-a-difficult-2025-1277>

2. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update" (2026-08-12). <https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/canariesaug26/>

5. Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence" (2025-11-13). https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/app/uploads/2025/11/CanariesintheCoalMine_Nov25.pdf

1. Indeed Hiring Lab, "The labor market is tilting toward seniority" (2026-07-23). <https://hiringlab.indeed.com/2026/07/23/the-labor-market-is-tilting-toward-seniority/>

2027 to 2030

A budget meeting. Radu's manager asks whether the team needs a junior developer this year. Radu looks at the review queue, which the AI assistant keeps full, and says no. He remembers his own first job, and the senior who had time to teach him.

Radu keeps his seat to 2030, and his team stops hiring juniors^{S15}. The juniors he does not hire are people like Jake.

The field grows while its entrance narrows

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment of software developers, quality assurance analysts and testers to rise 10% from 2025 to 2035⁷⁴. At a constant yearly rate, that is about 4.9% more such jobs in 2030 than in 2025⁸². The projection and the fall among young developers measure different things. A field can grow over a decade and still take on few beginners today.

Tech workers who lost a job have found new ones fast in the recent past. A 2022 ZipRecruiter survey asked new hires who had lost a tech-company job how long the search took. About 79% landed the new job within three months⁸³. The survey is a vendor's, and it covers 2022, before employment of young developers began to fall.

S15. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Radu keeps his job to 2030 while his team stops hiring juniors. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Indeed Hiring Lab.

74. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Software Developers, Quality Assurance Analysts, and Testers" (accessed 2026-09). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/software-developers.htm>

82. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [74]: Pro-rated to 2030, US software developer, QA analyst and tester employment grows about 4.9% from 2025.

83. Fox Business (vendor survey), "Laid-off tech workers quickly find new jobs (ZipRecruiter survey)" (2022). <https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/laid-off-tech-workers-quickly-find-new-jobs>

By 2035, the pace of AI decides whether the gap reaches Radu

2035

Three futures are open by 2035^{S6}.

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows^{S6}. Employment of US workers aged 22 to 25 in highly AI-exposed jobs stood about 19% below trend in June 2026². Radu, 43, still leads his team, which takes on juniors again as the gap narrows^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs^{S6}. Radu reviews far more code than he writes, in a team with fewer juniors than the one he joined^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back^{S6}. Radu's seat is exposed once the gap reaches experienced workers, who show no comparable gap today^{2,S7}.

If you write software for a living

Experience is holding for now. Experienced workers in highly AI-exposed US jobs show no comparable employment gap². Employment of US software developers aged 22 to 25 fell nearly 20% from its late-2022 peak to September 2025⁵.

Beginner openings are scarce. If you are starting out, expect few openings. Entry-level roles were 4.5% of US software job postings in early 2026¹.

Hiring favors seniority. Across all US occupations, senior-level postings rose 14.7% in the year to May 2026 while entry-level postings fell 7.5%¹.

The field still grows. BLS projects US software developer, tester and QA jobs to rise 10% from 2025 to 2035⁷⁴.

Measure what AI does to your own speed. In METR's early-2025 trial, experienced developers allowed AI tools took 19% longer on real tasks than without them⁷⁷.

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

Freelance illustrators and writers are losing income to AI

On Upwork, image freelancers lost 9.4% of their income after image generators arrived. Writing freelancers lost 5.2% of their monthly earnings after ChatGPT. By Upwork's own account, client spending on AI-related work there grew 52% year on year in the third quarter of 2025.

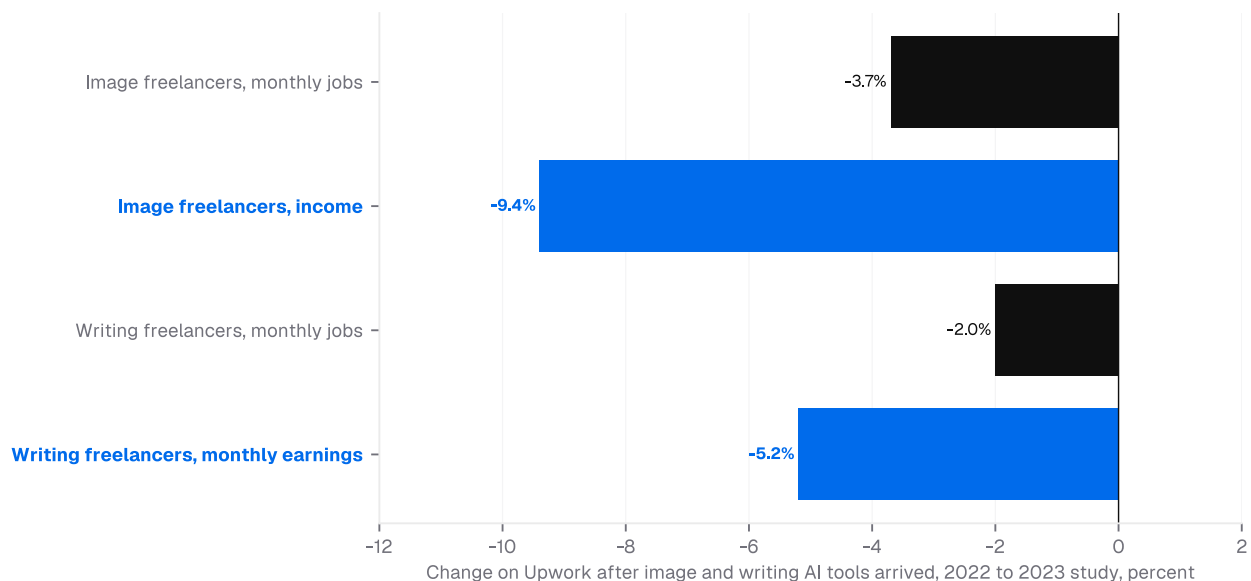


Image and writing freelancers on Upwork lost jobs and income after generative AI arrived; image freelancers lost the most, 9.4% of their income.⁸⁴



Léa, 31. Freelance illustrator and copywriter in Berlin for eight years, living on commissions from agencies and small brands. She wants clients who come back, and she fears competing on price with a machine.

-9.4%

Income of image freelancers on Upwork after image generators arrived⁸⁴

+52%

Client spending on AI-related work on Upwork, Q3 2025 vs Q3 2024⁸⁵

42%

Average declared income of a German insured visual artist, as a share of the median employee's gross pay⁸⁶

84. Washington University Olin Business School, "Study: AI tools cause a decline in freelance work and income, at least in the short run" (2023-08). <https://olin.washu.edu/about/news-and-media/news/2023/08/study-ai-tools-cause-a-decline-in-freelance-work-and-income-at-least-in-the-short-run.php>

85. Upwork earnings call (transcript via The Globe and Mail / Motley Fool), "Upwork (UPWK) Q3 2025 earnings call transcript" (2025).

86. Computed from Künstlersozialkasse [87], bibliomed-pflege.de (press, citing BA Entgeltatlas) [127]: A German KSK-insured visual artist's average declared income is about 42% of the median employee's annual gross pay.

Image and writing freelancers lost work and income

2026

Léa's inbox is quieter this spring. A client who used to order a set of illustrations every season now orders fewer and asks her to touch up pictures it made with an AI tool. Her copywriting for online shops has thinned the same way.

Freelance marketplaces show the same pattern at scale. After image generators such as DALL-E and Midjourney arrived, image-related freelancers on Upwork saw their monthly jobs fall 3.7% and their income 9.4%⁸⁴. After ChatGPT, writing freelancers lost 2% of their monthly jobs and 5.2% of their monthly earnings⁸⁴. In both trades income fell further than jobs⁸⁴. Léa loses part of her standard illustration and copy work^{S16}.

She starts from a thin base. Germany insures self-employed artists and writers through a special fund, the Künstlersozialkasse⁸⁷. Visual artists insured there declare an average of €21,100 a year, writers €25,076⁸⁷. The artists' average is about 42% of what the median German employee earns before tax⁸⁶. The comparison is rough, because the artists' incomes are self-declared⁸⁶.

Her safety net has a hole. The self-employed in Germany can buy unemployment insurance, at €97.37 a month in 2025⁸⁸. Léa could have insured herself only in her first three months of freelancing, and she did not⁸⁸. Before the pandemic, most OECD countries gave the self-employed only limited access to unemployment benefits⁸⁹.

The growth is in AI-related work

2027 to 2030

Léa takes a brief she would have turned down a year earlier. A campaign's images come out of a model, and her job is to make them look like one brand, fix the hands, and write the words around them. She bills it as art direction.

She moves toward AI-related projects^{S16}. On Upwork, client spending on AI-related work (gross services volume) grew 52% year on year in the third quarter of 2025, by the company's own account⁸⁵. This research found no measure of how much more clients pay for creative work made by a person⁹⁰.

AI agents are getting better at whole freelance projects. The Remote Labor Index tests them on real paid freelance work⁴⁷. When it launched in October 2025, the best agent completed 2.5% of the projects⁴⁷. By July 2026 the best completed 15.8%⁴⁸, about six times as many in eight months⁹¹. A straight line through

84. Washington University Olin Business School, "Study: AI tools cause a decline in freelance work and income, at least in the short run" (2023-08). <https://olin.washu.edu/about/news-and-media/news/2023/08/study-ai-tools-cause-a-decline-in-freelance-work-and-income-at-least-in-the-short-run.php>

S16. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Léa loses part of her commodity illustration and copy work and moves toward AI-related projects. Extends Washington University Olin Business School, Upwork earnings call (transcript via The Globe and Mail / Motley Fool).

87. Künstlersozialkasse, "KSK in Zahlen" (2026-01-01). <https://www.kuenstlersozialkasse.de/service-und-medien/ksk-in-zahlen>

86. Computed from Künstlersozialkasse [87], bibliomed-pflege.de (press, citing BA Entgeltatlas) [127]: A German KSK-insured visual artist's average declared income is about 42% of the median employee's annual gross pay.

88. IHK Koblenz, "Freiwillige Arbeitslosenversicherung für Existenzgründer" (2025).

<https://www.ihk.de/koblenz/unternehmensservice/unternehmensgruendung/unternehmensgruendung1/berufsgenossenschaft-und-versicherungstipps/versicherungstipps/freiwillige-arbeitslosenversicherung-fuer-existenzgruender-3658384>

89. IZA (Immervoll, Fernández et al), "De facto gaps in social protection for standard and non-standard workers, IZA DP 15289" (2022).

<https://docs.iza.org/dp15289.pdf>

85. Upwork earnings call (transcript via The Globe and Mail / Motley Fool), "Upwork (UPWK) Q3 2025 earnings call transcript" (2025).

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/investing/markets/markets-news/Motley%20Fool/35875625/upwork-upwk-q3-2025-earnings-call-transcript/>

90. Not found in 1 independent search. No measure of a price premium in money for human-made creative work was found in this research.

47. Scale AI Labs, "Remote Labor Index" (2025-10-28). <https://labs.scale.com/papers/rli>

48. Center for AI Safety, "A Significant Increase in Digital Labor Automation" (2026-07-01). <https://safe.ai/blog/significant-increase-in-digital-labor-automation>

91. Computed from Scale AI Labs [47], Center for AI Safety [48]: The best agent's Remote Labor Index automation rate rose about 6 times in about eight months.

those two readings passes 50% of projects around March 2028, and a line through two points forecasts nothing⁴⁹.

Side income stays small

She also sells brushes and a short course online, and that income stays small^{S17}. Most creators earn little. In a 2023 vendor survey, 8.1 million Americans earned money as independent creators⁹². Of them, 71% made less than \$30,000 from it over the year⁹².

The money gathers at the top. In CreatorIQ's payment data for 2025, the top 10% of creators earned 62% of all payments⁹³. On Kajabi, course income is small too. The typical seller with at least one sale has earned \$3,653 over their whole time on the platform, by the company's own figure⁹⁴.

Advertising money has a ceiling too. Advertisers' spending on creators came to at most about 0.29% of the US wage bill in 2025, and creators receive only part of it⁹⁵.

49. Computed from Scale AI Labs [47], Center for AI Safety [48]: On a straight line, the Remote Labor Index best automation rate passes 50% around March 2028.

S17. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Léa's creator side income stays small. Extends MBO Partners (vendor survey), CreatorIQ (vendor).

92. MBO Partners (vendor survey), "The Creator Economy report (State of Independence)" (fielded 2023-07). <https://www.mbopartners.com/state-of-independence/creator-economy-report/>

93. CreatorIQ (vendor), "State of Creator Compensation" (2026-01-14). <https://www.creatoriq.com/press/releases/state-of-creator-compensation->

94. Kajabi (vendor), "Is selling online courses profitable?" (2026). <https://www.kajabi.com/blog/is-selling-online-courses-profitable>

95. Computed from IAB/PwC via PR Newswire [128], Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BEA [129]: Creator advertising came to at most about 0.29% of the US wage bill in 2025, a ceiling on creators' ad income.

By 2035, three futures for her work

2035

Three futures are open by 2035^{S6}.

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly^{S6}. Léa, 40, keeps a mix of craft work and AI-related projects^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, and people already in work keep their jobs^{S6}. AI-related work carries Léa's income as her standard work shrinks^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back^{S6}. The best agent completed 15.8% of paid freelance projects in a July 2026 benchmark⁴⁸. Léa's income turns on clients paying more for work made by a person^{S7}. This research found no measure of that premium⁹⁰.

If you sell images or words

Image and writing work lost income. On Upwork, image freelancers lost 9.4% of their income and writing freelancers 5.2% of their monthly earnings after generative AI arrived⁸⁴.

The growth is in AI-related work. Client spending on AI-related work on Upwork grew 52% in a year, by the company's own account⁸⁵.

A human premium is unmeasured. This research found no measure of how much more clients pay for work made by a person⁹⁰.

Side income stays small for most creators. 71% of US independent creators made less than \$30,000 a year from creator work⁹².

Insure yourself in your first three months. If you go freelance in Germany, voluntary unemployment insurance cost €97.37 a month in 2025. It is open to those insured for 12 of the 30 months before they start⁸⁸. The application is due within three months of starting⁸⁸.

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

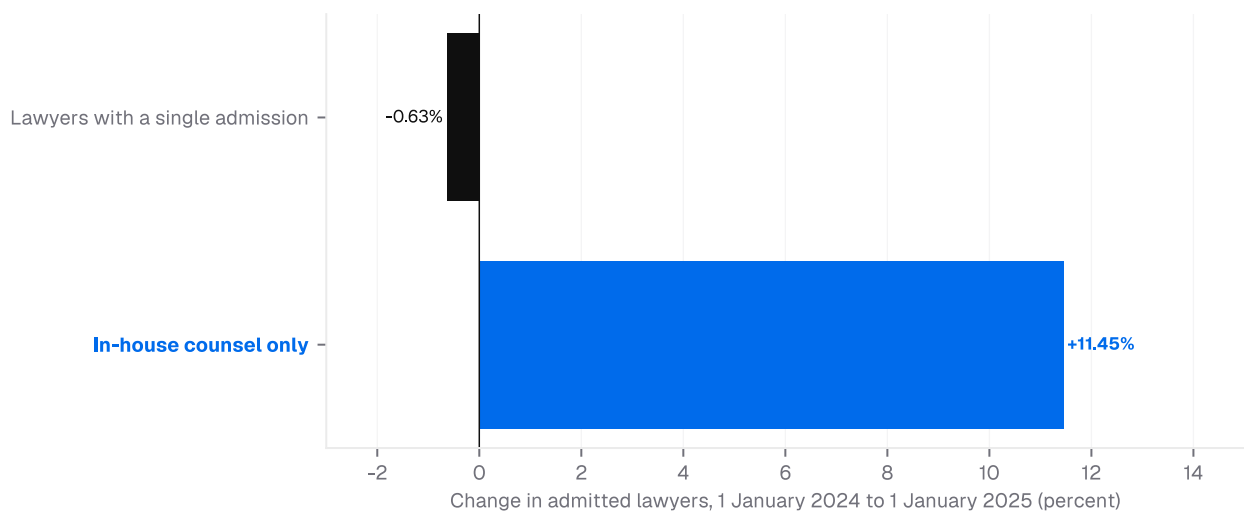
S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.



CHAPTER 6 · KATRIN

In-house lawyers are the fastest-growing part of Germany's legal profession

In Germany, lawyers admitted only as in-house counsel, employed by a company to handle its own legal work, grew 11.45% in the year to January 2025. Lawyers with a standard single admission, the largest group, fell 0.63%.



Lawyers with a standard single admission fell again. Lawyers admitted only as in-house counsel grew by more than a tenth in one year.⁹⁶



Katrin, 47. Lawyer, Kassel. The one employed lawyer in a small practice handling tenancy and dismissal cases. Loves the courtroom days. Afraid the practice will close when its owner retires.

166,504

admitted lawyers in Germany, 1 January 2025⁹⁶

62.2%

of US legal workers hold a license or certification⁹⁷

60%

of prior net pay, Germany's unemployment benefit³³

96. Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer, "Mitglieder- und Fachanwaltsstatistik zum 01.01.2025" (2025). <https://www.brak.de/presse/presseerklarungen/der-brak-2025/mitglieder-und-fachanwaltsstatistik-zum-01012025/>

97. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 53. Certification and licensing status of the employed by occupation, 2025 annual averages" (2025). <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat53.pdf>

33. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer" (2026). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/arbeitslos-arbeit-finden/arbeitslosengeld/finanzielle-hilfen/arbeitslosengeld-anspruch-hoehe-dauer>

Germany's bar shifted in-house

2026

Katrin opens the office at eight. Two tenancy disputes and a dismissal case wait on her desk. The owner is 64, and lately he asks which files she could take over. She has worked for him for eleven years and knows most clients by their first names.

Germany had 166,504 admitted lawyers on 1 January 2025⁹⁶. Lawyers with a single, regular admission, Katrin's group, numbered 138,715 that day, down 0.63% on the year before: 874 fewer people⁹⁶.

Admissions as in-house counsel only, for lawyers employed by a company to handle its own legal work, grew fastest of any type. They rose 11.45% in the same year, to 7,585, which is 779 more people in twelve months⁹⁶.

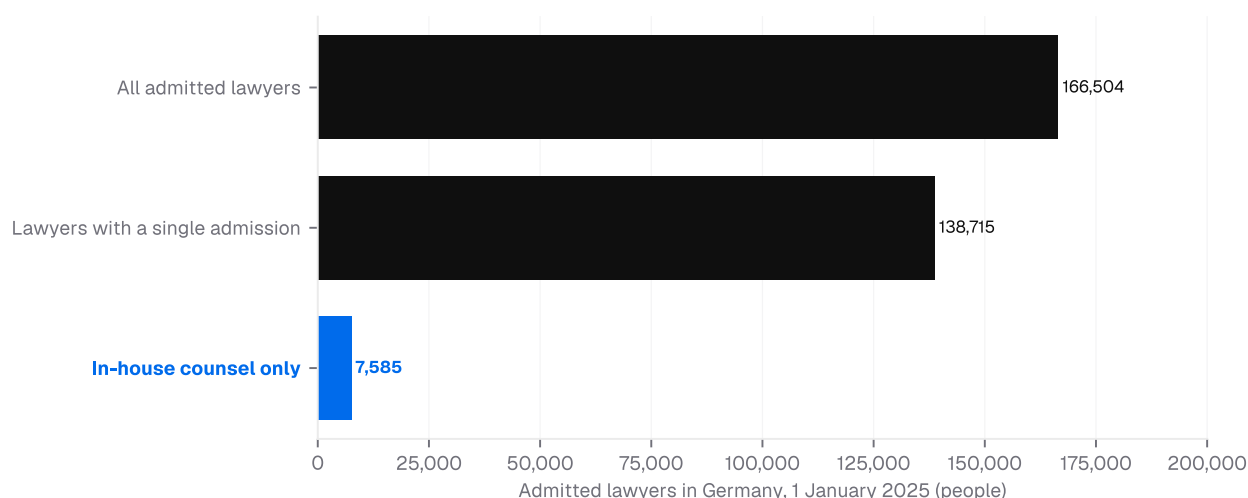


Exhibit 6.2. Lawyers admitted only as in-house counsel are the fastest-growing admission type, at 7,585 against 138,715 lawyers with a single admission. Admitted lawyers in Germany, 1 January 2025. Sources: ⁹⁶

Most US legal workers hold a license

In the United States, 62.2% of workers in legal occupations held a license or certification in 2025⁹⁷. The study behind this report predicts, with low confidence, that licensed professions keep their headcount to 2030 while their tasks change^{S18}.

The owner buys a drafting program in the spring. Katrin reads its first tenancy letter twice, corrects a date and a paragraph reference, and signs it. By summer she checks drafts more than she writes them.

Taking over the practice means owning its turnover and its risk

The owner offers Katrin the practice. The bar's own survey, as reported in the legal press, puts numbers on the offer. One-lawyer firms turned over €180,000 on average in 2024. Self-employed lawyers, across all firm sizes, kept an average personal profit of €106,000. Employed lawyers in one-lawyer firms, like Katrin,

96. Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer, "Mitglieder- und Fachanwaltsstatistik zum 01.01.2025" (2025). <https://www.brak.de/presse/presseerklarungen/der-brak-2025/mitglieder-und-fachanwaltsstatistik-zum-01012025/>

97. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 53. Certification and licensing status of the employed by occupation, 2025 annual averages" (2025). <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat53.pdf>

S18. Speculation, not a sourced figure. The underlying study predicts, with low confidence, that licensed professions keep their headcount to 2030 while their tasks change. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

earned €60,000 gross on average⁹⁸.

She thinks about it for a month and runs the sums at the kitchen table twice. Owning the practice would mean owning its clients, its rent and its future.

2028

A manufacturer on the edge of town advertises for in-house counsel. Katrin applies, gets the job, and moves from the practice to the company in 2028^{S19}. Her first week is supplier contracts and a question from the works council about night shifts. The desk is bigger. The cases are narrower, and every one of them belongs to the same client.

If the job ends, age sets the length of the cushion

The move is one path. The other begins with a letter saying the practice will close before she has found anything else.

Germany's unemployment benefit, Arbeitslosengeld I (ALG I, paid from unemployment insurance), pays 60% of prior net pay, or 67% of it for a claimant with a child³³. Under 50, it lasts at most 12 months³³. From 50 the entitlement rises in steps, reaching 24 months at 58 for people insured for at least 48 months³³.

2029

Katrin turns 50 in March. At dinner her sister asks whether the company job is safe. "Safe enough," Katrin says. She still keeps a copy of her insurance record in the kitchen drawer. Her cushion starts to lengthen from that birthday³³.

Twelve months can run out. In 2024, 28.6% of Germany's unemployed had been out of work for a year or more⁴¹. That is at least as long as the benefit lasts for anyone under 50³³. After ALG I ends, what remains is Bürgergeld, a means-tested basic payment of €563 a month for a single adult in 2026⁴⁰. Those who find work again tend to earn less for years. In German records, the earnings losses of displaced workers are large and persistent, and they nearly double in downturns⁵⁰.

2035: Katrin at 56, in three futures

2035

Katrin is 56. How her work looks depends on which future arrives^{S6}.

98. beck-aktuell (press, reporting BRAK STAR 2025), "BRAK-STAR-Umfrage 2025 (reporting)" (2026-02-10). <https://www.beck-aktuell.de/rechtsbranche/anwaltschaft/brak-star-umfrage-statistik-anwaltschaft-maenner-frauen-unterschiede-einkommen-2026-02-10>
S19. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Katrin moves from her small firm to an in-house legal role in 2028. Extends Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer.
33. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer" (2026). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/arbeitslos-arbeit-finden/arbeitslosengeld/finanzielle-hilfen/arbeitslosengeld-anspruch-hoehe-dauer>

41. Eurostat, "Long-term unemployment by sex and age, annual data (une_ltu_a)" (2026-09-10). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une_ltu_a/default/table?lang=en

40. Die Bundesregierung, "Nullrunde beim Bürgergeld" (2025). <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/nullrunde-buergergeld-2383676>

50. NBER (Schmieder, von Wachter, Heining), "The Costs of Job Displacement over the Business Cycle and Its Sources: Evidence from Germany, NBER w30162" (2022-06). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w30162>

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly. Katrin still does most of her company's legal work herself^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, and people already in work keep their jobs. Katrin keeps her seat, and her day shifts toward checking and signing drafts that software writes^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. The best agent completed 2.5% of the Remote Labor Index's paid freelance projects in October 2025 and 15.8% of them by July 2026^{47,48}. If her department closes, Katrin is between the 12 months of benefit that apply before 50 and the 24 months that apply from 58, in a downturn that nearly doubles the earnings loss^{33,50,S7}.

If your job needs a license in Germany

Lawyers with a single admission keep falling. Their number fell 0.63% in the year to January 2025⁹⁶.

The growth is in-house. Lawyers admitted only as in-house counsel grew 11.45% in a year, to 7,585⁹⁶.

Know your cushion before you need it. ALG I pays 60% of your prior net pay, or 67% of it with a child, for at most 12 months if you are under 50³³.

Age lengthens the cushion. From 50 the entitlement rises in steps, reaching 24 months at 58 if you were insured for at least 48 months³³.

A job loss costs more in a downturn. German displaced workers' earnings losses are large, persistent, and nearly double in recessions⁵⁰.

S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

47. Scale AI Labs, "Remote Labor Index" (2025-10-28). <https://labs.scale.com/papers/rli>

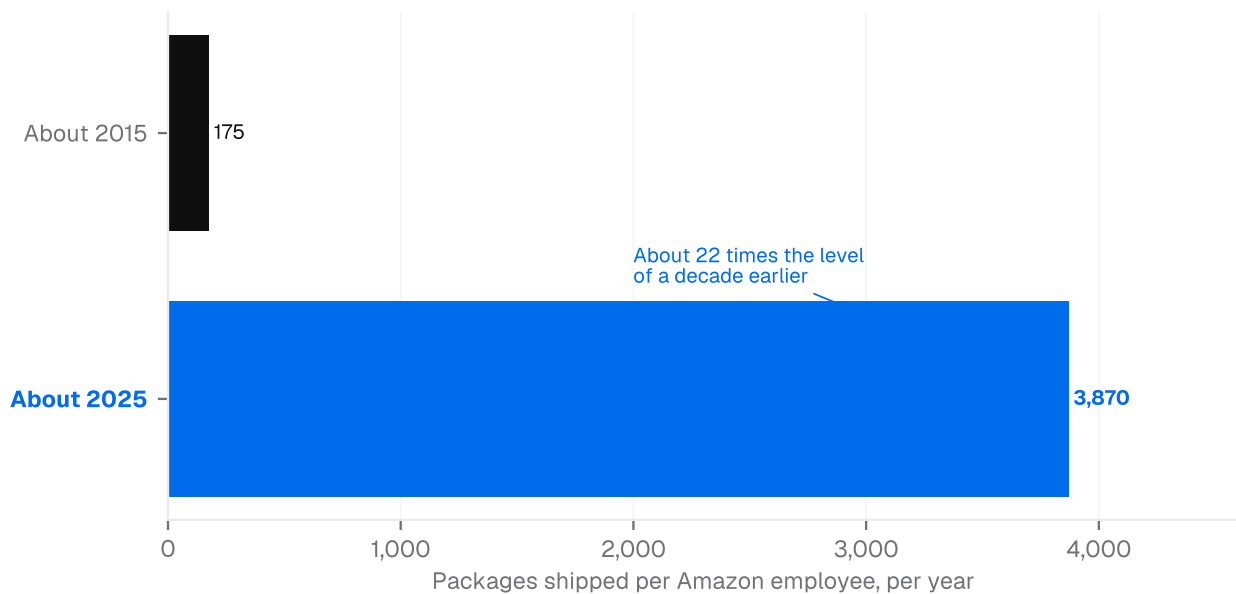
48. Center for AI Safety, "A Significant Increase in Digital Labor Automation" (2026-07-01). <https://safe.ai/blog/significant-increase-in-digital-labor-automation>



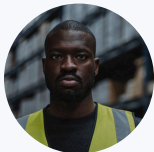
CHAPTER 7 · MARCUS AND JÜRGEN

Robots take over warehouse work, and German car plants cut jobs for reasons not traced to AI

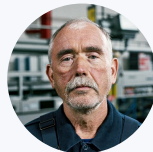
Amazon's warehouses need far fewer people per package than a decade ago. A truck license lifts a warehouse mover's median pay by about half. German car-industry jobs fell 6.3% in the year to September 2025. One search in this research found no source blaming AI.



Amazon ships about 22 times as many packages per employee a year as a decade ago.^{99,100}



Marcus, 36. Warehouse worker, Indiana. Picks and packs in a fulfillment center where robots move the shelves. Wants better pay and fewer night shifts.



Jürgen, 57. Auto-parts plant, near Stuttgart. Has worked the same line for twenty years. Wants to reach retirement in the job he knows.

+53%

Higher US median pay for a truck driver than for a material mover¹⁰¹

-6.3%

Fall in German car-industry jobs in one year, to the lowest level since 2011¹⁰²

99. GeekWire (press, citing the Wall Street Journal), "Amazon's robot workforce hits 1 million (citing the Wall Street Journal)" (2025-07-01). <https://www.geekwire.com/2025/amazons-robot-workforce-hits-1-million-heres-what-they-all-do/>

100. Computed from GeekWire (press, citing the Wall Street Journal) [99]: Packages shipped per Amazon employee a year rose about 22 times over a decade.

101. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [104, 106]: A US warehouse worker who becomes a heavy truck driver would earn about 53% more, at occupation medians.

102. Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), "Stellenabbau in der Automobilindustrie (Pressemitteilung PD25_N067_42)" (2025-11-20). https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2025/11/PD25_N067_42.html

A warehouse now needs fewer people for every package

2026

Marcus starts his night shift. The shelves come to him now, carried by robots, and he picks from them without walking the aisles. He is fast. The building around him feels emptier every year.

It is emptier. Amazon deployed its one millionth robot by July 2025¹⁰³. In 2024 its facilities averaged about 670 employees each, the lowest in at least 16 years, on a Wall Street Journal count⁹⁹. Over the same decade, packages shipped per employee rose from 175 a year to nearly 3,870, about 22 times as many^{99,100}.

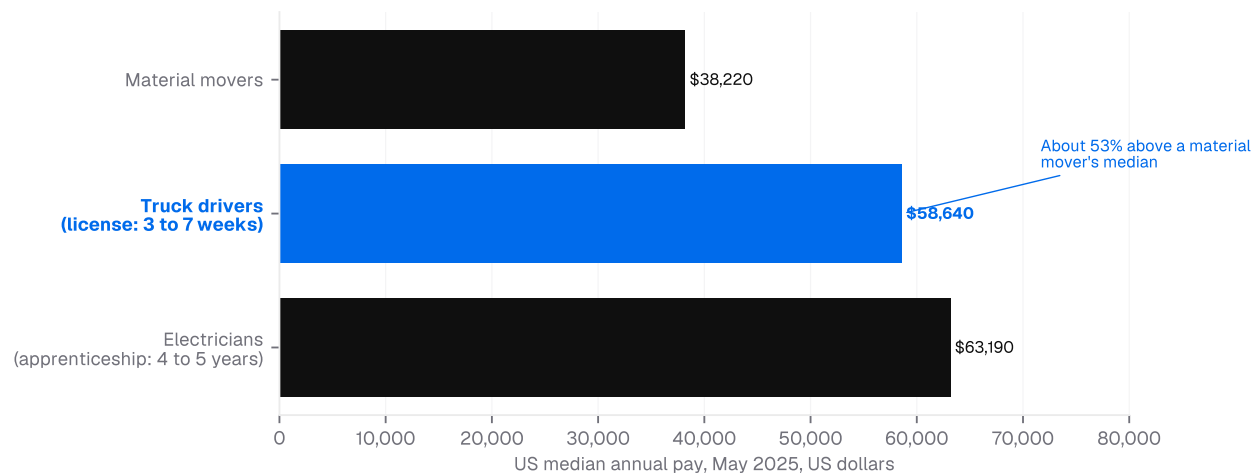
Robots take the walking and the lifting. The person who stays is paid like a mover: the US median for hand laborers and material movers is \$38,220 a year¹⁰⁴. Marcus still has his job. Each building needs fewer people than it did⁹⁹.

A truck license takes weeks and pays about half as much again

2027

Marcus signs up for a full-time course for a commercial driver's license (CDL), the license needed to drive a heavy truck. He passes and starts driving that year^{S20}. A full-time Class A course usually runs about 3 to 7 weeks¹⁰⁵.

The pay step is large. Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers earn a median \$58,640 a year, about 53% more than the median material mover^{101,106}. Both figures are medians for the whole occupation, experienced drivers included, so a first-year driver can start lower.



103. Amazon (company statement), "Amazon deploys its millionth robot" (2025-07-01). <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/operations/amazon-million-robots-ai-foundation-model>

99. GeekWire (press, citing the Wall Street Journal), "Amazon's robot workforce hits 1 million (citing the Wall Street Journal)" (2025-07-01).

<https://www.geekwire.com/2025/amazons-robot-workforce-hits-1-million-heres-what-they-all-do/>

100. Computed from GeekWire (press, citing the Wall Street Journal) [99]: Packages shipped per Amazon employee a year rose about 22 times over a decade.

104. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Hand Laborers and Material Movers" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/hand-laborers-and-material-movers.htm>

S20. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Marcus earns a commercial driving licence in 2027 and becomes a truck driver. Extends tradecareerpath.com (industry guide), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

105. tradecareerpath.com (industry guide), "Truck driver: how to get a Class A CDL" (2026-08-26). <https://tradecareerpath.com/trades/truck-driver/>

101. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [104, 106]: A US warehouse worker who becomes a heavy truck driver would earn about 53% more, at occupation medians.

106. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Heavy and Tractor-trailer Truck Drivers" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/heavy-and-tractor-trailer-truck-drivers.htm>

Exhibit 7.2. A license earned in weeks lifts median pay by about half; the electrician's extra pay takes four to five years of apprenticeship. US median annual pay, May 2025. Sources: ^{101,104,105,106,107}

The other door out of the warehouse is slower. Electricians earn a median \$63,190¹⁰⁷, after an apprenticeship of four or five years with about 2,000 hours a year of paid training on the job¹⁰⁷. Marcus has rent to pay. He picks the route that pays in weeks.

Many movers do not choose their moment. At the January 2026 survey, 65.3% of long-tenured US workers who lost jobs in production, transportation and material moving were back in work³¹.

Germany's car plants are shrinking, and Jürgen's clock is a rule change

2026

Jürgen's line runs short weeks now. The plant has put him on short-time work (Kurzarbeit): the state pays part of his wages while his hours are cut. He has worked this line for twenty years.

He is one of 501,800 workers on short-time work in February 2026¹⁰⁸. German car-industry employment was 721,400 at the end of the third quarter of 2025¹⁰². It fell 6.3% in a year, a loss of 48,700 jobs, to the lowest level since 2011¹⁰². German manufacturing jobs as a whole fell about 4.9% from 2022 to 2025¹⁰⁹. This research found no source that names AI as a cause of these losses¹¹⁰.

The rule that matters to Jürgen is a date. A firm can draw short-time allowance for up to 24 months until 31 December 2026, and for 12 months from 2027¹¹¹.

In 2027 the allowance runs out and the plant lets Jürgen go, at 58^{S21}. From 58, unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld I) runs up to 24 months for anyone insured for at least 48 months³³. It pays 60% of his previous net pay, or 67% of it for a claimant with a child³³.

In Germany, the unemployment rate for people aged 55 to 74 was 2.5% in 2025, a figure for the whole age group¹¹². In the US, 57.3% of long-tenured displaced workers aged 55 to 64 were back in work at the January 2026 survey³¹.

Romania's factories are shedding jobs too. Romanian manufacturing employment fell about 8.4% from 2022 to 2025, a loss of about 129,000 jobs^{113,114}. Continental confirmed about 870 job cuts in Romania, about 230 of them at its ContiTech plant in Timișoara¹¹⁵.

107. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Electricians" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/electricians.htm>

31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Displaced Workers Summary (January 2026 supplement)" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disp.nr0.htm>

108. Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), "Kurzarbeiter, saisonbereinigt" (2026).

<https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Wirtschaft/Konjunkturindikatoren/Arbeitsmarkt/karb840.html>

102. Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), "Stellenabbau in der Automobilindustrie (Pressemitteilung PD25_N067_42)" (2025-11-20).

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2025/11/PD25_N067_42.html

109. Computed from Eurostat [130]: German manufacturing employment fell about 4.9% from 2022 to 2025.

110. Not found in 1 independent search. No source on the 2022 to 2025 German automotive and industrial job losses that names AI as a cause was found in this research.

111. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Kurzarbeitergeld: Anzeige, Antrag, Berechnung" (2026).

<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/unternehmen/finanziell/kurzarbeitergeldformen/kurzarbeitergeld-anzeige-antrag-berechnung>

S21. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jürgen's plant ends short-time work at the end of 2026 and dismisses him in 2027, at 58. Extends Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

33. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer" (2026). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/arbeitslos-arbeit-finden/arbeitslosengeld/finanzielle-hilfen/arbeitslosengeld-anspruch-hoehe-dauer>

112. Eurostat, "Unemployment by sex and age, annual data (une_rt_a), ages 55 to 74" (2026).

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une_rt_a/default/table?lang=en

113. Computed from Eurostat [130]: Romanian manufacturing employment fell about 8.4% from 2022 to 2025.

114. Computed from Eurostat [130]: Romania lost about 129,000 manufacturing jobs from 2022 to 2025.

115. EconoMedia (press), "Confirmare: Continental face concedieri in Romania" (2025-06-04). <https://econoMedia.ro/confirmare-continental-face-concedieri-in-romania-870-de-angajati-raman-fara-locuri-de-munca-la-nivel-national-compania-motiveaza-masurile-vorbind-despre-un-context-de-piata-plin-de-provocari-pen.html>

At 58, a full retraining takes two years

Jürgen sits at the job center with three options on paper. None of them is the line he knows.

The short route is publicly funded further training (FbW), courses that update a worker's skills. People who took it were 12 percentage points more likely to be in unsubsidized work 180 days after the course than similar people who did not. In that comparison group, 45% were in such work⁴⁴. The long route is an Umschulung, a full retraining into a new trade. For men of all ages, its effect on employment reaches almost 18 points within four years of starting⁴⁶, and it usually takes two years⁴⁵. Started at 58, it ends at 60.

Care is the third. An elder-care assistant in Germany earns a median €2,785 gross a month¹¹⁶.

In 2035, the futures part over trucks and a recession

Driverless trucks are the open question for Marcus. Aurora's self-driving system had covered nearly 440,000 driverless miles by the end of June 2026¹¹⁷. Yet the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects US truck-driver jobs to grow 4% from 2025 to 2035¹⁰⁶. For Jürgen, the question is a recession⁵⁶.

Slow diffusion. AI tools spread and jobs change slowly. Truck-driver jobs grow as projected. Marcus drives, and Jürgen, retrained at 60, works his last years in the new trade⁵⁷.

Steady redesign. Total jobs follow the official projections, and people already in work keep their jobs. Marcus keeps his seat in the cab, and Jürgen keeps the work he retrained for⁵⁷.

Rapid substitution. The hiring gap reaches older workers, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Driverless trucks put Marcus's license at risk; an electrician apprenticeship is his hedge. Jürgen job-hunts in a downturn, when a German worker's earnings loss after a layoff nearly doubles^{50,57}.

44. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Geschäftsbericht 2024" (2025). https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/datei/geschaeftsbericht-2024_ba052936.pdf

46. IAB-Forum (Kruppe, Lang), "Geförderte berufliche Weiterbildung von Arbeitslosen: abnehmende Eintritte trotz positiver Wirkung" (2023-02-20). <https://iab-forum.de/gefoerderte-berufliche-weiterbildung-von-arbeitslosen-abnehmende-eintritte-trotz-positiver-wirkung/>

45. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Beruf wechseln: Rahmenbedingungen" (accessed 2026-09-23). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/karriere-und-weiterbildung/beruf-wechseln/rahmenbedingungen>

116. medi-karriere.de (press, citing BA Entgeltatlas), "Altenpflegehelfer Gehalt" (2026). <https://www.medi-karriere.de/medizinische-berufe/altenpflegehelfer-gehalt/>

117. Aurora Innovation (company filing, SEC), "Aurora Q2 2026 shareholder letter" (2026).

<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/0001828108/000182810826000075/aurora26q2shareholderlet.htm>

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

50. NBER (Schmieder, von Wachter, Heining), "The Costs of Job Displacement over the Business Cycle and Its Sources: Evidence from Germany, NBER w30162" (2022-06). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w30162>

If your work is in a warehouse or on a factory line

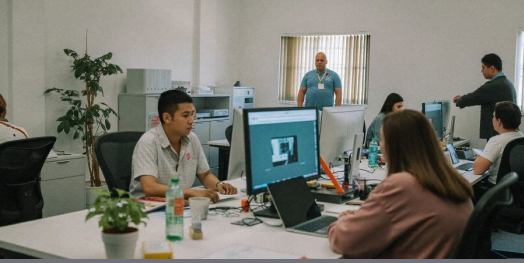
Amazon's warehouses employ fewer people each as robots multiply. Amazon had deployed its millionth robot by July 2025¹⁰³. Its facilities averaged about 670 employees in 2024, the lowest in at least 16 years⁹⁹.

A driving license is the fastest pay step. A full-time CDL course runs about 3 to 7 weeks¹⁰⁵. Truck drivers earn about 53% more than movers at the median¹⁰¹.

Keep a slower route in view. An electrician apprenticeship takes four or five years and is paid while you train¹⁰⁷.

In a German plant, watch the short-time work clock. From 2027 the allowance runs for 12 months, down from 24¹¹¹.

A full retraining pays, slowly. An Umschulung takes two years⁴⁵. For men of all ages, it raises employment by almost 18 points within four years⁴⁶.



SLOW DIFFUSION



STEADY REDESIGN



RAPID SUBSTITUTION

CONCLUSIONS · ALL TEN, IN 2035

Official forecasts show more jobs in 2035, but a first job may get harder to find

Official projections add jobs in the US and the EU-27 by 2035. Three possible futures differ on how many beginners get hired, on freelance work and on whether a recession hits.

In 2035 age in 2035	Slow diffusion tools spread slowly, hiring gap narrows	Steady redesign official totals, fewer beginners hired	Rapid substitution gap spreads, agents, recession
CARE HOLDS IN EVERY FUTURE			
 Rosa 61	Nursing assistant in home care; aide jobs projected +18% to 2035		
 Denise 53	In nursing after an aide course; her old job projected -5%		
THE HIRING GAP DECIDES			
 Jake 32	Training pays off; moves into analyst work	Reaches analyst work via his employer, years late	Stays in non-degree work; pay trails for years
 Radu 43	Leads his team; takes on juniors again	Reviews far more code; fewer juniors	Gap reaches older developers; his seat is exposed
AGENTS DECIDE			
 Léa 40	Commodity work thins slowly	Less commodity work, more AI-related projects	Agents complete most freelance projects
DRIVERLESS TRUCKS DECIDE			
 Marcus 45	Truck driver; driver jobs projected +4% to 2035		License at risk from driverless trucks; electrician is his hedge
A RECESSION DECIDES			
 Andreea 30	Welder in Medias; the plant keeps its welders after the orders		Orders end in 2030; a budget squeeze puts her job at risk
 Thomas 50	Retrained after his 2028 dismissal		Recession: German job losses cost nearly twice as much
 Katrin 56	In-house lawyer; the license holds, tasks change		Recession: losing her post costs nearly twice as much
 Jürgen 66	Lost his plant job in 2027; retrained at 60, works in the new trade		Job-hunts in a downturn; the earnings loss nearly doubles

Care workers keep their jobs in all three futures. The futures differ on the hiring of beginners, freelance work, driverless trucks and a recession⁵¹

5.9 million

More US jobs in 2035 than in 2025, in the BLS projection³⁴

19%

Below trend: employment of US workers aged 22 to 25 in highly AI-exposed jobs, June 2026²

51. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Home Health and Personal Care Aides" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home-health-aides-and-personal-care-aides.htm>

34. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections, 2025 to 2035 (news release)" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>

2. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update" (2026-08-12). <https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/canariesaug26/>

Both official forecasts have more jobs in 2035

2035

Both official forecasts point up. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects 5.9 million more jobs in 2035 than in 2025, a 3.5% rise in total US employment³⁴. Cedefop, the EU agency that forecasts skills and jobs, projects EU-27 employment to grow by over 4% between 2023 and 2035¹¹⁸.

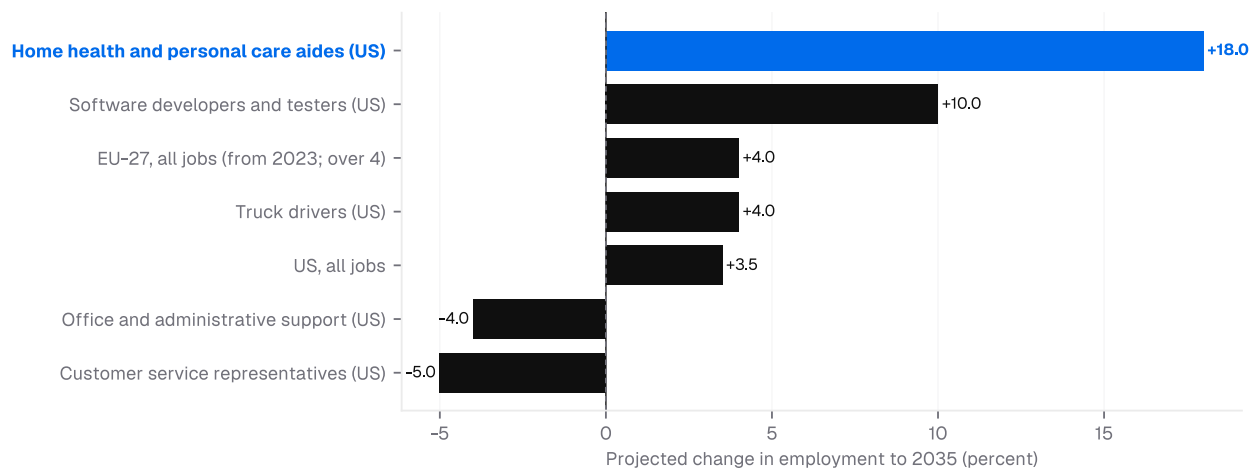


Exhibit 8.2. Care and software are projected to grow faster than the economy; office and customer-service work to shrink. Projected change in employment, US 2025 to 2035 and EU-27 2023 to 2035. Sources:

[32](#), [34](#), [51](#), [74](#), [106](#), [118](#)

Three scenarios frame the years to 2035, and none of them is a forecast^{S6}. In slow diffusion, AI changes jobs slowly and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. In steady redesign, fewer beginners are hired into office work exposed to AI. People already in work keep their jobs. In rapid substitution, the hiring gap reaches older workers and AI agents take most freelance projects. A recession hits, and exposed jobs do not come back.

Care holds Rosa and Denise in all three futures, at care's pay

Rosa is 61. In every future she drives the same streets between the same kind of clients, now as a nursing assistant^{S13}, ^{S7}.

34. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections, 2025 to 2035 (news release)" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>

118. Cedefop, "Cedefop updates skills forecast: new data to guide Europe's skills and labour market policy to 2035" (2026-07-21).

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/cedefop-updates-skills-forecast-new-data-guide-europes-skills-and-labour-market-policy-2035>

32. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Customer Service Representatives" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/customer-service-representatives.htm>

51. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Home Health and Personal Care Aides" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home-health-aides-and-personal-care-aides.htm>

74. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Software Developers, Quality Assurance Analysts, and Testers" (accessed 2026-09). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/software-developers.htm>

106. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Heavy and Tractor-trailer Truck Drivers" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/heavy-and-tractor-trailer-truck-drivers.htm>

S6. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Center for AI Safety, Stanford Digital Economy Lab (Brynjolfsson, Chandar, Chen), Scale AI Labs.

S13. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Rosa stays in home care through 2030 and trains as a nursing assistant. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cornell Legal Information Institute (U.S. regulation).

S7. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cedefop, Stanford Digital Economy Lab.

Care's weak point is pay. An aide's median hourly wage is about 70% of the median for all US workers⁶², and a nursing assistant's median was \$42,260 a year in 2025⁵².

Denise lost her customer-service seat in 2027^{S8}. By 2035 she works in nursing, after an aide course and then a practical nursing program of about a year^{S3, S12}. At the medians, a licensed practical nurse earns about 44% more than a customer service representative⁵⁵. Of long-tenured US workers who lost a sales or office job, about seven in ten were back at work at the last survey³¹.

A defense order decides Andreea's trade

Andreea stayed in Romania. In 2027 she took a free 720-hour state course in welding^{20, 21, S4}, and in 2028 she was hired as a welder at Rheinmetall Automecanica in Mediaș^{22, S5}. Rheinmetall expects Romania's €5.7 billion order to create thousands of jobs, with deliveries scheduled from 2028 to 2030²².

Her 2035 turns on what follows the deliveries^{S7}. In slow diffusion she is still welding at Mediaș. In steady redesign the plant keeps its skilled welders as manufacturing grows. Cedefop projects Romanian manufacturing employment to grow 2.3% a year from 2023 to 2030²⁷. In rapid substitution a recession and public spending cuts squeeze orders once deliveries end in 2030, and her job depends on new orders^{S7}.

For the young, the hiring gap decides

Jake is 32. Whether he holds the office job his degree pointed to depends on the hiring gap^{S7}. That is how far young workers in AI-exposed jobs have fallen behind peers in less-exposed jobs. In June 2026, employment of US workers aged 22 to 25 in these jobs stood about 19% below trend². Experienced workers in the same jobs showed no comparable gap². After a search of a few months he took a job that did not need his degree, and in 2027 entered sectoral training^{S1, S2, S3}. At Per Scholas, one such program, participants still earned 14% more than the control group in the seventh year¹⁰.

62. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51, 60]: A US home health aide's median hourly pay is about 70% of the national median wage.

52. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Nursing Assistants and Orderlies" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nursing-assistants.htm>

S8. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise's customer-service team is cut in 2027. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

53. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/licensed-practical-and-licensed-vocational-nurses.htm>

S12. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Denise certifies as a home health aide and later enrolls in a practical nursing programme. Extends Cornell Legal Information Institute (U.S. regulation), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

55. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [32, 53]: A US customer service representative becoming a licensed practical nurse would earn about 44% more, at occupation medians.

31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Displaced Workers Summary (January 2026 supplement)" (2026-08-27).

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disp.nr0.htm>

20. ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency), "Programe de formare profesionala pentru persoanele aflate in cautarea unui loc de munca" (n.d.).

<https://www.anofm.ro/programe-de-formare-profesionala-pentru-persoanele-aflate-in-cautarea-unui-loc-de-munca/>

21. ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency), "Programe de formare profesionala autorizate, CRFPA Dolj" (n.d.). <https://www.anofm.ro/crfpa-dolj/programe-de-formare-profesionala-autorizate/>

S4. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Andreea registers with the employment agency in 2027 and completes a free 720-hour qualification course as a welder. Extends ANOFM (Romanian National Employment Agency).

22. Rheinmetall AG (company press release), "Major historic international contract for Rheinmetall: Romania orders Lynx combat vehicles, vessels and air defence systems worth a total of EUR 5.7 billion" (2026-06-02). <https://www.rheinmetall.com/en/media/news-watch/news/2026/06/2026-06-02-major-historic-contract-in-romania-worth-5-7-billion>

S5. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Andreea is hired as a welder at Rheinmetall Automecanica in Mediaș in 2028, as work on Romania's Lynx order ramps up. Extends Rheinmetall AG (company press release).

27. Cedefop, "2025 skills forecast: Romania" (2025). https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/skills_forecast_-_romania_2025.pdf

2. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, "Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update" (2026-08-12).

<https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/canariesaug26/>

S1. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jake searches for about two and a half to six months after graduating in 2026, between the US median and mean spell of unemployment in progress. Extends Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS.

S2. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jake's first job does not require his degree. Extends Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

S3. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jake enters a sectoral training programme in 2027. Extends Economic Mobility Corporation (Roder, Elliott), MDRC, NBER (Katz, Roth, Hendra, Schaberg).

10. MDRC, "Employment and Earnings Effects of the WorkAdvance Demonstration After Seven Years" (2022-03).

<https://www.mdrc.org/work/publications/employment-and-earnings-effects-workadvance-demonstration-after-seven-years>

Slow diffusion. The gap narrows^{S6}. Jake's training pays off, and he moves from his first job into analyst work^{S7}.

Steady redesign. Hiring of beginners keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs^{S6}. Jake is one of them and reaches analyst work through his current employer, a few years behind his plan^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. The gap widens and a recession hits^{S6}. Canadian graduates who started work in a recession earned less for ten years³⁰. Jake stays in work that does not need his degree, and his pay trails for years^{S7}.

Radu sits on the other side of the same gap. He keeps his seat in Bucharest while his team stops hiring juniors^{S15}, and his days tilt toward reviewing and directing code that AI writes^{S14}. In the slow future his team takes on juniors again as the gap narrows^{S7}. BLS projects US software developer jobs to grow 10% from 2025 to 2035⁷⁴. In the rapid future the gap reaches older workers, and Radu's seat is exposed^{S6,S7}.

Agents decide the freelance market

Léa's inbox has fewer small illustration jobs than it had in 2026, and more requests that mention AI^{S16,S7}. Her brushes and online course pay for coffee^{S17}. In slow diffusion her craft work holds. In steady redesign, AI-related projects bring most of her income^{S7}. In rapid substitution, it depends on clients paying more for work made by a person. This research found no measure of such a premium⁹⁰.

After image generators arrived, image freelancers on Upwork lost 9.4% of their income. Writing freelancers' monthly earnings there fell 5.2% after ChatGPT⁸⁴. The next move depends on agents. On the Remote Labor Index, a test built from real paid freelance projects, the best agent completed 2.5% of the projects at launch⁴⁷. Eight months later it completed 15.8%⁴⁸. In the rapid future, agents complete most freelance projects^{S6}.

Driverless trucks decide Marcus's route

Marcus left the warehouse for a commercial driving license in 2027^{S20}. At the medians, a heavy truck driver earns about 53% more than a warehouse worker¹⁰¹. BLS projects truck-driver jobs to grow 4% from 2025 to 2035¹⁰⁶. In the slow and steady futures, he drives^{S7}.

30. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics (Oreopoulos, von Wachter, Heisz), "The Short- and Long-Term Career Effects of Graduating in a Recession" (2012-01). <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257%2Fapp.4.1.1>

S15. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Radu keeps his job to 2030 while his team stops hiring juniors. Extends Stanford Digital Economy Lab, Indeed Hiring Lab.

S14. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Radu's work shifts toward reviewing and directing AI-generated code. Extends Semafor (press, reporting a CEO statement), METR.

S16. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Léa loses part of her commodity illustration and copy work and moves toward AI-related projects. Extends Washington University Olin Business School, Upwork earnings call (transcript via The Globe and Mail / Motley Fool).

S17. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Léa's creator side income stays small. Extends MBO Partners (vendor survey), CreatorIQ (vendor).

90. Not found in 1 independent search. No measure of a price premium in money for human-made creative work was found in this research.

84. Washington University Olin Business School, "Study: AI tools cause a decline in freelance work and income, at least in the short run" (2023-08).

<https://olin.washu.edu/about/news-and-media/news/2023/08/study-ai-tools-cause-a-decline-in-freelance-work-and-income-at-least-in-the-short-run.php>

47. Scale AI Labs, "Remote Labor Index" (2025-10-28). <https://labs.scale.com/papers/rii>

48. Center for AI Safety, "A Significant Increase in Digital Labor Automation" (2026-07-01). <https://safe.ai/blog/significant-increase-in-digital-labor-automation>

S20. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Marcus earns a commercial driving licence in 2027 and becomes a truck driver. Extends tradecareerpath.com (industry guide), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

101. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [104, 106]: A US warehouse worker who becomes a heavy truck driver would earn about 53% more, at occupation medians.

In the rapid future, driverless trucks put his license at risk, and an electrician apprenticeship is his hedge^{S7}. Aurora's driverless trucks had logged nearly 440,000 miles by the end of June 2026¹¹⁷. The apprenticeship runs four or five paid years, and electricians earn a median \$63,190¹⁰⁷. At the last survey, 65.3% of long-tenured US workers who lost a production, transport or material-moving job were back at work³¹.

In Germany, a recession nearly doubles what a layoff costs

Thomas was let go from his Leipzig back office in 2028^{S10}. He took publicly funded training^{S11}. Six months after such courses, 45% of similar people without training were in work, and trainees did 12 percentage points better⁴⁴.

Katrin moved from the small practice in Kassel to an in-house legal post in 2028^{S19}. In-house counsel were a growing part of the German bar. Their number rose 11.45% in a year⁹⁶. A low-confidence prediction holds that licensed professions keep their headcount to 2030 while their tasks change^{S18}. A license makes a named, admitted person answerable for the advice^{S22}.

Jürgen's plant ended short-time work (Kurzarbeit: the state pays part of wages while hours are cut) at the end of 2026 and let him go in 2027^{S21}. He was 58, an age at which unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld I) runs up to 24 months³³. German car-industry jobs fell 6.3% in the year to autumn 2025¹⁰².

The earnings a German worker loses after a layoff are large and lasting, and they nearly double in a downturn⁵⁰. In US records, men laid off in a mass layoff lost 1.4 years of earnings when the unemployment rate was under 6%¹¹⁹. When it was over 8%, they lost 2.8 years¹¹⁹.

117. Aurora Innovation (company filing, SEC), "Aurora Q2 2026 shareholder letter" (2026).

<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/0001828108/000182810826000075/aurora26q2shareholderlet.htm>

107. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Electricians" (2026-08-27). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/electricians.htm>

S10. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Thomas's employer consolidates its back office and dismisses him in 2028. Extends International Labour Organization.

S11. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Thomas takes publicly funded training after his dismissal. Extends Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

44. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Geschäftsbericht 2024" (2025). https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/datei/geschaeftsbericht-2024_ba052936.pdf

S19. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Katrin moves from her small firm to an in-house legal role in 2028. Extends Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer.

96. Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer, "Mitglieder- und Fachanwaltsstatistik zum 01.01.2025" (2025). <https://www.brak.de/presse/presseerklarungen/der-brak-2025/mitglieder-und-fachanwaltsstatistik-zum-01012025/>

S18. Speculation, not a sourced figure. The underlying study predicts, with low confidence, that licensed professions keep their headcount to 2030 while their tasks change. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

S22. Speculation, not a sourced figure. A license makes a named, admitted person answerable for the advice or the care given. Extends U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

S21. Speculation, not a sourced figure. Jürgen's plant ends short-time work at the end of 2026 and dismisses him in 2027, at 58. Extends Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

33. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer" (2026). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/arbeitslos-arbeit-finden/arbeitslosengeld/finanzielle-hilfen/arbeitslosengeld-anspruch-hoehe-dauer>

102. Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), "Stellenabbau in der Automobilindustrie (Pressemitteilung PD25_N067_42)" (2025-11-20). https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2025/11/PD25_N067_42.html

50. NBER (Schmieder, von Wachter, Heining), "The Costs of Job Displacement over the Business Cycle and Its Sources: Evidence from Germany, NBER w30162" (2022-06). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w30162>

119. NBER (Davis, von Wachter), "Recessions and the Costs of Job Loss, NBER w17638" (2011-12). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w17638>

Slow diffusion. Thomas has retrained and is back at work^{S7}. Katrin still does most of her company's legal work herself^{S7}. Jürgen finished a two-year retraining at 60 and works his last years in the new trade^{45,S7}.

Steady redesign. Thomas has retrained and holds his new job^{S7}. Katrin keeps her seat, and her day shifts toward checking and signing drafts that software writes^{S7}. Jürgen keeps the work he retrained for^{S7}.

Rapid substitution. Thomas's search runs into the recession^{S7}. If her department closes, Katrin, at 56, falls between the 12 months of benefit that apply before 50 and the 24 months that apply from 58^{33,S7}. Jürgen job-hunts in the downturn, when a German worker's earnings loss nearly doubles^{50,S7}.

What the ten lives add up to

Across the ten lives, the change arrives through hiring before it arrives through layoffs. Jake meets it in 2026, in his first search^{S1}. Radu, in exposed work too, keeps his seat, and experienced workers in exposed jobs show no comparable gap^{2,S15}.

When a job is lost, the cost lies in the search and in the next job's pay. In August 2026, half of unemployed Americans had been looking for about 2.6 months or more⁶. In 2026, only 49% of US workers laid off after three or more years who found full-time work again earned as much as before³¹.

Care grows fastest of the jobs in Exhibit 8.2, but an aide earns about 70% of the US median wage^{51,62}. Better pay comes one step up, as a practical nurse, after about a year of training^{53,55}.

Retraining works when it is aimed at a trade with openings. Randomized trials of programs that train people for one industry found earnings gains of 11 to 40% after training ended⁹. In Germany, a two-year retraining raises men's employment by almost 18 percentage points within four years^{45,46}.

Not every loss is AI's. For the German car and industrial job losses of 2022 to 2025, one search in this research found no source that names AI as the cause¹¹⁰. Andreea's Romania has the EU's highest share of young people out of work and school, in a country where few firms use AI^{4,13}.

We believe the next decade will be decided at the entry level, where people look for a first job. The official forecasts add jobs overall³⁴. The three futures differ on whether beginners like Jake, and the juniors Radu no longer hires, get a way in^{2,S15,S6}.

45. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "Beruf wechseln: Rahmenbedingungen" (accessed 2026-09-23). <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/karriere-und-weiterbildung/beruf-wechseln/rahmenbedingungen>

6. Computed from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED), source BLS [120]: The median US spell of unemployment in progress was about 2.6 months in August 2026.

9. NBER (Katz, Roth, Hendra, Schaberg), "Why Do Sectoral Employment Programs Work? NBER w28248" (2020-12). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w28248>

46. IAB-Forum (Kruppe, Lang), "Geförderte berufliche Weiterbildung von Arbeitslosen: abnehmende Eintritte trotz positiver Wirkung" (2023-02-20). <https://iab-forum.de/gefoerderte-berufliche-weiterbildung-von-arbeitslosen-abnehmende-eintritte-trotz-positiver-wirkung/>

110. Not found in 1 independent search. No source on the 2022 to 2025 German automotive and industrial job losses that names AI as a cause was found in this research.

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13. Eurostat, "Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises (Statistics Explained)" (2025-12). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Use_of_artificial_intelligence_in_enterprises

If you are planning your working life to 2035

More jobs overall says little about your first one. In June 2026, young US workers in highly AI-exposed jobs were already 19% below trend².

Care holds in every future, at low pay. BLS projects aide jobs to grow 18% to 2035⁵¹. An aide earns about \$2,980 a month^{56,57}.

Plan for a recession as much as for a robot. A mass layoff when the unemployment rate was above 8% cost US men 2.8 years of earnings¹¹⁹. Under 6%, it cost 1.4 years¹¹⁹.

Check the next hiring-gap reading. A wider gap points toward the rapid future^{2,56}.

56. Computed from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [51]: The median US home health and personal care aide earns about \$2,980 a month before tax (May 2025).

Further reading

Canaries in the coal mine, August 2026 update, Stanford Digital Economy Lab. The payroll study behind the fall in hiring of 22 to 25 year olds, updated with each new wave of data.²

Displaced Workers Summary, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Every few years, how many long-tenured workers lost their jobs, how many found new ones, and what the new jobs pay.³¹

Employment Projections, 2025 to 2035, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The official ten-year outlook by occupation, including which jobs grow and which shrink.³⁴

Occupational Outlook Handbook: Home Health and Personal Care Aides, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Pay, training and outlook for home care work, the job Rosa does; the handbook has a page like it for most occupations.⁵¹

Skills forecast to 2035, Cedefop. The European counterpart to the US projections, with employment by sector and occupation for each EU country.¹¹⁸

Why Do Sectoral Employment Programs Work?, NBER. What the training programs with measured earnings gains have in common.⁹

Eleven-Year Gains: Project QUEST, Economic Mobility Corporation. Eleven years of follow-up on one training program, the longest measured payoff found.⁷³

Arbeitslosengeld: Anspruch, Höhe, Dauer, Bundesagentur für Arbeit. Who qualifies for German unemployment benefit, how much it pays and for how long (in German).³³

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4. Eurostat, *Young people neither in employment nor in education or training, 2025* (2026-05-28). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20260528-2> ref 4
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Speculation

1. **S1** Jake searches for about two and a half to six months after graduating in 2026, between the US median and mean spell of unemployment in progress. His spell is placed between the US median and mean spell in progress; the length for any one graduate is illustrative
2. **S2** Jake's first job does not require his degree. About two in five recent graduates are underemployed; which side of that line he lands on is illustrative
3. **S3** Jake enters a sectoral training programme in 2027. Sectoral programmes are the training with measured earnings gains; his choice and its timing are illustrative
4. **S4** Andreea registers with the employment agency in 2027 and completes a free 720-hour qualification course as a welder. The national employment agency runs free qualification courses for the unemployed, and a level-3 course, which includes welding, lasts 720 hours; the year and the trade are illustrative
5. **S5** Andreea is hired as a welder at Rheinmetall Automecanica in Medias in 2028, as work on Romania's Lynx order ramps up. Romania's Rheinmetall order is expected to create thousands of jobs, with deliveries from 2028 to 2030 and over half of production in Romania; the subsidiary is based in Medias. Her hiring and its year are illustrative
6. **S6** Three futures for 2035. Slow diffusion: AI tools spread and jobs change slowly, and the hiring gap for young workers narrows. Steady redesign: total jobs follow the official projections, hiring of beginners into exposed office work keeps shrinking, and people already in work keep their jobs. Rapid substitution: the hiring gap widens and reaches older workers, AI agents complete most freelance projects, and a recession hits in which exposed jobs do not come back. Scenarios defined by the underlying study from signals whose thresholds were fixed before the evidence was read; they describe ways the future could go and are not forecasts
7. **S7** Where each of the ten people stands in 2035 under each of the three futures. Each chapter's fork applied to its people; the positions are illustrative
8. **S8** Denise's customer-service team is cut in 2027. Customer service representatives are projected to shrink; the year her team is cut is illustrative
9. **S9** Denise is out of work for several months, between the median and the mean spell. Her spell is placed between the US median and mean spell in progress; the length for any one worker is illustrative
10. **S10** Thomas's employer consolidates its back office and dismisses him in 2028. Clerical work is the most exposed family; the event and its year are illustrative
11. **S11** Thomas takes publicly funded training after his dismissal. Publicly funded training measurably raises re-employment in Germany; his choice is illustrative
12. **S12** Denise certifies as a home health aide and later enrolls in a practical nursing programme. Aide certification takes 75 hours and a practical nursing programme about a year; her sequence is illustrative
13. **S13** Rosa stays in home care through 2030 and trains as a nursing assistant. Home care grows in every scenario and nursing assistants earn more after a short course; her path is illustrative
14. **S14** Radu's work shifts toward reviewing and directing AI-generated code. Large firms report most new code is AI-generated while a trial found experienced developers slower with AI; how one developer's job changes is speculation
15. **S15** Radu keeps his job to 2030 while his team stops hiring juniors. Experienced workers show no comparable gap while entry-level software postings are scarce; applying both to one Bucharest team is speculation
16. **S16** Léa loses part of her commodity illustration and copy work and moves toward AI-related projects. Freelancers in images and writing lost income while AI-related work grew; her mix is illustrative
17. **S17** Léa's creator side income stays small. Most creators earn modest sums and the top tenth take most payments; her outcome is illustrative
18. **S18** The underlying study predicts, with low confidence, that licensed professions keep their headcount to 2030 while their tasks change. The underlying study's own prediction, graded low confidence: licensing makes a named person answerable for the work, and no measured decline in licensed headcount was found
19. **S19** Katrin moves from her small firm to an in-house legal role in 2028. In-house counsel is the growing segment of the German bar; her move and its year are illustrative
20. **S20** Marcus earns a commercial driving licence in 2027 and becomes a truck driver. A full-time CDL course takes weeks and truck drivers earn more than material movers; his move and its year are illustrative
21. **S21** Jürgen's plant ends short-time work at the end of 2026 and dismisses him in 2027, at 58. Short-time work allowance shortens from 24 to 12 months in 2027; his dismissal and its timing are illustrative
22. **S22** A license makes a named, admitted person answerable for the advice or the care given. How the underlying study reads licensing as a brake on replacing people with software

Photographs: AI-generated illustrations.