BioSpace

Biopharma Job Market Report

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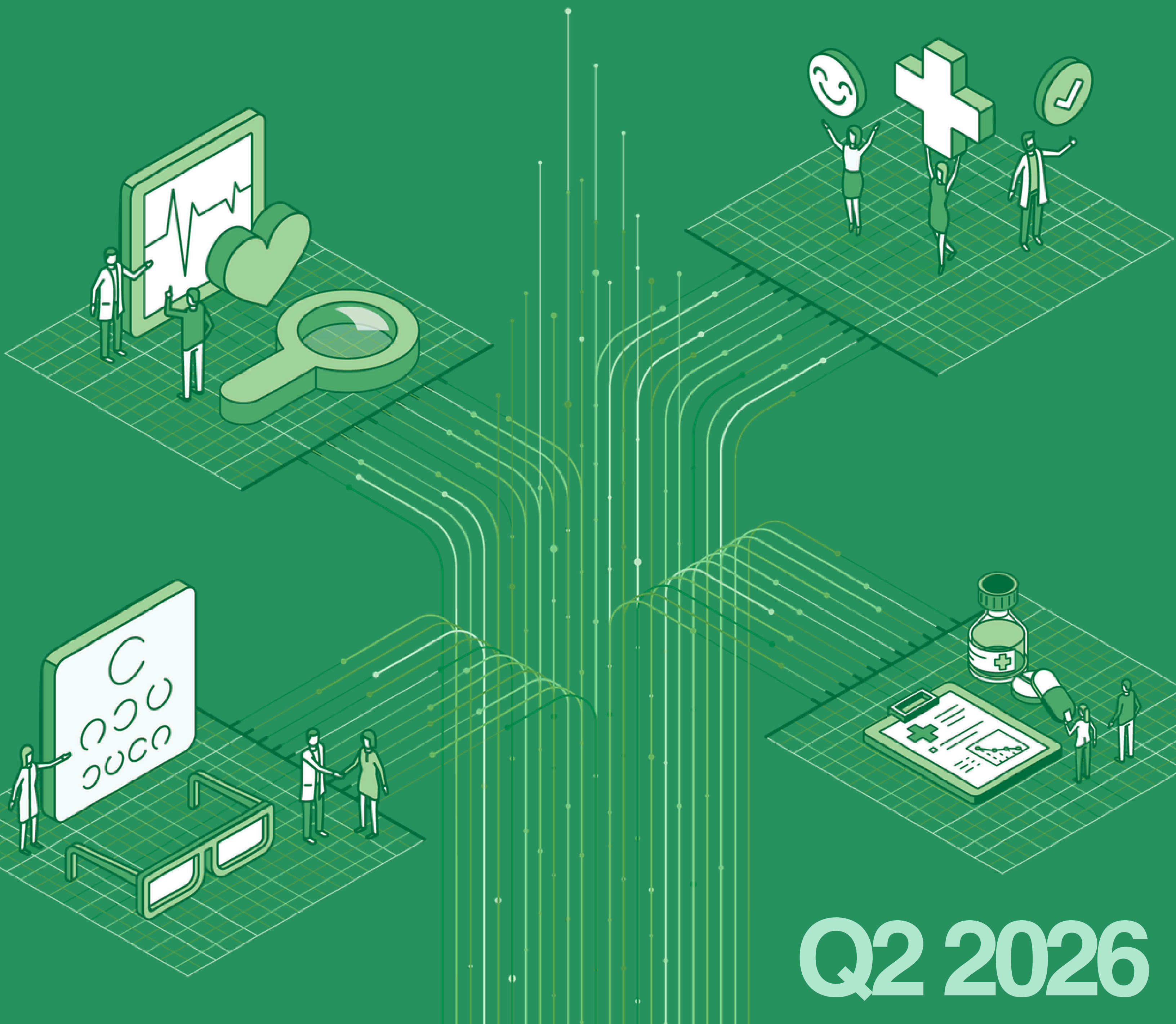
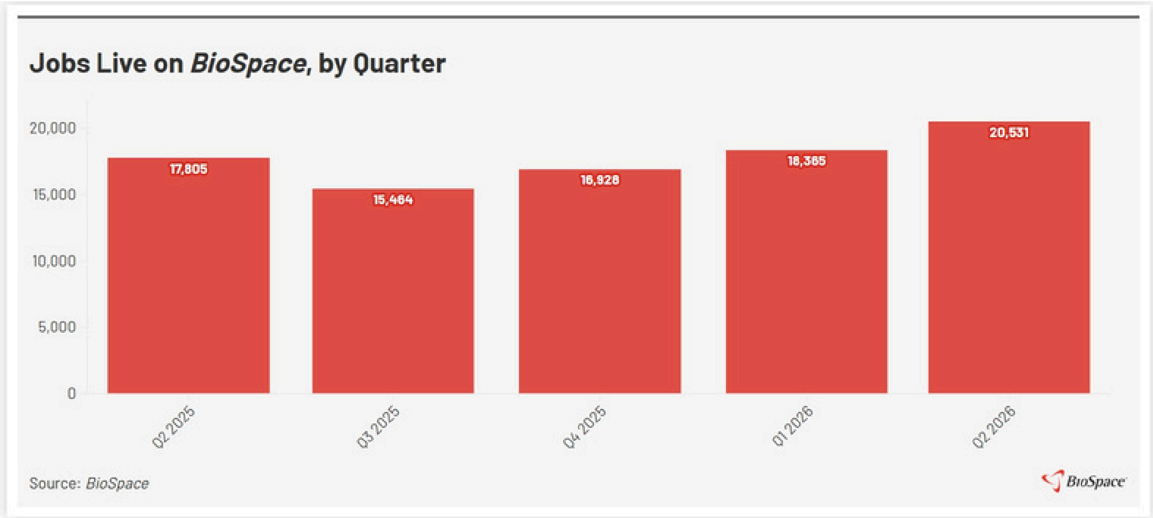


Q2 2026

Job postings increase on BioSpace

The second quarter brought encouraging signals for talent acquisition teams. Year over year, job postings live on the *BioSpace* website increased, pointing to renewed hiring activity. In addition, as the first half of 2026 ended, upticks in mergers and acquisitions (M&As) and initial public offerings (IPOs) offered a positive sign for the industry's health, suggesting employers should be prepared for increased hiring demand and a more competitive talent market ahead.

During Q2, job postings live on *BioSpace* rose 15% year over year and 12% quarter over quarter. It was the third straight quarter-over-quarter increase, with 10% and 8% bumps in Q4 2025 and Q1 2026, respectively.



Other notable job developments included:

- At least 5,000 pharma positions were live during every month of Q2, the first time that's happened since Q1 2024.
- Science/research and development (R&D) jobs live topped 3,000 in May, at 3,032, the first monthly total of at least 3,000 since November 2024. Positions live ticked up further in June to 3,119.
- Also in June, biotech R&D positions live surged 42% year over year. In addition, they increased month over month for the sixth consecutive time. That represents the longest monthly growth streak since a three-month run from June to August 2024.

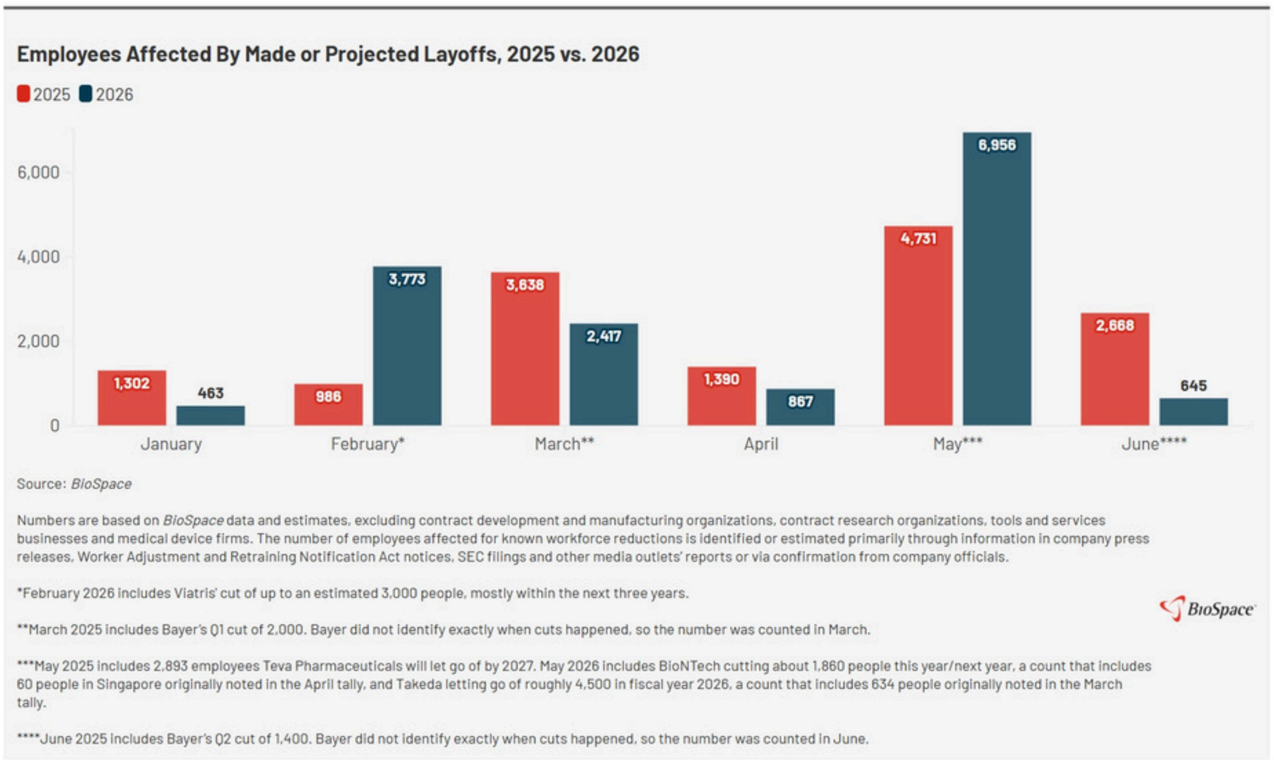
Also noteworthy: There was slightly less competition for biopharma jobs in the second quarter. During Q1, *BioSpace* received an average of about five applications per job posting. In Q2, that number dipped to 4.4.

Fewer companies make or plan cuts

Layoffs also showed improvement in the second quarter of this year. From April through June, 26 biopharma companies let go or projected they would let go of 8,383 employees, down from Q2 2025, when 64 biopharmas planned to cut 8,789 people. That represents a 59% drop in biopharmas making or planning layoffs and a 5% dip in the number of people affected.

The results were more mixed when comparing the first two quarters of 2026. More people were impacted in the second quarter (8,383) than in the first (6,653). However, fewer companies drove those layoffs (26 vs. 36).

In terms of the number of people affected, May proved the roughest month for downsizing so far this year. Layoffs hit nearly 7,000 employees due mostly to two large rounds of cuts. Takeda disclosed it will let go of about 4,500 people in fiscal year 2026, while BioNTech announced manufacturing facility closures by the end of 2027 will eliminate about 1,860 jobs.



June cuts affected the fewest staffers in the second quarter and represented the second fewest of 2026, with 10 companies letting go or planning to let go of 645 employees.

H1 M&A, IPO activity jump significantly

With funding issues often cited as a reason the job market is slow, it's worth noting that strong M&A and IPO activity in the first half of the year contributed to positive sentiment at BIO 2026 last month.

There were 52 mergers and acquisitions in H1 2026 compared to around 30 in H1 2025, according to BioSpace tallies. Of the 52 deals, 31 were announced in the second quarter, including six of Eli Lilly's nine buyouts. Lilly was the most active company in M&A, committing more than $25 billion across its acquisitions.

As for IPOs, there were 18 in the first half of the year, including seven in Q2, according to *BioSpace* tallies. That figure already more than doubles the total number of companies that went public in 2025. Two of this year's IPOs, by Kailera Therapeutics and Parabilis Medicines, set records as the biggest biotech debuts ever, with $625 million and $670 million raises less than two months apart.

BLS, ADP reports show mixed outlook

For those eyeing opportunities outside the biopharma industry, recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and ADP reports indicate the overall job market is having some challenges. BLS data for June showed that the U.S. added 57,000 jobs. However, that figure missed the Dow Jones consensus forecast of 115,000, according to CNBC. In addition, BLS revised the jobs added for April from 179,000 to 148,000 and for May from 172,000 to 129,000, a difference of 74,000 positions total.

ADP's monthly employment report produced in collaboration with the Stanford Digital Economy Lab also showed jobs added in June, with U.S. private sector employment rising by 98,000. However, there was a caveat.

"The pace of hiring is telling a story of both supply and demand," ADP Chief Economist Nela Richardson noted in the report's press release. "We know it's taking people longer to find work, but there also are signs of labor supply constraints in certain industries. For now, the overall effect is a slowdown in job creation."

Job market turnaround timing still questionable

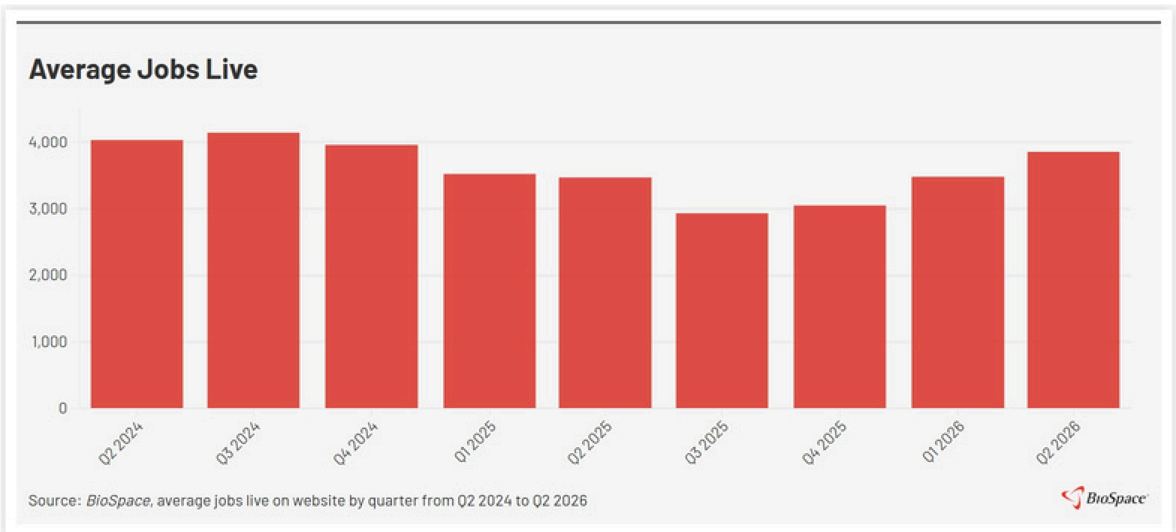
As to where the biopharma job market is headed, opinions are mixed. In a *BioSpace* article last month, experts were split on when it will turn around. Kim Laipple, president of Scientific Search, and Melinda Emig, founder and CEO of BioPharma Select, said a rebound in hiring has already started, based on business activity. However, Graig Suvannavejh, managing director and senior biotech and biopharma analyst at Mizuho Securities, said a turnaround is unlikely until 2027.

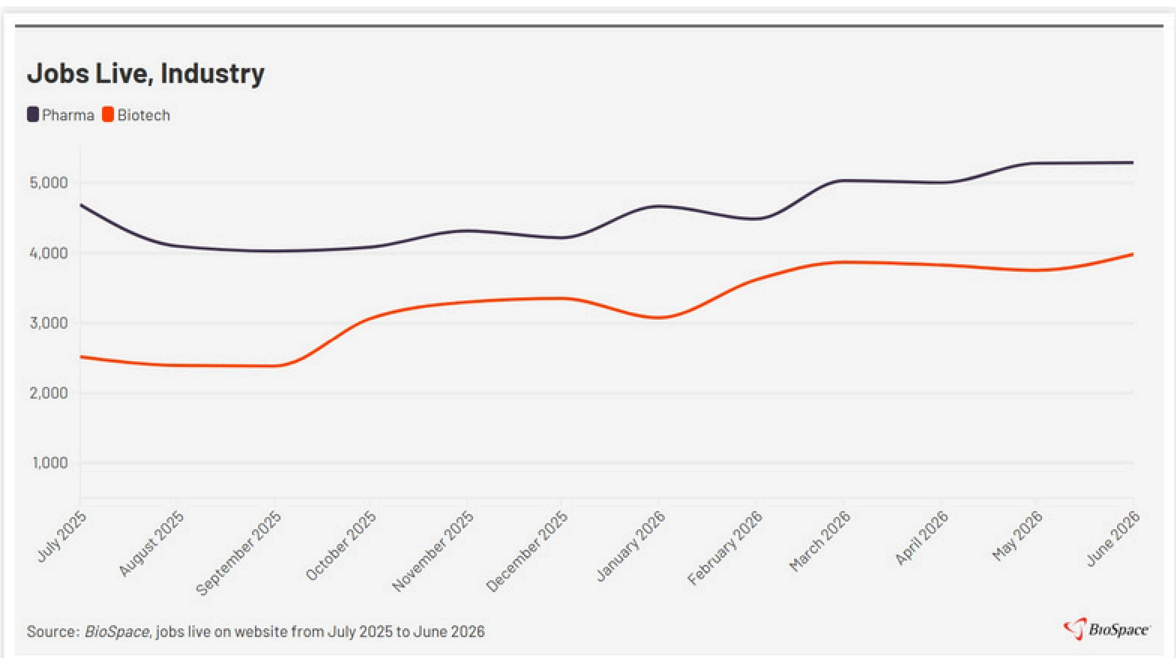
A *BioSpace* LinkedIn poll had a similar finding, showing that 77% of respondents didn't expect a change in the job market until at least next year.

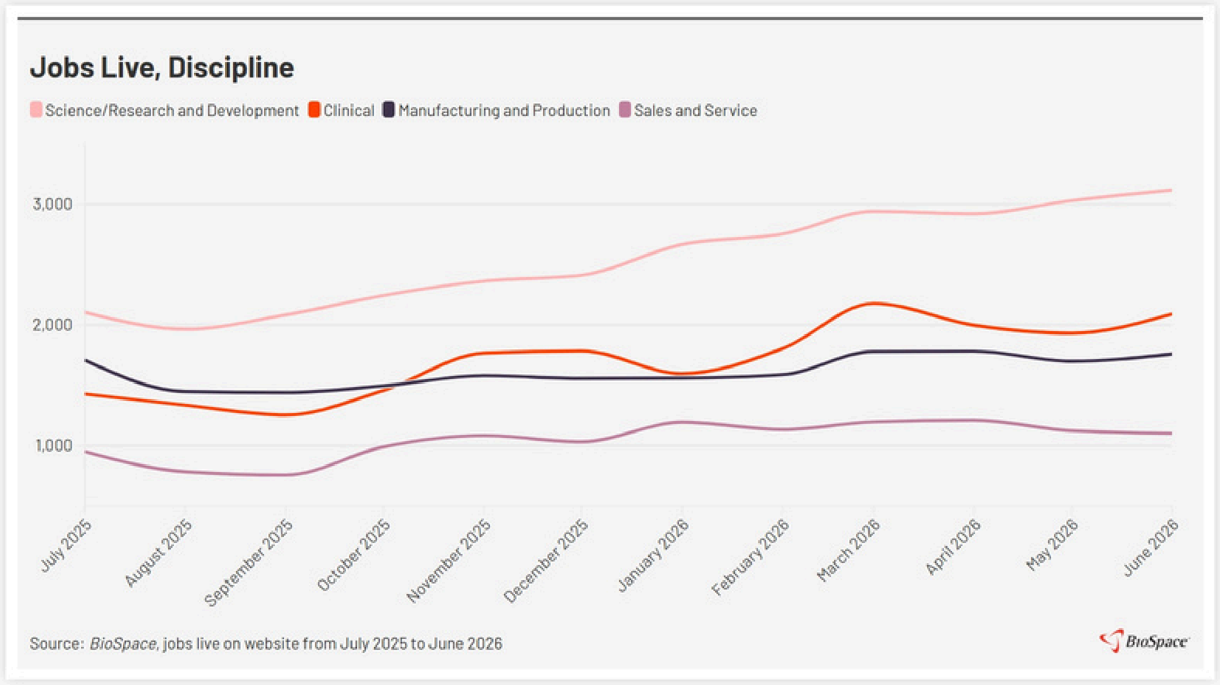
Suvannavejh noted that while there have been a decent number of IPOs and M&A in 2026, they don't outweigh the modern-day pressures biopharmas face.

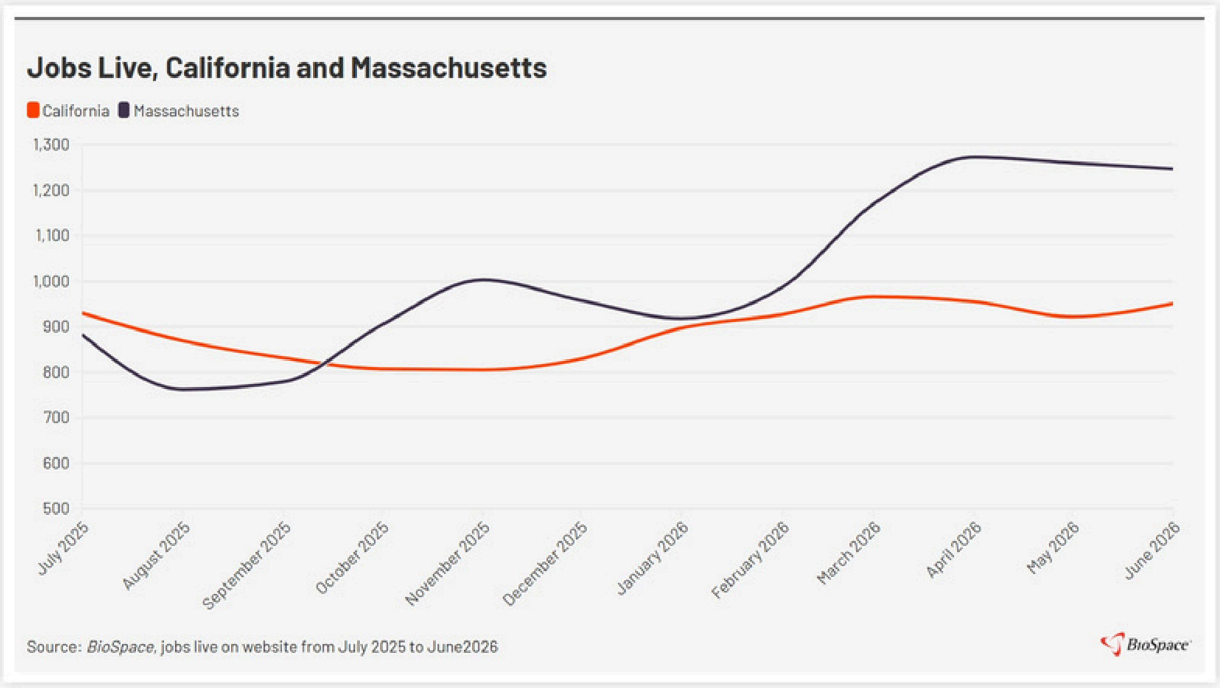
"As someone who roots for everybody—investors, companies, employees—I wish I could say that a turnaround in the biopharma job market were coming soon, but I think it's going to take awhile," he said. "And I think it's going to take awhile primarily because of increasing focus on being as cost-efficient as possible."

Job Activity Trends









**Layoff numbers exclude contract development and manufacturing organizations, contract research organizations, tools and services businesses and medical device firms. To tally the cuts, BioSpace compiles data for known workforce reductions. The number of employees affected is identified or estimated primarily through information in company press releases, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices, SEC filings and other media outlets' reports or via confirmation from company officials.*

Not all companies disclose downsizing, and some share only the percentage of staff affected. Some biopharmas provide total numbers retrospectively rather than disclosing individual workforce reductions as they happen.

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