

2025 U.S. Life Sciences

Employment Outlook



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Introduction

In January 2024, when *BioSpace* released the 2024 U.S. Life Sciences Employment Outlook report, biopharma had emerged from an incredibly challenging year for funding. The J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference had exuded a sense of “cautious optimism” that funding, and the biopharma industry as a whole, would bounce back.

Concern about the economic environment remains high, though outlook on fundraising has improved slightly.

Do you anticipate a change in the fundraising environment in 2025?

29%

Yes, I think
fundraising will
get harder

41%

No, I think it
will stay the
same

30%

Yes, I think
fundraising will
get easier

Are you concerned about the economic climate?

42%

Yes, very
concerned

46%

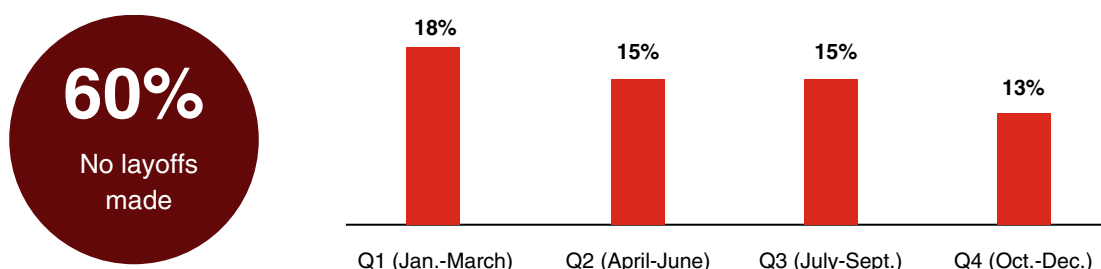
Yes, somewhat
concerned

12%

No, not
concerned

Layoffs continued to dominate headlines throughout 2024, impacting about 24,000 biopharma professionals, according to *BioSpace* tallies. Those cuts were at companies of all sizes, including Big Pharma businesses such as Bayer, Bristol Myers Squibb and Johnson & Johnson.

Percentage of surveyed organizations that made layoffs in 2024, by quarter



Top Reasons for Unemployment

38% Laid off due to general cost-saving measures

14% Laid off due to program getting cut

10% Resigned for personal or family reasons

6% Laid off due to company closure

6% Contract termed

5% Laid off after merger/acquisition

4% Terminated

3% Returned to education

»» 20% of employers anticipate making layoffs in 2025

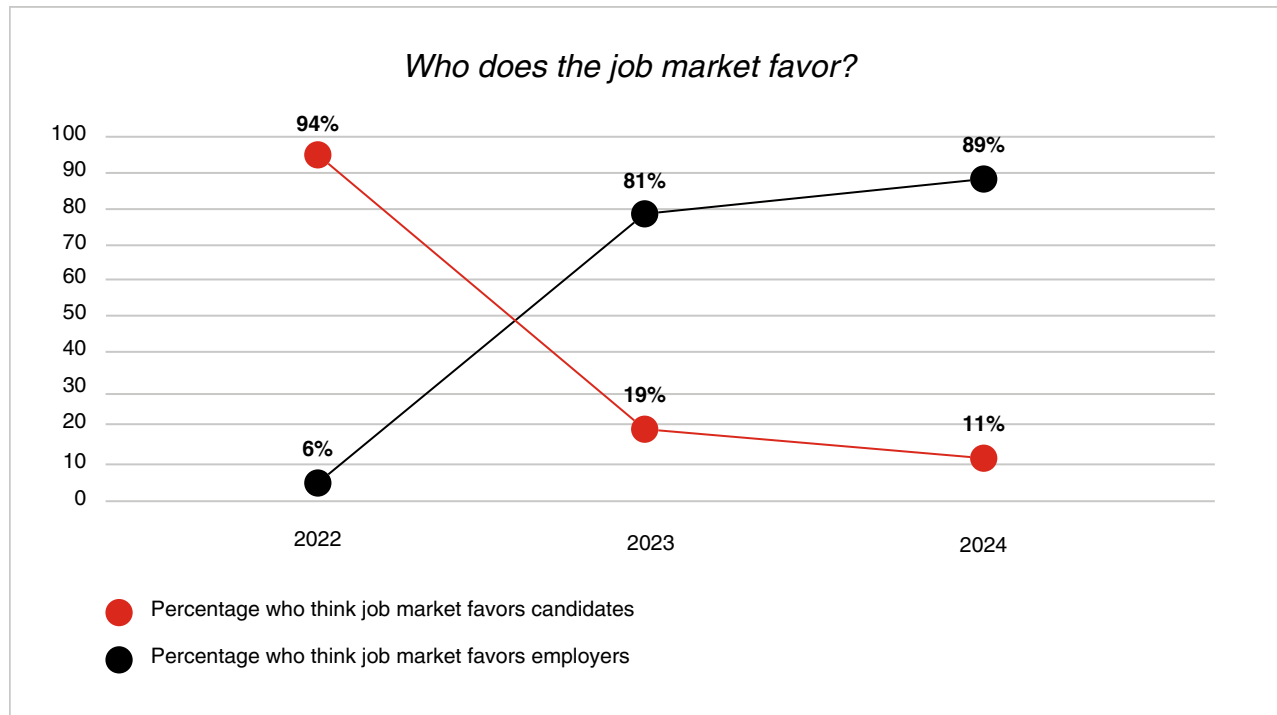
20% of surveyed employers anticipate making layoffs in 2025—the same percentage as those surveyed last year. Of those organizations that reported layoffs in 2024, 18% reported they occurred in the first quarter, compared to 13% who had them in the fourth quarter.

However, there is hope things will improve in the year ahead. 59% of organizations surveyed are actively recruiting, and 42% predict that their number of open roles in 2025 will increase.

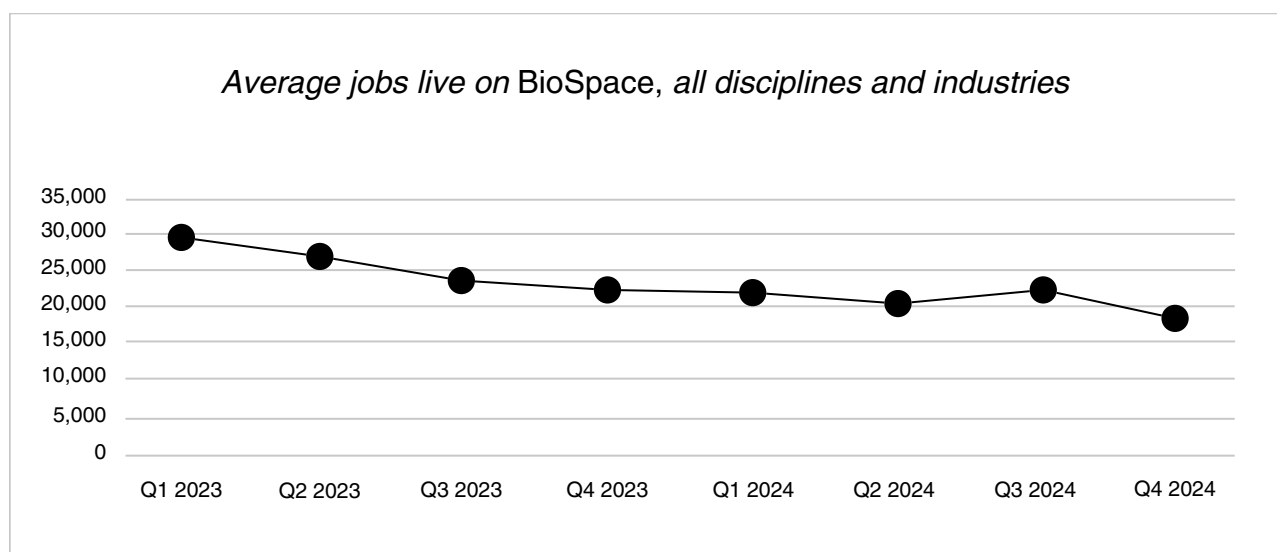
In this report, BioSpace explores current workforce sentiment, job activity trends and the prospective job and hiring outlook for 2025, particularly as it compares to the previous year.

Job Trends

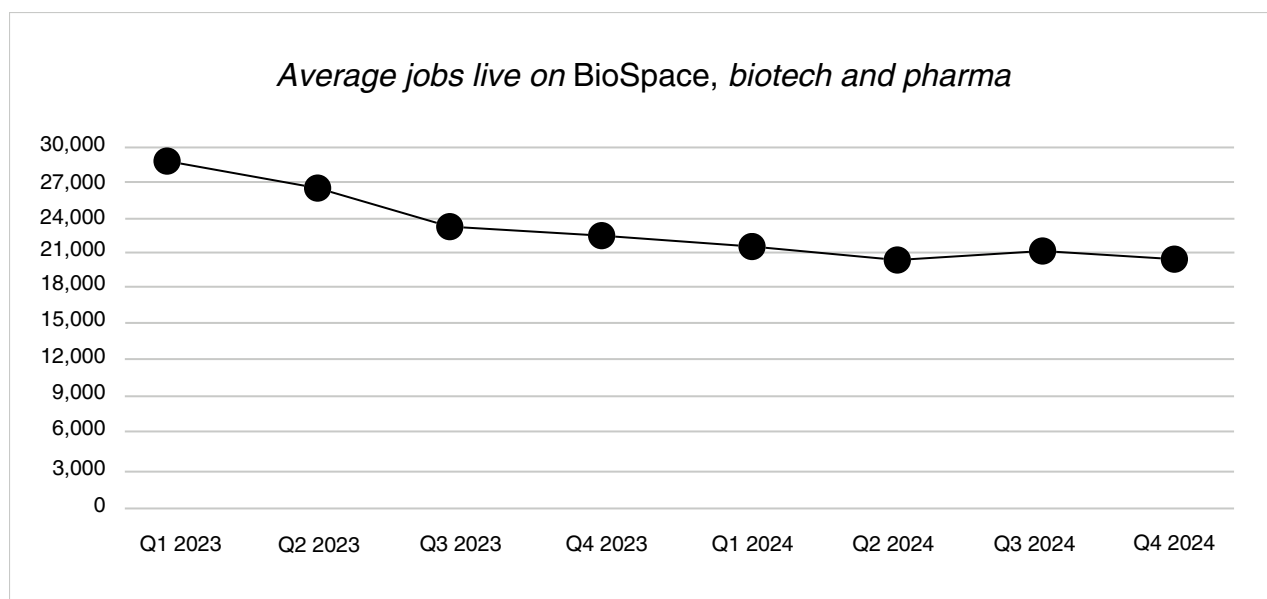
Open roles and hiring activity remain in decline compared to previous years. Compounded with layoffs, the job market continues to favor employers rather than candidates.



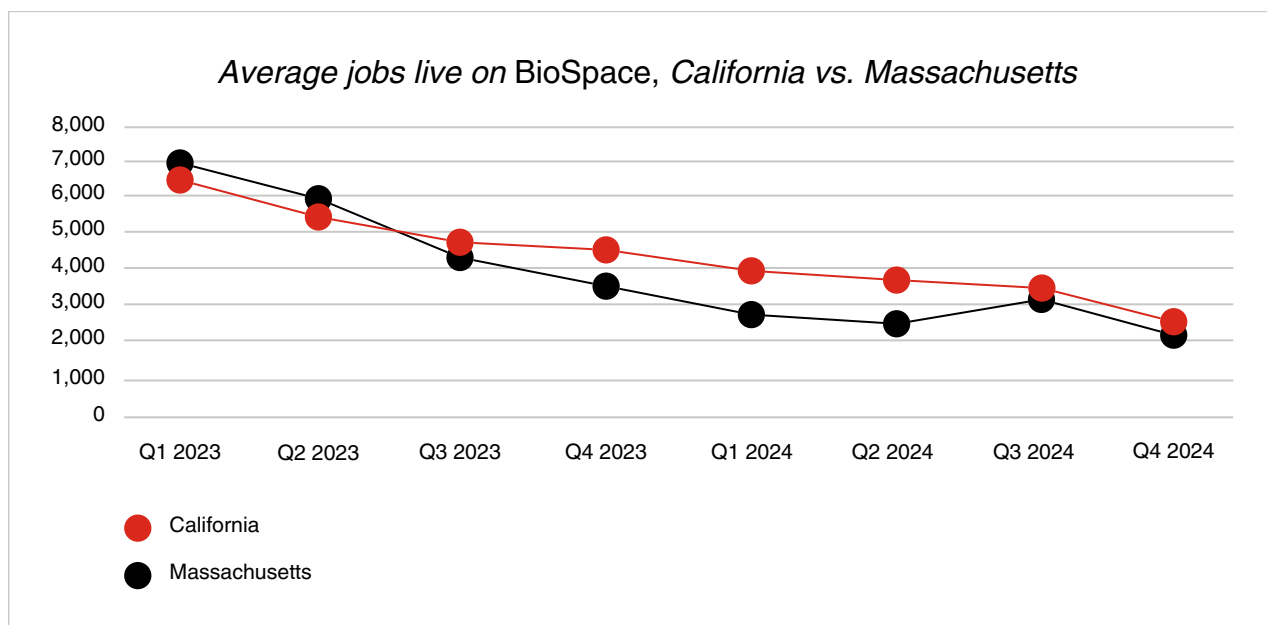
The data used in the graphs below are taken from *BioSpace.com* and are indicative of wider job market trends in biopharma. In conversations with biotech and pharma companies, *BioSpace* found most frequently that companies simply had fewer open roles, if they had open roles at all, and/or less budget for advertising and hiring for those roles. The greatest changes were in research and development and sales roles.



Comparing jobs live in 2024 to 2023, there were consistent declines: Q1: -26%, Q2: -25%, Q3: -11%, Q4: -24%.



BioSpace examined job posting trends in two key biopharma hubs: California and Massachusetts. Comparing jobs live in California in 2024 to 2023, the decline was far more significant in the first half of the year: Q1: -38%, Q2: -34%, Q3: -22%, Q4: -23%. Similarly, in Massachusetts the decline lessened significantly in the latter half of 2024: Q1: -62%, Q2: -56%, Q3: -30%, Q4: -18%.



Workforce Sentiment

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the stagnation in the job market and funding environment, workforce sentiment slightly declined from 2023 to 2024. This could be due to mounting responsibilities and pressure on employees. Less than half (48%) think they are appropriately paid for the work that they do, down from 53% in 2023. About half (51%) think they are underpaid. 65% think their job title accurately reflects their job level.

82%

Are proud of the company they work for
Decline from 87% in 2023

81%

Respect their company's CEO
Decline from 85% in 2023

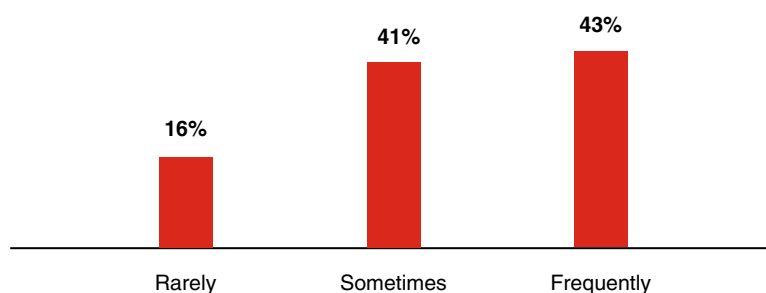
82%

Respect their manager
Decline from 86% in 2023

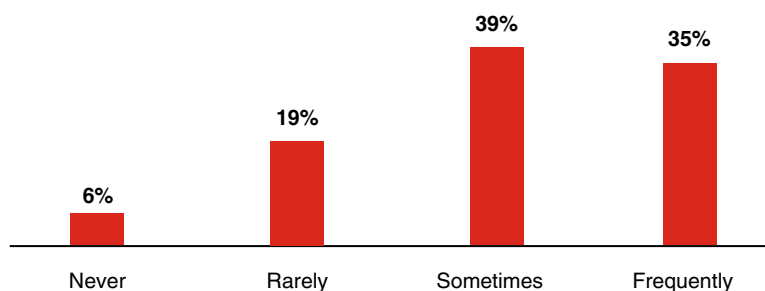
93%

Like their co-workers
Decline from 94% in 2023

How often do you perform tasks that are outside your job duties?

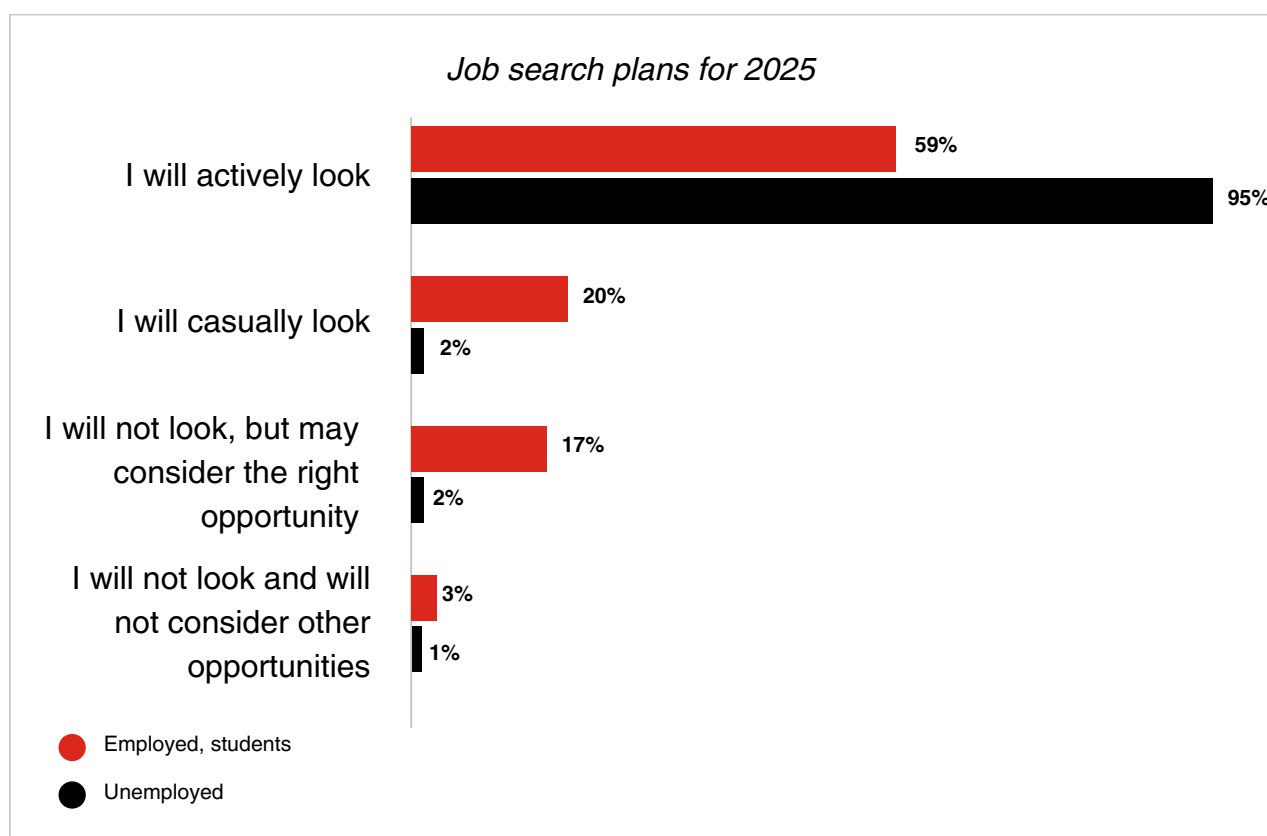
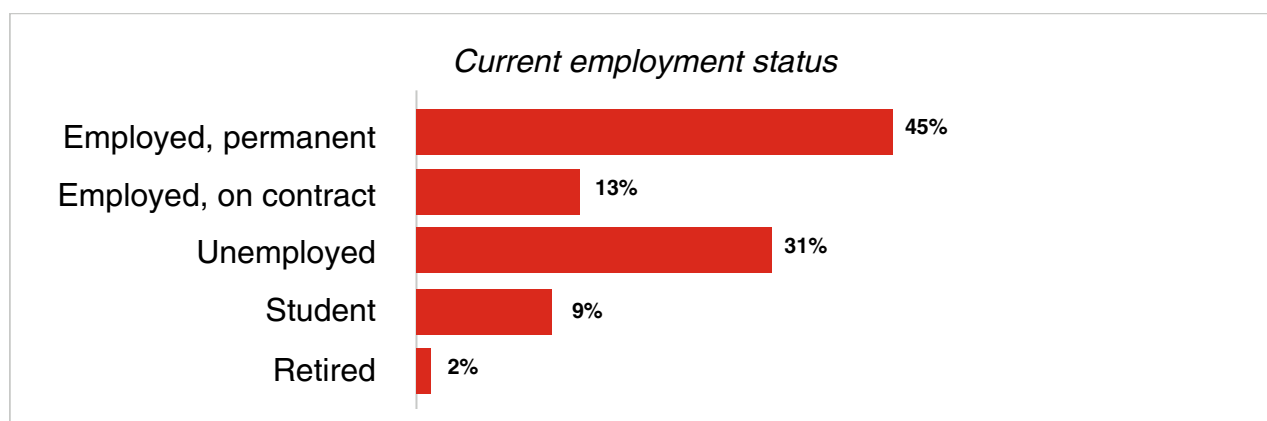


How often do you work more than your regularly scheduled hours?

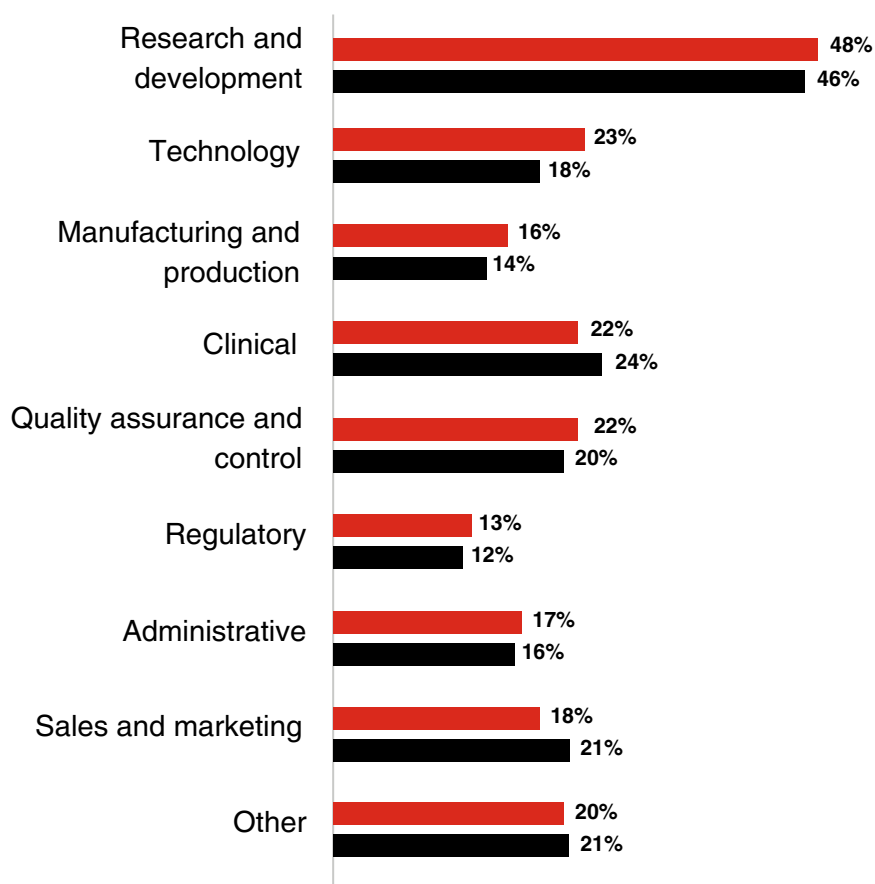


Job Search Plans

The number of respondents indicating they are unemployed was even higher than in 2023, which at the time was the highest since *BioSpace* started surveying life sciences professionals. 74% of unemployed respondents have been unemployed for more than three months. The vast majority of respondents will be open to new opportunities in 2025, with only 3% of employed and 1% of unemployed respondents not open to new roles.



In what function will you be looking for your next role?



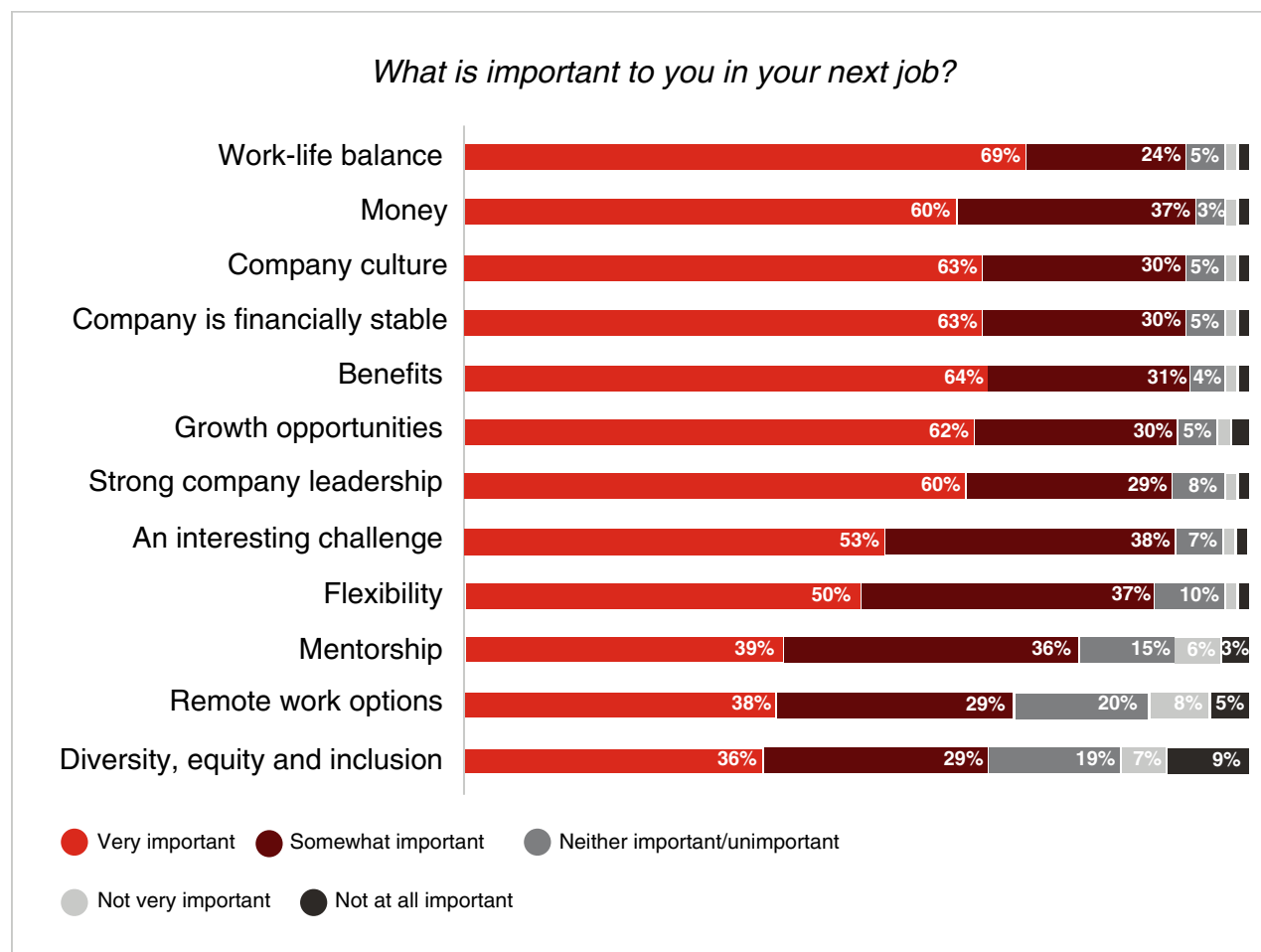
● Employed, students
● Unemployed

Motivations for Change

What is motivating biopharma professionals to find a new role in 2025? Unchanged from last year, the top reason life sciences professionals are seeking a new role is for more growth opportunities. 48% of respondents do not think their company offers opportunities for advancement. When considering their next opportunity, work-life balance came out on top as the most important thing.

Top Motivations to Look for a New Job

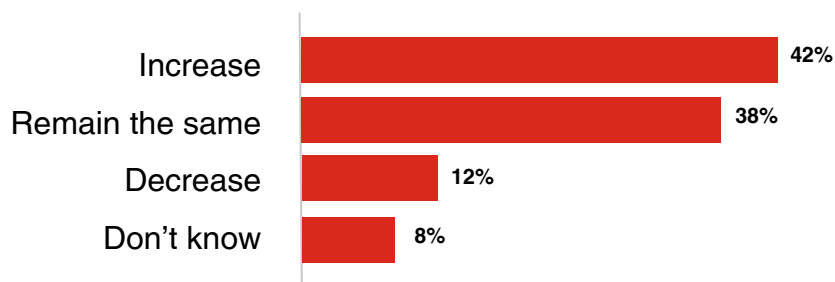
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|---|--|
| 1 64% want growth opportunities | 7 20% are fearful they may lose their job |
| 2 57% want more money | 8 17% want more flexibility |
| 3 43% want a new challenge | 9 16% are unhappy with company leadership |
| 4 33% want better benefits | 10 14% are unhappy with their manager |
| 5 22% want a remote position | 11 11% want to relocate |
| 6 20% are unhappy with company culture | 12 8% believe their workload is too much |



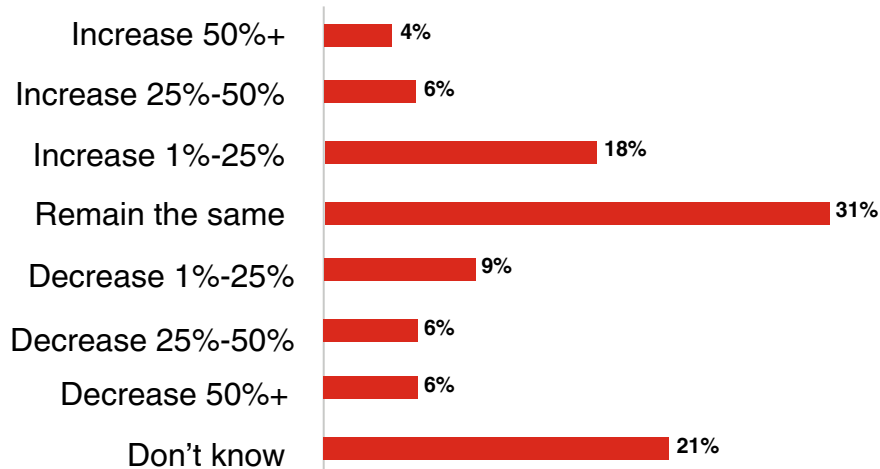
Hiring Outlook

59% of organizations surveyed are actively recruiting, a decline from last year (63%). 20% anticipate making layoffs in 2025. Despite the slowdown, many organizations are still hiring, with some struggling to fill unique roles or meet specific role requirements. However, most organizations (79%) still agree that the job market is currently in favor of the employer. 29% believe talent recruitment will be easier next year, though more (44%) believe that it will remain the same.

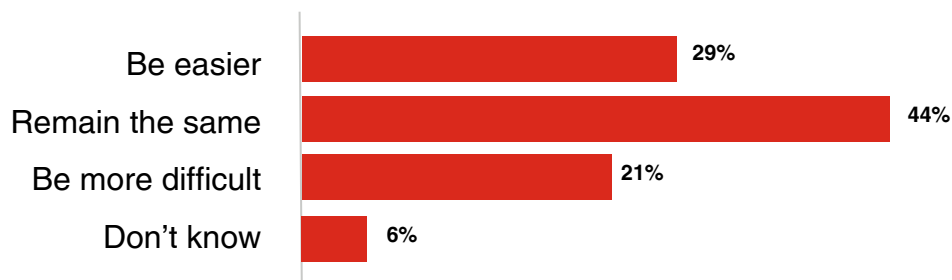
In 2025, you predict your number of open roles will...



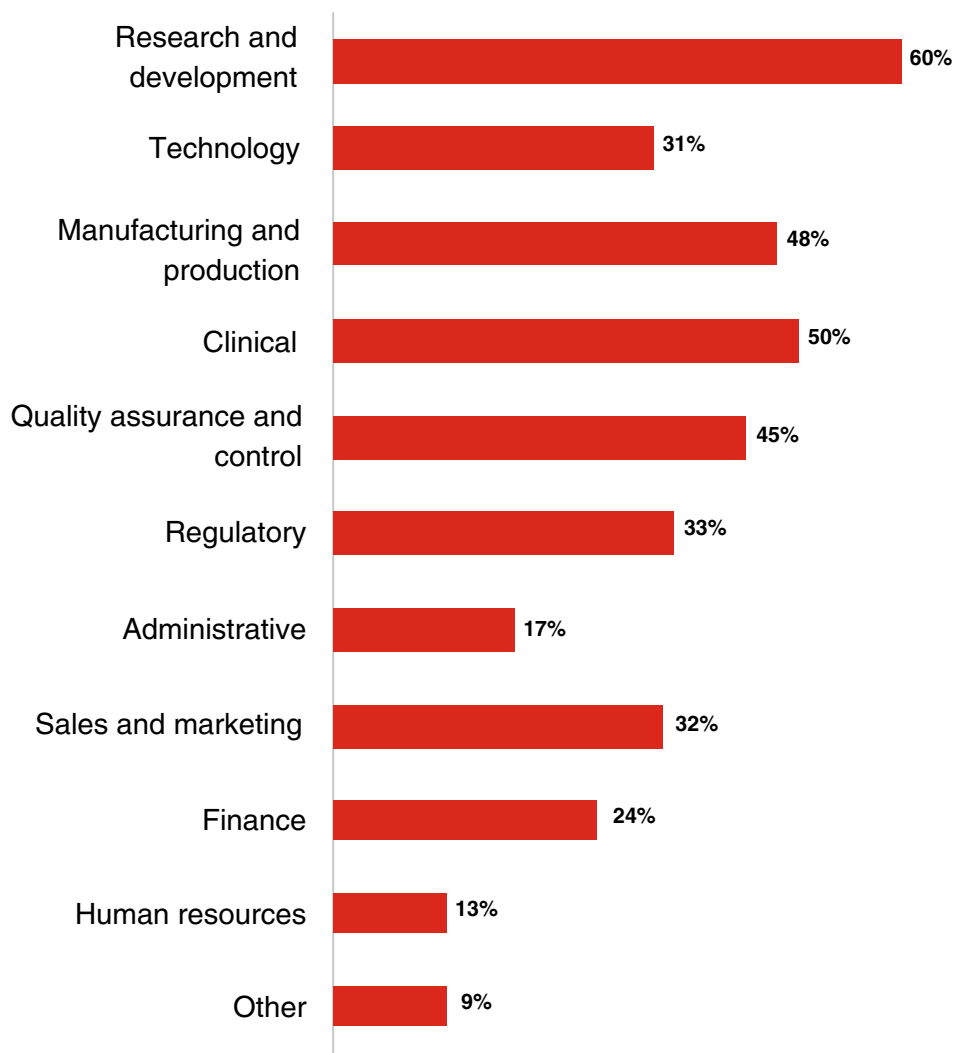
In 2025, how will your recruiting budget change from the previous year?



In 2025, you expect talent recruitment to...



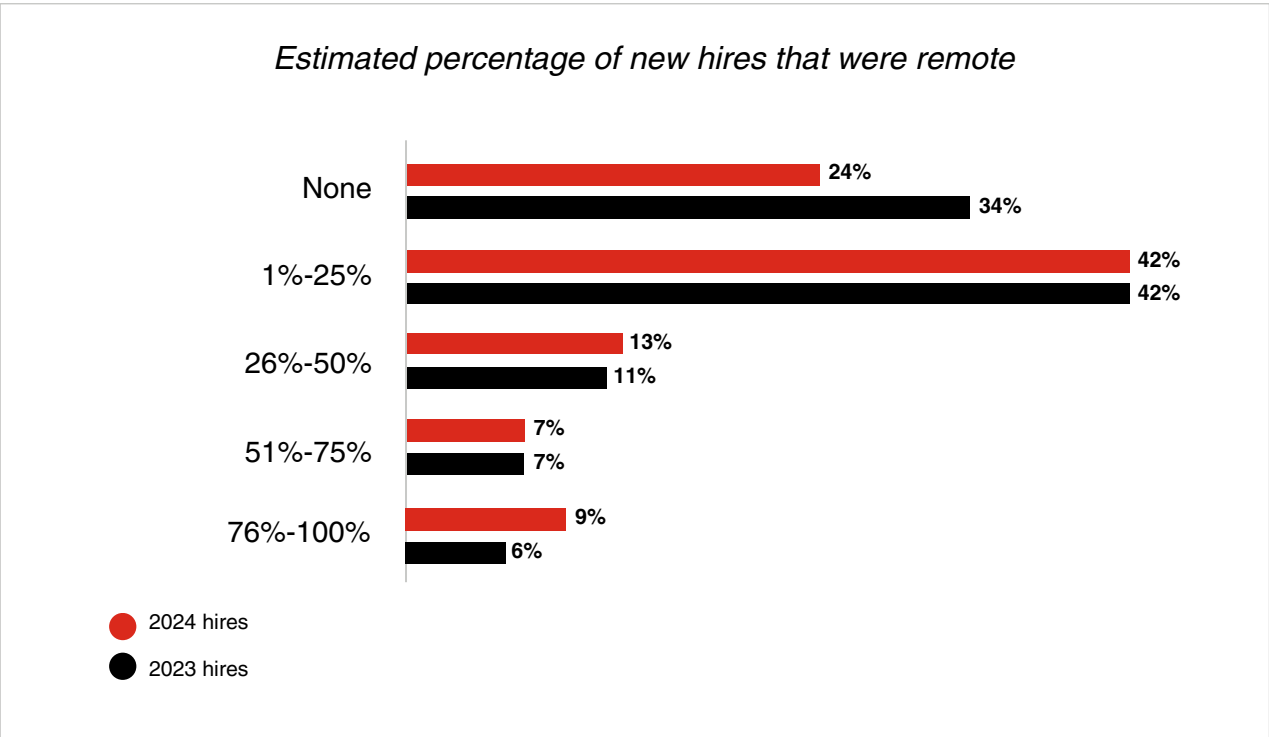
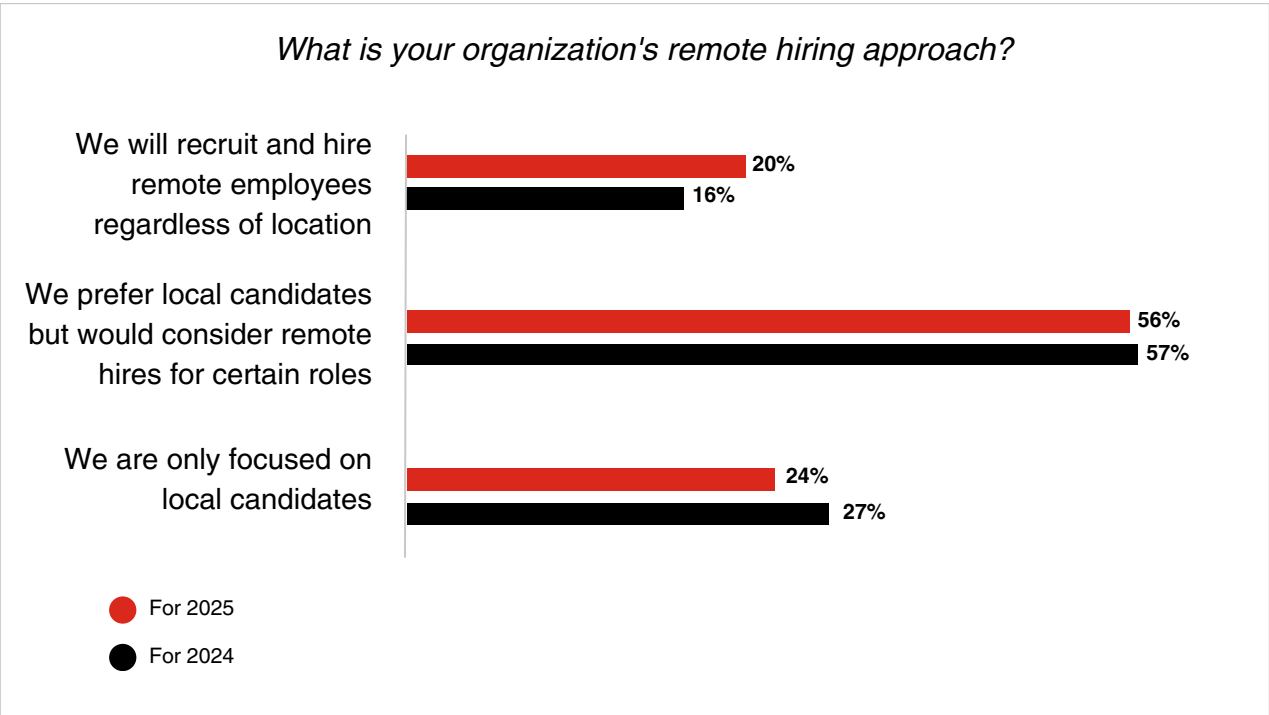
In what areas do you anticipate hiring for in 2025?



In terms of particular skills that are anticipated to be in demand, the most commonly cited were related to artificial intelligence, including automation, data engineering and generative AI. Regulatory skills and strategies were also noted by several respondents.

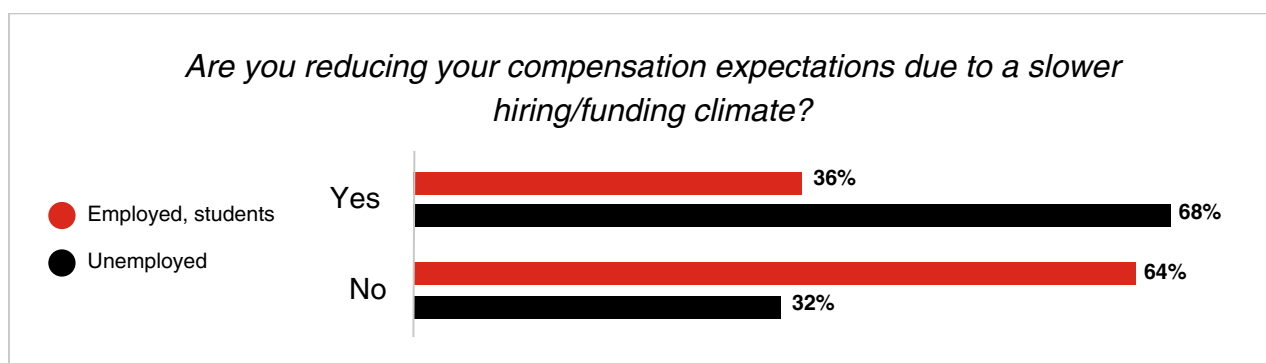
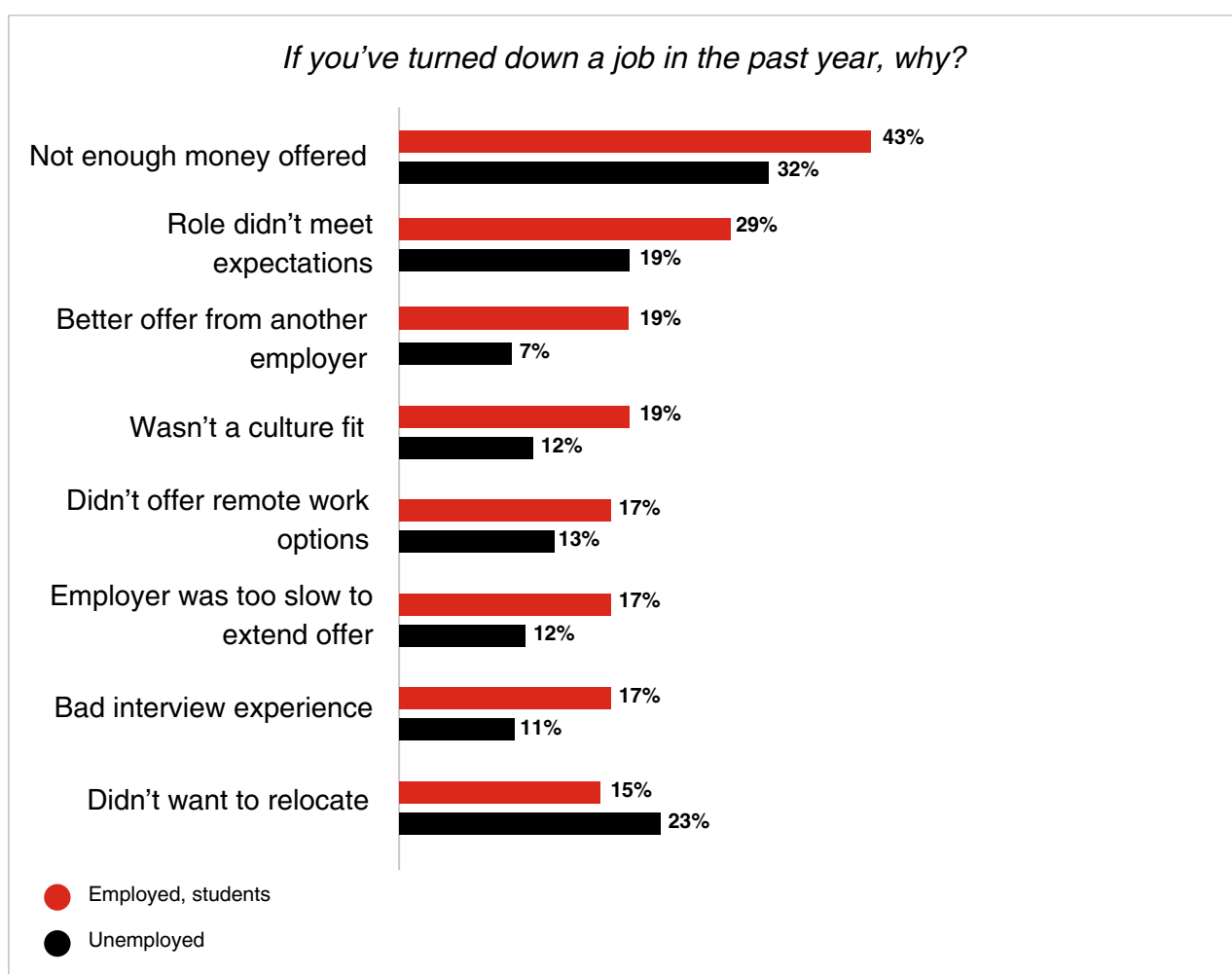
Remote Hiring

More than half (56%) of companies indicated that they prefer hiring local candidates, though they would consider remote hires for certain roles. About a quarter are focused only on local candidates, though this is a slight decline from last year. More companies this year (20%) are open to recruiting and hiring remote employees regardless of location compared to 2023, and more companies indicated that they hired a greater proportion of remote hires. 38% of organizations reported missing out on candidates due to relocation requirements.



Compensation

Despite the tight job market, respondents, both employed and unemployed, reported having turned down jobs in the past year. The No. 1 reason for turning down a role? Not enough money offered. The attitude of respondents regarding reduced compensation expectations depends on their current employment status. The majority of employed respondents are not reducing their compensation expectations due to the environment, while the majority of unemployed respondents are. 43% of surveyed employers reported their organization is struggling to meet compensation expectations, and 38% think expectations are unrealistic. The tension around compensation expectations may be exacerbated by 46% of employer respondents having concerns about their company's stability or performance in 2025. The majority (83%) are concerned about the economic climate.



Conclusion

What can we expect from the job market in 2025? Preliminary data is encouraging.

The month-over-month decrease in jobs live on *BioSpace* from November to December, typically the slowest time for hiring, was less in 2024 (-8%) than it was in 2023 (-10%).

The average number of jobs live on *BioSpace* in the first half of January 2025 was 5.28% higher than the same period last year. However, the job response rate (the volume of applications per posted job) this year is also higher—21% in 2025 vs. 15% in 2024—indicating that the job market will remain highly competitive for those seeking new roles.

Methodology

BioSpace conducted two web-based surveys, both fielded from Nov. 13 to Dec. 2, 2024. The first survey received 1,155 responses and was designed for professionals working in the biopharma industry in the United States. The second received 117 responses and was designed for those with insight into talent acquisition and/or workforce planning at biopharma organizations of any size that operate in the United States. Participation was promoted by email, social media and advertising to readers of *BioSpace* and visitors to *BioSpace.com*. Question formats included a mix of closed-ended, open-ended and contingency questions. An incentive was provided for one respondent to receive a \$100 Amazon gift card for each survey.

About *BioSpace*

BioSpace is the hub for life sciences news and jobs. We provide essential insights, opportunities and tools to connect innovative organizations and talented professionals who advance health and quality of life across the globe.

The proprietary resources we provide help companies make informed decisions regarding their workforce. *BioSpace* has a relationship with two-thirds of the entire U.S. life sciences workforce, with fast-growing subscriber lists and thousands of new site registrations every month. Our platform enables organizations to connect with our community through thought leadership, branding and recruitment marketing solutions—whether that's through webinars, podcasts, email, articles, advertising or jobs.

Interested in working with *BioSpace* for thought leadership, talent solutions or branding?

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