

# Job openings hit record in July, but hiring

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Job openings surged to a record high in July even as hiring fell, signaling a tighter labor market that's expected to soon push up sluggish wage growth.

Employers advertised 5.8 million jobs, up from 5.3 million in June and the highest on records dating to 2000, the Labor Department said Wednesday.

The number of hires slipped to 5 million from 5.2 million, according to the Job Openings and



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**Career fairs have been busy as job openings outpace hiring. Many employers have struggled to fill vacancies.**

Labor Turnover Survey. As the unemployment rate falls to near-normal levels, many employers are struggling to find workers — a dilemma some economists attribute to mismatches between the skills of unemployed workers and employers' needs. The jobless rate fell to 5.1% last month.

Many laid-off managers in human resources, marketing and accounting lack the skills in big data analysis and digital marketing, for example, that are required in the modern workplace, says Tom Gimbel, CEO of LaSalle network, a Chicago staffing firm.

Job candidates who have those

skills are being snapped up more quickly, reducing the average duration of job openings among his clients over the past year to about five weeks from two months.

Chicago-based StratEx, which makes human resources software, has struggled since early June to hire 10 project managers, software developers and customer service representatives, says CEO Adam Ochstein. The firm, which typically requires job candidates to undergo five interviews, has lost many to employers that are pouncing more quickly in the more competitive market.

"It's biting us in the butt," he

## remains tepid

says. He says the firm, with 70 employees, likely could have boosted sales up to 20% this year if it had filled the positions.

To combat the labor shortage, Guidant Financial of Bellevue, Wash., a small-businesses loan consultant, has raised wages 5% the past year and is now willing to train candidates who don't have all the skills it's seeking, say CEO David Nilssen.

Many employers are only now ramping up staffing after the recession and have been unwilling to raise salaries, says Paul McDonald, senior executive director of staffing firm Robert Half.