

Live Your Best Life - as a Temporary Employee

Assignments. Gigs. Contracts. Seasonal jobs. Interim roles.

Whatever you call it, temporary work is the new workforce normal for millions of Americans. In this guide, you will learn the realities of today's gig economy, and how to use temp work to live your best life:

- Brush up on the language of temporary staffing.
- Discover just how common and important temporary staffing is in the American economy.
- Get a feel for the types of people who can take advantage of temp and contract work.
- Find answers to your most burning questions about temporary work.
- Learn how to choose a recruiter and how to rock your assignments.
- Get tips for using temporary work to achieve your career goals.

The Language of Staffing

Recruiters and hiring managers sometimes use jargon that can be unfamiliar. The ability to “speak the language” can give you better insight into their process and a better idea of what you need to do to break through. Here are some important terms you should know.

Gig Economy: A labor market that focuses on temporary, contract and freelance jobs in lieu of hiring full-time employees.

Temporary Worker: A worker hired for a set amount of time to fill in for employees on vacation, to pick up the slack during busy seasons, etc. Temps are usually, but not always, paid on an hourly basis.

Contract Worker: Workers hired for a set period of time. Employers generally use them for special projects, pay them more than temps and use them for longer periods of time.

Freelance Worker: A self-employed professional who works independently for companies or clients. Freelance workers often set their own hours and pay; however, the flow of work can be unsteady.

Temp-to-Hire: A position where an employee is hired on a temporary basis, but may be hired full time. This often depends on the amount of work needed, the quality of performance, and if the employer’s budget allows for the addition of a new employee.

Applicant Tracking System (ATS): Automated software that scans and filters resumes based on keyword matches. Whenever you apply for a job online, you are almost always submitting your resume to an ATS.

Background Check: Employers run your name, Social Security number, etc, through software that allows them to check for criminal records, look at your credit history and more.

Benefits: Compensation that goes above and beyond salary or hourly wage. Benefits can include health insurance, paid time off, stock options and more.

Corporate Culture: The norms that define the environment in which employees work. Company culture develops through the beliefs, values and expectations a company holds and imposes on its employees.

Employment Contract: An employment contract is a legal document that lays out binding terms and conditions of employment between an employee and an employer.

Informational Interview: The purpose of an informational interview is not to get a job offer, but to learn more about a specific career or industry.

Offer Letter: Offer letters are formal documents employers send to candidates they select to hire, outlining the details of employment.

Recruiter: Recruiters seek out, screen and interview candidates before presenting them to employers. Some employers have in-house recruiters, while others work with staffing firms.

Soft Skills: The intangible skills employers look for to evaluate a candidate’s level of professionalism and work ethic. These include interpersonal skills, communication skills, leadership skills, etc.

Talent Network: Programs that allow job seekers to upload their information (name, contact information, work history, etc.) into a company’s database to be notified of new job opportunities.

The Vital Role of Temporary Employees in Today's Labor Market

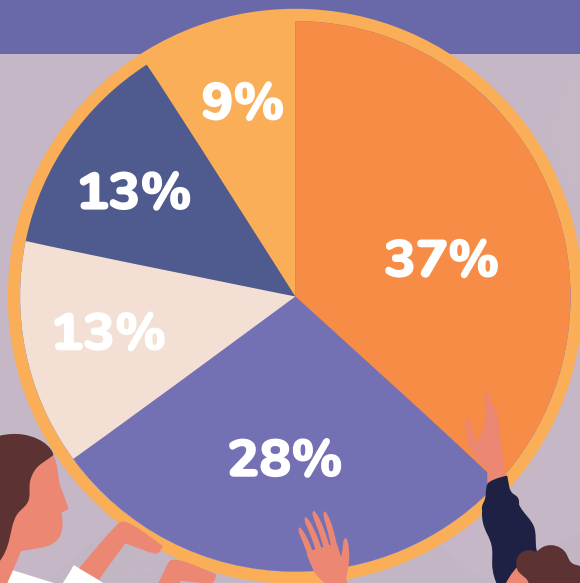
When it comes to the gig economy, staffing companies play a vital role in connecting workers of all levels in short-term, long-term and direct hire positions. Each year, they put more than 17 million Americans to work.

Staffing companies offer a wide range of employment-related services, including:

- Temporary and contract staffing
- Recruiting and permanent placement
- Outsourcing and outplacement
- Human resource consulting

Staffing employees work in virtually all occupations in all sectors:

- 37% Industrial
- 28% Office – Clerical and Administrative
- 13% Professional – Managerial
- 13% Engineering, Information Technology and Scientific
- 9% Health Care



Did you know?

- Staffing companies put **more than 3 million** temporary and contract employees to work each week.
- American staffing companies hire **about 17 million** temporary and contract employees per year.
- **76%** of people working for staffing companies work full time.
- Half of staffing company employees say it's a **great way to land a permanent job**.
- **One-third** of staffing employees turned a temporary assignment into an **offer of employment**.
- One in five of all staffing employees say they choose temporary work for its **flexibility**.

Source: <https://americanstaffing.net/staffing-research-data/fact-sheets-analysis-staffing-industry-trends/staffing-industry-statistics>

Snapshots of Today's Temporary Worker

Who are the people engaging in temporary work?

They come from all backgrounds and fields, at all levels of experience. Here are just a few of the “faces” of temporary employees.

Contract IT Professional

Companies lean on contract IT professionals in all niches to help with large projects, tight deadlines, staff vacancies and to ease overtime. Contracts can run from a few days through a few years and pros in all fields from help desk support to development to data science can make entire careers of contracting.

Travel Nurse

Hospitals, nursing homes, dialysis centers and other healthcare facilities must stay fully staffed at all times in order to meet strict staff-patient ratios. To ensure access to high-quality nurses, many facilities work with staffing firms to hire people from anywhere in the country. Travel nurses typically work six-week to three-month assignments. This is a wonderful career choice for recent graduates who don't yet have families and for empty-nesters who want to travel and see the country, but aren't yet ready to retire.

Light Industrial Workers

Warehouses, distribution centers, manufacturers and other industrial businesses routinely hire temporary workers to help with demand. That demand may be seasonal, it may be due to an expansion or landing a large contract, or other circumstances. Laborers enjoy the freedom and flexibility that comes with working in a variety of environments and working a variety of shifts throughout the year.

Seasonal Accountant

Professionals in both public and private accounting know that tax season is busy. Professionals from the support level through CPAs and leadership have ample opportunity to work temporary assignments during the busy season. This is an excellent opportunity for new grads to boost their resumes, for retired accountants to work a few months out of the year, or for stay-at-home parents to keep their skills sharp without going back to work full time.

Clerical and Administrative

Companies are always in need of temporary clerical and administrative help. Whether it's special projects, covering vacation or family leave, expanding into new markets or some other need, there is always a demand for these professionals. Clerical and administrative workers at all levels enjoy the freedom and flexibility that comes with temping throughout the year, as they often get more time off than their counterparts and get exposed to a variety of different work environments.

Interim Executive

There are even temporary opportunities for executives. If a member of the C-suite leaves an organization suddenly, if a company is experiencing a crisis or if the organization is undergoing major changes, interim executives are often brought in to help steer the ship. Interim executives may be retired business leaders, entrepreneurs who sold their companies, or they may make entire careers out of helping organizations through transitional periods.



What's It Like to Work With a Staffing Service?

People who want to take advantage of the flexibility that comes with temporary work often turn to staffing services to help them fill their schedules. But if you've never worked with a staffing agency, you might have some questions. **Here are your answers:**

How much will it cost me?

As a job seeker, you should not pay any sort of fee to a recruiter. Staffing agencies are paid by the companies that hire them to find great people. It is in the best interest of the recruiter to find you a role where you will thrive and add value to an employer.

Do staffing companies ONLY hire for temporary positions?

Staffing agencies hire for a range of employment opportunities that can include temporary, contract, consulting, temporary-to-hire, and direct hire positions.

Do staffing companies ONLY fill blue-collar or entry-level clerical jobs?

No. Staffing agencies find jobs for people in nearly every industry, job, and type of company. They work in virtually all occupations in all sectors, including industrial, office (clerical and administrative), managerial, engineering, information technology (IT), scientific and health care.

Will I get paid less if I go through a staffing agency?

There is a misconception that staffing agencies take a "cut" of the salary offered to a candidate they recommend, which leaves that employee earning less than they would have if they had applied on their own. The fact is, staffing agencies charge their clients a fee for services, so nothing is coming out of your paycheck.

How quickly can I get to work?

Once you complete a staffing firm's application process, you will be offered appropriate positions based on your preferences, experience and skills. It could take a matter of hours, days or weeks depending on the market.

What is involved in the application process?

It varies by staffing company but typically, you will fill out an online application, and then interview with a recruiter. In the interview, you will have the opportunity to discuss your skills, experience and what you are looking for in your next position. Once you have completed the interview, you may be asked to complete some skills testing and verification. You may also be subject to background and reference checks before getting cleared to work.

What if I am not interested in a certain position when it is offered? Is it all right to turn it down?

If you are not interested in a position, you are free to decline.

What if I am on an assignment and decide it is not for me?

Not every job will be a good fit and there are times you will not know that until you have tried the position. If you are on an assignment and find it will not work for you, you should contact your recruiter immediately.



Is There Really Value in Working With a Recruiter?

Many job seekers wonder if there is actually any value in working with a recruiter in an era when it's easy to apply to jobs with a few taps of a finger. **The truth is, there is significant value in working with a recruiter, including:**

- **Access.** Many companies only work with staffing agencies to fill contract and temporary roles.
- **A strong network.** Niche, industry-specific recruiters know the people and the companies that are moving and shaking in your field.
- **Learn your value.** A specialized recruiter will tell you exactly what you are worth in your current market.
- **Confidentiality.** Recruiters know how to run a confidential search so you can breathe easy throughout the workday.
- **Interview prep.** The recruiter knows what each hiring manager is looking for and can offer you strong preparation material.
- **Feedback.** After each assignment, the recruiter will share what you did well and where you could improve.
- **Ongoing opportunities.** A recruiter can help you keep your schedule as full – or as free – as you'd like by placing you in a new job after an assignment ends.



How to Be a Recruiter's Ideal Candidate

A recruiter is your gateway to jobs, so you must nurture the relationship and do everything you can to impress. **Here are some quick tips for being a great candidate:**

- **Provide documentation efficiently.** When the recruiter asks for information from you, gather it and send it as quickly as you can.
- **Be responsive.** It's not always possible to answer the phone or respond right away to emails, but make every effort to respond in a timely manner.
- **Be clear about what you want.** Sending you on interviews for jobs you'd never take wastes the time of the employer, the recruiter and you. Be honest and clear about your goals, expectations, needs and wants from a position.
- **Work through the recruiter.** Do not go around the recruiter and reach out directly to the hiring manager.
- **Offer referrals.** If you really want to score some points and build a strong relationship with your recruiter, offer strong referrals of colleagues who are open to new opportunities.



Choose the Right Staffing Company

If you want to land your ideal job, you've got to choose a staffing company that knows your field and has a proven track record of success.

- **Research, research, research.** Don't simply settle for the first recruiter you find through a Google search. Spend time researching staffing firms that specialize in placing people in your industry. When you find a few that are worthwhile, reach out to schedule a meeting.
- **Treat the first meeting like an interview.** Dress professionally, bring several copies of your resume and come prepared with a list of questions about the recruiter's background, skills, their track record in your specialty, and their understanding of the job market. Ask as many questions as you need to be comfortable and confident in working with them, and take thorough notes.
- **Ask for testimonials or referrals.** There is nothing wrong with asking to see testimonials from other job seekers who have worked with the company in the past.
- **Make your choice.** After you've interviewed with several recruiters, sit down and review your notes, evaluating each recruiter's potential. Consider the reputation of their firm, their experience in your specialty, and whether or not you felt you had a good rapport with them. In order to have a good relationship, you genuinely have to like the recruiter.



How to Rock Temporary and Gig Work

Whether your assignment is two days or two months, entry level or professional, there's a right way (and a wrong way) to work as a temporary employee.

- **Arrive early.** Leave earlier than you think you need to on your first day.
- **Stick to your schedule.** After day one, always show up on time and do not leave until the end of your shift.
- **Dress for the job.** Dressing appropriately will help you fit in, perform better and feel more confident in your role.
- **Ask questions.** It can be intimidating to ask questions as a temporary employee, but it actually shows you care about doing a great job. When you need clarification, speak up.
- **Take notes.** Keep a notepad and pen with you and take notes. Asking questions is important, but you don't want to ask the same question multiple times.
- **Ask for more work when you need it.** Don't sit and wait for people to give you more tasks. When you complete your list, ask what else needs to be done.
- **Stay out of the gossip mill.** Don't get sucked into office politics. Be friendly, but focus on doing your job.
- **Put your phone down.** Don't use your smartphone or tablet during work. Likewise, do not use an employer's equipment for personal use.
- **Display a positive attitude – every day.** Make a conscious choice to approach each new work situation constructively – you never know where it may lead.
- **Treat the assignment as if it's permanent.** Perform with the same enthusiasm and commitment as you would if the assignment were your full-time job.
- **Stay in touch with your recruiter.** If your goal is to keep working after an assignment is over, stay in touch with your recruiter and make your intentions known.
- **Update your resume as you complete assignments.** Include the new skills and experience you acquire as you go.



How to Use Temp Work to Achieve Your Goals

People choose temporary work for a variety of reasons. What are yours? Whether it's experience, skills development, flexibility, control, variety, a faster path to getting a job, getting a foot in the door with a dream employer or exploring a new career or work environment; make sure to keep your eye on your goal.

- **Share your goals with your recruiter.** Recruiters are not mind readers. Share your goal with your recruiter so she can either continue to match you with the best jobs for you or help you turn temp work into a job offer.
- **Maximize your time.** If your goal is to learn and build new skills, use your time wisely. Ask for tasks that align with the skills you want to sharpen and solicit feedback from colleagues and supervisors.
- **Choose assignments wisely.** If a temporary job doesn't align with your ultimate goal, it's OK to turn it down. Just explain to your recruiter why you are saying no, so he doesn't think you are unreliable.



Ready to Jump Into the Gig Economy?

Does more flexibility and exposure to new experiences sound like something you'd enjoy?
Are you ready to test out the freedom and control of the gig economy?

Partner with a professional staffing agency today.

No matter where you are in your career or where you want to go, there is a place for you in this exciting labor market.

