

JUNE 2024

icims® Insights

Workforce Report



iCIMS Insights June snapshot

Both employers and job seekers appear to be embracing a less volatile approach to the job market this spring. The seesaw that the market rode last year, with numbers up and down each month, has leveled off, and activity has remained consistent.

Could we all just use a little stability right now?

That's what the Class of 2024 is hoping for as they enter the workforce post-graduation into full-time employment. New grads want job security and are leaving all options on the table.

This month, we look at entry-level hiring data to get a read on the Class of 2024's expectations and the job market they are entering. This class had a college experience that was upended by the pandemic, and they are ready to take control of the narrative post-graduation.

Top findings this month:

- Employers showed continued confidence, with hires and openings up in May for the third month in a row.
- The competition for entry-level roles is on the rise — applications per opening (APO) grew 13% since last May.
- New grads say they expect to make \$62,656 at their first full-time job and yet 12% of entry-level applications this year were for jobs with salaries \$100,000 and higher.



Our analysis of iCIMS data captures the insights that employers need to understand an ever-changing labor market and make better decisions for their businesses.

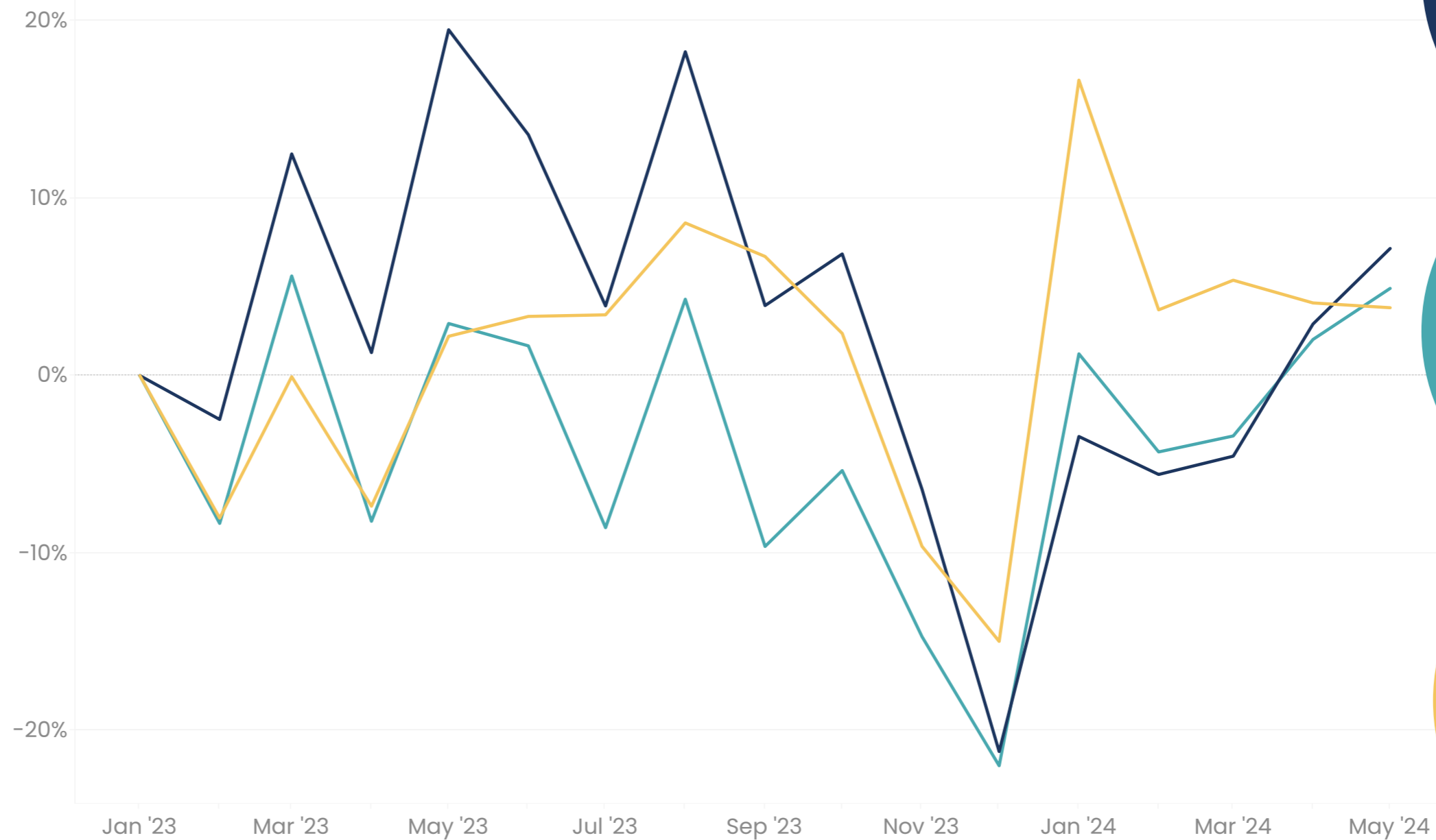
-Rhea Moss, Global Head of Workforce & Customer Insights, iCIMS



Hires and job openings continue to climb for third month in a row

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- Employers showed continued confidence, with hires and openings up in May for the third month in a row.
- **Job openings** have crept up since the drop at the end of 2023 to 5% higher than the start of that year.
- **Hires** are 10% lower year over year but still up 7% from January 2023.
- **Job applications** have leveled off since the burst of activity in January but there is still a steady stream of candidates coming in, 4% more than January 2023.



↑
7%
Hires

↑
5%
Job openings

↑
4%
Job applications

since Jan. 2023

Platform indicators
Job openings, applications and hires
January 2023–May 2024

Class of 2024: Entry-level expectations

iCIMS surveyed 1,001 U.S. college seniors and 2024 graduates to gain insight into their expectations as they enter the workforce.

Stability and growth are the top must-haves for new grads

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- The flashy benefits that may have wowed entry-level talent in the past are no longer dominating recent graduates' employer wish lists.
- Stability and opportunities for growth in their career are now the biggest drivers in application decisions for graduates.
- Top 3 drivers for applying to a role for Gen Z include company stability and job security, opportunities for growth or advancement and a sense of purpose in their role.

43%



would like a long-term career path with an employer that offers opportunity for them to grow with for many years in the future.

33%



said they see themselves staying and growing with an employer in the same role or department for at least a few years.

32%



would like to get a least a year of experience with an employer under their belt before exploring other opportunities

26%



said wouldn't care how long they stay with an employer and are okay with jumping around at the start of their career if better opportunities present themselves.

16%



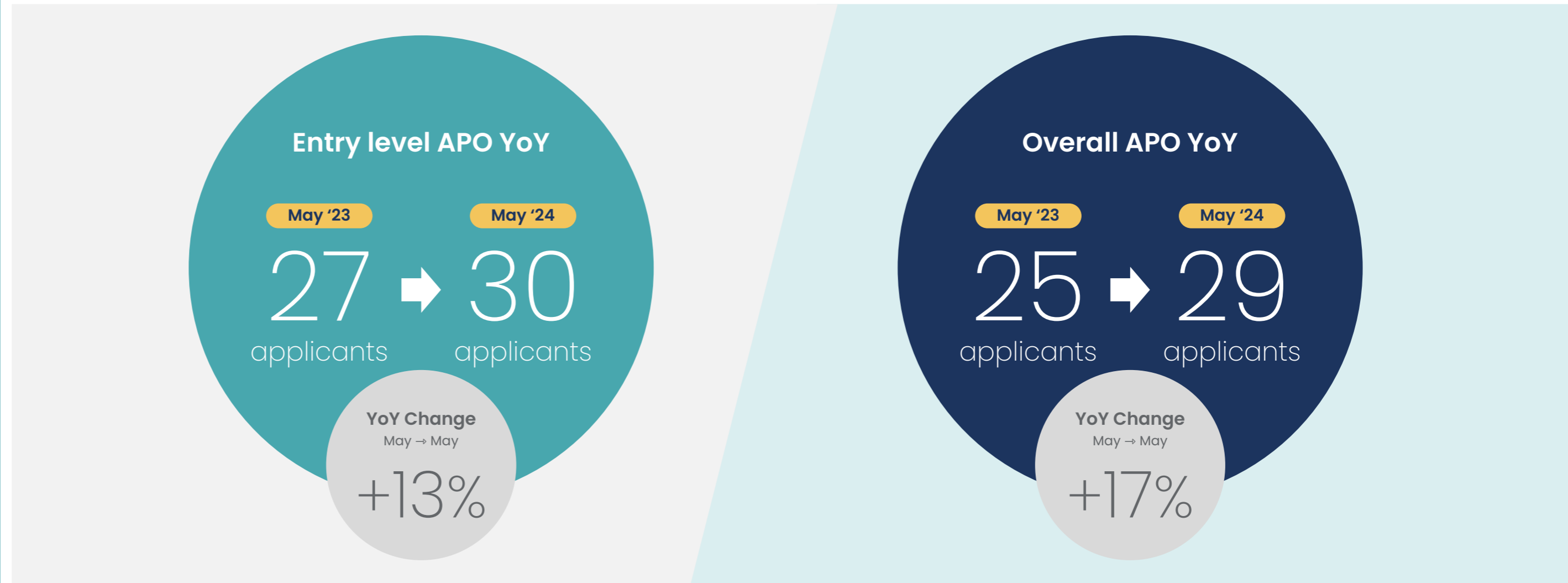
would leave without another opportunity in place if a job did not meet their expectations.

*Responses do not add up to 100 as respondents were asked to pick up to 2 options.

Attention new grads: The competition for entry-level roles is heating up

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- The applications streaming in for open roles has only increased since last May. Is it more candidates or just a lot more applications flowing in?
- Looking at **entry-level jobs**, applicants per opening (APO) last month was 30, a 13% increase from May 2023.
- Pulling back to view the **whole job market**, APO for all available jobs was 29, a 17% increase from one year prior.
- This is good news for employers, who have a growing pipeline of candidates, but frustrating for the Class of 2024 who are up against more competition than last year's crop of graduates.

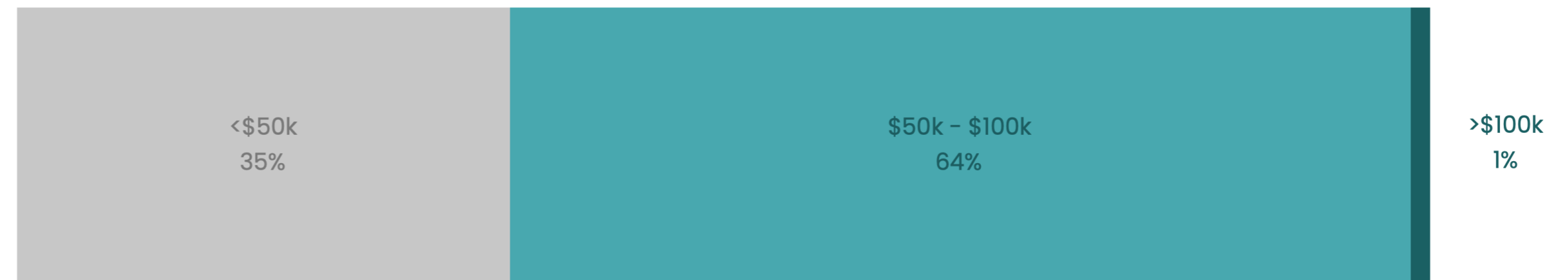


Tell me you want more money without telling me you want more money

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- Sure, there's even more competition for entry-level jobs and the economy remains uncertain, but that's not stopping new grads from trying to nab a six-figure job right out of the gate.
- While survey respondents said they expected to make \$62,656 in their first full-time job after graduation, iCIMS data showed that 12% of entry-level applications in 2024 were for jobs with salaries \$100,000 and higher.
- The Class of 2024's salary expectations are lower than the Class of 2023 who expected an average salary of \$66,467 – and well below 2022 graduates, who expected a starting salary of more than \$70,000.

What candidates say they expect to make in their first full-time jobs



Survey respondents said they expected to make **\$62,656** in their first full-time job after graduation.

Salaries for jobs candidates are applying to



Entry-level expectations vs. salary reality

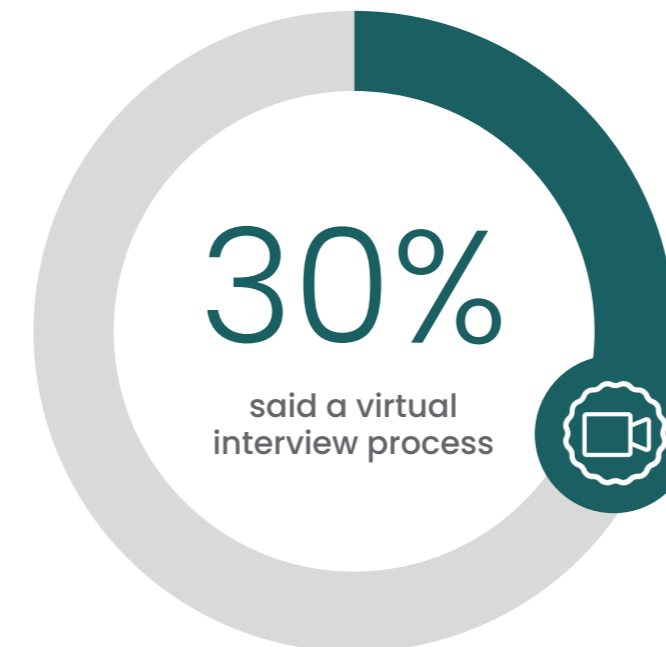
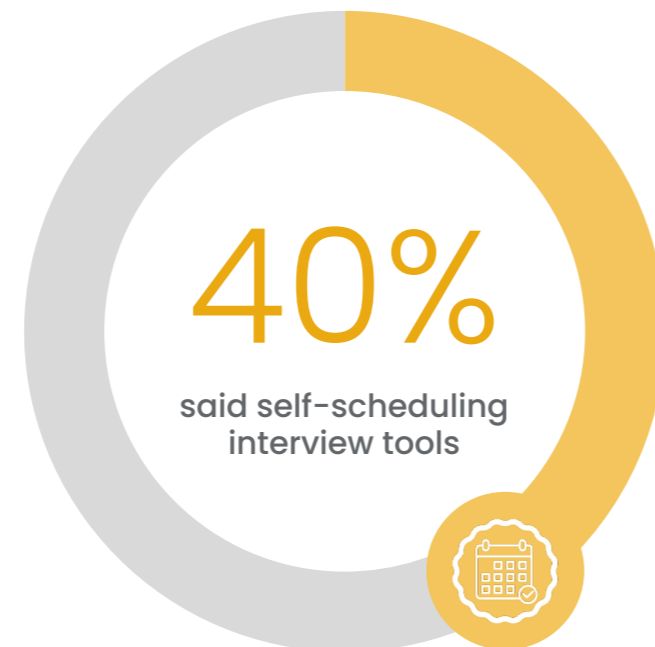
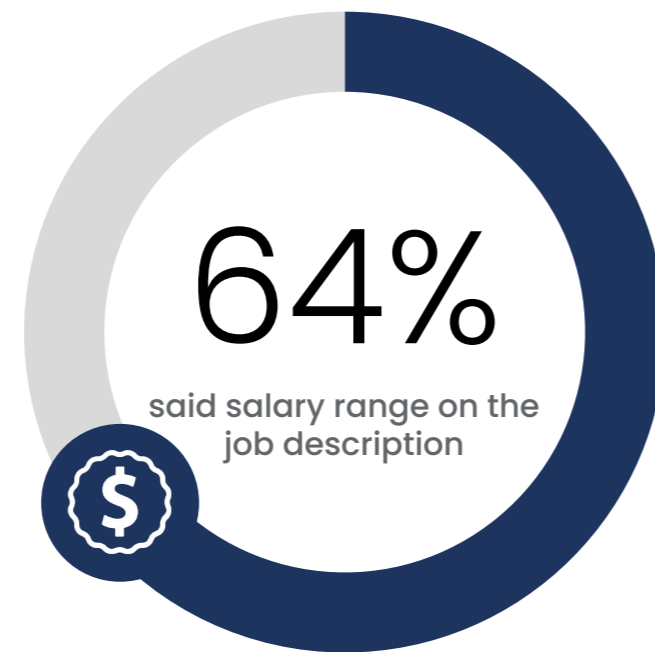
January 2024–May 2024

Want more Gen Z candidates? Make the application process easy peasy.

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- Today's grads desire speed in all aspects of the job search. They want quick responses and efficient processes from potential employers. And they aren't interested in jobs with no clear salary range – the majority (59%) said it was unlikely they would apply to a position that did not include salary in the job posting.
- iCIMS data shows that time to hire in May was just under 3 weeks (19 days).
- Nearly half of Gen Z candidates (46%) will give the entire job search about 3-6 months before waving the white flag and switching gears.

What would make Gen Z candidates more inclined to apply for a job?



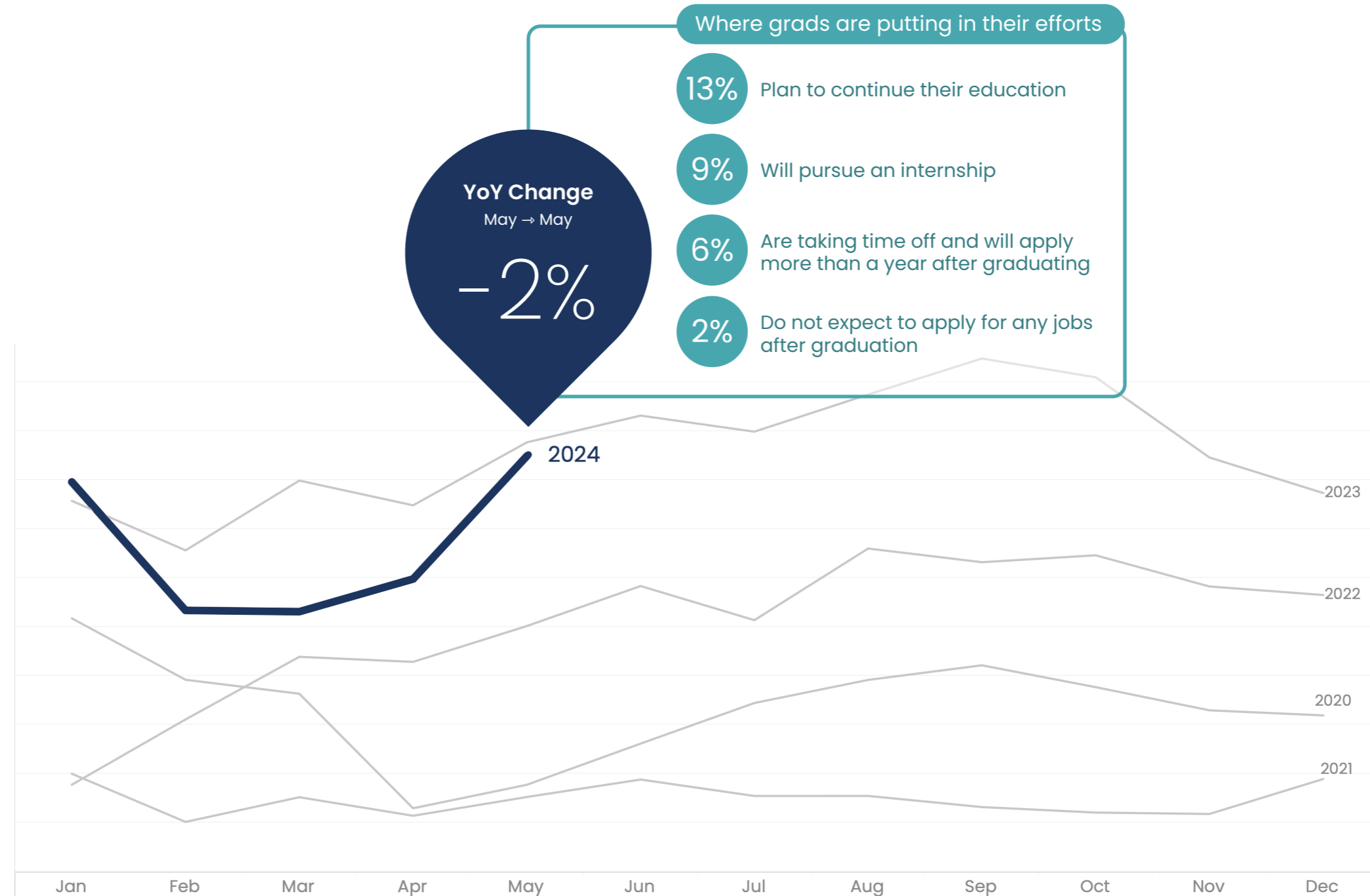
*Responses do not add up to 100 as respondents were asked to check all that apply.



One-third of graduates are foregoing the full-time route (for now)

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- In the face of a decline in hiring and increased competition for available entry-level jobs, 30% of Gen Z job seekers say that they are rethinking full-time employment. For now.
- iCIMS Insights data shows that application volume in May dipped slightly (2%) since 2023.
- Many Gen Z candidates have a Plan B in their back pocket. Nine percent are considering a post graduation internship, and 13% are thinking about staying in school to pursue a post-graduate degree. A few (6%) are even open to running away from it all and taking a year off before applying for full-time work.



Entry-level applications
2020-2024

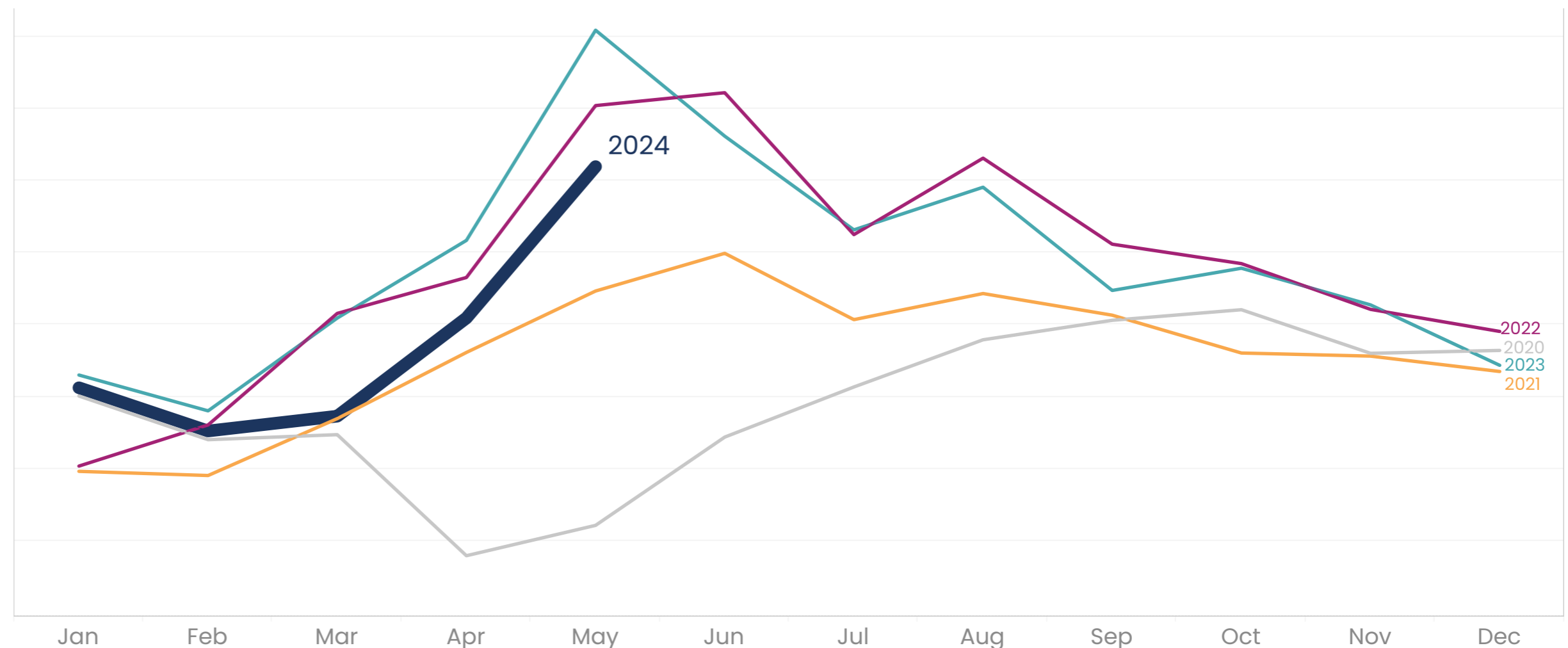


Gen Z is keeping all options on the table for life post-college

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- Cost of living post-grad is a top driver for recent grads' career decisions. The newest members of the U.S. workforce are open to doing what is necessary to find financial security in a competitive and uncertain job market.
- Hiring for entry-level jobs was down 17% year over year in May after a 10% jump between 2022 and 2023, according to iCIMS data.
- Despite the dip in hiring and increased competition for entry-level roles, 17% of Gen Z job seekers said that they don't feel any uncertainty around landing a job after graduation.

What options have Gen Z candidates considered in an uncertain job market?



Entry-level hires
2020-2024

According to new grads, STEM roles slay. But sales? Not so much.

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- Entry-level candidates are heeding the call to fill STEM-related roles as applications for those positions saw some of the highest growth since last May.
- If job security and opportunities for growth are what the Class of 2024 is after, they are in the right place. STEM jobs are growing twice as fast as non-STEM careers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, with a projected 11,278,700 positions available in 2030.
- On the other end of the popular jobs spectrum, applications shrank for roles that could be seen as more unstable – whether due to the uncertain economy or the increasing use of AI to repurpose more admin-type positions.

What are the most (and least) popular entry-level jobs right now?

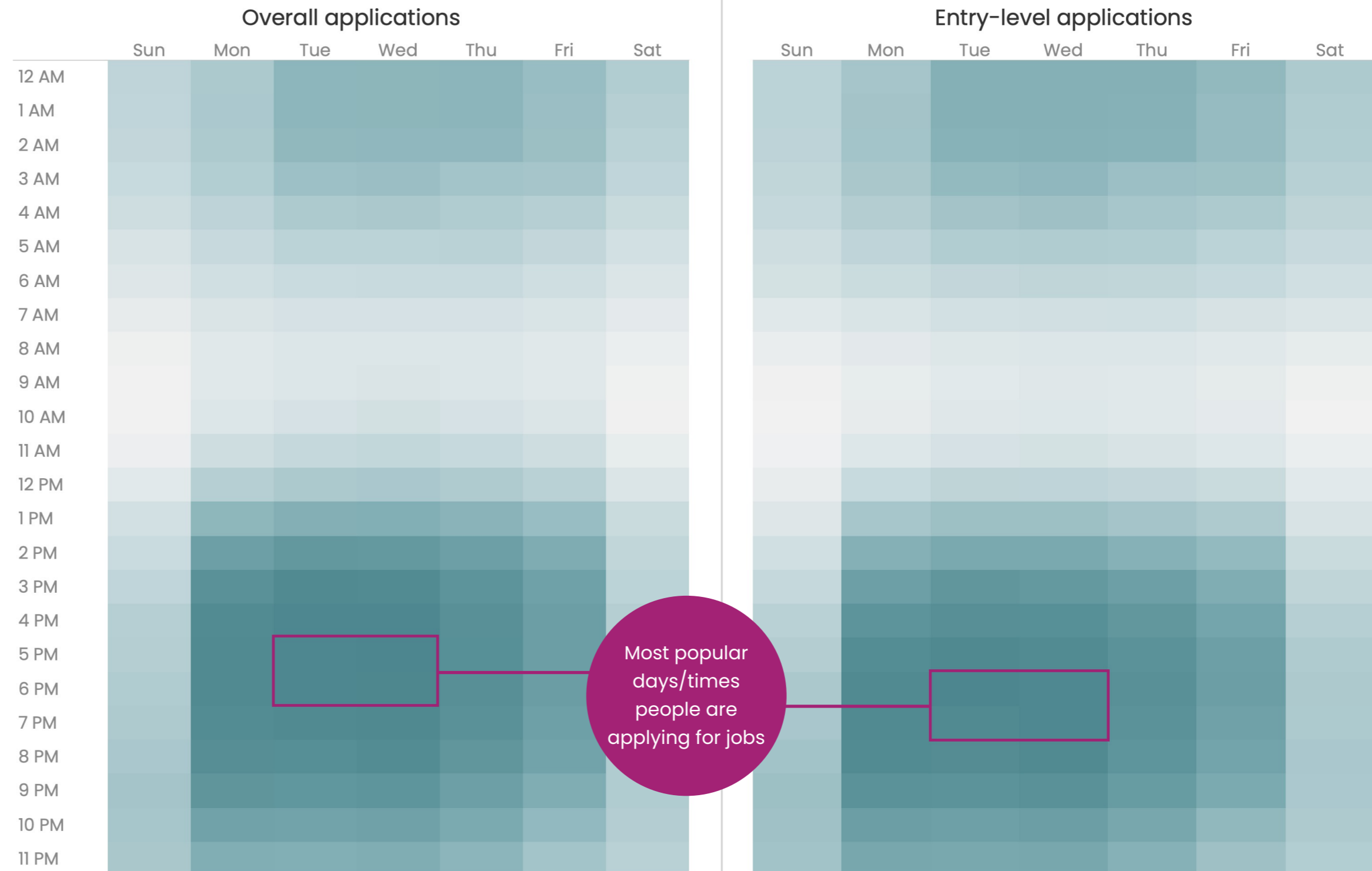


Entry-level applications by occupation type
May 2023 vs. May 2024

New grads are just like us: Activity for entry-level jobs mirrors everyone else's

iCIMS Insights quick take:

- Late afternoon. Early in the week. This seems to be when all job seekers – including entry-level candidates – get busy applying for jobs.
- Gen Z candidates are embracing AI during the job application and interview process. Top use cases for AI bots include interview prep, writing and proofreading their resumes and cover letters and helping to draft responses to questions on the application.
- About 1 in 5 (22%) would consider using an AI bot to answer a hiring manager's questions during the job interview and almost the same number of Gen Z candidates (23%) haven't considered using AI in the application and interview processes.



Want more great insights?

iCIMS 2024 CHRO Report

CHROs and chief people officers share insight into what's top of mind in the year ahead in [iCIMS 2024 CHRO Report](#). Unsurprisingly, HR leaders are juggling many challenges and priorities in an uncertain hiring climate. Read the highlights from our survey of over 1,000 people leaders, then download the full report.

iCIMS 2024 Workforce Report

If 2021 was the year of the Great Resignation, 2022 was the Great Reshuffle and 2023 was the year that defied expectations, what does 2024 hold? The [iCIMS 2024 Workforce Report](#) highlights last year's key workforce trends and stats from our analysis of iCIMS Insights proprietary platform data so organizations are ready for whatever comes next.

iCIMS Insights+

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iCIMS is a leading provider of talent acquisition technology that enables organizations everywhere to build winning workforces.

Visit www.icims.com to learn more.

Workforce data is vital to driving business forward.

iCIMS Insights provides data that is:

- Current
- Cross-industry
- Dual-focused on employer and job seeker intentions and activity

Data derived from:



3+ million global platform users



570+ million candidate profiles



200+ million applications in 2023



5.5+ million hires in 2023