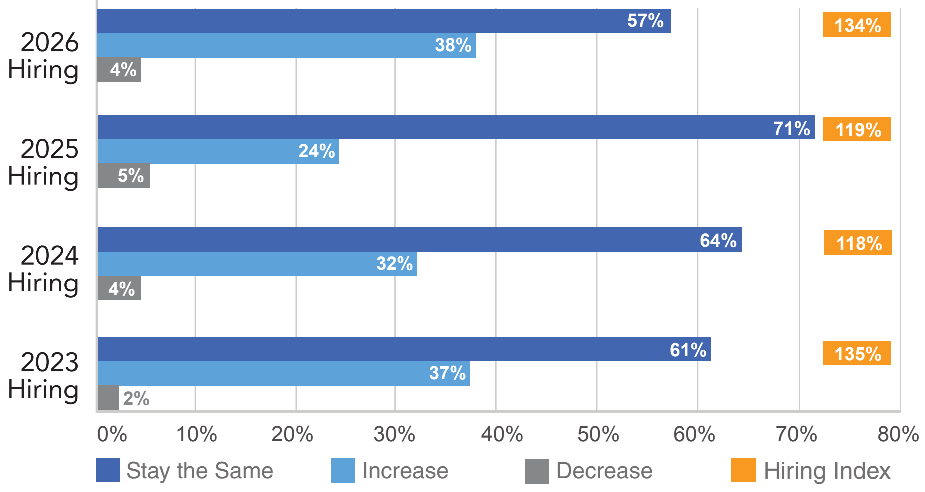
2026 Corporate Finance & Accounting Talent Study Infographic

Controllers Council™

The objective of this important study was to identity how Controllers, CFOs and related executives are managing finance and accounting (F&A) talent, along with such challenges as skill shortages, evolving work models, rapidly changing AI technologies, unpredictable macroeconomic and political environments, and more.
Following are **Key Takeaways:**

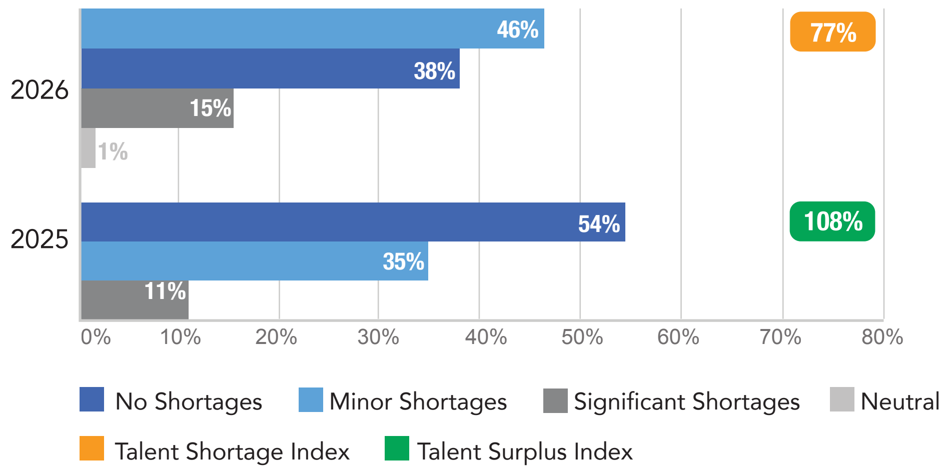
2026 Hiring Returns to Post-Pandemic Levels After 2 Year Lull

The 2026 survey results indicate renewed hiring confidence among finance organizations. Fifty-seven percent of respondents expect to maintain current staffing levels, while 38% plan to increase accounting and finance headcount over the next 12 months. Only 4% anticipate reducing staff for a **2026 Hiring Index of 134%.**



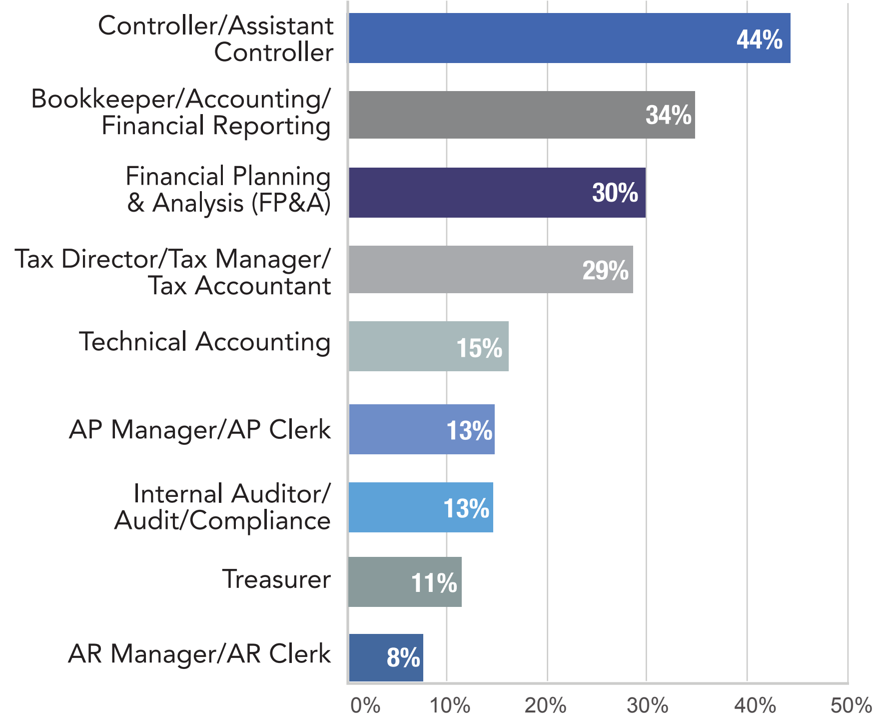
F&A Talent Shortages are Growing

Talent shortages remain a significant challenge for corporate finance and accounting organizations in 2026. Respondents report experiencing either minor (46%) or significant (15%) shortages of finance and accounting talent for a **2026 Talent Shortage Index of 77%** vs. a **2025 Talent Surplus index of 108%.**



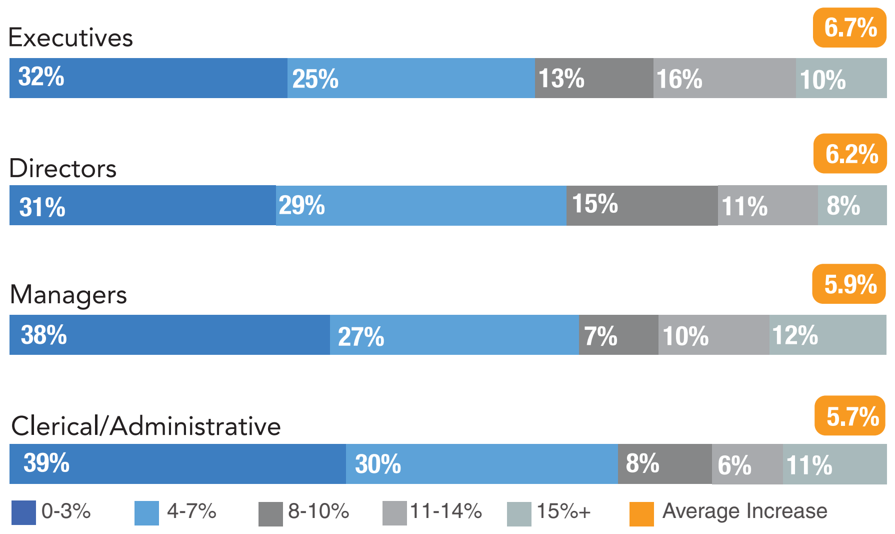
Which F&A Skills are the Most Challenging to Recruit?

In 2026, the most challenging roles to fill include Controller/Assistant Controller (44%), Bookkeeper/Accounting/ Financial Reporting (34%), and FP&A roles (30%). Controllers have been ranked as most challenging to recruit for the last four years, often by wide margins from other roles.



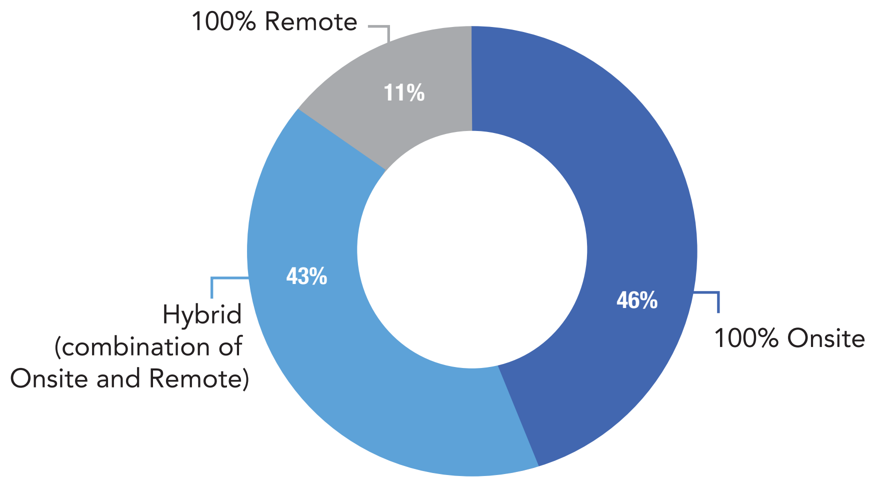
Average Pay Increases Nearly Double in Last 12 months

Overall F&A compensation increased in the past 12 months, with Executives averaging 6.7%, followed by Directors at 6.2%, Managers at 5.9%, and Clerical/Administrative at 5.7%. By comparison, 2025 pay increases were much less at 3.8% for Executive and Manager levels, 3.5% for Clerical/Administrative, and 3.3% for Directors; nearly 40-50% less than these 2026 levels.



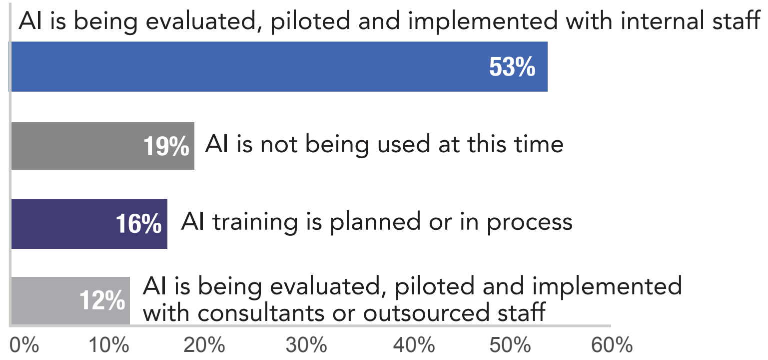
Onsite Work Surpasses Hybrid Models

Regarding work environments and return to office (RTO) mandates, fully Onsite work surpassed Hybrid combinations of Onsite and Remote options for the first time since the pandemic (46% vs. 43%). Only 11% plan for Full Remote.



AI is Used by 53% with Internal Staff

Artificial intelligence continues gaining momentum across corporate finance. More than half of respondents (53%) report AI is currently being evaluated, piloted, or implemented using internal staff, while only 19% are not using AI.



Visit: www.ControllersCouncil.org

View the complete 2026 F&A Talent Study report here.

Controllers Council™