



# Food & Beverage Insights: Society Insurance

## » How to Hire Temporary Workers During Uncertain Times

In Q1 of 2020 the United States employment rate was 71.4% according to data provided by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the unemployment rate was just 4.4% as reported by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS). Since then, the unemployment rate has drastically peaked to nearly 15% at times.

Today, as businesses across the United States reopen, restaurants, bars, distilleries and breweries may be scrambling to call workers back while determining how many employees they need to sustain operations — and how many they can afford to employ while revenue is down. This creates a massive uncertainty in hiring staff.

Seasonal and temporary workers have a number of benefits. There is often a shorter hiring process as you're not necessarily looking for a long-time cultural fit, there are reduced long-term labor costs as you're not providing a salaried position, and the position is extremely flexible, allowing you to better respond to changing market needs and demands.

Society Insurance, which specializes in coverage packages and risk-control services for the hospitality industry, has four tips to help owners and managers be effective in hiring qualified seasonal workers.

### » Home in on Specific Groups

College students with seasonal breaks, such as summers off or a winter break, are typically looking for short-term employment to make a little extra cash. Another viable seasonal employee pool includes retirees. Nearly 10,000 baby boomers retire

every day, and 55% of Americans plan to continue working in some capacity after retirement, according to AARP. Many of them have flexible schedules and may want something to occupy their time or supplemental income for hobbies and vacations.

If a student or retiree is a good employee, let them know they can come back next year. It's far easier to retain a good employee than it is to find another. To lessen the need of continually hiring workers throughout a season due to workers quitting halfway through, some businesses offer an "end of season bonus" which can be beneficial to a company that is looking for staff to end on a very specific date.

### » Start Your Search Online and Early

As soon as you know temporary help will be needed, begin your candidate search. Many students look for jobs well in advance in order to coordinate with their busy schedules. Advertise on local job boards, reach out to schools and leverage social media, including on your social media channels, in Facebook groups and on NextDoor. Exhaust your free resources before reaching out to a staffing agency unless you are pressed for time. Consider an employee referral program with a small incentive to get existing employees to refer people they know and trust.

Having a roster of temporary workers on-hand who you can contact to begin work immediately if you're in a bind is smart business.

### » Consider a Staffing Agency

Although there is a cost, staffing agencies are a valuable resource for finding talent quickly and efficiently. These agencies already have an applicant

pool that allows them to easily determine which applicant would be a good fit based on needs. A staffing agency does the heavy lifting for those employers who are striking out when searching for workers or don't have the time to conduct a comprehensive interview process. Staffing agencies can assist with temp-to-hire, full-time or temporary employees.

### Be Crystal Clear with Candidates

Give as many details as possible about the position in the job description and throughout the interview process. Be clear on the duration of the job, and set your expectations of the skills and experience required — and stick with it. If you're open about sharing pay, share this piece of information right away too. Acknowledge employment duration in interviews and in writing and ask the employee to sign a formal offer letter prior to the start date.

### » Avoid Misclassifying Workers

Employing seasonal workers can be tricky. Be sure to confirm with your legal counsel your specific state's regulations of seasonal workers. For example, misclassifying a worker as an "independent contractor" can open the business up to potential liabilities. Additionally, read up on your state labor laws to see if overtime exemptions and workers compensation apply to your business.

In times of uncertainty, seasonal employees can help you keep a business afloat without taking on an excess of full-time employees. By learning the legalities regarding seasonal workers and implementing efficient hiring practices early on, your business can be better prepared.

Society Insurance is ready to help you navigate the unique challenges facing your restaurant. Ask your local Society Insurance agent ([www.societyinsurance.com/location/](http://www.societyinsurance.com/location/)) about specific coverage questions.