GTA VI LAUNCH DAY

Data for small businesses

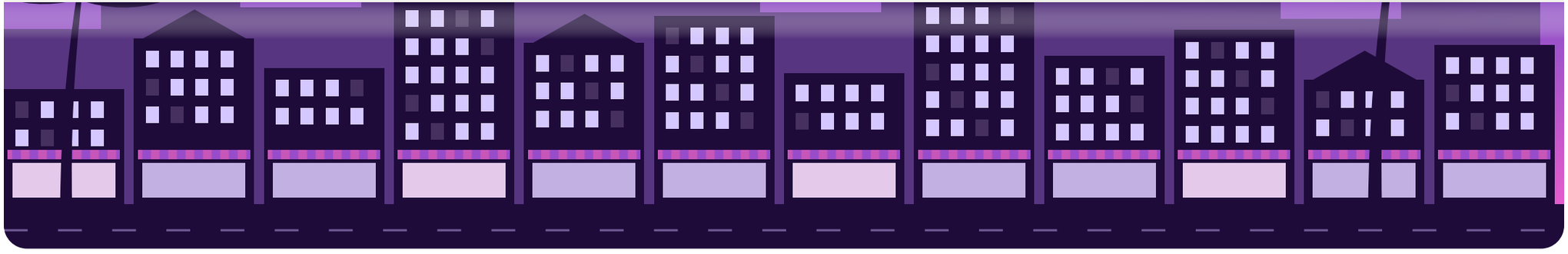
How did GTA 6 launch week impact Main Street? We looked at when teams asked to swap shifts, who found coverage, and how those patterns compared to a typical week.



1.5M+
ACTIVE WORKERS

125K+
U.S. SMALL BUSINESSES

149K
ACTIVE LOCATIONS



WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

Launch day at a glance

★★★★★

+44%

More swap requests than on a typical Thursday morning.

+14.5%

Increase in the rate of Thursday shifts offered for swap.

80%

Of Thursday shifts offered for swap found coverage, compared to about 85% on the prior four Thursdays.

GTA VI SMALL BUSINESS DATA

How much is GTA VI really impacting small businesses?

GTA VI is the gaming event of the year, if not the decade. Launching with a 99 Metacritic score and earning an estimated $1.5 billion or more in presales, it's proving that, for fans at least, it was worth the 13-year wait.

For small businesses, though, the story is a little more complicated. There's been endless discussion online about whether people are planning on skipping work or taking time off to play. Here at Homebase, we know that when you have a small team, last-minute callouts can really throw a wrench into your plans.

So, to understand how this release was impacting Main Street, we looked at data from real hourly teams using Homebase to see shift swaps, time off, and shift coverage around launch day.

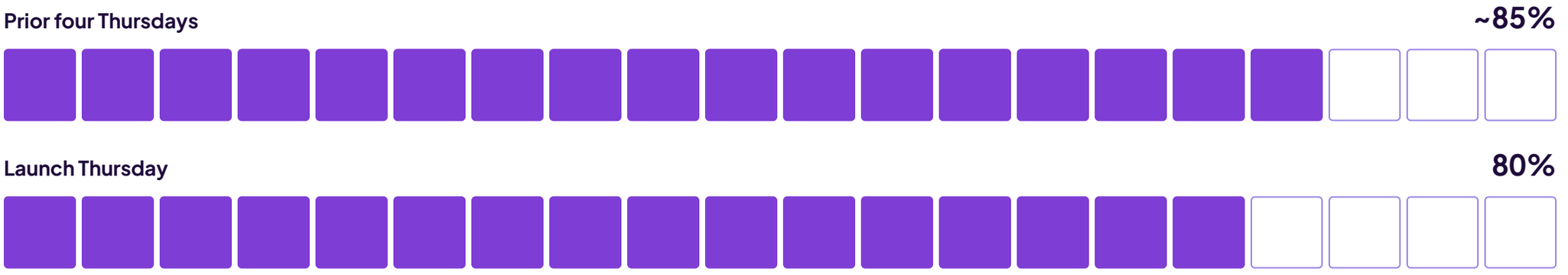
SHIFT SWAPS

More shifts went up for swap, but fewer found takers

We first wanted to see how many people would request to swap shifts on Thursday, November 19, release day. Across 549,653 shifts scheduled in Homebase that day, we counted 5,745 offered for swap, or 104.5 per 10,000 — up 14.5% from the prior eight Thursdays.

We also found that evening shifts (otherwise known as peak gaming time) were the ones up for grabs most often. Each swap reached 15 coworkers on average, up from 11, yet a smaller share of shifts found a taker.

Shifts covered by 1 p.m. ET



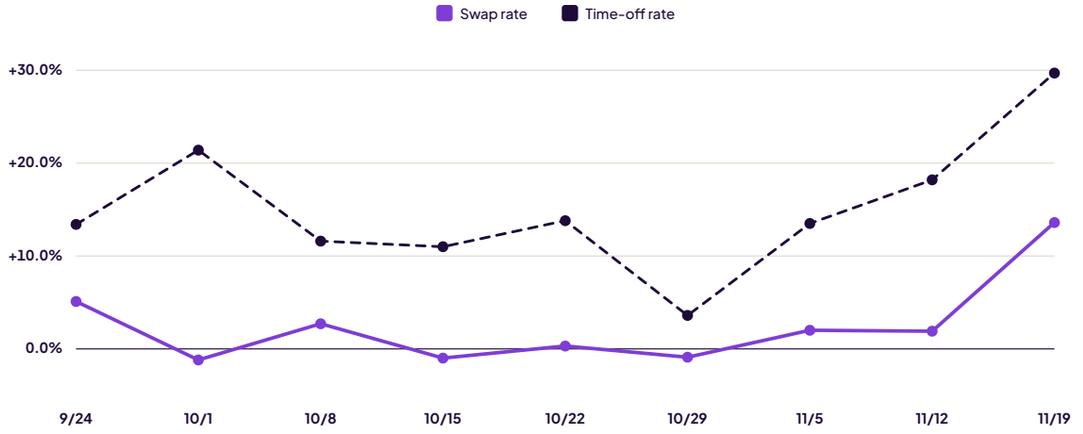
Each square represents 5 percentage points.

AGAINST LAST YEAR

Launch Thursday stood out against last fall

It wasn't just that the last few Thursdays had been slow, either. To rule that out, we looked at the Thursday before Thanksgiving last year and found that the swap rate rose 13.6% year over year.

And shift swaps weren't the only part of the schedule affected. The time-off rate for that day also rose almost 30% year over year — no wonder it was a little harder to find takers for the shifts that were being swapped!



Period	9/24	10/1	10/8	10/15	10/22	10/29	11/5	11/12	11/19
Swap rate	+5.1%	-1.2%	+2.7%	-1.0%	+0.3%	-0.9%	+2.0%	+1.9%	+13.6%
Time-off rate	+13.4%	+21.4%	+11.6%	+11.0%	+13.8%	+3.6%	+13.5%	+18.2%	+29.7%

SHIFT-SWAP REQUESTS

Swap requests built through Wednesday

Leading up to launch day, swap requests started coming through faster and faster. The week-over-week gap widened from Monday through Wednesday, and Wednesday had the largest gain even though Monday had the most requests.

Daily change versus the week before



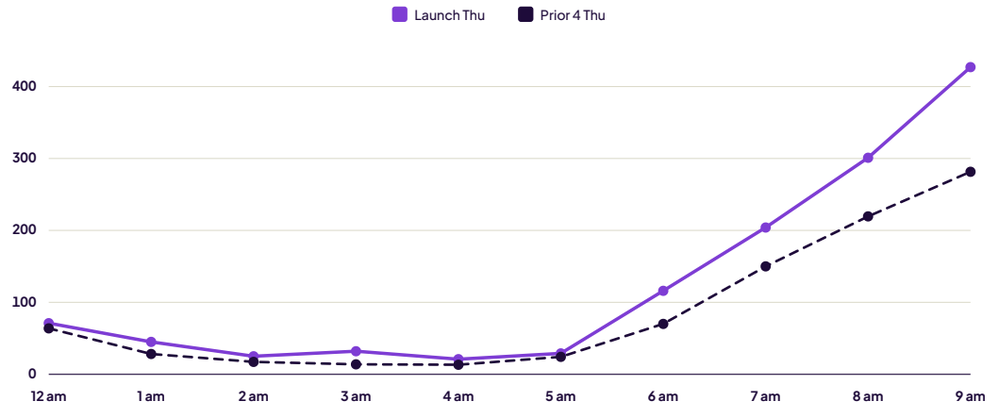
Requests submitted	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Nov 9–11	6,985	6,075	5,733
Nov 16–18	7,484	7,277	6,995

In the 9, 10 and 11 p.m. hours on Wednesday, swap requests ran 29–35% above the prior four Wednesdays. Thursday was still in progress at the cutoff. Evening shifts are categorized as those starting at 4 p.m.

LAUNCH MORNING

By 9 a.m. on Thursday, swap requests were arriving faster

And the requests kept coming even on launch day itself, meaning that teams were hoping to make some last-minute changes. During the 9 a.m. hour in their local time zone, teams submitted 427 swap requests, compared with a four-Thursday average of 281.5.



Period	12 am	1 am	2 am	3 am	4 am	5 am	6 am	7 am	8 am	9 am
Launch Thu	71	45	25	32	21	29	116	204	301	427
Prior 4 Thu	63.8	28.2	17.2	13.8	13.2	24.2	70	150	219.5	281.5

> From midnight through 9:59 a.m. local time, teams submitted 1,271 swap requests, 44% above the prior four Thursdays' average of about 881. Across the 6 through 9 a.m. hours, hourly swap requests were 36–66% higher. Time-off submissions rose about 4–18% over those same hours.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friday and Saturday shifts were already drawing swap requests

But it wasn't just launch day that was impacted. As of Thursday afternoon, the swap rate for Friday shifts was 7.3% above the prior eight Fridays, and Saturday was up 7.9% — meaning that your schedule might be shaken up for a few more days to come.

Shift day	Shifts offered	Per 10,000 shifts	YoY growth above usual[1]
Thu	5,745	104.5	+12.5 pts
Fri	5,289	90.9	+8.9 pts
Sat	6,484	131.3	+10.1 pts
Sun	3,819	106.0	+4.1 pts

[1] Difference between this year's growth and the average year-over-year growth for the prior eight matching weekdays. Sunday's difference was within recent variation. Weekend figures are preliminary pending the Nov 23 refresh.

SWAPS BY INDUSTRY

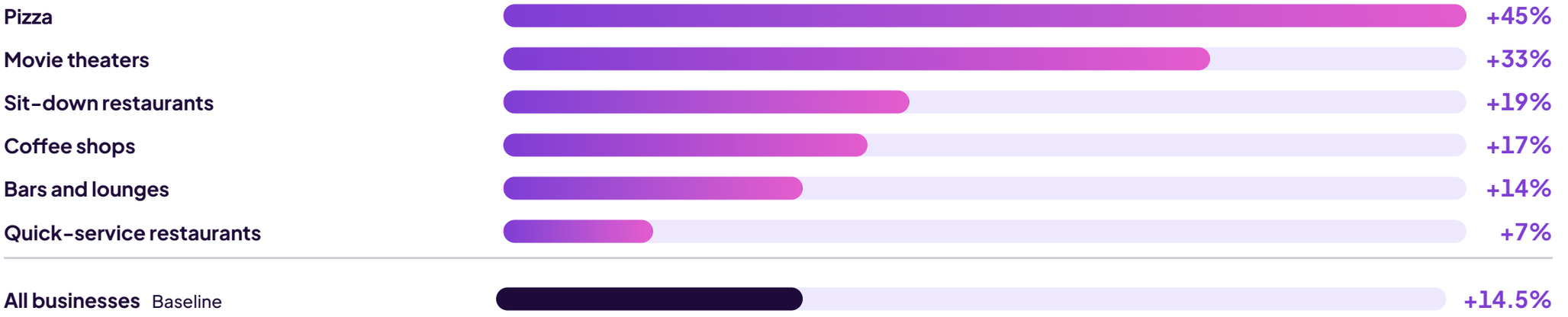
Pizza shops saw the largest increase among the industries we looked at

The impact wasn't consistent across industries, though. Pizza shops saw the biggest change with a whopping 45% increase in swaps, and other restaurant types also saw a jump.

But within the medical, educational, and professional services businesses using Homebase, swap rates were flat or decreased.

Given that 47% of Gen Z respondents in a British survey were excited about playing, the pattern could reflect differences in the age and part-time makeup of these workforces.

Change in the rate of shifts offered for swap



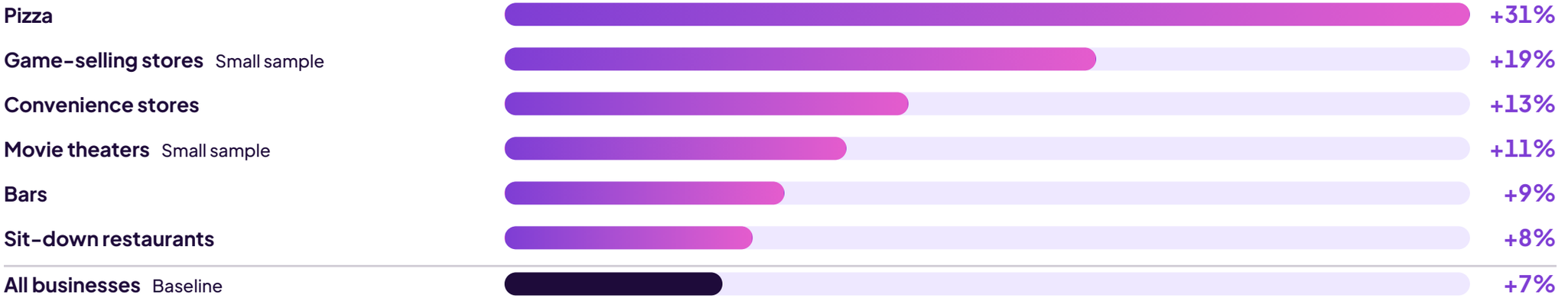
This compares the rate of Thursday shifts offered for swap per 10,000 scheduled shifts with the prior eight Thursdays. Movie theaters recorded 35 swaps, so their increase is directional.

TIME-OFF REQUESTS BY INDUSTRY

Pizza shop employees also wanted more time off

In terms of time-off requests, we saw a similar pattern. Pizza shops had the largest percentage increase, though sit-down restaurants had the most extra requests among the industries shown.

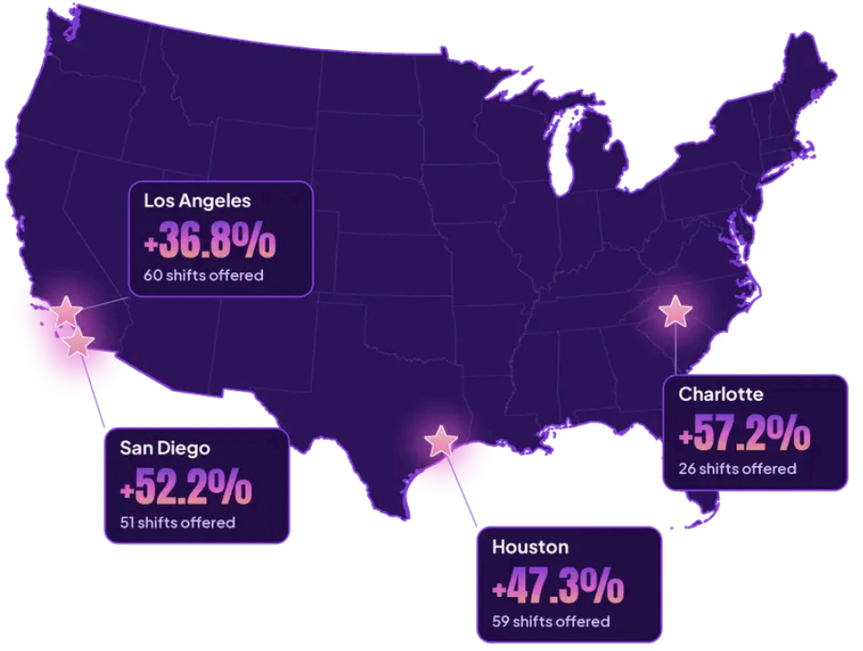
Change in time-off requests starting on launch day versus a typical Thursday



WHERE SWAPS ROSE

The Texas swap rate rose nearly 30%

Not every region saw the same impact. In Texas, the state where we saw the biggest increase, 517 of 42,085 scheduled Thursday shifts went up for swap. The swap rate was 29.5% higher than on the prior eight Thursdays. The cities shown below also saw a notable increase in swap requests.



In Miami, the inspiration for the game's Vice City, the time-off rate was 46.9% higher than on the prior eight Thursdays, though it was a small sample of just 60 requests. Florida's time-off rate overall also rose 20%.

> City estimates above are directional because each had fewer than 100 swaps.

How we measured launch week

This analysis uses Homebase scheduling data from more than 125,000 US small businesses and 1.5 million workers active on our platform between October 20 and November 18, 2026. It is separate from the Main Street Health Report. Instead of clock-ins and hours, it looks at the requests teams send through Homebase when they want a shift off: shift swaps and time off.

Launch day (Thursday, November 19) is compared with the same weekday over the four to eight weeks before, and with the matching Thursday in 2025 (also the Thursday before Thanksgiving). To keep the comparisons fair, every day is counted up to the same hour, so a launch day still in progress isn't compared with finished days. Swap rates are per 10,000 scheduled shifts, so a busier week doesn't inflate the numbers.

These figures are preliminary, as of November 19, 2026. They show what changed around launch day, not why. Where a group is small, we describe the direction instead of an exact percentage.

If you use this report, please link to joinhomebase.com.

Shift swaps

Shifts a team member put up for swap in the Homebase app. Each shift counts once, however many teammates were asked.

Swaps covered

Swapped shifts that another team member picked up.

Time-off requests

Requests for time off, counted on the day the time off starts or the day the request was sent, as each chart notes.

Typical day

The same weekday over the four to eight weeks before launch, counted up to the same hour.

Business type and location

The business category and city on file in Homebase. All times are the business's local time.

About the game. Grand Theft Auto VI is a Rockstar Games title. Homebase isn't affiliated with or endorsed by Rockstar Games or Take-Two Interactive.