

# AMERICA EMPLOYED

## INSIGHTS FROM EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS



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## New Survey: It's Getting Even Harder to Fill Jobs

### Three-Quarters Say "Difficult" to Fill Positions

### Lack of Skilled, Experienced Applicants is a Concern

### Funk: We Need to Focus on "Worker Creation," Not Just "Job Creation"

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Jan. 10, 2018** — Chris Ashcraft, who runs an Express Employment Professionals office in Mobile, Alabama, says it's getting harder to fill jobs in his area. Unemployment is hitting new lows, meaning fewer workers are available.

"Right now, we are trying to recruit employees into the area from outside," he said.

Ashcraft is not alone. Anne Woods, an Express office owner in Covina and Santa Fe Springs, California, says finding people is "harder than this time last year, but about the same as it has been for the last six months."



In Grand Rapids, Michigan, Express office owner Janis Petrini notes, "We have full employment, and so companies are having to be creative about how they will tackle the shortage of labor." Despite the challenges, she's optimistic.

"The community partners have come together to talk about innovative and creative ways to train and cross train the workforce," Petrini added.

In a recent survey of businesses from Express, more than three-quarters of respondents said it was "difficult" to recruit and fill positions, more than in any of the previous four quarterly surveys.

Respondents were asked, “Currently, how easy is it for you to recruit and fill positions?”

Forty-five (45) percent said, “somewhat difficult,” and 31 percent said “very difficult.” Just 21 percent said “somewhat easy,” while 2 percent said “very easy” and another 2 percent said “I don’t know.”

When asked why jobs are not filled, 37 percent said “lack of applicants with experience,” and 31 percent said “lack of available applicants.” Other top concerns include applicants without the relevant hard and soft skills.

“Headlines have been filled with generally positive economic news over the past weeks and months, but here is a reminder that we’re not actually reaching our full potential—so long as we don’t have people for available jobs and jobs for available people,” said Bob Funk, CEO of Express, and a former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. “If I have a wish for 2018, it’s that we can expand the conversation beyond simply ‘job creation’ to ‘worker creation.’ We need to turn unemployed people, and workers on the sidelines, into qualified workers.”

The survey of 462 businesses, which are current and former clients of Express Employment Professionals, was conducted in December 2017 to gauge respondents’ expectations for the first quarter of 2018.

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If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bob Funk to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Karami, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

#### **About Robert A. Funk**

Robert A. “Bob” Funk is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 790 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Under his leadership, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide. Funk served as Chairman of the Conference of Chairmen of the Federal Reserve and was also the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

#### **About Express Employment Professionals**

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.05 billion in sales and employed a record 510,000 people in 2016. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit [ExpressPros.com](http://ExpressPros.com).