



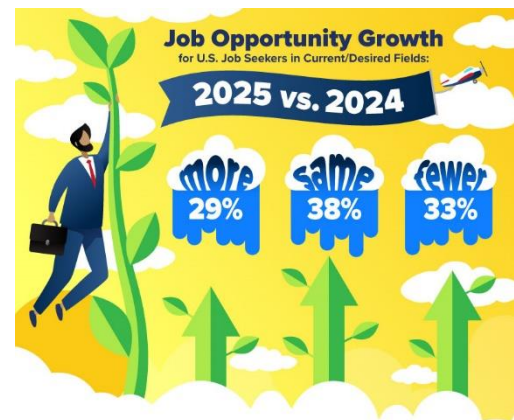
2025 US Job Market Perceptions Split: Survey Reveals Mixed Sentiments on Opportunities and Job Search Ease

One-Third of Job Seekers Predict Decline in Desired Field Positions

OKLAHOMA CITY, Jan. 8, 2025 — Is the job market heating up or cooling down? U.S. job seekers are split in the new year, with a third believing there are fewer job opportunities in their desired fields compared to a year ago (33%), while 38% feel the number of opportunities remains the same and 29% see an increase.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

Job seekers are also divided on how easy it will be to find a new job in the next six months. Slightly more than half (51%) are optimistic about their prospects, feeling it will be easy to secure a job, while 49% anticipate difficulties. These sentiments mirror those from the spring 2024 wave, indicating a consistent split in job market perceptions.



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Source: The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 21 to Dec. 10, 2024, among 1,039 adults ages 18 and older.

Key Findings:

- **Job Search Duration:** Sixty-one percent of job seekers believe they will find a new job within six months, directionally lower than 66% in the spring of 2024 but a significant decrease from 69% in the fall of 2023.
- **Motivations for Job Change:** Employed job seekers are primarily looking for better compensation (40%), growth opportunities (38%) and improved work-life balance (33%). Notably, employed female job seekers are more likely than their male counterparts to look for a new job to find/negotiate for better compensation (46% vs 36%, respectively) or to find the work-life balance they want (39% vs 29%). Similar to the importance of work-life balance, this may also reflect the priorities female job seekers balance on top of their current roles.

- **Job Preferences:** Most job seekers are open to full-time positions (79%), with fewer willing to accept part-time (35%), contract/freelance (24%), temporary/seasonal (19%) or entry-level positions (18%).
- **Challenges:** The most significant challenges for job seekers include finding opportunities that match their qualifications (51%), securing jobs with the pay they need to cover basic expenses (44%) and standing out in a competitive market (40%). Millennials and Gen Xers are more likely to report difficulties in standing out compared to Gen Z and boomers.
- **Barriers:** The top barriers to employment are lacking hard skills, soft or communication skills (40%), companies claiming to be hiring but are only collecting applicants/resumes to review (34%) and being underqualified (23%). Gen Z and millennials are more likely to report a lack of hard skills as a significant barrier.

Despite these challenges, there is some optimism about wage growth, with 46% of job seekers expecting overall wages to increase in 2025. However, job seekers are prepared to act if companies fail to meet their expectations regarding benefits and compensation. Eighty-three percent would hesitate to refer others to companies with inadequate benefits, and 78% would likely leave such companies as soon as possible.

Boosting Career Marketability

January is the perfect time for job seekers to re-evaluate career goals and sharpen their skills to make them more marketable in the new year, according to Alisha Chappell, Express Employment International Talent Acquisition and Retention Director.

"Explore job postings for positions that interest you to identify any gaps in your technical skills," she advises. "Then, consider enrolling in online courses or pursuing certifications to bridge those gaps and increase expertise in your field."

"Take some time to reflect on how you can enhance your interpersonal abilities (soft skills). While specialized knowledge is crucial, many employers are willing to provide training for candidates who demonstrate strong soft skills, such as eagerness to learn, punctuality, a positive attitude, excellent communication and teamwork."

Job seekers should highlight these skills on resumes and cover letters to help hiring managers immediately recognize valuable attributes, increasing chances of standing out in a competitive job market.

"Navigating the job market in 2025 requires resilience and adaptability," said Bill Stoller, Express International CEO. "As job seekers face a dynamic landscape, those who remain proactive and open to continuous learning will find opportunities even in uncertain times. The key to success lies in leveraging one's unique strengths and staying prepared to pivot as the market evolves."

Survey Methodology

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 21 to Dec. 10, 2024, among 1,039 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, employing 492,000 people globally in 2023 and more than 11 million since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.