

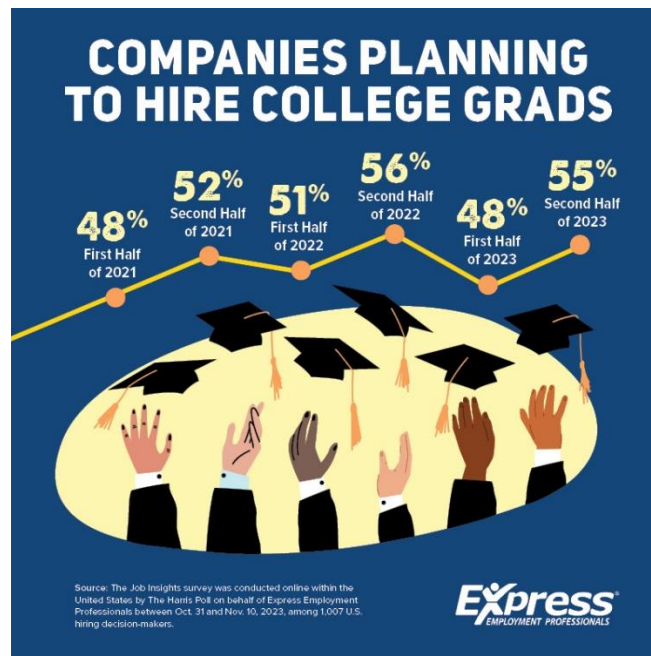
## More Than Half of Companies Eager to Snag US College Grads

*Business Owners Caution Former Students of Competitive Market*

*Latest Results from The Harris Poll*

**OKLAHOMA CITY, May 29, 2024** — American employers continue to show interest in hiring college graduates with more than half (55%) planning to hire recent alumni, a positive trend over the past few years, aside from a dip in the first half of 2023.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey in which companies also outlined other in-demand demographic segments and industries.



In addition to college graduates, hiring managers say they plan to employ college students (41%), vocational/career tech graduates (37%), high school students (23%) and adults with a disability (21%). Fewer companies plan to hire immigrant workers in 2024 (19%) — lower than the first half of 2023 (23%) and the second half of 2022 (24%).

Some also plan to hire retirees (16%), migrant workers (15%) or justice-involved individuals

(13%).

### **Laborers Needed, Full-Time Employee Demand Surges**

Businesses are also looking to hire employees in many key departments in 2024, most commonly in general labor (28%), customer service (27%), sales (27%) and IT/technology support (26%).

Interest in hiring specifically for IT/technology support has increased since the second half of 2022 (26% in the second half of 2023 vs. 23% in the second half of 2022).

The majority of hiring managers (86%) report their company plans to hire full-time employees, either hourly (61%) or salaried (52%) this year, with interest in this group the highest it's been since the survey began in 2020.

### **Hiring Landscape**

"There are a lot of jobs out there, but it is much harder to land them than in the previous two years," said Jake Domer, Senior Vice President of the Specialized Recruiting Group. "Graduates will have to be more deliberate, strategic and work hard — but the opportunities are there."

He adds that overall hiring is still good for college graduates, however, the market has become more competitive and constrained towards proven skills vs. education.

In West Virginia, Express franchise owner Chad Drainer says his market has tightened, and it's a tough one for college grads to dive into.

"I believe the market is worse than previous years because of concerns with the economy," he said. "Many companies have tightened their budgets. When they are hiring, they are looking for more experience."

When alumni start the job hunt, Domer says demand will always be there for the healthcare industry, while Drainer encourages them to consider an additional avenue.

"I believe the best opportunity for college grads is in any sales capacity, whether that is insurance, marketing, advertising sales or staffing," he said. "Most companies are more willing to hire the right attitude and drive and are willing to train a salesperson."

### **Workforce Prep Starts Now**

To future graduates, Drainer encourages them to be open to new opportunities to gain experience.

"The perfect position may not be readily available after graduation," he said. "Take a position to

continue to sharpen skills and gain work-related experience.”

Workforce prep is a subject dear to Domer’s heart as he prepares his daughter to graduate college in a few years. For college seniors, he suggests:

- Don’t get caught up in the “down” narrative. There is still a significant labor shortage at all levels, and this is only getting worse with the rate of retirement of boomers and the historically low birth rates in the U.S.
- Get out and meet employers face-to-face. Don’t rely on a “post and pray” approach of submitting online applications only.
- Make sure your social presence is professional. Everyone will look at least, if not further, at LinkedIn, Instagram and other platforms.
- Internships are critical to giving students a real-world perspective.
- Use expanded networking and mentorship opportunities offered by colleges.
- Utilize reputable and reliable recruiters, such as ones available through staffing agencies, to avoid falling for “unicorn” job posts that are scams.

“I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2024 and a warm welcome to the workforce,” said Bill Stoller, CEO of Express Employment International. “While many things have changed since my college graduation years ago, a diligent work ethic and dedication to lifelong learning remains a cornerstone of career success. If you’re prepared to do the hard work of investing in yourself, the road ahead is paved with endless opportunities.”

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 1,007 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

For full survey methodologies, please contact [Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com](mailto:Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com), Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

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If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact [Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com](mailto: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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