

NEW POLL: COVID-19 Pandemic Having Severe Impacts on Unemployed Canadians

Unemployed Canadians Can't Afford to Stay Out of Work for Much Longer

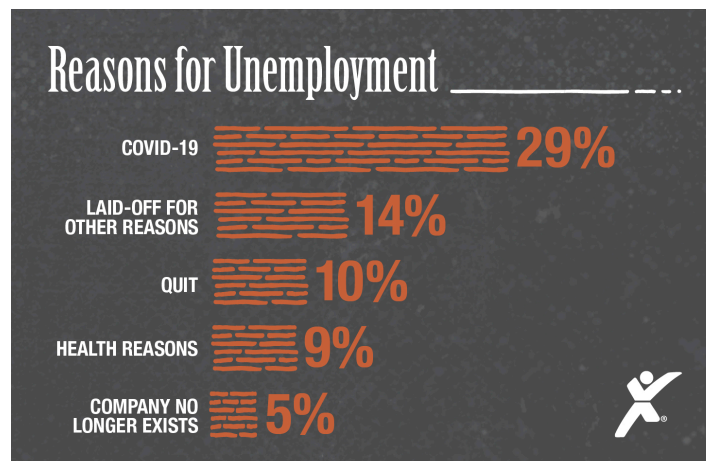
TORONTO, Dec. 9, 2020 – A new survey released today provides the first comprehensive picture of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on unemployed Canadians. The survey found that the COVID-19 pandemic is having severe, and potentially long-term, impacts on Canadians looking for work.

The Harris Poll survey, commissioned by Express Employment Professionals, polled over 1,000 unemployed Canadians at the end of October 2020 and found the COVID-19 pandemic is the most commonly reported reason for their current unemployment, a barrier to returning to work for most and a key factor in why many are still unemployed.

"The workforce has been hit hard this year by COVID-19, and it's understandable unemployed Canadians are becoming more discouraged the longer the pandemic lingers," Express CEO Bill Stoller said. "This new survey gives us great insight into the plight of the unemployed and how they are staying afloat."

COVID-19 pandemic is the most commonly cited reason unemployed Canadians lost their job.

According to the survey, almost 1 in 3 unemployed Canadians (29%) say they lost their job/their position was eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This impact is similar across both genders and generations. Other reasons for their current unemployment include being laid off (14%) and quitting (10%).



Thirty-eight per cent (38%) have been unemployed for six months or less, and 62% have been unemployed for more than six months, with 21% unemployed for more than two years.

COVID-19 isn't just resulting in job loss, it's making it harder for unemployed Canadians to find a new job.

According to the survey, even with the concerns around health and safety brought about by COVID-19, 81% of unemployed Canadians would return to work if offered a job right now. But more than three-quarters (77%) say COVID has made it more difficult to find a job in their field, with half (50%) saying it has made it "much more difficult."

Despite applying for jobs (unemployed Canadians spent on average 11 hours in the previous week applying for jobs and applied for an average 13 jobs in the previous month), two-thirds (67%) did not obtain a single job interview in the previous month.

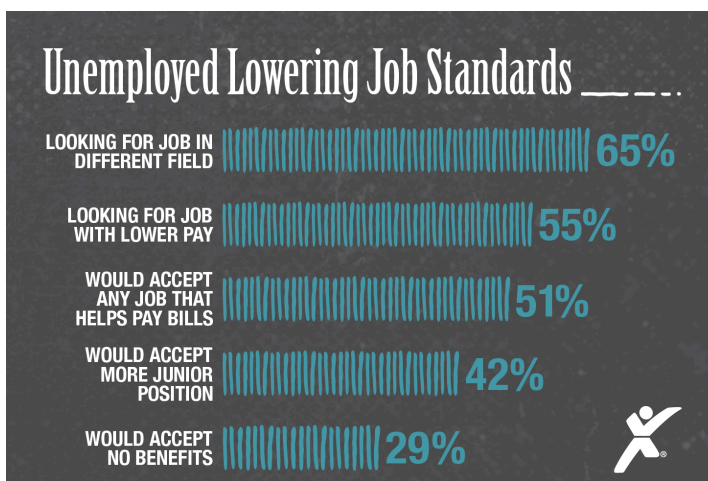
Almost two-thirds (62%) of unemployed Canadians surveyed say COVID-19 is the reason they are still unemployed.

COVID-19 has not just resulted in more people looking for fewer jobs, it has made finding a job more difficult in many other ways.

Half of unemployed Canadians (51%) say finding opportunities to expand/upgrade their skills has become more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Half (50%) say job interviews have become more challenging, while 44% say determining if a role is the right fit has become more challenging. Nearly half (47%) say networking has become more challenging.

As a result, unemployed Canadians are widening their job search—reluctantly, in many cases.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many to search and apply for jobs that do not meet their desired standards. Half of unemployed Canadians (51%) are willing to accept almost any job that will help them pay the bills.



Furthermore, more than half (55%) say they are now looking for a job that pays lower than they would like and nearly two-thirds (65%) say they are looking for a job in a different field because they haven't been able to find one in their current line of work. Many also say that if they were offered a job right now, they would be willing to accept a more junior position (42%), long hours (33%) and no benefits (29%).

Unemployed Canadians are feeling stressed and desperate.

Almost three-quarters (71%) find being unemployed really stressful, 70% are becoming more discouraged the longer they remain unemployed, 62% feel desperate due to being out of work and more than half (54%) are angry about being out of work.

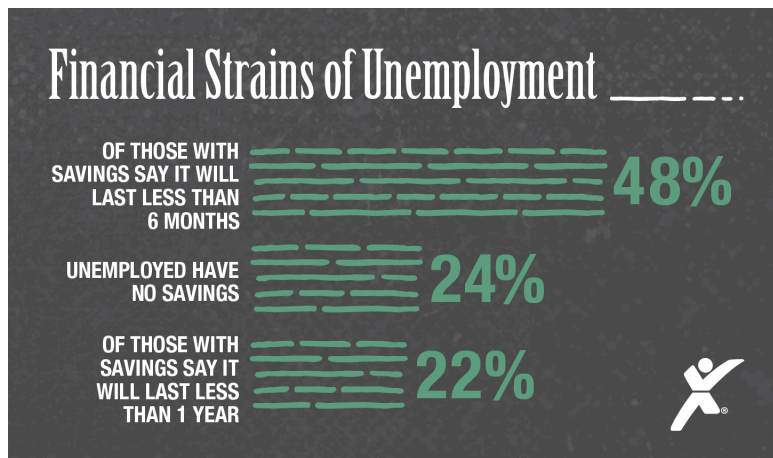


The inability to obtain a job has many unemployed Canadians getting into the gig economy.

Forty-two per cent (42%) of unemployed Canadians say they rely on gig work (i.e. short-term, temporary, and/or independent work) to keep them afloat.

Unemployed Canadians are struggling financially, and most say they will not be able to make ends meet much longer.

The financial impacts of being unemployed are severe. Forty per cent (40%) are currently relying on their savings to make ends meet, 26% are relying on the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), 25% are relying on Employment Insurance (EI) and 23% are receiving financial help from friends and family.



But many say their savings are quickly running out. Of the 76% who have some savings, more than half (52%) say their household has less than \$5,000 in accessible savings, with more than one-quarter (27%) saying their household has less than \$1,000 in accessible savings. Nearly one-in-four unemployed Canadians (24%) say their household has no savings at all.

Nearly half of those with savings (48%) say it will last them less than six months, while close to another quarter (22%) say their savings will last them from 6 months to less than a year.

Most unemployed Canadians don't think there is enough support for Canadians who have lost their jobs.

Many unemployed Canadians are receiving financial support through CERB (26%) or EI (23%), and 59% say they could not have gotten by without receiving EI after becoming unemployed. However, a majority (63%) do not think enough financial support is provided to people who are

unemployed. In addition, a similar proportion (62%) believe the Canadian economy is headed in the wrong direction.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 15 and Oct. 29, 2020, among 1,008 Canadian unemployed adults (defined as adults ages 18+ in Canada who are not employed, but looking for work). Figures are weighted where necessary by age by gender, race, region, marital status, education, household size, and knowledge of official languages.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, The Harris Poll avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading.

About the Survey

- [Memo from Harris Poll](#)
- [Survey from Harris Poll](#)
- [Infographic](#)

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email ana@mapleleafstrategies.com.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 825 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa, and beginning in 2020 will expand to Australia and New Zealand. Since its inception, Express has put more than 8 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, OK, our international network of franchises offer localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve, employing 552,000 people across North America in 2019. For more information, visit www.ExpressPros.com.