

Hiring Outlook Optimistic for College Students and Recent Grads

Opportunities Abundant in 2021

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, June 9, 2021 – Sometimes overlooked in a tight labor market, U.S. hiring decision-makers say their companies are optimistic about hiring a variety of groups this year, including recent college graduates, college students and vocational/career tech graduates.

This is according to a new survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

By segment, U.S. hiring decision-makers say their company plans to hire recent college graduates (48%), vocational/career tech graduates (37%), college students (36%), immigrant workers (18%), high school students (16%), retirees (15%) and/or disabled adults (14%).



“We expect the hiring market to be robust in the summer of 2021,” said John Calabrese, Express franchise owner in Utica, New York. “This is due to the emergence of new businesses in our region, as well as a ramp-up of hiring from existing businesses across multiple sectors. This should lead to increased employment opportunities in engineering, manufacturing, wholesale/distribution, financial services information technology and healthcare.”

In Glendale, California, Express franchise owner Kim Guard believes that college graduates may still be overlooked for jobs this summer, but it’s dependent on their degree.

“If someone is graduating with a marketing or HR degree, there are probably not a lot of positions out there,” she said. “But if they are graduating with an engineering degree or from a trade school, there will be more work for them.”

Both Express franchisees agree there should be plenty of opportunities for vocational/career tech graduates in the near future because they have the hands-on skills for jobs that are available now.

Guard says her office works with local entities that teach a few 6-week certification courses in welding, machinery and manufacturing.

“We are all fighting over them when they complete it,” she said.

Another untapped labor source, Guard says, is high school graduates who do not plan to go to college.

“If individuals are graduating and not going to college, we could use hundreds of them,” she said. “High school graduates are a great fit for warehouse and distribution positions. In all my years of staffing, I always wondered why we don’t see more applicants who are right out of high school.”

Calabrese adds there are excellent opportunities for high school students in part-time positions, internships and full-time jobs as businesses look to ramp up again and are more flexible with shift hours.

And for those recent high school graduates who are trying to decide between attending a four-year institution in the fall or pursuing a vocational/career tech education path, Calabrese said both tracks offer excellent opportunities in 2021.

“However, vocational/career tech positions should see unprecedented growth in the last half of 2021 because of the large number of construction projects in the region, the emergence of new businesses that are looking for these skill sets and the expanded hiring for existing businesses in these areas,” he said. “An aging workforce will also lead to long-term opportunities in skilled trades and other pathways from a vocational/career tech education standpoint.”

These survey results from The Harris Poll are a good sign for those new to the workforce who need the experience of a first job, Express CEO Bill Stoller said.

“Younger employees deserve a chance to build their resumes early in their career, and it looks as if the market is picking them back up swiftly,” he said. “With the desperate need for skilled labor, these initial jobs allow them to explore different career paths and discover which industries are going to be most lucrative with in-demand positions while gaining experience.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between March 23 and April 12, 2021, among 1,001 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data was weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

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

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing company has more than 830 franchises in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Since inception, Express has put more than 9 million people to work worldwide.

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