



## The New Job Hunt Reality: More Seekers, Longer Timelines, Greater Required Flexibility

*Twenty-five percent expect a six-month search, and 83% are willing to take different roles to secure work.*

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Sept. 24, 2025** — The labor market is sending mixed signals, and America’s job seekers are taking notice. While employers may feel confident, workers are bracing for a tougher road ahead, and many are already making moves.

The latest Express Employment Professionals–Harris Poll survey paints a clear picture: nearly 8 in 10 job seekers (78%) believe employers have the upper hand in today’s market. That perception is fueling action. Forty-four percent of job seekers are actively looking for a new job, a steady climb from 41% in fall 2024 and just 35% in spring 2024.



But optimism is in short supply:

- 59% believe it will be harder to find a job in the next six months, up significantly from 48% in fall 2024 who believed there were fewer job opportunities.
- 48% now believe there are fewer job opportunities than a year ago, a sharp increase from 33% in fall 2024.
- 25% expect it will take more than six months to find a job.
- 48% still hope for a wage increase within the next year, though confidence is waning.

And for some, the timeline feels daunting: one in four job seekers (25%) expect it will take more than six months to find a job, signaling growing anxiety about the future.

### Challenges Ahead

Finding the right fit remains the biggest hurdle. More than half (52%) say their top challenge is finding opportunities that match their qualifications, while 46% worry about landing a job quickly enough to cover basic expenses. Another 44% struggle to stand out in an increasingly competitive market.

Barriers compound these challenges:

- 43% cite lack of relevant experience
- 36% point to limited openings in their field
- 30% say their skills don't align with employer demands

### **Flexibility Becomes a Survival Strategy**

Faced with uncertainty, job seekers are broadening their horizons. Eighty-three percent are willing to accept a different role than initially planned, and 75% would consider temporary or contract work. Some are even willing to make bigger sacrifices—24% would relocate, 23% would switch industries and 19% would take a pay cut.

### **Why They're Leaving—and What They Fear**

The motivations for change are clear—42% want better pay, 39% seek improved work-life balance and 31% are chasing career advancement.

At the same time, fears about current roles loom large:

- 40% worry about layoffs
- 31% fear reduced hours or pay
- 31% see no path for advancement

"Today's labor market is full of contradictions. Opportunities exist, but finding the right fit is harder than ever," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, President and Chairman of Express Employment International. "Job seekers who understand these dynamics and seek expert guidance from staffing companies like Express are better equipped to navigate uncertainty, shorten their search and uncover roles they might otherwise miss."

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from June 12 to 27, 2025, among 1,000 adults ages 18 and older.

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

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**About Robert (Bob) Funk Jr.**

Robert (Bob) Funk Jr. is the Chief Executive Officer, President and Chairman of Express Employment International, a global staffing franchisor founded and headquartered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He leads a portfolio of workforce solution brands, including the flagship Express Employment Professionals franchise, along with several affiliated brands serving specialized markets. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

### **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. 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 427,000 people globally in 2024 and more than 11 million since its inception. For more information, visit [ExpressPros.com](https://ExpressPros.com).