



The ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey

The **ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey** is a nationally representative quarterly survey of U.S. job seekers that measures how optimistic or pessimistic they are about their ability to land their preferred jobs. Increased confidence is typically an indicator of future increases in employee turnover, wage growth, and labor force participation.

Data Spotlight

Latest Release
2023 Q2

↓ **3.9%**
**Expectations
Index**

Job seeker optimism about the medium-term labor market outlook deteriorated moderately.

↓ **2.8%**
**Preparedness
Index**

Job seekers felt less confident in their readiness for the job search process.

↓ **3.1%**
**Financial
Wellbeing Index**

Job seekers reported greater financial strain and lost some confidence in their ability to find better-paying jobs.

↓ **4.7%**
**Present
Situation Index**

Job seekers' appraisals of current job market conditions declined substantially.

U.S. Job Seeker Confidence

The **ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Index** decreased 3.8 points from 97.8 in 2023 Q1 to 94.0 in 2023 Q2 (Index: 2022 Q1 = 100). Job seekers became more pessimistic across the board—about current labor market conditions, the medium-term economic outlook, their personal finances, and their preparedness for the labor market. The decline reversed a temporary first-quarter rebound in optimism.

“In certain industries and regions, demand for labor has cooled and supply has improved. Affected job seekers perceive greater competition for a smaller set of roles, and feel increasingly anxious about their prospects, according to @ZipRecruiter’s latest Job Seeker Confidence Survey.”

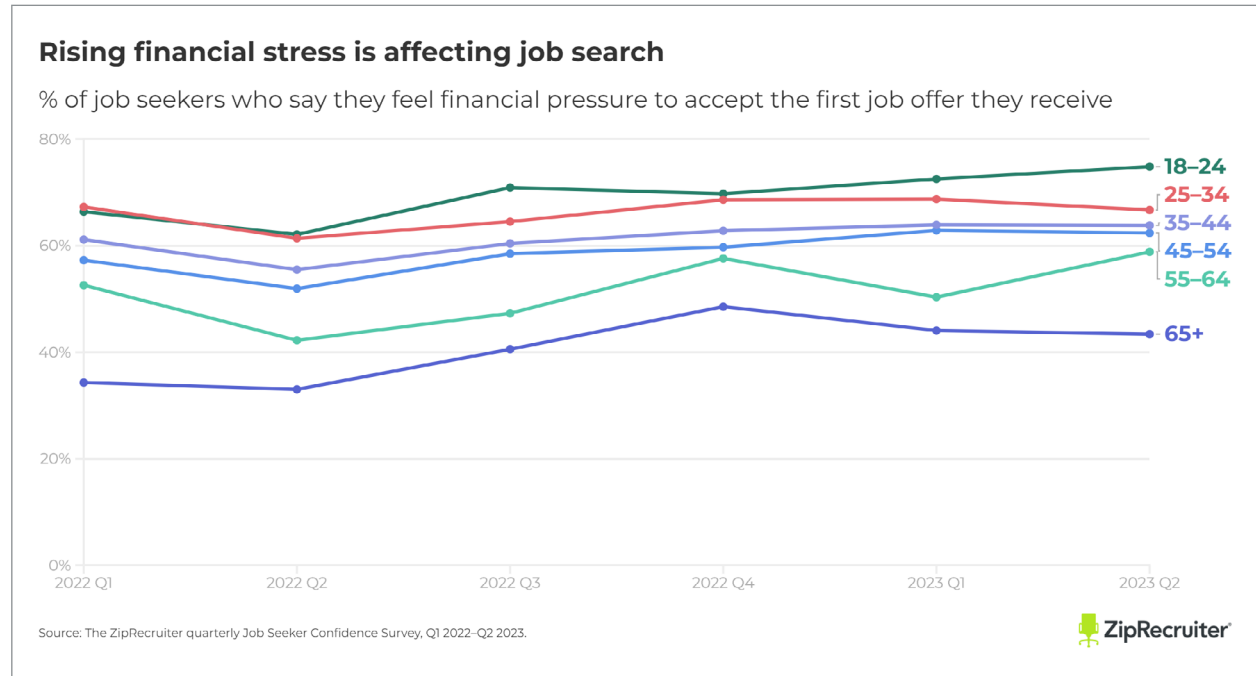
— Julia Pollak, ZipRecruiter Chief Economist

Trends in job seeker sentiment have recently diverged across regions. While job seeker confidence experienced an encouraging upturn in the South, all other regions witnessed a decline. This regional disparity underscores the varying economic dynamics across the country, where unemployment rates have reached series lows in 10 states, but are rising in several others.

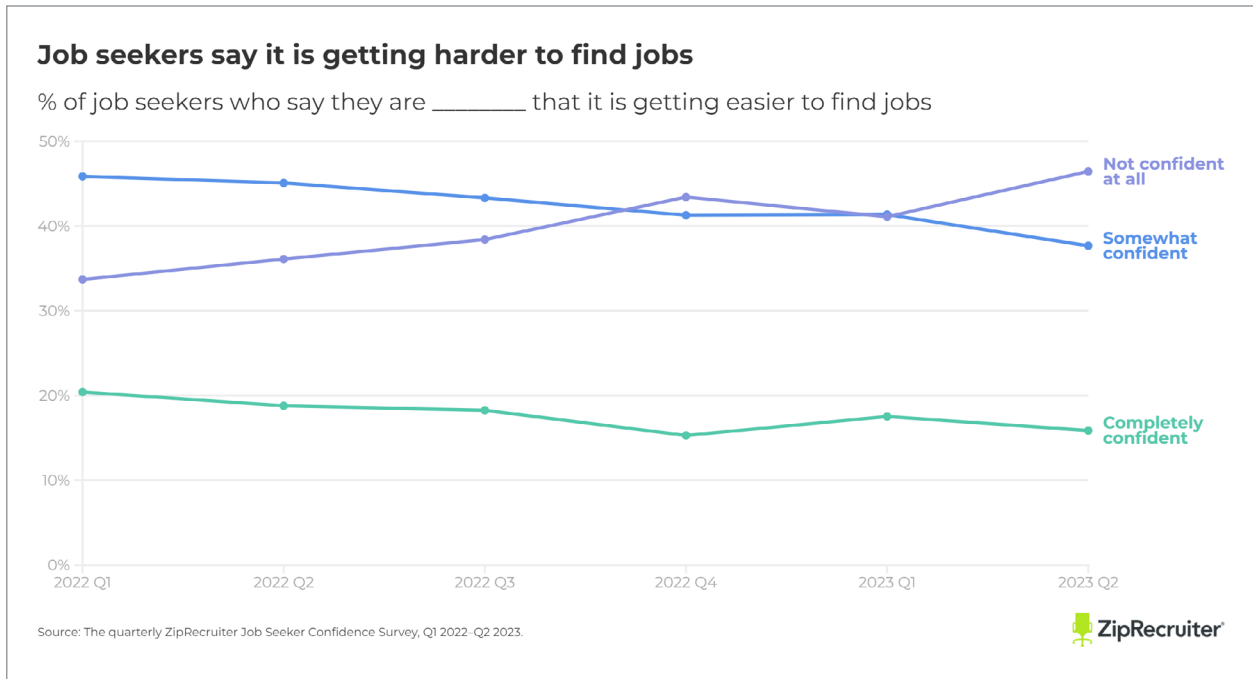
Optimism has also diverged across racial, income, and age demographics. Sentiment was resilient among black job seekers, but declined among white job seekers. Heading into the busy summer hiring season, young job seekers aged 18 to 24 reported increased confidence levels. However, older job seekers became considerably more pessimistic, particularly those aged 65 and above. Over the past year, confidence has declined most steeply among the job seekers with the highest earnings and education levels.

3 Reasons for Deteriorating Sentiment in 2023 Q2

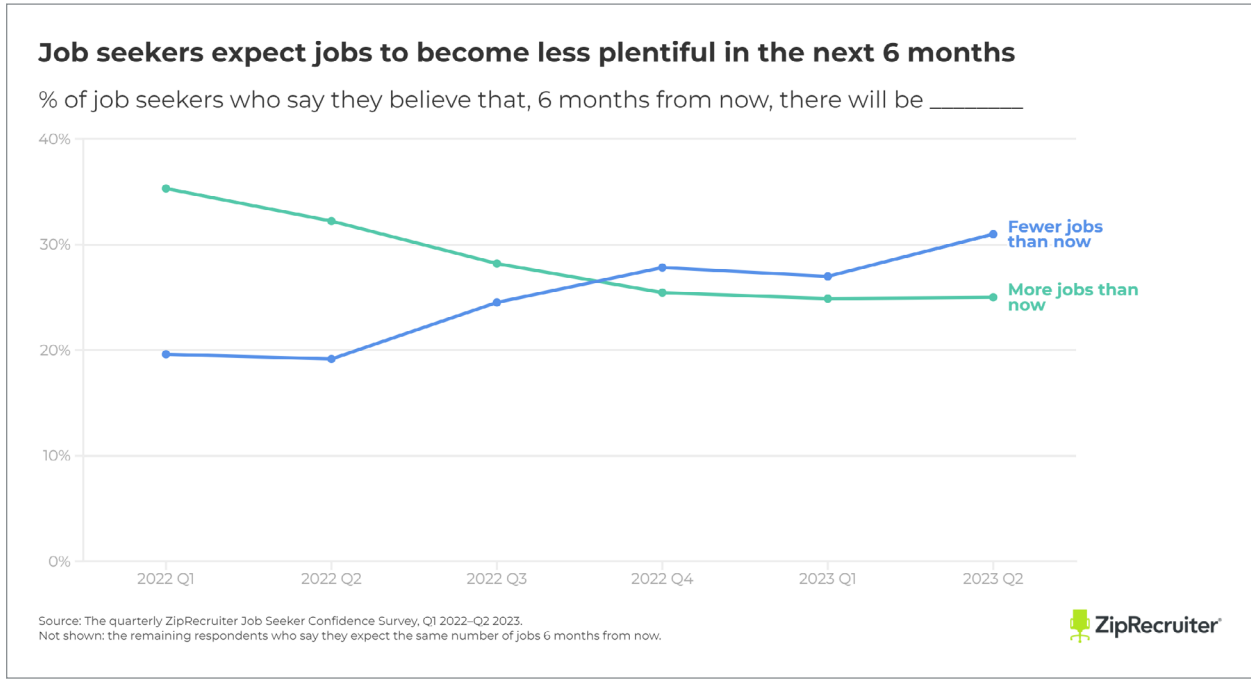
- **Rising financial strain:** 61% of job seekers said they feel financial pressure to take the first job they are offered, up from 50% a year ago. That sentiment is held by three in four younger workers, aged 18 to 24, the highest share in the 18 months of the survey. It has risen both among employed and unemployed job seekers over the past year.



- Greater difficulty finding jobs:** The majority of job seekers say they are confident that jobs are plentiful, but that share has fallen substantially over the past year from 75% to 66%. 47% of job seekers say it has become harder to find a job over the past 6 months, up from 34% in early 2021. Rising shares of nonemployed job seekers cite either the unavailability of any jobs, or the unavailability of jobs offering adequate pay, as the main reasons that they are not currently working. 59% of job seekers say they have not received any job offers in the past month, compared with 54% a year ago.



- **Rising concern about the future outlook:** Job seekers are more likely to expect that there will be fewer jobs available 6 months from now than to expect that there will be more jobs, and the gap has recently widened.



Although job seeker anxiety has risen, it has not translated into a willingness to accept lower wages. On the contrary, job seekers’ pay expectations continue to rise. The average reservation wage—that is, the lowest wage job seekers say they would be prepared to accept—rose from \$42,862 in Q1 to \$44,926 in Q2.

Spotlight on Career Readiness

Many job seekers could likely improve their chances of success with greater job search preparation or assistance. 7.5% of job seekers report never having written a resume and, among those with resumes, one in four say that their resume is outdated. Overall, 31% of job seekers either say they have not updated their resume in years or that they have never written a resume.

“3 in 10 job seekers have an outdated resume or no resume at all, according to @ZipRecruiter’s latest job seeker survey. In the current market, they will need a well-written resume to meet employers’ tightening standards.”

– Ian Siegel, ZipRecruiter CEO

Update on Remote Work

- **Remote work remains popular:** 62% of job seekers overall say that they would prefer to find a job that allows them to work remotely, although preferences differ across population groups and industries. For example, 54% of men and 69% of women prefer remote work. Across industries, the share of workers seeking remote jobs ranged from 42% in transportation and delivery to 100% in research in the second quarter. People who currently work remotely are generally satisfied with the arrangement, with 83% saying they’d prefer to work remotely in their next job as well.
- **Motivations for wanting remote work:** The overall preference for remote work has stayed remarkably stable since the start of our survey in early 2022, even as the share of workers citing the desire to avoid illness as their motivation for wanting remote work has declined from 41% to just 22%. The most widespread motivations are to save time and money commuting (cited by 57% of job seekers), to be able to work from anywhere (46%), and to be more productive (36%).
- **Job seekers would accept less pay to work remotely:** Job seekers say that they would accept 16% less pay, on average (median 8%), for the opportunity to work remotely. Workers in the utilities industry say they would trade 10% of their pay for remote work flexibility, but that share rises to 35% among workers in advertising.

The Survey

The quarterly **ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey** is based on an online sample and conducted for ZipRecruiter by Qualtrics. It is administered to 2,000+ job seekers between the 10th and 16th of the second month of each quarter and weighted to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Respondents may be employed, unemployed, or not currently in the labor force, but they must reside in the United States and plan to find a new job "in the next six months" in order to be included in the sample.

The ZipRecruiter Index

The overall **ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Index** comprises four subindices:

- The **Preparedness Index** measures how confident job seekers feel about their job skills, education, and training, as well as about their job search skills—that is, their ability to find relevant positions, develop application materials, and interview effectively.
- The **Financial Wellbeing Index** measures job seekers' financial security—that is, whether they have peace of mind about their ability to meet their financial needs, or whether they are searching for work and negotiating job offers under financial pressure.
- The **Expectations Index** captures job seekers' short-term outlook for labor market conditions. It is based on questions about whether job seekers expect the number of available jobs to increase or decrease.
- The **Present Situation Index** is based on job seekers' assessment of current labor market conditions. It is based on questions about whether they expect to get interviews, find a job easily, and get the job they want, and how satisfied they are with their job search.

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