

The ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey

The **ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey** is a nationally representative monthly 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
September, 2022

↑2.9% Expectations Index	↑2.9% Preparedness Index	↑2.7% Financial Wellbeing Index	↑2.8% Present Situation Index
Job seeker optimism about the labor market outlook partially recovered in September following a three-month decline.	Job seekers felt slightly more confident in their preparedness for job search and career readiness.	Job seekers reported improvement in their financial situations, likely due to falling gasoline prices and student loan debt cancellation.	Job seekers perceived improvement in current job market conditions and reported more positive job search experiences.

U.S. Job Seeker Confidence

The ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Index partially rebounded in September to 100.5, after falling to an all-time low of 97.8 in August. Job seekers had been anticipating a hiring slowdown since June, but sentiment recovered slightly in September amid a sustained expansion in employment.

Job Seeker Confidence Rebounded in September

All four subindices rose modestly in September, as the holiday hiring season began. Job seekers reported improved sentiment about the current employment situation, greater optimism regarding the future labor market outlook, greater confidence in their own preparedness for the job market, and improved perceptions of their own financial wellbeing.

While inflation and uncertainty continue to weigh on sentiment, job seekers appear to have taken some comfort in September from the continued strength in hiring, the three-month decline in gasoline prices, and the White House's August announcement of student debt cancellation for millions of Americans.

Key findings:

- **Job seekers increasingly express willingness to relocate for jobs.** The share of job seekers reporting that they would be open to relocating to another neighborhood or state for a new job rose from 43% in July, to 45% in August, and then to 48% in September. The recent spike in rent inflation may be prompting job seekers to consider moving to more affordable areas.
- **Job seekers remain confident enough to keep quitting jobs for new opportunities.** 1 in 4 employed job seekers reports feeling so confident in the availability of jobs that they would quit their current job without having another job offer lined up. That share (25%) is the same as in August, but higher than in July (22%), the first time the question was asked.
- **Job seekers expect wage growth to increase over the next 6 months.** By a 2-to-1 margin, job seekers are more likely to expect wage growth to accelerate than to slow, with the share expecting wage growth to rise increasing to 34% in September, from 32% in August.

“If employers are hoping for relief from an overheated labor market, they are not yet likely to get it. Americans continue to expect wage increases and feel confident enough to say ‘I quit.’”

— Julia Pollak, ZipRecruiter Chief Economist

Additional Findings

Job Seeker Sentiment Improved in Multiple Areas

Job seekers felt more positive about a wide range of job search outcomes in September. Notably:

- 25% of job seekers said they were completely confident that they would be able to find a job within a month, up from 21% in August.
- 71% of job seekers said they were somewhat or completely confident that jobs are plentiful right now, up from 68% in August.
- Only 37% of job seekers disagreed that it has become easier to find jobs in the last 6 months, down from 41% in August.
- 30% of job seekers felt completely confident that they are using the best job search tools available to them, up from 25% in August.
- 78% of job seekers said they were somewhat or completely confident that they would reject or take time responding to job offers they do not like because they know that something better will come along, up from 76% in August.
- 31% of job seekers said they were completely confident that they would find a great job that they like, up from 27% in August.
- 41% of job seekers said they were completely confident that they have the right skills and are adequately prepared for the jobs available, up from 38% in August.
- 23% of job seekers said they had already secured multiple job offers, up from 21% in August.

Job Seekers Continue to Face a Range of Job Search Barriers

Job seekers cited the following as the top barriers to getting hired:

- being perceived as too old (21%)
- lacking the right work experience (20%)
- lacking the right education (18%)
- lacking transportation (17%)
- being perceived as overqualified (14%)
- lacking a professional network (13%)

The main job search process challenges respondents said they confronted include:

- not finding relevant opportunities (39%)
- never hearing back from employers (30%)
- not getting interviews (28%)
- being discouraged by time-consuming and repetitive application processes (22%)
- not knowing what jobs they're qualified for (20%)
- getting interviews, but not offers (18%)
- not knowing what they want (18%)
- difficulty navigating complicated hiring timelines (14%)

“Low inventory levels limited holiday season sales in recent years, but staffing shortages threaten to be the sales bottleneck this year. Employers who wait too long to staff up will struggle in what continues to be a job seekers’ market.”

— Ian Siegel, ZipRecruiter Co-Founder and CEO

The Survey

The monthly **Ziprecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey** is based on an online sample and conducted for ZipRecruiter by Qualtrics. It is administered to 1,500 job seekers between the 10th and 16th of each month 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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