

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
July, 2022

↓-3.6% Expectations Index	↑2.2% Preparedness Index	↓-1.4% Financial Wellbeing Index	↓-1.5% Present Situation Index
Job seeker optimism about the labor market outlook fell for the second month against growing recession fears.	Job seekers continued to feel confident in their job search skills and ability to find relevant jobs using the best tools.	Job seekers felt more financial pressure to accept job offers quickly and were less inclined to negotiate or wait for additional offers.	Job seekers experienced increased difficulty finding jobs and were less likely to believe that jobs are plentiful.

U.S. Job Seeker Confidence

The overall **ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Index** decreased to 102.4 in July (January 2022=100), as job seekers started to experience greater difficulty finding jobs and increased concern about the future availability of jobs.

Notable changes included:

- A sharp increase in the share of job seekers who believe there will be fewer jobs 6 months from now, to 26% in July, from 20% in June.
- A sizable decrease in the share of job seekers who say their job search is going well to 19% in July, from 22% in June.
- A slight increase in the share of job seekers who feel financial pressure to accept the first job offer they receive to 51% in July, from 49% in June.

The overall confidence index would have fallen more sharply were it not for an improvement in job seekers' confidence in their ability to look for jobs effectively; in their ability to use the best job search tools and methods; and in their preparedness for the jobs available.

"In another sign that the job market is tipping back towards normal, candidates indicate they are becoming more likely to accept the first offer they receive and less likely to hold out for better or negotiate for more."

- Julia Pollak, ZipRecruiter Chief Economist

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.

“Even as job seeker confidence in overall market conditions starts to fall from unprecedented highs, candidates remain enthusiastic about online job search, confident that using the best job search tools will help them succeed.”

- Ian Siegel, ZipRecruiter Co-Founder and CEO

Candidate Ghosting and Job Seeker Confidence

Candidate ghosting—that is, the practice of candidates cutting off communications with a potential employer at any stage in the recruiting process—peaked in May, according to self-reported behavior in the ZipRecruiter monthly Job Seeker Confidence survey. Job seekers were emboldened in a bustling job market full of opportunities.

Now, as optimism about the future labor market outlook wanes, the share of job seekers who say they have ghosted a potential employer is rapidly falling. The survey provides insight into who ghosts employers, when, and why.

Here are five highlights from our findings:

- 1. Ghosting is more prevalent when job seeker optimism is high.** Job seekers' expectations regarding the future availability of jobs is the key factor driving ghosting. When candidates think there will be many more fish in the sea, they take less care to preserve their relationships with each potential employer. In July, as the share of job seekers who believe there will be fewer jobs available 6 months from now rose by 5.4 percentage points, the share of job seekers who said they had ghosted an employer in their most recent search fell by 3.4 percentage points.
- 2. Ghosting is more common among first-time job seekers.** 31% of first-time job seekers say they have ghosted an employer during their current search, whereas only 12% of experienced professionals say so. First-timers seem to have fewer qualms about burning bridges with potential employers. They may not yet appreciate the long-term value of preserving professional relationships and expanding their networks.
- 3. More active job seekers are more likely to ghost potential employers.** There are stark differences between the job search activities of those who ghost and those who don't.
 - Ghosters apply to more jobs. 47% of ghosters said they had applied to more than five jobs in the prior month, compared with only 31% of non-ghosters.
 - Ghosters have more job interviews. On average, ghosters say they have participated in 10 interviews during their current search—vs. six for non-ghosters.
 - Ghosters are emboldened by having more offers. 62% of ghosters say they have already secured at least one job offer, vs. only 45% of non-ghosters.

In other words, ghosting may largely be the result of busy job seekers struggling to juggle multiple job offers and interview opportunities at once.

- 4. People who have themselves been ghosted by employers are more likely to ghost employers.** 47% of ghosters say they themselves have been ghosted by a potential employer, vs. only 31% of non-ghosters.
- 5. Ghosting happens in both blue- and white-collar jobs, and across all industries.** The common perception that ghosting is more common among hourly workers with little education is false. 34% of ghosters say they are pursuing salaried jobs, vs. only 25% of non-ghosters.

Additional Findings

Overall, job seekers became less confident in July as the job market cooled. Their future expectations deteriorated for the second month. High inflation, rising recession fears, slowing wage growth, and the declining availability of jobs left some job seekers discouraged and less inclined to be selective or negotiate.

Notably:

- The share of job seekers who said they are completely confident that, if an employer makes them an offer, they will negotiate before accepting, fell from 25% to 23%.
- The share of employed job seekers who think that their current employers are likely or very likely to make a counteroffer if they resign fell from 53% to 48%.
- The share of job seekers who say they are completely confident that, if they receive an offer they do not like, they will take their time responding or turn it down because they know that something better will come along, fell from 29% to 27%.

Older job seekers continued to worry about ageism. The top barrier to finding a job that respondents cited was being perceived as too old (29%) or overqualified (17%) by employers. Other barriers included:

- lacking the right work experience (23%)
- lacking the right education (18%)
- lacking transportation (15%)
- having caregiving responsibilities (14%)

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

- not finding relevant opportunities (37%)
- never hearing back from employers (32%)
- being discouraged by time-consuming and repetitive application processes (26%)
- not getting interviews (25%)
- not knowing what they want (20%)
- not knowing what jobs they're qualified for (20%)
- difficulty navigating complicated hiring timelines (15%)
- getting interviews, but no offers (13%)
- difficulty putting together a resume (11%)

Job seeker enthusiasm for remote work remained high. 18% of job seekers say they only want remote work, and an additional 44% say they would prefer to find remote work, bringing the total share of job seekers who want remote work to 62%. So far in 2022, only 9.15%¹ of online job postings have offered remote opportunities.

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.

Related Publications

[Survey Methodology](#)

[This is What Job Seeker Bargaining Power Looks Like](#)

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Archive

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[May Report \(PDF\)](#)

[April Report \(PDF\)](#)

¹ ZipRecruiter, Inc. internal data, Jan. 1 2022–July 21 2022.