



Economic Uncertainty and High Cost of Living Causing Anxiety for Canadian Job Seekers

Rising cost of living is influencing 89% of job seekers' decisions to pursue new work.

TORONTO, July 22, 2026 — Finding a job feels difficult for many Canadians in the market for work, especially when the right role must match their qualifications, pay needs and long-term goals, according to a new Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

More than one-third of Canadian job seekers (35%) say they are actively looking for a new job, while 65% browse for jobs more casually. Most job seekers (80%) are focused on finding full-time positions, but 43% are open to accepting part-time opportunities. These figures are similar to the fall of 2025.



More than three-quarters of job seekers (75%) say it will be difficult to find a job in the next six months.

Pay, Fit and Competition Top the List

The survey breaks down where job seekers are feeling the most pressure:

- Finding opportunities that match their qualifications: 56%
- Finding a job with enough pay to cover basic expenses: 45%
- Standing out in a competitive job market: 50%
- Balancing job searching with other responsibilities (e.g., caregiving, education): 36%
- Navigating automated hiring processes instead of feeling heard by people: 35%

The experience can also feel uncertain. One-third of job seekers (32%) say companies that claim to be hiring but only collect resumes make it harder to find their next opportunity. Others say their experience does not align cleanly with available roles, with 27% citing overqualification as a barrier and 26% citing underqualification.

Current Job Worries Are Also Driving the Search

Among employed job seekers, concerns about pay, job security and the economy remain top of mind.

Their biggest fears about their current job include:

- Not getting the salary increase or raise they deserve: 37%
- Their company reducing the workforce due to the economic climate: 34%
- A slowdown in work opportunities because of the economy: 30%
- Technology or AI negatively impacting their role: 25%

However, uncertainty isn't the only reason employed job seekers are exploring other options. Many are motivated by quality-of-work factors, with 46% hoping to find or negotiate better compensation, 38% seeking better work-life balance and 36% looking for stronger growth opportunities in their current industry.

Rising costs are also part of the equation, with more than 9 in 10 job seekers (92%) saying increasing prices have had at least some impact on their decision to pursue new employment. For 71%, that impact is moderate or large.

"The job search may feel difficult, but that does not mean the market is standing still," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, president and chairman of Express Employment International. "Job seekers are being more intentional about what they want, and employers should be just as intentional about what they offer. Clear expectations, realistic qualifications and strong communication can help turn a challenging search into the right match."

Discover more research and real-world workforce trends from the Canada Employed series at ExpressPros.ca/Newsroom.

Survey Methodology

The Job Seeker survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from May 19 to June 8, 2026, among 508 Canadian adults ages 18 and older who are employed but looking for a new job or not employed and looking for work.

For full survey methodology, please contact Ana Curic at Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

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 more than 11 million people globally since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.ca.