



The New Job Hunt Reality: Canadian Job Seekers Expect to Have Hard Time Finding Jobs and Are Lowering Demands

56% of Job Seekers Say There Are Fewer Job Opportunities in Their Field Than Last Year

TORONTO, Sept. 24, 2025 — The labour market is sending mixed signals, and Canada's job seekers are taking notice. Workers are bracing for a tougher road ahead with many already making moves and adapting their job search strategy.

The latest Express Employment Professionals—Harris Poll survey paints a clear picture: a large majority of job seekers (80%) believe employers have the upper hand in today's market. Almost three-quarters of job seekers (72%) say the current state of the job market makes them feel like they have to settle for less than they're qualified for. In addition, almost two-thirds (62%) are less willing to negotiate salary or benefits due to fear of a recession.



These perceptions are fueling action. More than one-third of job seekers (38%) are actively looking for a new job, but optimism is in short supply:

- 74% believe it will be harder to find a job in the next six months, up sharply from 62% in fall 2024.
- 56% say there are fewer job opportunities in their field than a year ago, a significant increase from 46% in fall 2024.

And for some, the timeline feels daunting: More than 2 in 5 job seekers (42%) 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 a big hurdle. More than half (54%) say their top challenge is finding opportunities that match their qualifications, while 48% struggle to stand out in an increasingly competitive market, and 46% worry about landing a job quickly enough to cover basic expenses.

Barriers compound these challenges:

- 43% cite lack of skills.
- 32% believe they are overqualified.
- 29% say companies are claiming to be hiring but are only collecting resumes.
- 25% think companies are waiting to hire until they see the outcomes of changes in government policies.

Flexibility Becomes a Survival Strategy

Faced with uncertainty, more than three-quarters of job seekers (82%) are changing their job search strategy:

- 35% are more open to different work environments.
- 30% are applying to roles they're overqualified for.
- 28% are applying to roles outside of their target industry.
- 28% are more willing to relocate for work.
- 20% are more willing to do a longer commute.
- 18% are more open to lower salaries.

One in 10 job seekers (10%) is even willing to accept jobs that pay less than their most recent pay level.

Why They're Leaving — and What They Fear

The motivations for change are clear: 41% are chasing career advancement, 38% want better pay and 36% are seeking improved work-life balance.

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

- 47% fear fewer work opportunities.
- 45% worry about having to accept lower salaries.
- 40% are concerned about increasing competition.
- 39% worry about job insecurity after being hired.
- 36% fear having to accept worse or fewer benefits.

"Today's labour 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 Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from June 12 to 27, 2025, among 503 adults ages 18 and

older.

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

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