

TRENDICATORS SURVEY REPORT

The 2024 Job Seeker Survey Report



TRENDICATORS
HR Research & Insights by Engage2Excel Group

Introduction

Welcome to the 2024 Job Seeker Survey Report, an analysis of the perceptions and preferences of active and passive candidates across all major industries in the U.S. produced by Trendicators, the research division of the Engage2Excel Group. Now in its fifth edition, this report is based on survey responses from 1,500 job seekers surveyed in February 2024.

The fundamental aspects of what people want when seeking employment have remained relatively constant since our first Job Seeker Survey Report in 2019. Despite significant changes in society, the workplace and the economy, candidates want to be recognized and respected during hiring and onboarding processes, seek fair and equitable compensation, and look for a combination of job fit, positive working conditions and job security when evaluating job offers and deciding whether to seek employment elsewhere.

This report presents important insights into six key questions. The answers to these questions should influence your organization's talent acquisition and retention strategies to optimize success.

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- How many respondents worked more than one job to keep up?
- Why do people seek employment elsewhere?
- Why do candidates accept or reject job offers?
- How do onboarding experiences affect the intent to stay?
- What do candidates think about the recruitment process?
- Key Takeaways

Survey Demographics

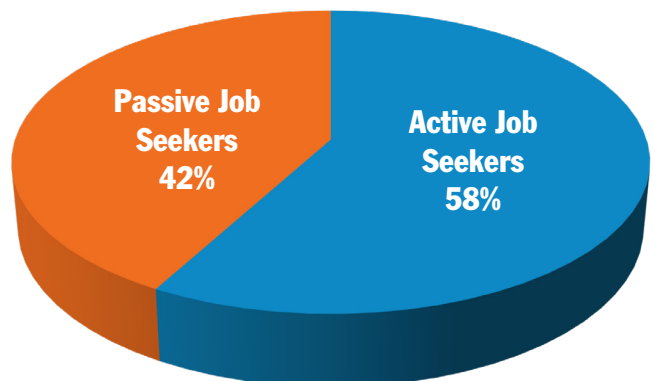
Number of Respondents: 1,500

Countries Represented: United States

Industries Represented: All major industries

Respondent Demographics: US adult workers in all job types with proportionate representation of gender, age group and race/ethnic origin

Margin of Error: 95% confidence level +/- 1.5%



Trendicators™ is the research division of the E2E group of companies, leading providers of engaging career and consumer experiences. Trendicators provides original research and reports on insights and best practices from industry leaders and experts.



Where does remote work currently stand?

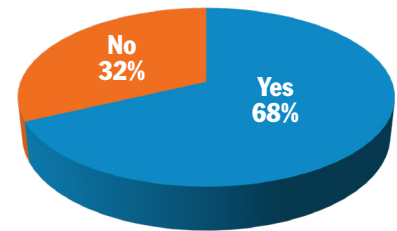
Time Spent Working Remotely: Most 2024 survey respondents (55%) reported working remotely at least 20% of the time. The percentage who reported working remotely from 60% to 100% of the time was 16%, virtually unchanged from last year's results.

Return to Office Timing: A large percentage (58%) expected to return to the office within the next three to six months, but 11% were still uncertain of when they would return. The percentage of those who did not plan on returning to the office dropped to 12%, eight percentage points from 2023 results.

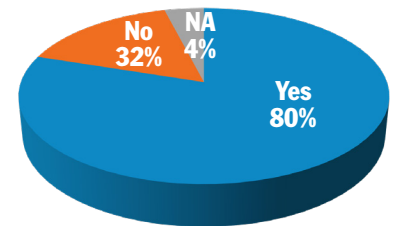
Policy Perceptions: More than two-thirds (68%) reported that a change in their organization's work from home policy would cause them to consider leaving, and an overwhelming 80% of respondents favored a four-day work week.

Remote Work Challenges: The most difficult challenges cited in working from home included managing work/life balance (61%), overcoming at-home distractions (36%) and managing mental health issues (28%).

Would a change in your organization's work from home policy cause you to consider leaving your organization?



Are you in favor of a 4-day work week?



What % of the week do you work remotely?

I don't work remotely	29%
Up to 20% of the time	17%
Up to 40% of the time	18%
Up to 60% of the time	9%
Up to 100% of the time	16%

40% to 100% = **43%**

When do you plan on returning to the office?

Next 3 months	38%
Next 4-6 months	29%
Beyond 6 months	10%
Not sure	11%
Not returning to an office	12%

What are the challenges of working remotely?

Work/life balance	61%
At-home distractions	36%
Managing mental health issues	28%
Lack of dedicated space	21%
Lack of social interaction	19%

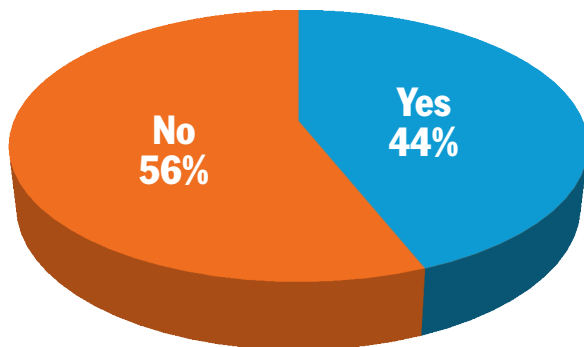


How many respondents worked more than one job to keep up?

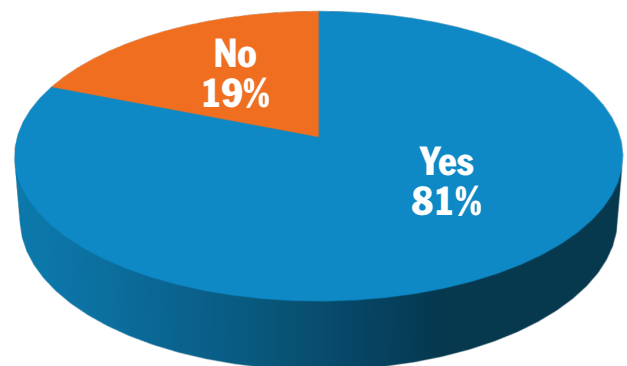
We asked survey respondents if they worked a side gig in 2023 when the annual inflation rate was 3.4%. At the end of February, the inflation rate is virtually unchanged, but we are still reeling from last years inflation that topped 9%.

A significant number of respondents (44%) reported working more than one job to make ends meet. A vast majority (81%) reported that their full-time employers knew of their extra jobs, and nearly half (44%) were devoting 10 to 20 hours a week to their side gigs. This year, the percentage of respondents who reported devoting 31 or more hours to their side gig was 12%, up 3 percentage points over 2023.

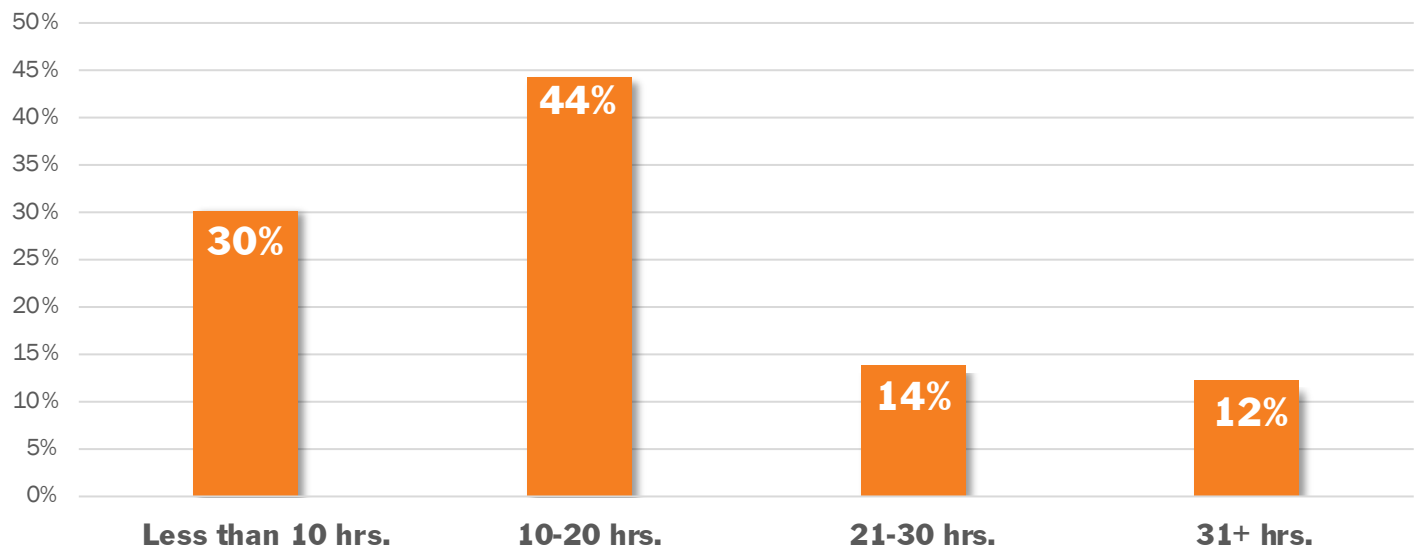
Are you currently working a side gig?



Does your full-time employer know?



How many hours a week do you devote to your side gig?



Why do people seek employment elsewhere?



It is not at all surprising that fair compensation has been cited by survey respondents as the top reason for seeking employment elsewhere in all but one of our surveys since 2019. In 2022, amid a robust hiring streak and annual inflation at 6.5%, lack of recognition edged out compensation by one percentage point as the most important attrition driver. What is more interesting in reviewing perceptions over the years is just how important recognition is as a retention driver.

In 2024, 15% of survey respondents said that lack of recognition was the second most important reason that would cause them to leave their employer, a drop of three percentage points from 2023. With wages failing to keep pace with inflation and many families struggling to make ends meet, the reduced importance of recognition and job security gave way to other concerns. These included a lack of training as well as high stress associated with inflexible hours or poor interpersonal relations with co-workers.

2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation 20%	Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation 19%	Lack of Recognition, Appreciation and Respect 20%	Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation 19%	Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation 19%
Lack of Recognition, Appreciation and Respect 16%	Lack of Recognition, Appreciation and Respect 18%	Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation 19%	Lack of Recognition, Appreciation and Respect 18%	Lack of Recognition, Appreciation and Respect 15%
Concern About Work Conditions 16%	Concern About Work Conditions 14%	Concern About Job Security 14%	Concern About Work Conditions 15%	Concern About Job Security 14%

Engage2Excel did not conduct a Job Seeker Survey in 2020 due to COVID.



Why do candidates accept or reject job offers?

Much has changed since our first Job Seeker Survey Report in 2019. Despite the pandemic, remote work, inflation and changing demographics, what candidates seek when deciding whether to accept a job offer has remained remarkably constant over the past five years. The table below shows candidates' top three factors with the most significant influence on their decision to accept or reject a job offer. Whether or not a candidate is shown recognition, appreciation and respect throughout the entire hiring process was found to be most important, followed by fair compensation and job fit. In 2024, the importance of recognition on offer acceptance dropped to 26% from 31%, reflecting greater concern over job security and other factors.

2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
TOP 3 REASONS FOR ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER				
27% Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	29% Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	32% Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	31% Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	26% Recognition, Appreciation & Respect
23% Fair Compensation	22% Fair Compensation	21% Fair Compensation	22% Fair Compensation	23% Fair Compensation
21% Job Fit	17% Job Fit	17% Job Fit	15% Job Fit	15% Job Fit
TOP 3 REASONS FOR REJECTING A JOB OFFER				
26% Lack of Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	24% Lack of Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	24% Lack of Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	24% Lack of Recognition, Appreciation & Respect	23% Lack of Recognition, Appreciation & Respect
20% Concern About Job Fit	19% Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation	18% Concern About Job Security	19% Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation	18% Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation
17% Concern about Fair & Equitable Compensation	16% Concern About Job Security & Job Fit	17% Concern About Job Fit & Compensation	16% Concern About Job Fit	18% Concern About Job Fit

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How do onboarding experiences affect the intent to stay?

Another workplace reality that has remained consistently important over the past several years is that onboarding experiences have a profound influence on attrition rates. Candidates believe that how they are treated during the hiring process reflects the quality of the relationship they will have with an employer. If experiences during the onboarding process don't align with expectations set early on in recruiting and interviewing processes, employees are far more likely to leave.

The Impact of Onboarding Experiences: Nearly two-thirds (65%) of 2024 survey respondents said that the first day of their onboarding experience is highly likely or likely to affect their decision to stay for more than a month. Furthermore, 63% said that their onboarding experience would influence their decision to stay for more than a year. In our 2023 publication *Improving Retention Rates for New Hires*, we reported that the cost of early attrition could range from 16% to 213% of an employee's annual salary. Poor onboarding experiences, inadequate training and lack of attention to and mentorship for new hires were among the top causes of early attrition. Creating meaningful onboarding experiences is critical for maximizing your organization's talent advantage in today's highly competitive environment.

First day will affect the decision to stay over a month:

Highly Likely or Likely	65%
Somewhat Likely	22%
Unlikely or Highly Unlikely	13%

Total experience will affect the decision to stay more than a year:

Highly Likely or Likely	63%
Somewhat Likely	25%
Unlikely or Highly Unlikely	11%



What do candidates think about the recruitment process?

What matters most to you in the application process?

Easy and straightforward	54%
Quick to complete	30%
An engaging experience	16%

How do you prefer to communicate with a recruiter?

Email	37%
Phone call	37%
Text	18%
LinkedIn	6%

How long should it take to complete an application?

< 5 min:	6%	30-44 min:	15%
5-14 min:	33%	45-60 min:	5%
15-29 min:	40%	> 1 hour:	1%

“I would participate in a social community for an organization I’m interested in even if there are no current job openings.”

Highly Likely or Likely: **53%**

What is a reasonable number of pre-hire assessments?

1 assessment	30%
2 to 3 assessments	48%
4 to 6 assessments	12%
7 to 10 assessments	3%

Would you consider another job offer if not contacted between the time of offer and the first day on the job?

Yes	57%
No	24%
Not Sure	19%

What is the likelihood that you’ll be working for a new employer in the next 6 months?

Highly Likely or Likely	56%
Somewhat Likely	22%

% of passive candidates willing to learn about a new opportunity:

92%

WHAT DO CANDIDATES THINK ABOUT THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS?

How important is it to meet with the following individuals during the interview process?

Hiring Manager	90%
HR Representative	80%
Trainers	78%
Senior Management	75%
Person in Similar Role	75%
Future Coworkers	72%

Overall, I had the most positive experience with the following individual:

Hiring Manager	40%
Recruiter	22%
Coordinator	18%
Other member of the recruitment team	12%
HR Representative	6%

Should organizations have applicants participate in drug screenings as part of pre-employment screening?

Yes	60%
No	16%
Depends on the job	24%

What are the most important aspects to consider for your career path?

Gaining new skills	62%
Getting promoted	56%
Changing industries to gain new skills	30%
Changing jobs within my industry to gain new skills	22%

A personalized gift at time of job offer would influence offer acceptance:

Yes, definitely or somewhat

59%

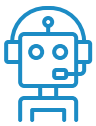
In life, I care about having a career:

18 to 24	74%
24 to 40	89%
41 to 56	79%
57 to 66	75%
67 to 75	68%
76+	85%

% who found a job or know someone who found a job on Instagram or TikTok:

Instagram	34%
TikTok	30%

Key Takeaways From The 2024 Job Seeker Survey Report



Overcoming Depersonalization: Technology has helped employers become more efficient, but the extent to which recruiting automation solutions have created negative perceptions among candidates continues to be a cause for concern. Employers need to humanize hiring experiences to develop stronger personal connections.



Helping Hiring Managers Succeed: It should not be assumed that hiring managers know how to effectively engage with high-potential candidates. Managers are distracted and pressured to meet deadlines and fill open positions. Whereas some managers possess good candidate engagement and interviewing skills, others need help and training.



Candidate Engagement: Recognizing candidates' achievements and demonstrating appreciation and respect for the views expressed during the interview process create a connection that candidates believe is the most important factor in determining whether to accept or reject a job offer.



Managing Experiences: There is a significant potential disconnect between what led an individual to join your organization and their onboarding experience. Celebrating offer acceptance positively affirms the decision to join an organization. This can include personal emails from everyone involved in the hiring process. Upon offer acceptance, a personalized, company-branded gift sent to the home demonstrates appreciation to the new hire and their loved ones.



Optimizing Onboarding: Organizations need to recognize that onboarding is an investment in setting expectations and building a long-term relationship with an individual to help them understand the organization's culture, get to know their co-workers, and learn what is expected of them to succeed as a valued team member. If a poorly planned onboarding process follows the personal connection made during recruiting and job acceptance, people naturally question whether they have made the right decision.



Addressing Remote Work Preferences: Employers and workers have yet to reach a concrete agreement regarding remote work that appeals to both parties. Many organizations are adopting flexible work policies to address employee concerns and remain competitive in recruiting for roles that are in high demand.

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