

# **WORK TRENDS**

**AMERICANS' ATTITUDES ABOUT WORK,  
EMPLOYERS AND THE GOVERNMENT**

September 1998

*A joint project of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University  
and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut*

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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"Work Trends: Americans' Attitudes About Work, Employers, and Government" is a national survey conducted quarterly by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at University of Connecticut. The study directors are Carl Van Horn, Director of the Heldrich Center and Ken Dautrich, Director of CSRA.

This is the first in a series of national surveys that will explore Americans' perceptions regarding job satisfaction, job security, career mobility, education and training and the appropriate role of government in addressing the needs of workers, employers and job seekers. The surveys, which will be conducted every quarter, will follow broad trends in the workforce. In addition, each quarter will highlight a different topical issue.

The overall objective of this study is to provide an objective, in-depth understanding of workforce issues that are important to the American public.

### Key Findings:

**Despite 7 years of economic growth and the lowest unemployment rate in the last 25 years, Americans are still concerned about their economic security.**

- The majority of Americans (87%) are concerned about job security for those currently employed.
  - Most American workers (78%) are concerned about their children's future, believing that employment prospects will be worse for the next generation.
  - One in five (21%) American workers believe that working hard will not guarantee them a job until retirement.
  - One in four (25%) of Americans think that today is a bad time to find a quality job.
  - Most Americans (91%) think that it is important for the government to require employers to pay for health and medical benefits, and 90% of Americans think it is important for government to require employers to pay for retirement and pension benefits.
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**American workers believe the ability to balance work and family is essential.**

- Nearly four out of ten (39%) of American workers rate the ability to balance work and family as an extremely important factor for a job. More workers rate this as extremely important than factors such as Health and medical coverage (38%), job security (33%) and income (33%).

**American workers are skeptical about their employer's loyalty to them.**

- Only 36% of American workers strongly agree that their managers or supervisors feel a sense of loyalty to them, while 45% of American workers strongly agree that they are loyal to their immediate managers or supervisors.
- Only 27% of American workers strongly agree that the company or organization for which they work feels a sense of loyalty toward them, while nearly half (49%) of American workers strongly agree that they feel a sense of loyalty toward the company or organization for which they work.

**American workers are satisfied with their current jobs, but they are worried about their retirement and would like to work fewer hours.**

- Nine in ten (90%) of American workers report being satisfied with their current jobs, with over half (55%) of all workers being very satisfied.
- Forty-five percent (45%) of American workers report they are more satisfied in their current job than they were one year ago, compared to only 16% who report being less satisfied.
  - Americans are satisfied with the places they work and the people with whom they work. American workers have high levels of satisfaction with their relationships with co-workers and supervisors, and with their commute to work.
  - American workers are least satisfied with their total annual income, the age at which they expect to retire, their retirement and pension plans, and opportunities for advancement at their jobs
  - Nearly a third of American workers report that they are working more hours now than they were just three months ago. A more than a quarter of all Americans would like to work few hours.

**American workers believe they are well prepared for jobs, but value continuing education and training.**

- Four-fifths of American workers (78%) think that they have received enough education and training to prepare them for the type of job they want. Over half (56%) of those who have not received enough education and training for the type of job they want plan to enroll in additional education and training courses over the next three years.
  - Virtually all American workers (99%) believe they have the skills necessary to remain in their current job, while substantial numbers believe that they have the skills necessary to get a better job (77%) or get a promotion with their current employer (75%).
  - Sixty-five percent of workers received training from their current employer, and 91% of those that received this training felt it made them more productive at work.
  - Most workers (65%) receiving employer-provided training thought that the training enhanced their job security, but only 46% of those workers indicated it helped them earn more money.
  - Only 33% of American employers provided financial support for workers to get additional education outside of their current job. Of those that received this education, 85% said that it made them more productive at work.

**Americans believe that the government should provide both financial support and direct services to individuals seeking jobs as well as regulate companies in order to protect workers' economic interests.**

- About 75% of Americans think it is either very or extremely important for the government to provide financial assistance for skills training, basic education, and college.
- 88% think it is very or extremely important for government to improve the quality of education in schools. These opinions vary little by age, gender, income level or political party.
- While Americans think that government should help improve and fund further education and training, nearly a majority (45%) believe that the responsibility for obtaining further education and training beyond formal schooling should rest with the workers themselves.

- Through various job-related programs, the government touches the lives of many Americans. More than one in three have received unemployment insurance at some point during their work lives and a similar number of Americans have receive some other form of government-funded education or training beyond high school. Their opinions of these programs are overwhelmingly positive.

**Americans are very concerned about how their political leaders handle workforce issues.**

- 91% of Americans say that the candidates' ability to handle the job situation will be important in their choice for President in the 2000 election.
- Currently, Americans say that Democrats are doing a better job than Republicans in handling issues related to jobs in America by a 14 percent margin.
- 54% say President Clinton is doing a good or excellent job in this area.

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## **2. BACKGROUND ON THE WORK TRENDS PROJECT**

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"Work Trends: Americans' Attitudes About Work, Employers, and Government" is a national survey conducted quarterly by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis, University of Connecticut. Every quarter for at least the next two years, this comprehensive survey will explore Americans' perceptions regarding job satisfaction, job security, career mobility, education and training and the appropriate role of government in addressing the needs of workers, employers and job seekers. In addition, each quarter will highlight a different topical issue, providing an in-depth understanding of work-related issues important to the American public.

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development was founded in 1997 at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey to address the needs of the nation's workforce development system. The Center's mission is to increase the efficiency of the labor market by identifying and creating strategies to empower America's workforce to seize the job opportunities emerging in the global economy. The Center's researchers, scholars and practitioners combine their talents to develop solutions to put people to work, ensure that workers remain competitive, and provide employers with qualified and productive workers.

The Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut is a non-profit, non-partisan research and education facility. CSRA is recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in conducting innovative and important public opinion research.

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## **3. THE COMPACT BETWEEN WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS**

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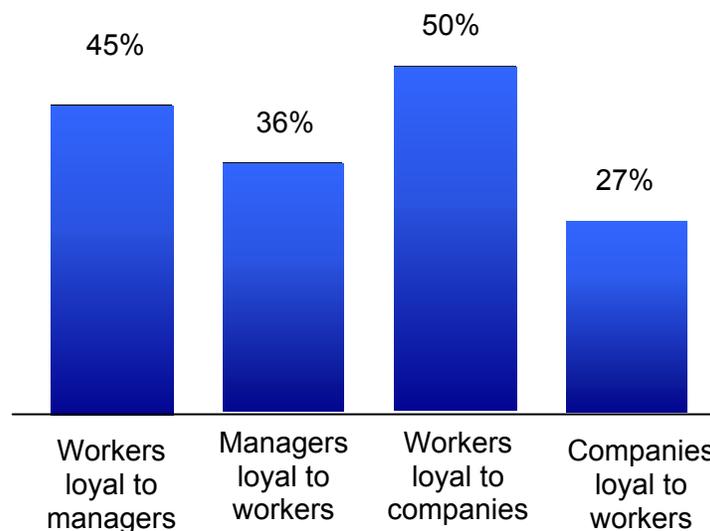
Despite a strong economy and low unemployment rate, many American workers are anxious about their employers' commitment to them and pessimistic about job prospects today and for the next generation. Workers also feel a gap between their loyalty to their employers and their employer's loyalty to them.

Only 27% of American workers strongly agree that the company or organization for which they work feels a sense of loyalty toward them, while nearly half (49%) of American workers strongly agree that they feel a sense of loyalty toward the

company or organization for which they work. Workers have similar feelings about their immediate manager or supervisor. Only 36% of American workers strongly agree that their managers or supervisors feel as sense of loyalty to them, while 45% of American workers strongly agree that are loyal to their immediate managers or supervisors. [See Figure 3-1]

**Figure 3-1**

**Employee Perceptions of Workplace Loyalty**

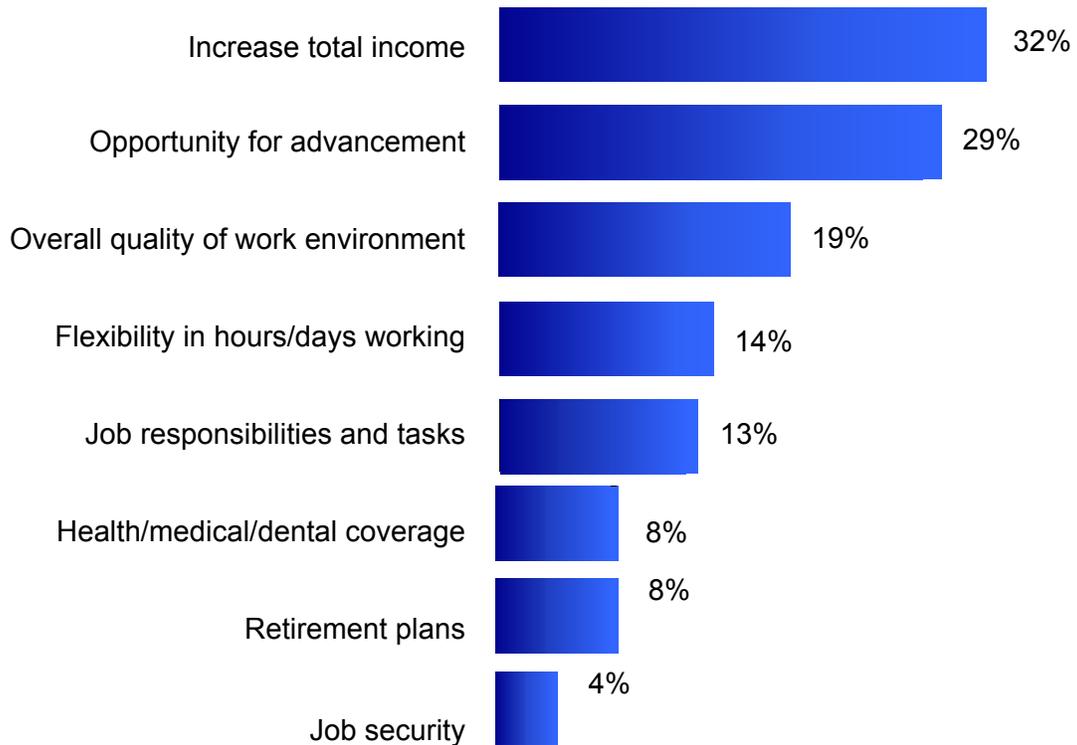


American workers' outlook about the general relationship between workers and employers is even more pessimistic. Only 11% of workers strongly agree that companies and organizations care about the interest of their employees and only 13% strongly agree that workers care about the interest of their companies or organizations. In addition, about one in five workers (21%) do not believe that if they work hard, they will be able to have a job until retirement age.

Although 82% of workers are confident that they could find a comparable or better job, few workers (14%) are looking. Those that are seeking other employment give a variety of reasons ranging from wanting more income (32%) to wanting more flexibility in the hours and days they can work (14%). [See Figure 3-2.]

**Figure 3-2**

**Reasons Workers are Looking for Another Job\***

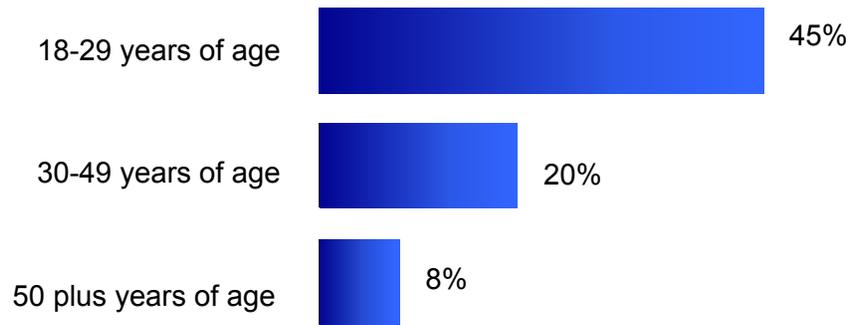


\* Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Young workers, however, tend to be in the same job less time than older workers. Close to half (45%) of all workers between 18-25 years of age have been on their current job less than two years while only 20% of workers age 30-49 years of age and just 8% of workers over 50 have been in their current job less than two years. [See Figure 3-3]

**Figure 3-3**

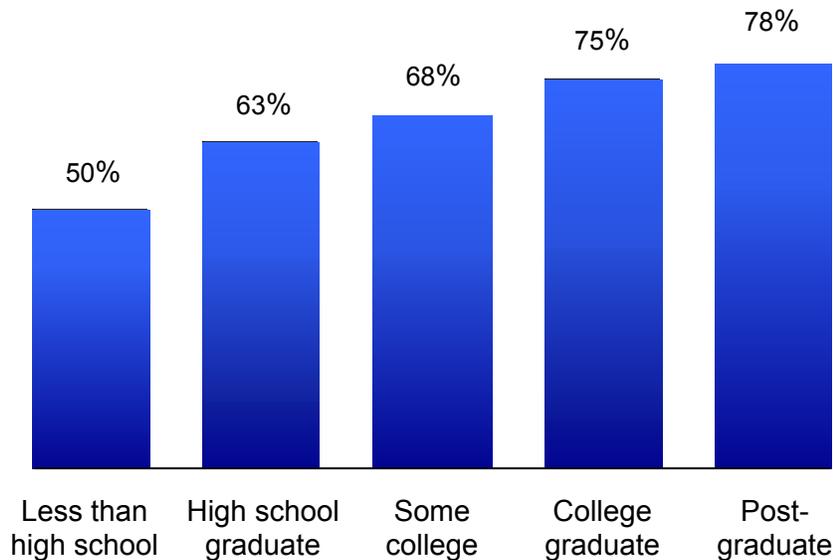
**Percentage of Workers in Their Job Less Than Two Years**



Surprisingly, one in five (25%) workers do not feel that now is a good time to find a quality job. In general, individuals with less formal education have a more pessimistic view about the quality of available jobs. Just 50% of those with less than a high school education think it is a good time while 75% of college graduates believe that it is a good time to find a quality job. [See Figure 3-4]

**Figure 3-4**

**Is it a Good Time to Find a Quality Job?**



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#### 4. AMERICANS' JOB SATISFACTION

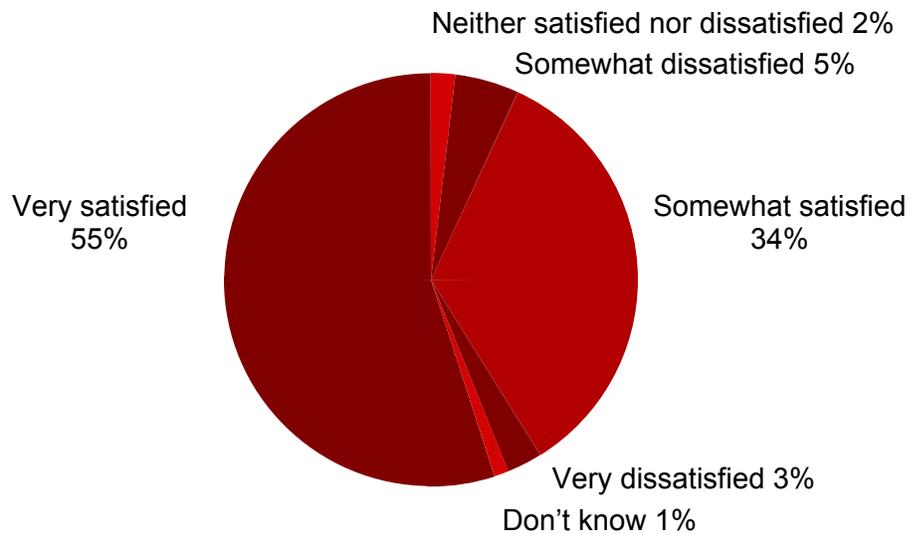
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The survey measured overall job satisfaction as well as satisfaction with 16 different aspects of a job. To complement these satisfaction measures, the survey also measured the importance of the 16 job factors.

Overall, American workers report very high levels of satisfaction with their current jobs. Nearly nine-in-ten (89%) of all American workers report that they are satisfied with their current jobs, while more than half of all workers (55%) report that they are very satisfied with their current jobs. [See Figure 5-1] Only eight percent (8%) of all workers report that they are dissatisfied with their current jobs.

**Figure 4-1**

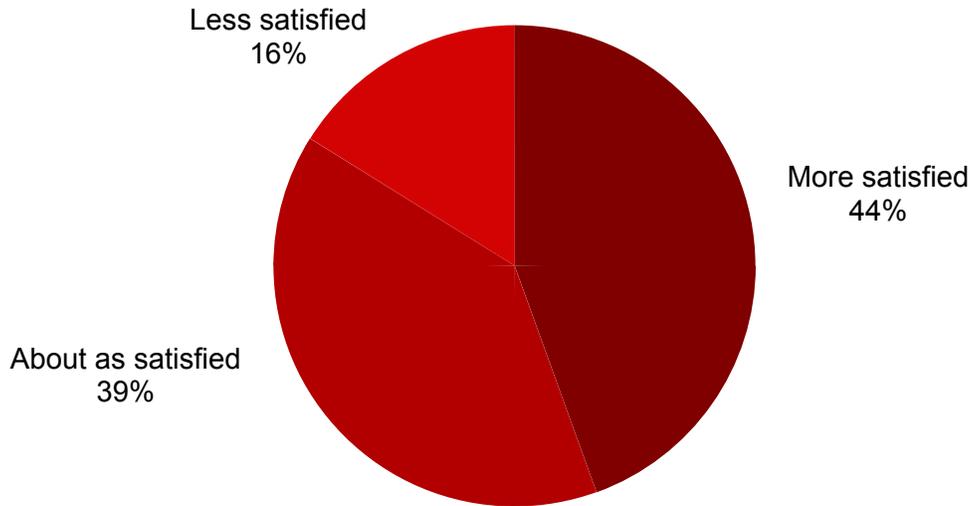
##### **Overall Job Satisfaction**



Job satisfaction is also more likely to be increasing than decreasing. Forty-four percent (44%) of workers report that they are more satisfied with their jobs compared to three months ago, compared to only 16% who report that they are less satisfied. [See Figure 4-2]

Figure 4-2

**Current Job Satisfaction Compared to Three Months Ago**



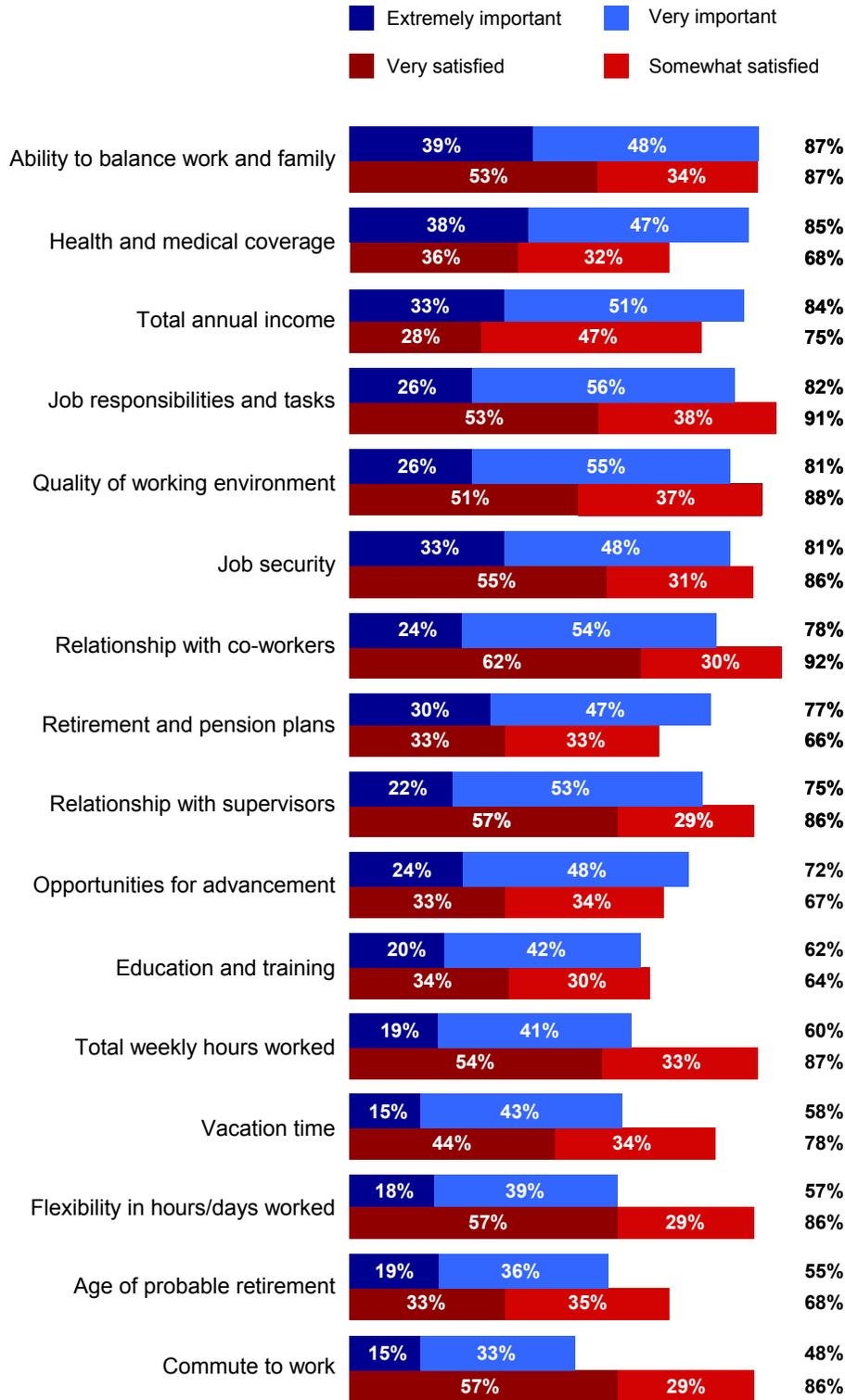
Job satisfaction is something about which American workers have definite opinions. Although the American workers interviewed for this survey were given a specific option of saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs overall, ninety-seven percent (97%) of all workers told interviewers that they were either satisfied or dissatisfied with their work. Only two percent (2%) reported that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and only one percent (1%) volunteered that they didn't know whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied. Less than one-half of one-percent of all workers volunteered that they didn't know whether they were more satisfied, about as satisfied, or less satisfied with their work compared to three months ago.

Overall job satisfaction is a function of many different specific job factors. Workers will not only have differing levels of satisfaction with various parts of their jobs, but workers will assign different importance to these various factors. The "Work Trends" survey took 16 separate job factors and asked respondents to report how important each factor was to them and how satisfied they were with each separate factor. Questions measuring the importance of job factors were asked of all members of the workforce -- both employed and unemployed. Satisfaction was measured only among currently employed workers.

The results of these questions [See Figure 4-3] provide a picture both of the relative importance of different aspects of work and the relative satisfaction of the American workforce with each of these factors.

**Figure 4-3**

**Relative Importance and Satisfaction of Different Job Factors**



A majority of American workers report being satisfied with most particular aspects of their jobs. However, Americans are more likely to be satisfied with factors in their working environment than traditional employer-provided benefits such as income and health and medical coverage. When coupled with the relative importance of these benefits, one can note at least a slight disparity between the satisfaction of workers with some items in which they place relatively high importance.

The most important factor for Americans in considering a job is the *Ability to Balance Work and Family*. This is rated as extremely or very important by 87% of all members of the workforce, and as extremely important by 39%. Interestingly, American workers do not seem to equate the ability to balance work and family strictly with the total amount or flexibility of time worked. Only 60% of workers rate *Total Weekly Hours Worked* as extremely or very important, and only 57% of workers give these ratings to *Flexibility in Hours or Days Worked*. These numbers place these factors as twelfth and fourteenth in relative importance among the 16 factors assessed.

Overall, Americans are relatively satisfied with the *Ability to Balance Work and Family*. Nearly nine-in-ten (87%) American workers are very or somewhat satisfied with the ability to balance work and family, with over half (53%) of all workers being very satisfied with the balance of work and family. Workers are almost equally satisfied with the *Total Number of Hours Worked Each Week* (87% very or somewhat satisfied) and the *Flexibility in the Hours and Days They Work* (86% very or somewhat satisfied.)

*Health and Medical Coverage* and *Total Annual Income* are the second and third most important job factors to American workers. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the workforce rate health coverage as extremely or very important (28% extremely important) and eighty-four percent rate total annual income as extremely or very important (33% extremely important). Although Americans have generally high overall levels of satisfaction with their total annual income and health and medical coverage, they are less satisfied with these aspects of their work compared to most other factors. Although three-fourths of American workers (75%) indicate they are very or somewhat satisfied with their total annual income, this is only the tenth highest level of overall satisfaction. Americans are even less satisfied with their health and medical coverage. Although 68% are very or somewhat satisfied, this gives the second most important factor to American workers the twelfth highest overall satisfaction ranking. Although a smaller percentage of workers express satisfaction with their medical coverage compared to their income, a greater percentage are very satisfied. Thirty-six percent (36%) of all workers report being very satisfied with their health and medical coverage, compared to only 28% who are very satisfied with their total annual income.

The other traditional employer-provided benefits measured in the survey are somewhat less important, with *Retirement and Pension Plans* ranking eighth in

overall importance and *Vacation Time* ranking 13<sup>th</sup> in overall importance. Workers have low relative satisfaction with these factors as well. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of workers are satisfied with the amount of their vacation time (equal to income as tenth most important factor), and only two-thirds (66% -- 15<sup>th</sup> most important out of 16 items) are satisfied with their retirement and pension plans.

American workers place relatively high importance -- and report relatively high levels of satisfaction -- on the environments in which they work and the tasks they perform. *Job Responsibilities and Tasks* and the *Overall Quality of the Working Environment* are the fourth and fifth most important factors. These receive the second and third highest levels of overall satisfaction.

Americans have the highest level of overall satisfaction with their *Relationships with Co-Workers*; this ranks seventh in overall importance. *Relationships with Supervisors* ranks as sixth in overall satisfaction and ninth in overall importance.

*Opportunities for Advancement* and *Opportunities for Education and Training in the Workplace* are of only moderate importance to American workers -- opportunities for advancement ranks tenth in overall importance while opportunities for education and training is eleventh in overall importance. Although these factors are of moderate importance, Americans have very low relative levels of satisfaction with them. Opportunities for education and training has the lowest levels of overall satisfaction, while opportunities for advancement ranks 14<sup>th</sup> out of the 16 factors measured in terms of satisfaction.

In an era of corporate downsizing, four out of five (81%) see *Job Security* as an extremely or very important factor, with one-third (33%) placing this as extremely important. Americans are generally satisfied with their levels of job security. Eighty-six percent (86%) are very or somewhat satisfied with their job security -- this is tied with three other factors as the sixth highest in overall satisfaction. More than half of all workers (55%) are very satisfied with their job security.

Although *Retirement and Pension Plans* ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in overall importance to American workers, the *Age at Which Workers Expect to Retire* ranked second to last (15<sup>th</sup> overall) in importance. The probable age of retirement ranked twelfth in overall satisfaction.

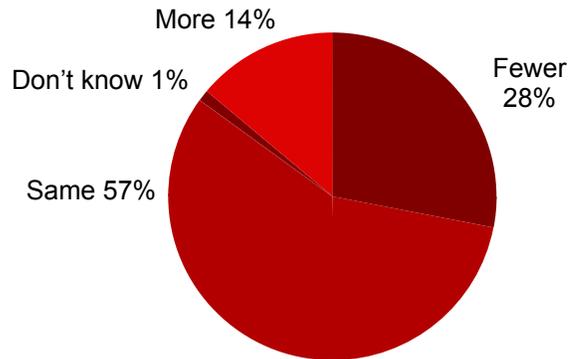
Less than half of all American workers (48%) rank their *Commute to Work* as extremely or very important. However, eighty-six percent of American workers are satisfied with their daily commute, with 57 percent of all workers being very satisfied.

If given the choice, more than half (57%) of American workers are happy working the number of that they currently work. (See Figure 5-4) However, 28% would

prefer to work fewer hours, compared to 14% who would prefer to work more hours than they currently do.

**Figure 4-4**

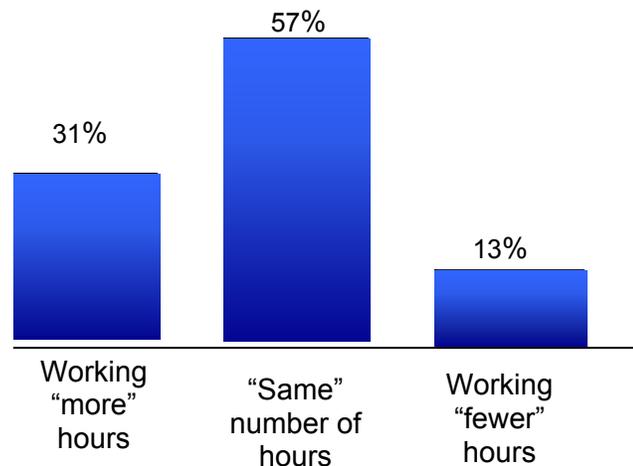
**Whether Workers Would Prefer to Work More, the Same, or Fewer Hours**



The majority of American workers (57%) are working the same number of hours as they were three months ago. [See Figure 4-5]. However, 31 percent of all workers are working more hours, compared to 13 percent who are working fewer hours.

**Figure 4-5**

**Current Work Compared to Three Months Ago**



This negative outlook about employment opportunities is also reflected in people's attitudes about employment opportunities for the next generation. Only 16% of Americans strongly agreed that career and employment opportunities would be better for the next generation while 15% strongly disagreed.

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## 5. AMERICANS' ATTITUDES ABOUT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

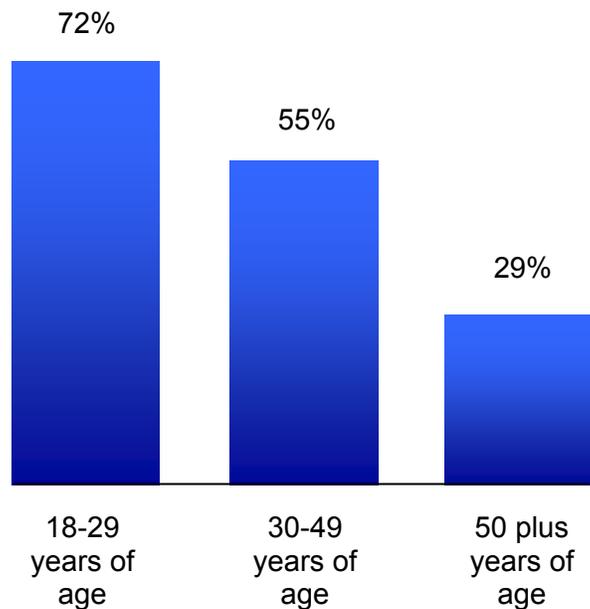
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American workers believe that their education and training prepared them well for their current jobs and that additional training makes them more productive. Almost all American workers (99%) believe that they have the skills to remain in their current job while four-fifths (78%) think that they have received enough education and training to prepare them to get the job they desire.

Over half (56%) of those who have not received enough education and training for the type of job they want plan to enroll in additional education and training courses over the next three years, and younger workers are more likely seek additional education and training than older ones. [See Figure 5-1]

**Figure 5-1**

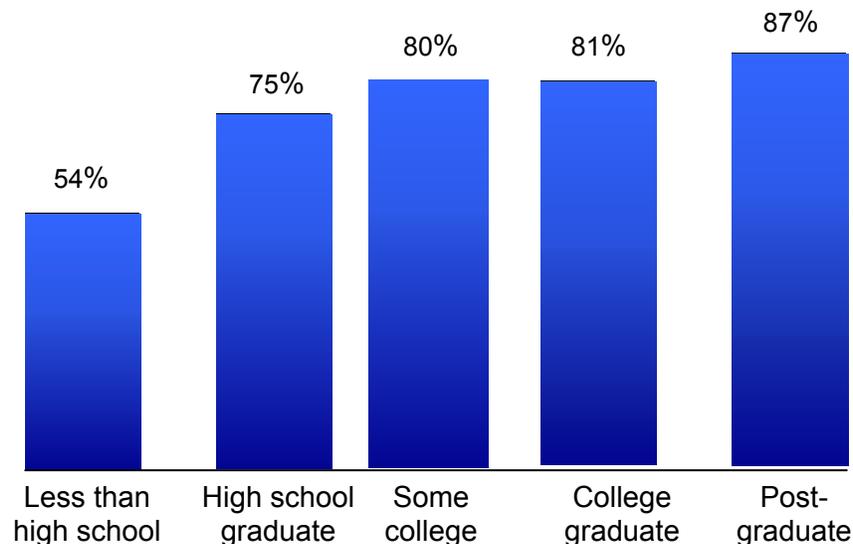
### **Plan to Enroll in Education or Training Courses by Age**



Workers with less than a high school degree feel less prepared than those with more education. Only 54% of workers with less than a high school education felt ready for their current job based in their education and training. Three out of four workers (75%) with a high school degree and no college education reported that their education and training did prepare them for their current job. Surprisingly, high school graduates' perception of readiness for employment varied little from those with college and post-graduate education.

**Figure 5-2**

**Readiness for Employment by Education Level**



Although workers feel well prepared for their jobs, over half (53%) report having to obtain additional skills to perform their current job. Employer-provided training is common (65% of workers) and perceived by 91% of workers receiving this training as enhancing their productivity but only 65% as enhancing job security and 46% as earning more money. Employer-provided training is more common for those with household earnings over \$40,000 (70%) than under \$40,000 (58%).

Only 33% of American workers were provided financial support by their employers to get additional education outside of their current job. Of those that received this education, 85% said that it made them more productive at work and 53% said it helped them earn more money.

Those workers with less than a high school degree received less additional training than any other group. [See Figure 5-3] For the most part, the more

education a worker already possesses, the greater the likelihood that individual would receive addition training or be reimbursed by their employer for outside training.

**Figure 5-3**

**Additional Training by Education Level**

	<u>Less than HS</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>Some College</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Post-Graduate</u>
<b>Employer-provided training</b>	45%	57%	71%	68%	73%
<b>Employer financial support for outside training</b>	16%	23%	36%	34%	52%

**5. AMERICANS' ATTITUDES ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND THE WORKFORCE**

Americans believe that the government should provide both financial support and direct services to individuals seeking jobs as well as regulate companies in order to protect workers' economic interests.

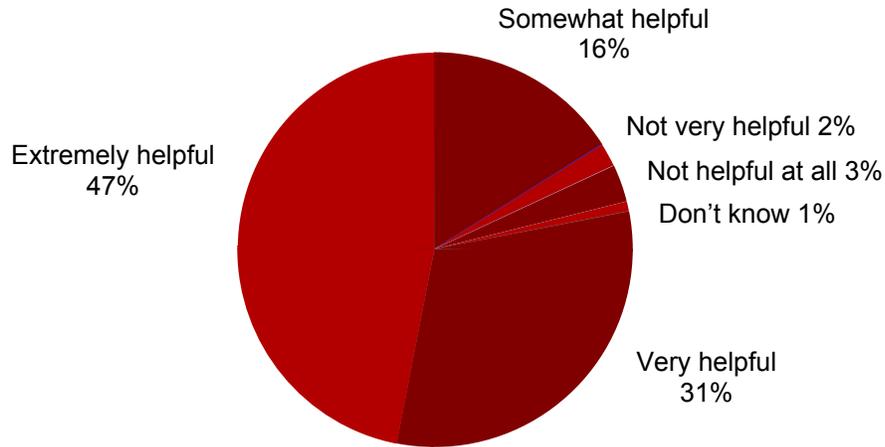
About 75% of Americans think it is either very or extremely important for the government to provide financial assistance for skills training, basic education, and college. Americans feel even stronger about the government's role in improving the quality of education in schools, with 88% believing that is either very or extremely important. These opinions vary little by age, gender, income level or political party.

Many more Americans believe the responsibility for continuing education and training beyond formal schooling should rest with the workers themselves (45%) rather than employers (28%) or the government (8%).

Through its various job-related programs, the government touches the lives of a many Americans. One in three Americans (34%) report having received Unemployment Insurance (UI) during their lives and 32% of Americans state that they have received support from a government-funded education or training program. Most participants (78%) in these programs found them to be helpful, with 47% indicating that they were extremely helpful. [See Figure 6-1]

Figure 6-1

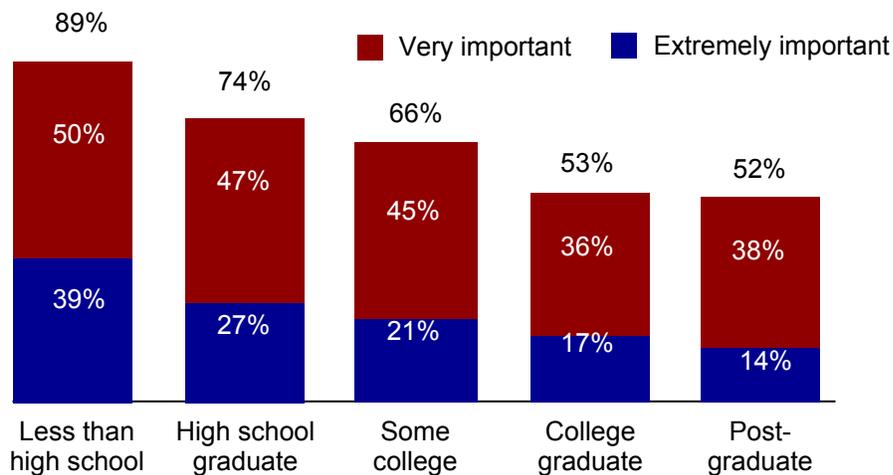
Helpfulness of Government-Funded Education & Training Program



The government also provides people information about available jobs, and 65% of Americans think service is either very or extremely important. Information about available jobs is much more important to those with less formal education, 89% of those with less than a high school degree thinking the service is very or extremely important. By contrast, only 53% of those with a college degree find it as important. [See Figure 6-2]

Figure 6-2

Importance of Government Activities to Provide Information about Available Jobs by Education Level



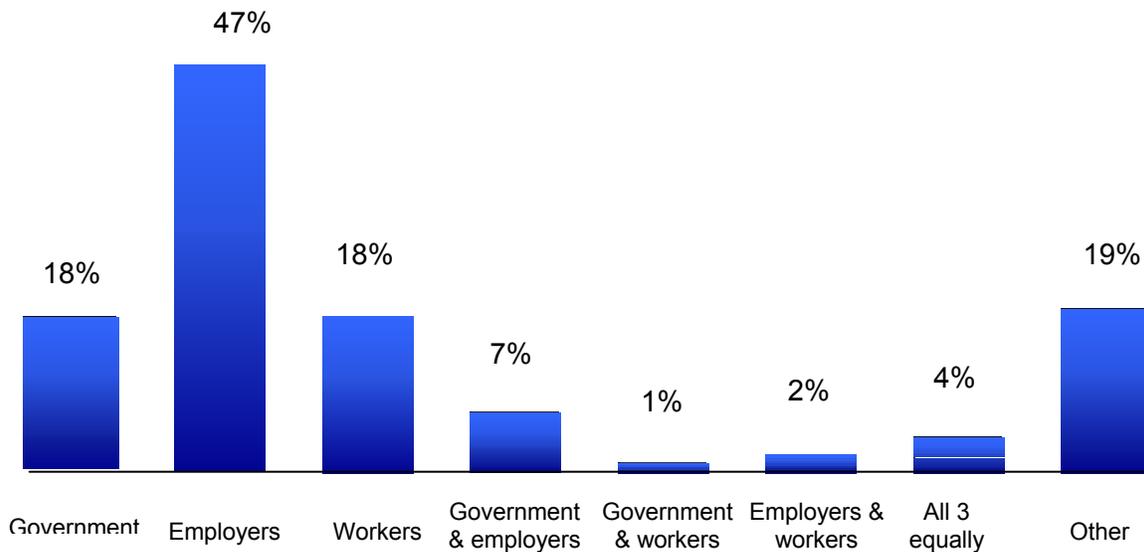
In addition to providing financial assistance, direct services and improving the quality of education, Americans believe strongly that government should require businesses to provide training and guarantee certain benefits to their employees. Sixty percent (60%) of Americans think it is very or extremely important to require

employers to provide training for employees. In addition, 79% thought it very or extremely important to require employers to provide health and medical benefits; 77% thought it very or extremely important to require employers to give more advance notice to people losing their jobs; and 75% thought it very or extremely important to require employers to provide retirement and pension benefits.

Americans also think that employers are more responsible than any other entity (including government) for providing financial support for laid-off workers. [See Figure 6-3].

**Figure 6-3**

**Who Should Provide Financial Support to Laid-Off Workers?**



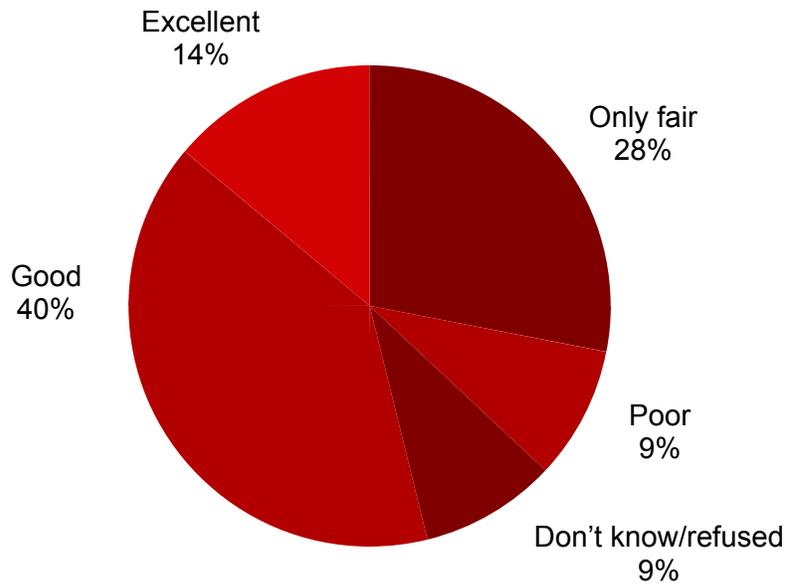
The American public cares about how presidents handle the job situation and believes that the Democrats are doing somewhat better than Republicans. Nine out of ten (91%) Americans think that the way a presidential candidate will handle the job situation is an important factor in making their decision for President. Currently, people think that Democrats do a better job than Republicans of handling issues related to jobs in America: 41% stating that Democrats do a better job and 27% stating that the Republics do a better job.

In addition, most Americans think that President Clinton is doing a good job in this area. Over half of Americans (54%) said that President Clinton was doing a good or excellent job in handling the employment situation while only 9% of respondents reported that the President was doing a poor job. [See Figure 6-4]

Although Americans think it is important for the President to pay attention to the job situation, their understanding of the current status of the labor market is somewhat limited. Only about 35% of respondents were able to state the current unemployment rate within a percentage point, with another 35% indicating that they did not know. Most respondents (75%), however, did know that that the unemployment rate has gone down over the last 5 years.

**Figure 6-4**

**President Clinton's Performance  
Handling the Job Situation in America**



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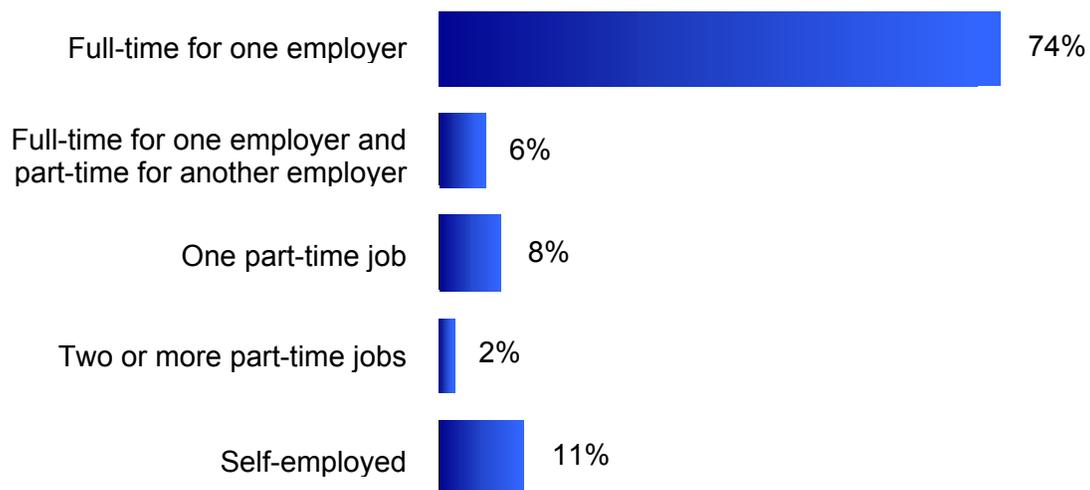
## 7. PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

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The employment status of the Work Trends survey sample closely reflects the national employment figures, with most Americans employed and working full-time for private, for-profit companies that employ at least 250 workers. Only 5% of the respondents reported being unemployed, all stating that they are looking for work. Most workers are either in one full-time job (74%) or indicate they are self-employed (11%). Part-time work is the primary type of job for about 10% of workers, 8% holding one part-time job and 2% working two or more part-time jobs. A small minority of working Americans (6%) report working a part-time job in addition to their full-time job. [See Figure 7-1]

**Figure 7-1**

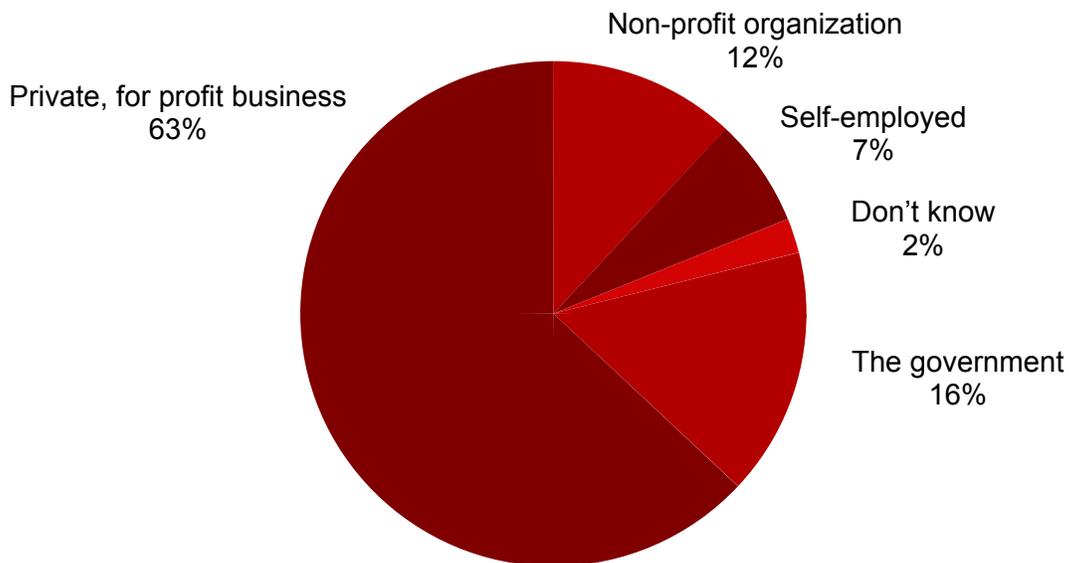
### **Employment Situation of Working Americans**



Americans (61%) tend to work for private, for-profit businesses, although a significant percentage are employed by government (15%) and not-for-profit organizations (12%). Women are more likely than men to work for government or not-for-profit organizations, 19% employed by government and another 15% are employed by not-for-profit organizations compared to only 12% of working men employed in government and 8% in not-for-profit jobs. In addition, men are twice as likely to be self-employed as women, with 14% of men reporting themselves as their primary employer. [See Figure 7-2]

**Figure 7-2**

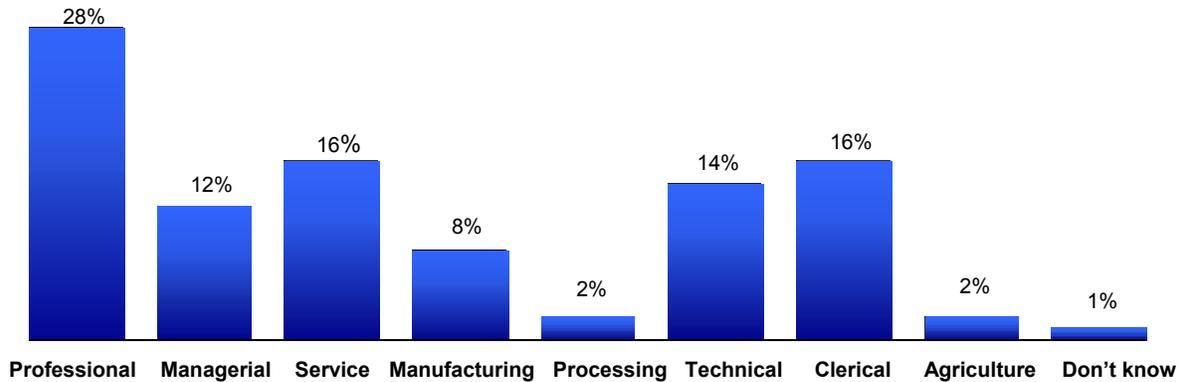
**Type of Primary Employers**



The most frequent occupations held by respondents are professional (28%), clerical/sales (16%) and service (16%) occupations, with very few Americans working in agricultural (2%) or processing (2%) occupations. [See Figure 7-3] Younger workers are more likely to work in technical occupations than older workers with one in five (20%) workers 18-29 year of age in technical occupations as opposed to 9% of the 50 plus cohort. In addition, workers with little formal education (a high school degree or less) are more likely to work in service occupations. Almost one in three (29%) of workers with less than a high school education and one in four (25%) workers with a high school degree work in service occupations. In contrast, only 10% of college graduates and 7% of those workers with post-graduate education work in service occupations.

**Figure 7-3**

Occupation in Place of Primary Employment



About half (46%) of those interviewed are employed by companies or organizations with more than 250 workers. A quarter (25%) of employees work for companies or organizations with 25 or less people and about the same percentage (27%) work for employers with between 25 and 250 workers.

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## 8. THE ATTITUDES OF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

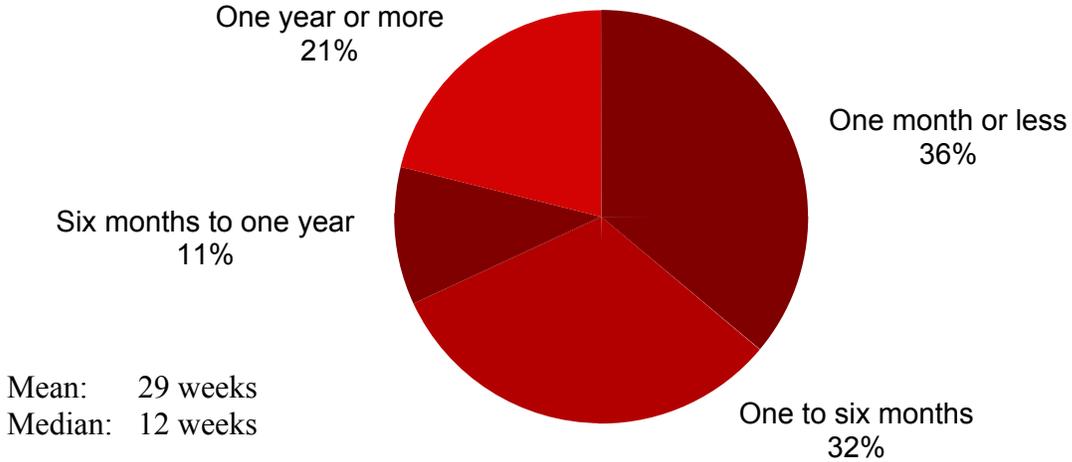
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The survey administered a special section of questions to unemployed workers. In addition to measuring basic statistical data, the survey looked at unemployed workers' opinions about barriers to employment and collected assessments of the usefulness of different means of looking for work.

Although the median length of time workers have been unemployed is 12 weeks, this simple statistic masks a more complex situation. More than one-third of these workers (36%) have been unemployed for one month or less, while one-fifth (21%) have been unemployed for one year or more. [See Figure 8-1] These two groups represent two extremes of a pool of unemployed workers divided into those who are unemployed for short periods of time and those who are unemployed for extended time periods.

**Figure 8-1**

**Length of Time Unemployed**

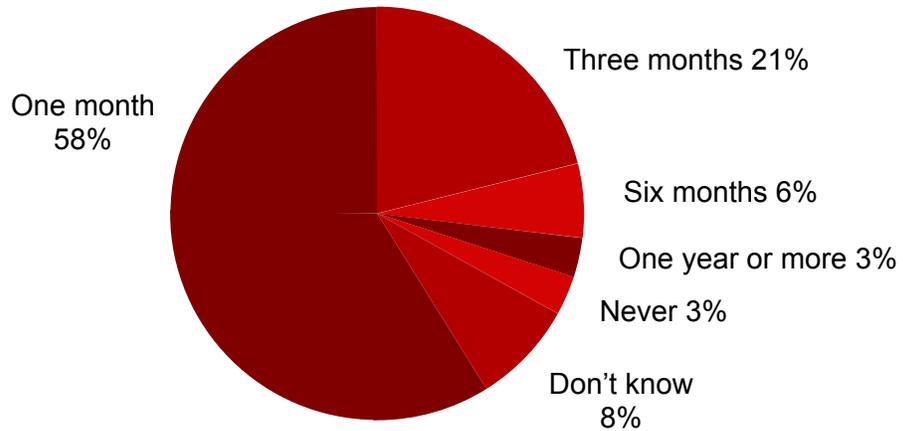


Most unemployed workers are relatively optimistic about how soon they will find a job.

More than half (58%) believe they will find a job in one month, while nearly eighty percent (79%) believe they will find a job within three months. [See Figure 8-2] Only three percent (3%) believe it will take them one year or more to find a job.

**Figure 8-2**

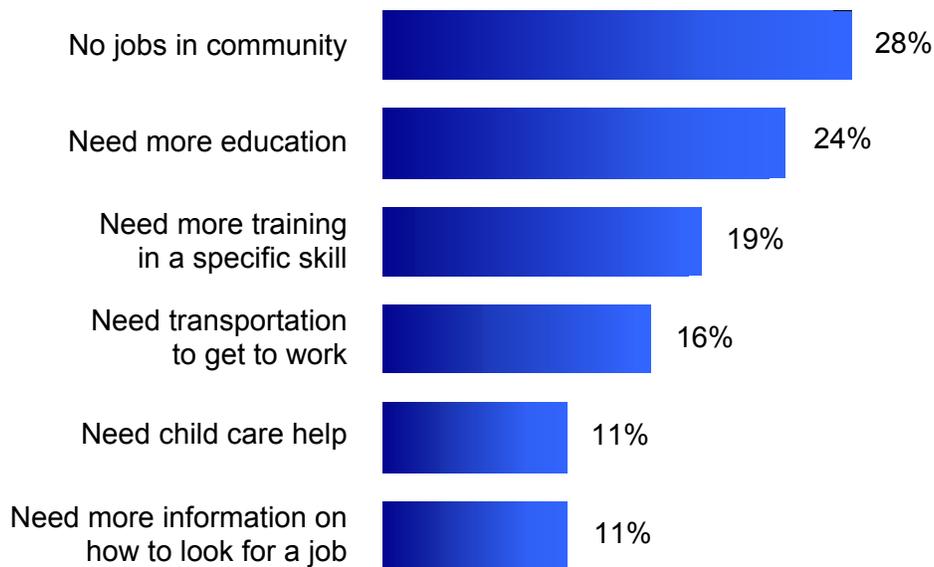
**Unemployed Workers Assessment of How Soon They Will Find a Job**



There are at least three types of causes of unemployment: economic factors, such as lack of jobs, workforce factors, such as lack of training or education, and environmental factors such as lack of transportation or lack of information about jobs. [See Figure 8 – 3] Unemployed workers view an economic factor -- lack of jobs in a community -- as the most important barrier to getting a job. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all unemployed workers view this as being an extremely important barrier to getting a job. The next most important barriers to getting a job, according to unemployed workers, are workforce factors. Nearly one-fourth (24%) of unemployed workers rate a general lack of education, and nearly one in five (19%) rate lack of training in a specific skill as extremely important barriers to getting a job. Environmental factors are least likely to be seen as barriers to getting a job. Sixteen percent (16%) of unemployed workers rate lack of transportation as an extremely important barrier to getting a job, while only 11% view lack of child care help or insufficient information on how to look for a job as extremely important barriers to finding work.

**Figure 8-3**

**Relative Importance of Barriers  
To Employment for Unemployed Workers**

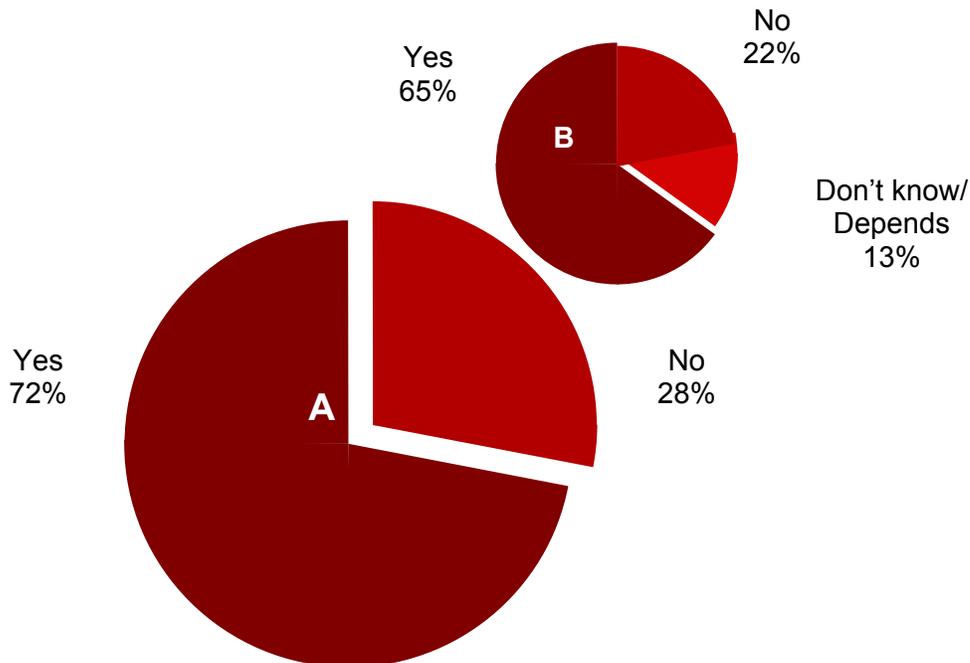


*Percent of Unemployed Rating Barrier as Extremely Important*

Nearly three-fourths (72%) of unemployed workers think that the education and training they have received has adequately prepared them to get a job. (See Figure 8 - 4) Almost two-thirds (65%) of those who think their training has not sufficiently prepared them to get a job plan to enroll in additional education and training within the next three years.

**Figure 8-4**

**Education and Training for Unemployed Workers**

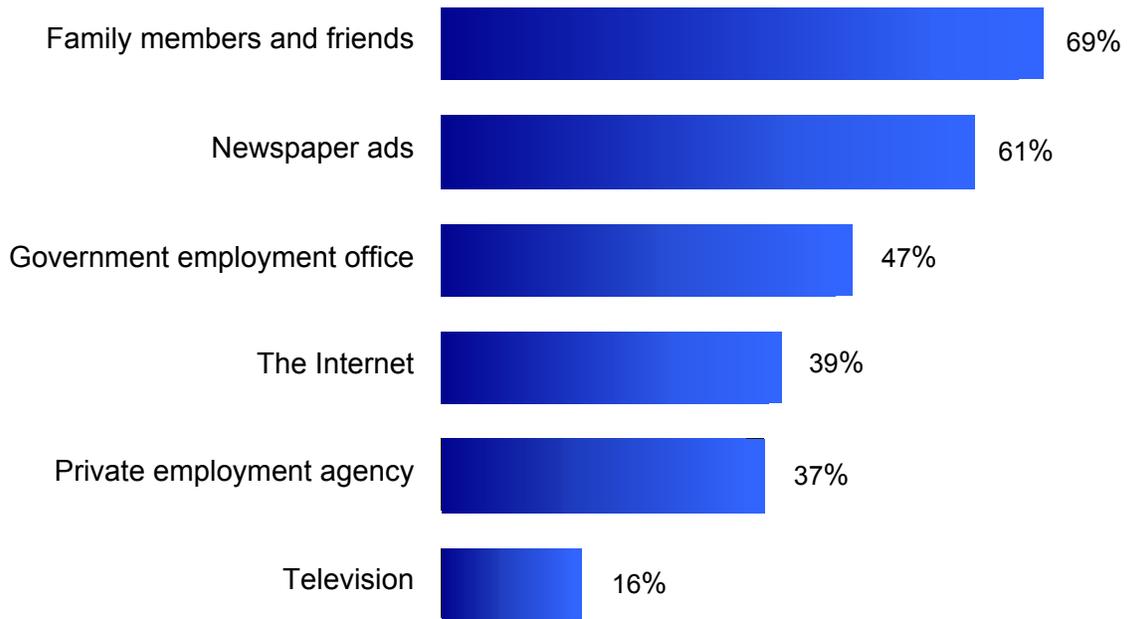


- A. “Did the education and training you have received adequately prepare you to get a job?”
- B. “Do you plan to enroll in additional education and training courses in the next three years?”

Family members and friends and newspaper ads are seen by unemployed workers as the most useful aid in a job search. [See Figure 8 - 5] Sixty-nine percent (69%) of unemployed workers find help from family members and friends as extremely or very useful, while sixty-one percent (61%) find newspaper ads extremely or very useful. Government employment offices are more likely to be seen as useful to the unemployed than private employment agencies. Almost half (47%) of unemployed workers find government employment offices as extremely or very useful in their job searches, compared to only 37% who find private employment agencies extremely or very useful. The Internet is seen as a useful tool in a job search by 39% of unemployed workers, compared to only 16% who see television as useful in a job search.

**Figure 8-5**

**Usefulness of Different Ways of Finding  
Jobs to Unemployed Workers**



*Percent of unemployed*