

Job Seeking Among Workers Age 50+

In August 2017, AARP conducted a survey among labor force participants age 50 and over around job seeking. Key findings include:

- + There is interest among workers age 50-plus in finding new jobs. In fact, a fifth looked for one in the past year, and almost as many considered looking for one. Moreover, just over a third say it is likely they will apply for a job in the next three years.
- + However, few workers age 50-plus feel employers will see their age as an advantage. In fact, a majority think employers will see it as a disadvantage.
- + Many workers age 50-plus do not keep their resume up to date. For nearly two-fifths of them, it has been ten or more years since they updated their resume.

Methodology

This study was fielded from August 18-21, 2017 as part of GfK's US Omnibus survey. The sample was drawn from the GfK KnowledgePanel, a probability-based online survey panel representing the US adult population. Oversamples were collected to achieve a sample size of 1,003 adults age 50+ who are in the labor force (i.e., working or looking for work). The margin of error was +/- 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Data was weighted by gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, household income, and region to reflect US adults age 50+ in the labor force.

Base: US adults age 50+ in the labor force (referred to as "workers" or "labor force participants" throughout this report – i.e., those working or looking for work).

SCREENER: Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

	Total 50+
Base Unweighted	1003
Working for pay for 35 hours per week or more	71%
Working for pay for less than 35 hours per week	23%
Not working but looking for work	6%

Detailed Findings

Job Search in the Past Year

- A fifth of labor force participants age 50 and over looked for a new job in the past year (20%). Another 16% considered looking for a new job, but did not actually do so.

Q: In the past year did you...?

	Total 50+	Age 50-64	Age 65+
Base Unweighted	1003	781	222
Look for a new job	20%	21%*	14%
Consider looking for a new job, but did not actually look	16%	17%*	8%
Neither	64%	61%	78%*

*Statistically significant difference between age groups (50-64 and 65+) at the 95% confidence level.

Likelihood to Apply for a New Job

- Thirty-five percent of age 50+ labor force participants report that they are likely to apply for a new job in the next three years. However, two-thirds of these job seekers say they believe employers would see their age as a disadvantage in the hiring process.

Q: How likely is it that you will apply for a new job in the next three years?

	Total 50+	Age 50-64	Age 65+
Base Unweighted	1003	781	222
Very/Somewhat likely (Net)	35%	38%*	17%
Very likely	18%	20%*	8%
Somewhat likely	17%	19%*	9%
Not too/Not likely at all (Net)	65%	62%	83%*
Not too likely	23%	24%	23%
Not likely at all	42%	38%	60%*

*Statistically significant difference between age groups (50-64 and 65+) at the 95% confidence level.

Most Recent Job Application

- Almost half of age 50+ workers (47%) say it has been ten or more years since they have applied for a job, with almost a quarter saying it has been 20 or more.
- Four-in-ten (40%) report having applied for a job within the last five years.

Q: When was the last time you applied for a job?

	Total 50+	Age 50-64	Age 65+
Base Unweighted	1003	781	222
Within the last 6 months	14%	15%	11%
6 months to less than a year ago	5%	5%	3%
A year to less than 3 years ago	12%	12%	10%
3 years to less than 5 years ago	9%	9%	8%
5 years to less than 10 years ago	14%	13%	17%
10 years to less than 20 years ago	24%	24%	22%
20 years ago or more	22%	21%	27%
Never	1%	0%	2%

Most Recent Resume Update

- Four-in-ten (39%) workers age 50 and over say they have not updated their resume in ten or more years. Among workers age 65+, this figure rises to 49%.
- Another four-in-ten (38%) workers age 50+ say they have updated their resume within the last three years.

Q: When was the last time you updated your resume?

	Total 50+	Age 50-64	Age 65+
Base Unweighted	1003	781	222
Within the last 6 months	17%	18%*	11%
6 months to less than a year ago	7%	8%*	4%
A year to less than 3 years ago	14%	14%	11%
3 years to less than 5 years ago	10%	10%	9%
5 years to less than 10 years ago	12%	12%	14%
10 years to less than 20 years ago	14%	14%	15%
20 years ago or more	12%	11%	19%*
Never	13%	13%	15%

*Statistically significant difference between age groups (50-64 and 65+) at the 95% confidence level.

Employers' Perception of Age

- Two-thirds (64%) of workers age 50 and over believe employers would see their age as a *disadvantage* when making hiring decisions. Among workers age 65+, this figure rises to 79%.
- Moreover, few believe employers would see their age as an advantage – only 9% of workers age 50-plus think employers feel this way.

Q: If you were to look for a new job today, in general, do you believe employers would see your age as an advantage, a disadvantage, or would your age not affect their hiring decision?

	Total 50+	Age 50-64	Age 65+
Base Unweighted	1003	781	222
Advantage	9%	10%*	5%
Disadvantage	64%	61%	79%*
Would not affect hiring decision	27%	29%*	16%

*Statistically significant difference between age groups (50-64 and 65+) at the 95% confidence level.

<https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00057.001>

CONTACT US

Sarah Kerman, AARP Research
skerman@aarp.org

Colette Thayer, AARP Research
cthayer@aarp.org