CompTIA

Job Seeker Trends

Research Brief

Longitudinal trending of career pursuits among the career intent, tech intent and skills intent

June 2025 release

Key Points

34% Percent of the US labor market reporting pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months. This represents a notable increase over the prior rate of 27%. The uptick is not due to a single factor, but rather a likely combination of seemingly contradictory perceptions – some positive, such as optimism around the direction of the economy, and some negative, such as concerns around job security or actual layoffs.

58 Average rating score of the state of the job market, a slight improvement over the prior survey wave score of 56. Net negative responses continue to exceed net positive responses (36% vs. 29%), but the gap has narrowed. The remaining 35% of job seekers rate the state of the job market as average. Non-job seekers (those content with their current employment) report net positive sentiment with the state of the labor market (50% vs. 34%).

#4 Average rank of consideration among job seekers in pursuing a career in a technology field, also known as the Tech Intent. The average rate spans nine waves of the Job Seeker tracking survey over five years. For the June 2025 wave, consideration for pursing a career in technology tied for second with the hospitality, food, travel, and tourism job category.

49% Percent of non-job seekers categorized as the Skills Intent – those most committed to further building their skills for career maintenance or career advancement. Another 27% fall into the Skills Curious segment.

#1 Job seeker rank of earning a technical industry-recognized certification as the top strategy when pursuing a career in technology. The second ranked strategy entails training in an in-demand technical skill, which often precedes earning an industry-recognized certification.

88% Rating of importance (net) of digital fluency skills in today's workforce.

#1 Job seeker rank of AI as the top skill they plan to learn and develop.

38% Percent of job seekers that believe AI will be both a positive and a threat to jobs and wages. In comparison, equal percentages (21%) rate AI a positive or a threat to jobs and wages.

Job Seeking Continues at a Robust Rate

34%

Approximately 34% of the US labor market report pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months, a notable increase over the prior rate of 27% recorded in CompTIA's job market tracking research. This reflects the uptick in unemployment (more out-of-work seeking employment), and the uptick in job security concerns (workers seeking more job security).

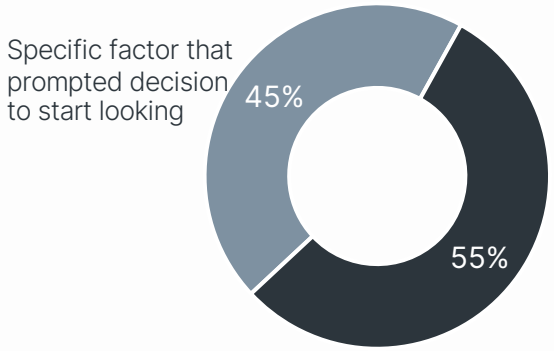
Job seeking incidence profile:

60%	Age 18-34
51%	Age 35-44
46%	Age 45-64
24%	Age 65+

56m

Thirty-four percent translates to approximately 56 million active job seekers, inclusive of those currently employed and those out of work.

Prompt that initiated job seeking



Top factors contributing to job seekers pursuing new employment opportunities

1. Financial situation changed — Correlated with income, with higher rates among the <$50K and $50K-$100K segments
2. Unhappy with current career trajectory
3. Stuck in a rut and wanting something new
4. Burnout or stress — Slightly higher rate among 18-34 age segment
5. Values or life priorities changed

See Methodology for survey and sample details

6 in 10

Non-job seekers report contentment or satisfaction with their current job

Among the 64% of the labor market that is not actively pursuing a new job or career change, 56% indicate the reason is contentment or satisfaction with their current job. CompTIA designates this segment the **Career Content**.

The remaining 44% falls into the passive category known as the **Career Curious**. This segment is fluid and may shift into active job seeking mode when an opportunity presents itself.

Top factors holding the Career Curious back from active job seeking:

1. Waiting for right opportunity
2. Timing not right
3. Need more work experience, skills, training to improve odds of success
4. Paused looking; plan to resume
5. Balancing job, family etc.

See Appendix for data segmentations

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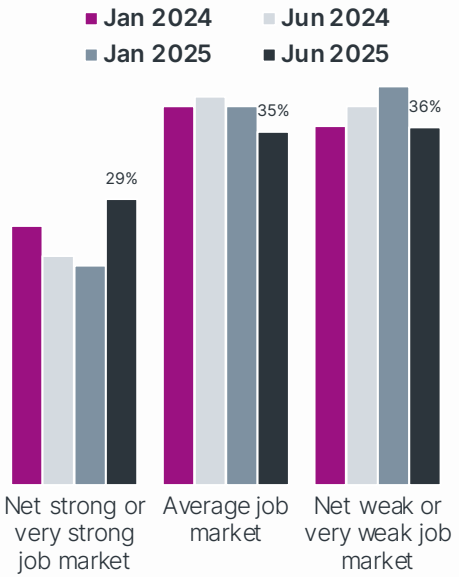
Job seeker perceptions of the health of the labor market



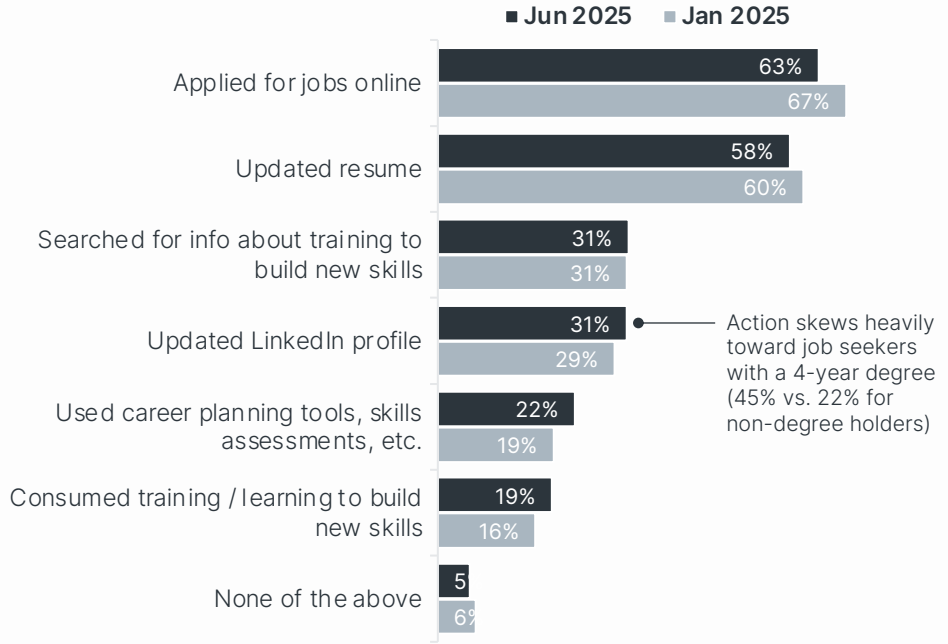
When translating job seeker ratings of the state of the job market to a score, the calculation yields an average of 58; a slightly improvement over the prior survey wave score of 56.

Net positive feelings of a strong job market remains lower than net negative feelings (29% vs. 36%), with the middle segment of 35% rating the jobs market average.

Male job seekers hold slightly more positive views than female job seekers (average score of 60 vs. 55), as do Gen Z vs. Gen X (59 vs. 56)

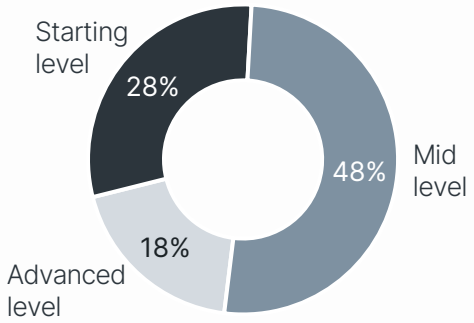
Actions taken by job seekers in pursuing career opportunities

More so than other cohorts, the data indicates Gen Z applied to jobs online at a lower rate (62% current period vs. 70% prior period), while increasing the rate of searching for information around training to build new skills (37% current period vs. 29% period). This may reflect a degree of frustration in applying for countless jobs without success; shifting to a strategy of boosting skills to improve chances.



Action taken	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X
Updated resume	57%	58%	59%
Updated LinkedIn profile	26%	32%	33%
Searched for information about training and building skills	37%	34%	24%
Used career planning, skills assessments, career coach etc.	27%	26%	15%

Desired job level of job seekers



Data on par with prior survey wave | unsure responses not shown

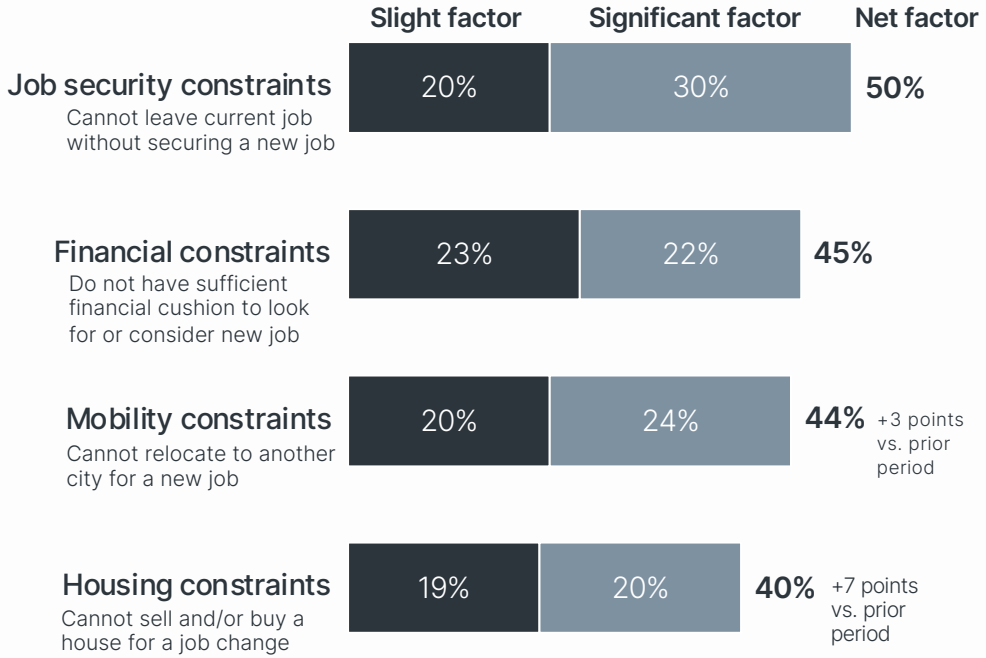
Top reported job seeking challenges

1. Time to apply for jobs, fill out applications, interviews
2. Mental fatigue and stress of lengthy job searches
3. Balancing job searches with the demands of work or family
4. Automated application systems that screen out candidates
5. Too many rounds of interviews
6. Figuring out where/how to start job search strategy

Mental fatigue increased as a reported challenge (+3 points to 43%), as well as the fatigue that comes with too many rounds of interviews (+4 points to 30). Rural job seekers report higher levels of fatigue than city residents (48% vs. 39%)

Life factors constrain many potential job seekers

Reported constraints among non-active job seekers



Younger demographics report higher rates of mobility constraints. On the one hand, this may run counter to societal perceptions of young people having more flexibility to pick up and move. On the other, the significant run up in both housing and rental costs make it exceedingly difficult to relocate, especially if the move is from a lower cost town to a higher cost city.

Job seeking constraints	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X
Financial constraints	62%	52%	44%
Mobility constrains	53%	51%	42%
Housing / rental constraints	53%	44%	40%

Job Seekers Consider a Diverse Mix of Career Fields

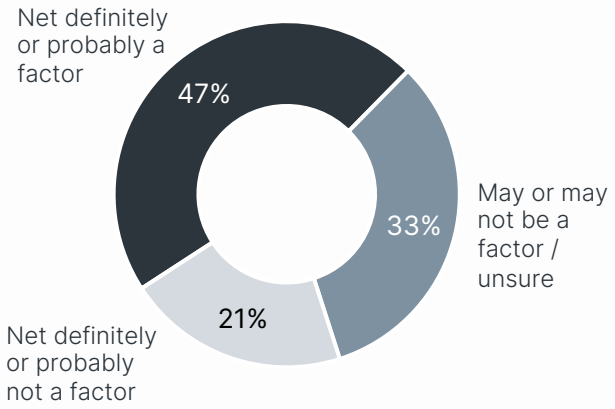
There was a notable increase in the number of career categories that experienced higher levels of consideration. A total of 11 career categories recorded gains versus only four categories during the prior January 2024 survey wave. The increase in consideration rates is consistent with the overall directional trend of a greater volume of job seeking intent. The career categories with the largest increases from the prior survey wave include: 1). Technology careers, 2). Arts, Design, Entertainment or Sports, 3). Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism, 4). Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, or Architects, and 5). Transportation, Drivers, or Material Moving.

Consideration for career field	Jun 2021	Jan 2022	Jun 2022	Jan 2023	Jun 2023	Jan 2024	Jun 2024	Jan 2025	Jun 2025	Mean Rate	Jun 2025 change vs. mean
Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related	22%	22%	23%	28%	22%	24%	25%	22%	23%	23%	−
Hospitality, Food, Travel, Tourism	26%	20%	23%	21%	21%	19%	20%	20%	22%	21%	↑
Technology, Tech Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Cloud, Software, Proj. Mgt.	13%	20%	17%	17%	15%	17%	16%	16%	22%	17%	↑
Manufacturing, Production	16%	13%	16%	16%	12%	15%	14%	17%	18%	15%	↑
Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, Architects	13%	11%	11%	13%	9%	12%	10%	15%	17%	12%	↑
Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst, Operations	14%	18%	18%	18%	13%	16%	17%	16%	17%	16%	↑
Healthcare, Medical	18%	20%	21%	19%	20%	17%	17%	19%	16%	19%	↓
Transportation, Drivers, Material Moving	14%	9%	12%	10%	11%	10%	11%	12%	14%	11%	↑
Personal and Professional Care, Service, Child Care	16%	14%	12%	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	13%	13%	−
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports	13%	9%	10%	11%	11%	11%	10%	9%	12%	11%	↑
Comm., Multimedia, Journalism, Social Media	8%	11%	10%	11%	9%	10%	10%	9%	11%	10%	↑
Education, Teaching, Instruction	11%	14%	12%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	10%	12%	↓
Community, Social Service, Psychology, Non-profit	11%	11%	10%	9%	10%	11%	10%	8%	9%	10%	↓
Installation, Maintenance, Mechanics, Repair	10%	6%	6%	8%	6%	7%	7%	11%	9%	8%	↑
Engineering, Technicians	7%	6%	8%	8%	5%	6%	7%	7%	8%	7%	↑
Life, Physical, Social Science	5%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	−
Legal, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, Armed Forces	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	4%	6%	6%	−
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%	5%	↑

Overcoming Confidence Gap Barriers

Confidence gap[1] remains a barrier to a tech career for many job seekers

[1]Belief that working in technology is not possible due to real or perceived barriers that discourage some candidates.



Examples of confidence gap concerns

32%
Concern over starting too far behind

23%
Concern over not having a 4-yr degree

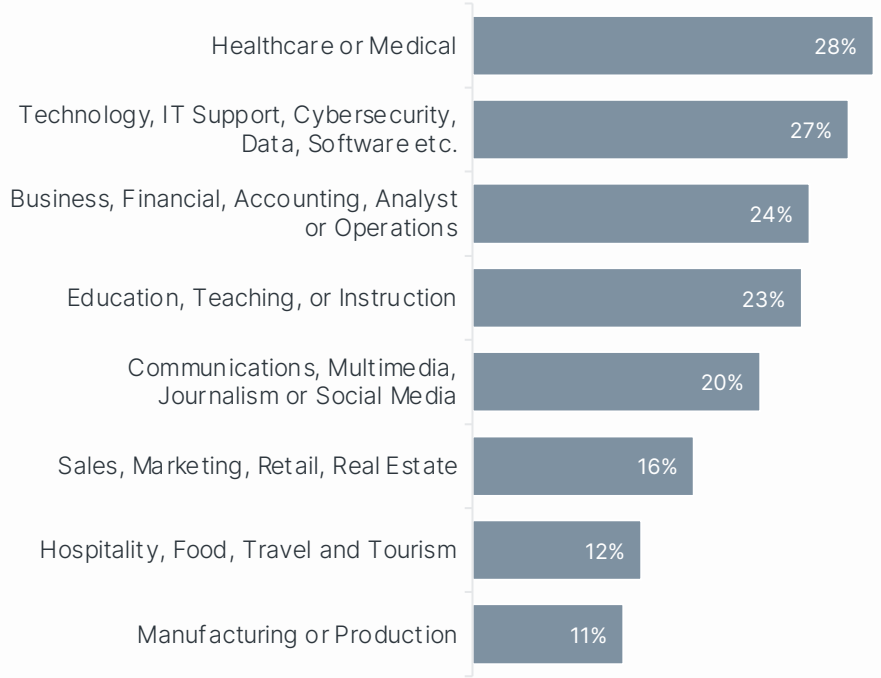
Reported challenges and perceived barriers to pursuing a tech job

Jan 2025	Jun 2025	
27%	28%	Not interested in field of technology
26%	28%	Believe tech jobs don't pay enough
22%	23%	Believe training takes too long
21%	22%	Believe training too expensive
21%	23%	Believe not enough tech jobs in my region
21%	21%	Believe insufficient math or science skills a barrier to working in tech

Factors are generally similar across age and other demographic categories

Job seeker assessment of perceived difficulty of transitioning into career fields

Top reported challenges of pursuing a new job | Net difficult displayed | many occupations rated as 'about in the middle' in difficulty



Note: the occupation categories presented in the accompanying chart span many job levels and job types. Job seeker ratings of the difficulty of transitioning into new career fields should be interpreted as directional guidance to inform where additional support may be needed to enable talent mobility.

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Job seeker approaches to pursuing a career in technology

#1 Earning a technical industry-recognized certification [49%]

#2 Training in an in-demand technical skill [47%]

#3 Encouragement / nudge from mentor or career coach [45%]

#4 Guidance from someone working in tech [41%]

#5 Developing a career change plan [38%]

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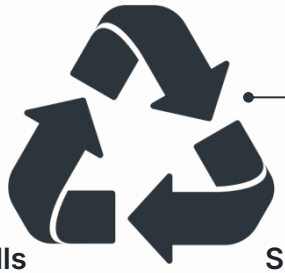
Profiling the Skills Intent



Skills Intent 49%

Skills development rating of very important to career advancement and/or career maintenance

Adjusted rates as a % of the overall labor market:

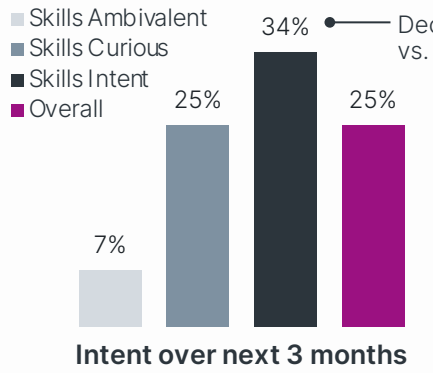
32% Skills Intent
18% Skills Curious
16% Skills Ambivalent

Skills Ambivalent 24%

Skills Curious 27%

Intent to train to develop skills over next 3 months

Among non-job seekers | training for skills development may entail formal paid learning or informal free learning content



Decrease of -8 points vs. prior survey wave

Intent over next 3 months

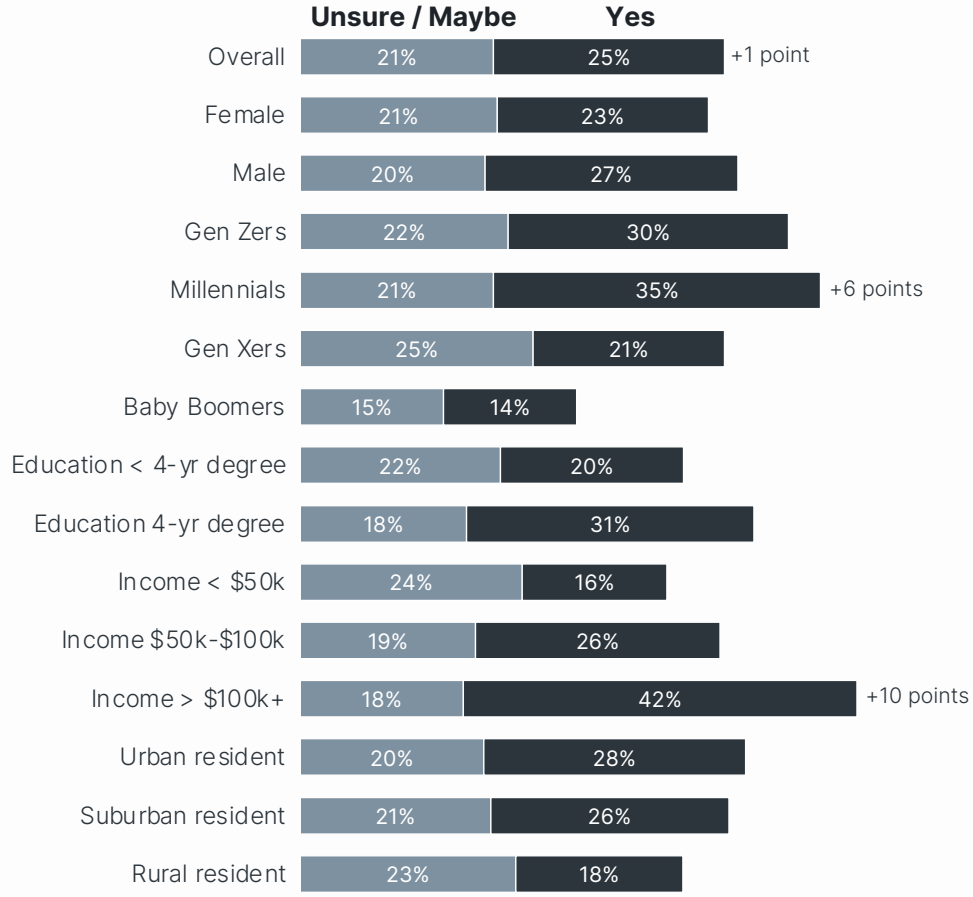
Expectation for who will drive skills development training

63% Mostly driven by self
13% Mostly driven by employer
24% About an even split

The Skills Intent segment reports a slightly higher rate of proactive self-driven training vs. the Skills Ambivalent relying more on the employer to drive the decision.

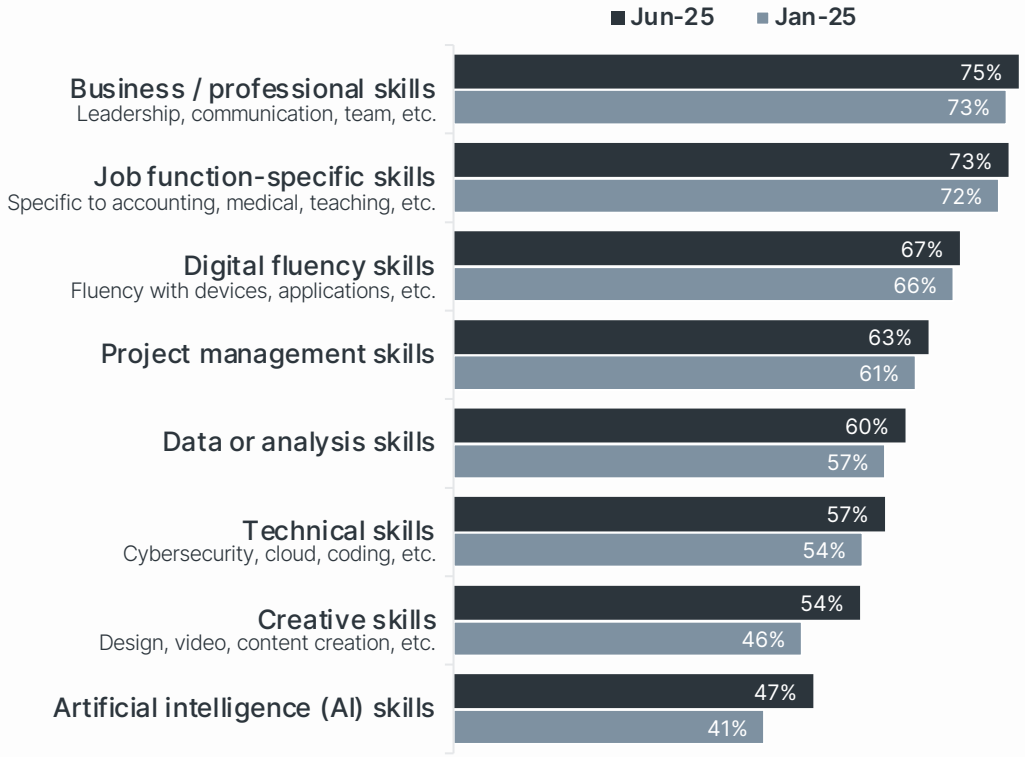
Training intent profiling segmentation

Among non-job seekers | training for skills development may entail formal paid learning or informal free learning content



The Skills Intent recognize a mix of skills in career maintenance and/or advancement

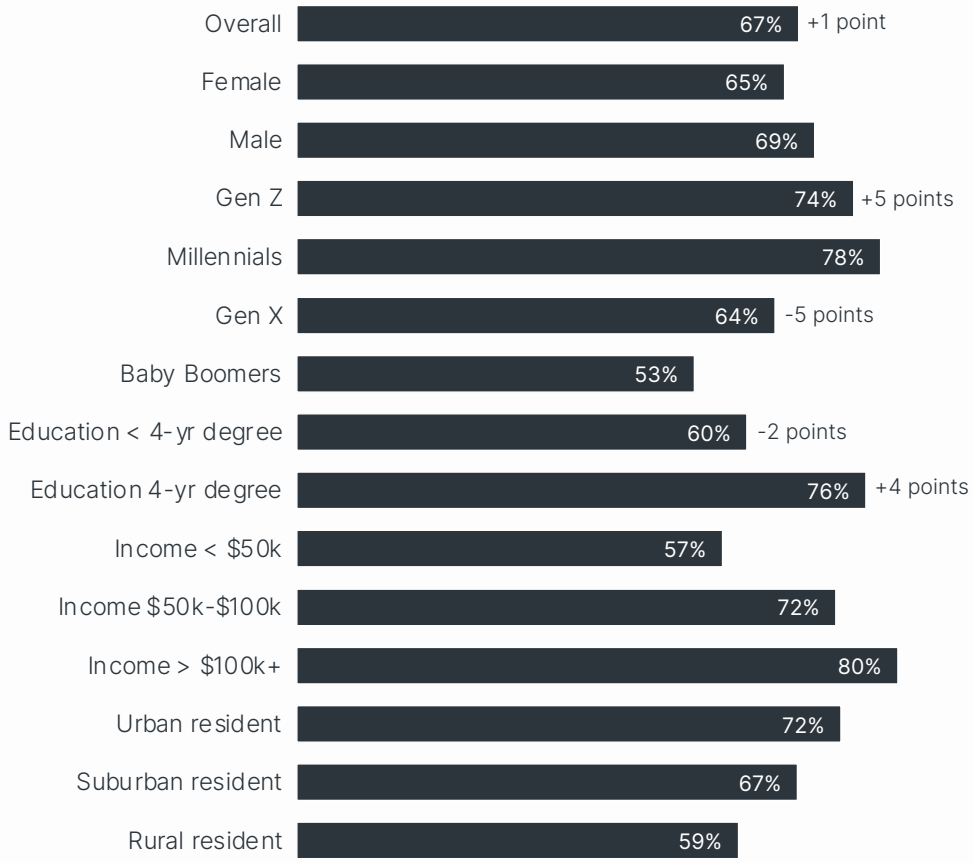
Net rating of very important + somewhat important



Note: the Skills intent segment spans the breadth of occupation categories, some of which, are technical fields and some are not. The relatively high rating of digital fluency skills speaks to the degree to which digital skills underpin so many occupation categories across the labor market.

Digital fluency skill intent segmentation

Skills Intent segmentation of those rating digital fluency skills as important (net) to their career maintenance or advancement



88%

Job seeker rating of the importance (net) of digital fluency skills in today's workforce

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) fundamentals
2. Applications fundamentals, e.g. Microsoft Office, Salesforce, etc.
3. Technology fundamentals, e.g. terminology, concepts, uses etc.
4. Data/Analytics fundamentals
5. Cybersecurity fundamentals

Note: these responses are among the job seeker segment – the 27% of the labor market actively seeking a new position. The rank order did not change from the prior survey wave.

Data on the prior page is among the non-job seekers. Differing priorities between job seekers and non-job seekers helps to explain differences in skills development ratings. For example, job seekers rate AI skills development a higher priority than non-job seekers.

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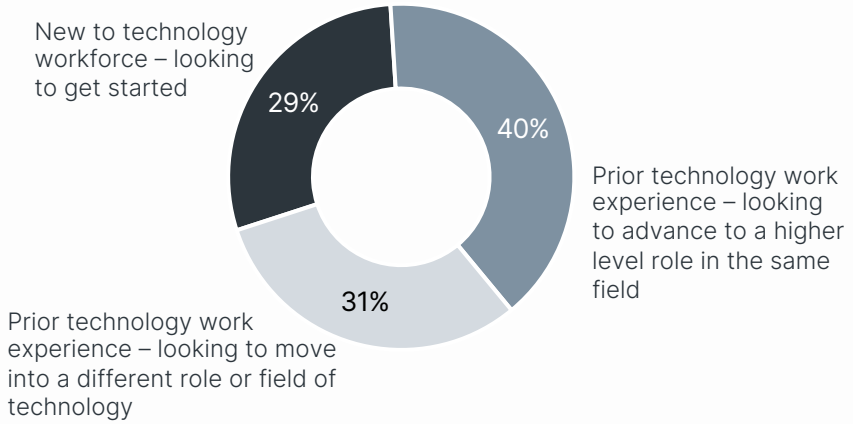
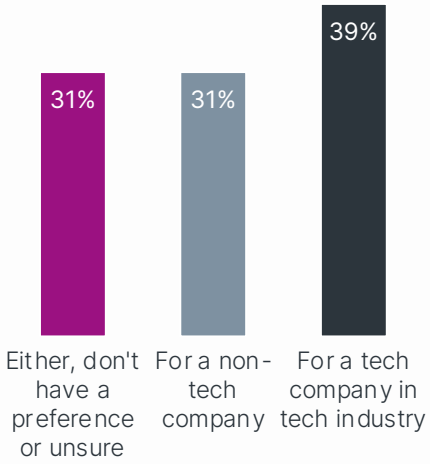
Profile of job seekers already working in a technology field



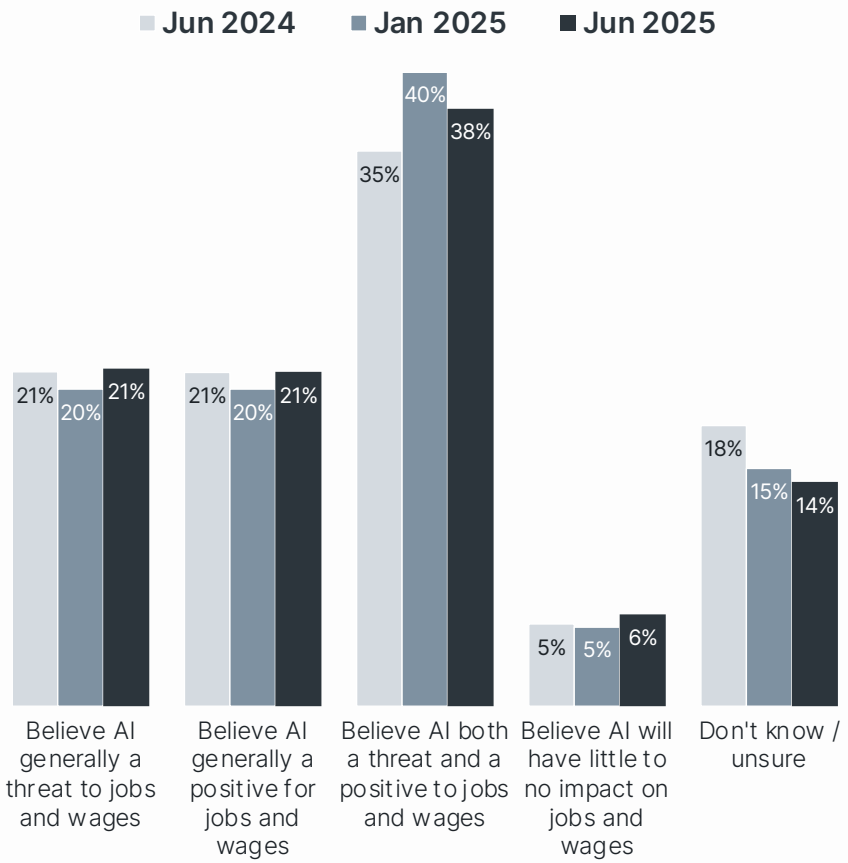
Job seeker preference for working within tech



According to CompTIA's State of the Tech Workforce, an estimated 40% of tech jobs are with tech companies in the tech industry. A majority of tech jobs span all other sectors across the economy, such as a cybersecurity analyst working for a financial company or a cloud engineer working for a healthcare provider.

Job Seeker perceptions of AI's impact on jobs and wages

Job seeker perceptions of the impact of AI on the jobs market and wages have tracked consistently over the past three survey waves. Males and those in the Millennial age cohort report slightly higher rates of positive views toward AI.



Methodology

CompTIA's Job Seeker Trends study was conducted via a quantitative survey fielded online during June 16 -24, 2025. The data was weighted to approximate a target sample of U.S. adults based on gender, educational attainment, age, race, and region. The full survey sample of n=2,024 was evenly segmented between active job seekers and non-seekers. The n=1,000 segmentations have an approximate margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

The survey was administrated by the research firm Morning Consult.

Within the context of this study, job seekers are defined as adults who have looked for a new job within their current or most recent career field or explored new jobs in a different career field in the past 3 months. Note: the data suggests some respondents interpreted 'new career' pathway as a new job role within an existing field (e.g. transitioning from an IT support role to a cybersecurity role). Overall, this had little effect on the key themes of the findings.

Caveats to Keep in Mind:

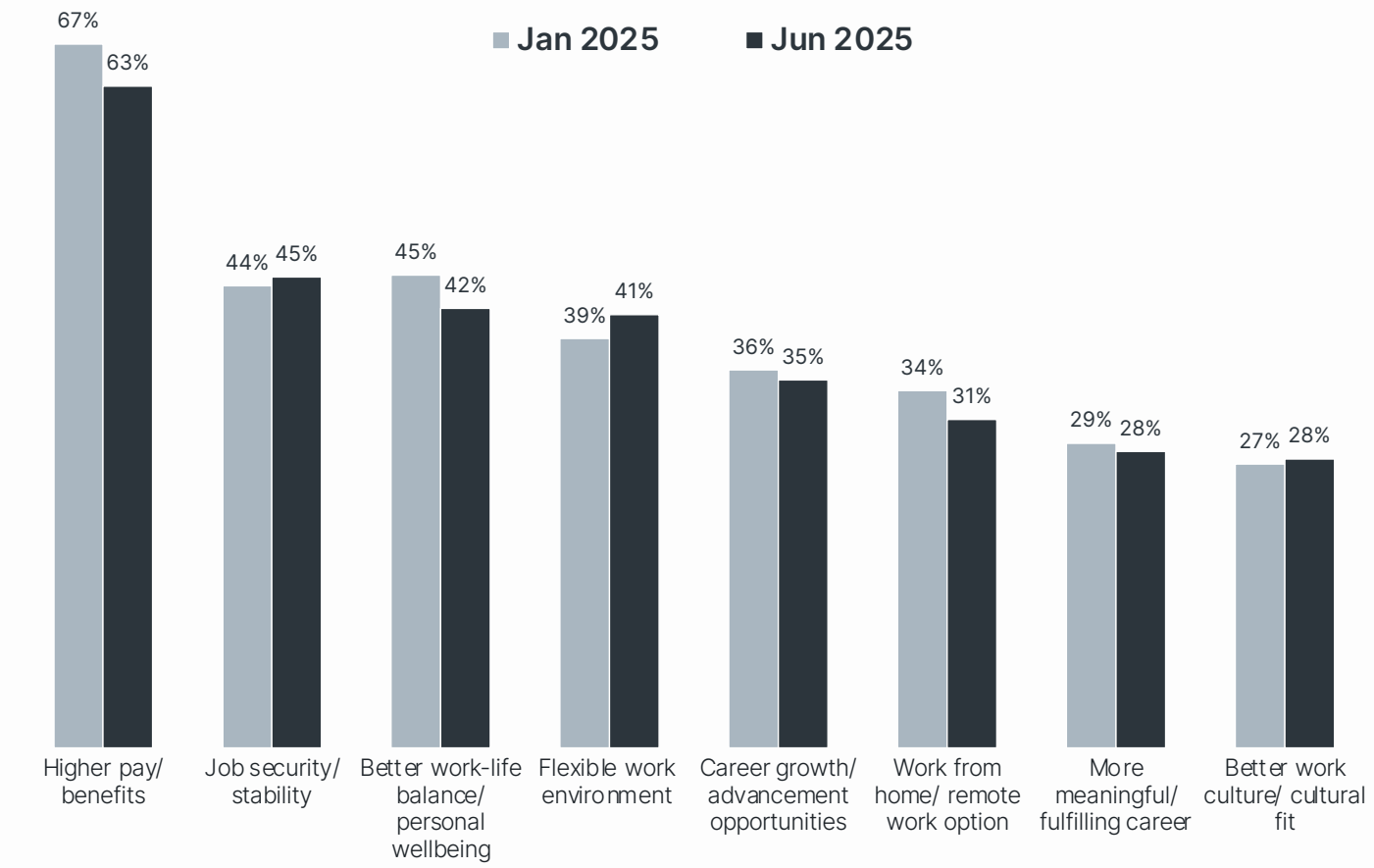
- The intent of this study was to capture a broad-based look at career exploration, allowing for comparisons across occupation categories. The trade-off with this approach is less detail in any one occupation category. Occupations were described at a high level without providing detailed definitions or an extensive list of jobs falling within the category.
- Past CompTIA research indicates certain segments new to the field of information technology (IT) have a number of preconceived notions of what the career field entails. In some cases, job seekers may have an interest in a job role with a significant technology or data or digital component without thinking of it in the context of a traditional "IT" role.
- The reported rates of engaging in training in this study pertain to active job seekers only. The large segment of workers that routinely train to improve their skills or prepare for a certification exam that are not actively looking (although could be planning for career advancement with their existing employer) are not included in the training figures.
- See prior waves of Job Seeker Trends for additional insight on topics such as gig work and the use of talent marketplaces.

CompTIA, Inc. is a member of the market research industry's Insights Association and adheres to its internationally respected Code of Standards. Any questions regarding the study should be directed to CompTIA Research and Market Intelligence staff at research@comptia.org.

Appendix




Factors driving job seekers to pursue new employment opportunities



Deterring factors in considering a job opportunity with new employer

Female	Male	
45%	40%	Job posting with unrealistic requirements for experience, skill or education
41%	38%	Red flags with hiring manager / team you'd be working with
39%	45%	New position not sufficiently better than current job, e.g. in work, salary, etc.
28%	35%	Employer reputation / cultural fit with your values
28%	22%	Lack of remote work or WFH option / work location
26%	35%	Employer not committed to career growth and advancement opportunities

The data is generally consistent across demographic categories with segments rating deterring factors similarly. There were minimal changes in comparing the data to the priory survey wave.