

Americans Continue to View Job Market as Bad and Only One-Quarter Expect it to Improve in Six Months

Two in five adults worry main income earner will be unemployed in next 6 months

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – April 29, 2009 – As reports of mass layoffs continue, it is not surprising that only one in eight Americans (12%) rate the job market in their region of the country as good while two-thirds (68%) rate it as bad. This is, however, slightly better than how people described the job market in January. There is somewhat less pessimism now. In January, only 6% of adults said the job market in their region was good while 76% said it was bad.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,401 U.S. adults surveyed online between April 13 and 21, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Looking ahead six months, almost one-quarter of adults (23%) say they believe the job market in their region of the country will be better while 42% say it will remain the same and 36% believe that it will be worse. This is also an improvement from January when just 15% thought the job market would be better in six months while almost half (49%) believed it would be worse.

Depending on where one lives, there are different feelings about the job market. The Midwest is the most pessimistic – over three-quarters (77%) of all adults there rate the current job market as bad and two in five (40%) believe it will become worse in the next six months. Easterners are slightly less pessimistic as 15% rate the current job market as good and over one-quarter (26%) expect it to get better six months from now.

Concern Over Job Loss

There is also a concern that more people will become unemployed. More than two in five Americans (43%) are concerned that the main income earners in their households may become unemployed in the next six months. Again, the Midwest shows the most unease about unemployment as 46% say they are concerned about unemployment hitting their household. Those living in the East, may not be more concerned, but one in five are *very* concerned (21%), the highest of all regions of the country.

So What?

With the U.S. auto makers continuing their announcements of likely job cuts, it is not a surprise that those in the Midwest are among the most nervous about the job market these days. But the general attitude of those living in the other three regions is not much better. Almost half of all adults say they are concerned about losing their jobs, and three-quarters of Americans believe the job market will remain the same or get worse in the next six months. If economic recovery requires an improvement in consumer confidence, that is unlikely to happen while so many people are pessimistic about the job market.

TABLE 1
RATING OF CURRENT JOB MARKET IN YOUR REGION

“How would you rate the current job market of your region of the country?”

Base: All adults

	Total	Region			
		East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
GOOD (NET)	12	15	6	16	9
Very good	3	9	1	3	*
Somewhat good	9	7	5	13	9
Neither good nor bad	20	22	17	22	20
BAD (NET)	68	63	77	62	71
Somewhat bad	39	37	42	37	42
Very bad	29	26	35	25	29

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Note: * indicates less than 0.5%

TABLE 2
RATING OF CURRENT JOB MARKET - TREND

“How would you rate the current job market of your region of the country?”

Base: All adults

	June 2008	July 2008	Jan 2009	April 2009
	%	%	%	%
GOOD (NET)	28	30	6	12
Neither good nor bad	18	19	18	20
BAD (NET)	53	51	76	68

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Note: Prior to January, there were three categories for Good and Bad

TABLE 3
EXPECTATIONS FOR JOB MARKET IN YOUR REGION IN SIX MONTHS

“How do you think that the job market in your region of the nation will change over the next 6 months?”

Base: All adults

	Total	Region			
		East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
BETTER (NET)	23	26	17	23	24
Will be much better	3	9	1	1	*
Will be somewhat better	20	17	16	21	24
Will remain the same	42	42	42	41	42
WORSE (NET)	36	32	40	36	33
Will be somewhat worse	29	26	31	30	27
Will be much worse	7	6	10	7	7

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Note: * indicates less than 0.5%

TABLE 4
EXPECTATIONS FOR JOB MARKET IN SIX MONTHS – TREND

“How do you think that the job market in your region of the nation will change over the next 6 months?”

Base: All adults

	Jan. 2009	April 2009
	%	%
BETTER (NET)	15	23
Will be much better	1	3
Will be somewhat better	14	20
Will remain the same	36	42
WORSE (NET)	49	36
Will be somewhat worse	36	29
Will be much worse	14	7

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 5
CONCERN OVER BECOMING UNEMPLOYED

“How concerned are you that the main income earner in your household might become unemployed in the next 6 months?”

Base: All adults

	Total	Region			
		East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
CONCERNED (NET)	43	42	46	40	45
Very concerned	17	21	18	15	16
Somewhat concerned	26	21	27	25	29
NOT CONCERNED (NET)	57	58	54	60	55
Not very concerned	26	28	24	28	24
Not at all concerned	31	29	31	32	30

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

The Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States April 13 and 21, 2008, among 2,401 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different

probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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