

Study: Workers looking for a new job, 2014

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Every year, many workers change jobs without necessarily going through a period of unemployment. These workers start their job search while still in the job they wish to leave.

In Canada, 12% of paid workers reported that they had taken steps to find a new job in the previous month. This proportion has been on the rise since the mid-1990s, when it was around 5%.

An often-cited theory to explain this gain is decreased costs associated with looking for work, on account of the rapid increase in information technology and communications.

In addition, considering the growing pool of educated workers and the role of skills in today's labour market, more workers may seek better job opportunities.

The reason most often cited by workers looking for a new job is better pay (51%), followed by a job better suited to their qualifications and education (28%).

These findings come from a new study called "[Workers looking for a new job](#)." Based on data from the 2014 Longitudinal and International Study of Adults, the study examines the reasons why these workers want to leave their job. It also explores the characteristics and level of job satisfaction of workers looking for a new job.

Workers looking for a new job are younger and more educated than those not looking for work

Workers looking for a new job were generally younger than those who had not taken any steps to find a new job. Just over 1 in 5 workers looking for a new job were between 18 and 24 years of age, compared with just under 1 in 10 among other workers.

They were also more likely to have changed employers in the previous two years and had fewer years of service at their current job.

Moreover, they were more educated than other workers and had higher literacy, numeracy and problem-solving scores. For example, around 43% had a postsecondary degree equal to or above the bachelor level, compared with 35% of workers not looking for a new job.

However, younger workers are not the only ones looking for a job while employed: more than 4 in 10 were aged 35 to 54.

Workers looking for a new job are less likely to have received a raise in the previous two years

Workers seeking a new job were more likely to have seen their responsibilities, complexity, or pace of work increase in their job over the previous two years.

In contrast, they were less likely to have received a wage increase in the same period: 48% got a raise during this period, compared with 58% of workers who were not looking for work.

Workers looking for a new job also had less well-paying jobs than workers who were not looking for work. They earned, on average, \$23.57 per hour, compared with \$26.27 per hour for other workers, a difference of just over 10%.

They were also less likely than other workers to have a full-time or permanent job, to be covered by a collective agreement, or to participate in a pension plan.



Finally, workers who had looked for another job estimated the probability of losing their current job in the next year at nearly one in five (19%), compared with 10% for other workers. In contrast, they were more optimistic than the rest of workers about their chances of finding a job that was at least as good as their current job.

Workers looking for a new job reported a lower level of job satisfaction

There is a strong link between job satisfaction and looking for a new job, even after taking earnings and other working conditions into account.

Among workers dissatisfied with their job, the probability of looking for a new job was more than 40% for both men and women, compared with 6% of those who were satisfied or very satisfied with their job.

This finding is consistent with the fact that looking for a new job is not only driven by working conditions, but also by other aspects of the work environment related to job satisfaction (such as workload). People's values and their work-related preferences (such as the importance of job prestige or social activities organized by the employer) can also play a role.

Note to readers

This study uses data from the 2012 and 2014 Longitudinal and International Study of Adults (LISA). LISA is a longitudinal survey that collects information from the same individuals at each new survey wave.

The sample of workers looking for a new job includes anyone aged 18 and over, working for an employer and looking for work at any time during the four weeks preceding the day of the survey. For the purposes of this study, self-employed and unpaid workers were excluded from the sample.

The on-the-job search rate while employed is the number of workers looking for a job divided by the total number of employed persons aged 18 and over.

From 1976 to 1995, information about on-the-job search activities was collected by the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The information collected in the LFS is similar enough to the information collected in LISA to make comparisons between the data from the two surveys.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5144](#).

The article "[Workers looking for a new job](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)).

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