

WORKTRENDS

AMERICANS' ATTITUDES ABOUT WORK, EMPLOYERS, AND GOVERNMENT

Workers' Sour Assessment of the U.S. Labor Market and Inflation Cuts Across Party Lines on the Eve of National Elections in 2024

Topline Survey Results

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HELDRICH CENTER
FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

Topline Survey Results: Work Trends November 2023 Survey

Fielded online (N=1,008) and by telephone (N=30) from November 17 to 19, 2023 by SSRS on its Opinion Panel Omnibus platform. Fielded in English (N=1,012) and Spanish (N=26). Margin of error at the 95% confidence level for total sample, N=1,038, is +/- 3.6%

All tables are based on labor force, unless otherwise noted.

Estimates may not sum to totals due to rounding.

* Denotes reported percentage is less than 0.5%.

Labor force sample includes *employed full time, employed part time, on temporary furlough, retired from main occupation but now working, and unemployed and looking for work* (N=737). Margin of error at the 95% confidence level for labor force sample, N=737, is +/- 4.3%

Employed sample includes *employed full time, employed part time, on temporary furlough, and retired from main occupation but now working* (N=677). Margin of error at the 95% confidence level for employed respondents, N=677, is +/- 4.5%

Weighted frequency percentages and unweighted sample sizes are presented for total labor force sample, total sample (where noted), by party identification, and by household income. Margins of error for demographic subgroups are higher. The party identification and household income measure information are presented below.

Question: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

Based on labor force

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent (includes "Something Else," N=67) |
|---------------------|------------|----------|--|
| Margin of error +/- | 7.3% | 7.6% | 7.4% |
| Sample size | 253 | 237 | 247 |

Question: What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes?

Based on labor force

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Margin of error +/- | 7.3% | 7.4% | 7.7% |
| Sample size | 259 | 248 | 229 |

Note: One respondent is missing due to refusing the income question.

Q1. Which of the following *best* describes your current employment situation? If you are a student, please pick the category that best describes you.

Based on total sample (N=1,038)

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Employed working full-time hours (at least 35 hours per week) | 48% |
| Employed working part-time hours (34 hours or less per week) | 12% |
| Unemployed and looking for work | 7% |
| Unemployed and not looking for work | 6% |
| On temporary furlough from a job | * |
| In the military | * |
| Retired from main occupation, but now working | 4% |
| Retired from main occupation, and not working | 22% |
| Don't know/Refused | * |
| Total | 100% |

Based on labor force sample (N=737)

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Employed working full-time hours (at least 35 hours per week) | 68% |
| Employed working part-time hours (34 hours or less per week) | 17% |
| Unemployed and looking for work | 10% |
| On temporary furlough from a job | * |
| Retired from main occupation, but now working | 5% |
| Total | 100% |

Q2. How confident are you that if you lost or wanted to leave your current job, you could find another job as good or better?

Based on employed sample (N=677)

Embargoed for future release.

Q3. Thinking about the next three to five years...how likely are you to be at the same place of work you are now?

Based on employed sample (N=677)

Embargoed for future release.

Q4. Thinking about the next three to five years...how likely are you to be at the same place of work you are now?

Based on employed sample who definitely or probably will not work at the same place (N=207)

Embargoed for future release.

Q5. Thinking about some economic issues...please indicate how concerned you are about each one.

ITEMS RANDOMIZED, presented in tables below

a. The current unemployment rate

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 57% |
| Very concerned | 21% |
| Somewhat concerned | 36% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 43% |
| Not too concerned | 32% |
| Not at all concerned | 11% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 61% | 49% | 62% |
| Very concerned | 19% | 22% | 21% |
| Somewhat concerned | 42% | 27% | 41% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 39% | 51% | 38% |
| Not too concerned | 31% | 37% | 28% |
| Not at all concerned | 8% | 14% | 10% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 73% | 55% | 36% |
| Very concerned | 34% | 16% | 7% |
| Somewhat concerned | 39% | 39% | 29% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 27% | 45% | 64% |
| Not too concerned | 20% | 36% | 44% |
| Not at all concerned | 7% | 9% | 20% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

b. Job security for those currently working

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 67% |
| Very concerned | 21% |
| Somewhat concerned | 46% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 33% |
| Not too concerned | 28% |
| Not at all concerned | 5% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 68% | 66% | 68% |
| Very concerned | 22% | 20% | 22% |
| Somewhat concerned | 46% | 46% | 46% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 32% | 34% | 32% |
| Not too concerned | 27% | 30% | 27% |
| Not at all concerned | 5% | 4% | 5% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 76% | 64% | 56% |
| Very concerned | 28% | 17% | 15% |
| Somewhat concerned | 48% | 47% | 41% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 24% | 36% | 44% |
| Not too concerned | 21% | 33% | 34% |
| Not at all concerned | 3% | 3% | 10% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

c. Your own job security

Based on employed (N=677)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 41% |
| Very concerned | 14% |
| Somewhat concerned | 27% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 59% |
| Not too concerned | 35% |
| Not at all concerned | 24% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 38% | 44% | 40% |
| Very concerned | 11% | 16% | 14% |
| Somewhat concerned | 27% | 28% | 26% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 62% | 56% | 59% |
| Not too concerned | 38% | 29% | 37% |
| Not at all concerned | 24% | 27% | 22% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 53% | 40% | 27% |
| Very concerned | 24% | 9% | 6% |
| Somewhat concerned | 29% | 31% | 21% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 47% | 60% | 73% |
| Not too concerned | 28% | 40% | 37% |
| Not at all concerned | 19% | 20% | 36% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

d. The job market for those looking for work

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 67% |
| Very concerned | 23% |
| Somewhat concerned | 44% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 33% |
| Not too concerned | 28% |
| Not at all concerned | 5% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 68% | 69% | 65% |
| Very concerned | 18% | 23% | 28% |
| Somewhat concerned | 50% | 46% | 37% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 32% | 31% | 35% |
| Not too concerned | 28% | 27% | 29% |
| Not at all concerned | 4% | 4% | 7% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 77% | 65% | 56% |
| Very concerned | 32% | 22% | 11% |
| Somewhat concerned | 45% | 43% | 45% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 23% | 35% | 44% |
| Not too concerned | 19% | 32% | 36% |
| Not at all concerned | 4% | 3% | 9% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

e. The ability to financially support you and your family

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 71% |
| Very concerned | 41% |
| Somewhat concerned | 30% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 29% |
| Not too concerned | 21% |
| Not at all concerned | 8% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 73% | 69% | 72% |
| Very concerned | 42% | 40% | 40% |
| Somewhat concerned | 31% | 29% | 32% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 37% | 32% | 38% |
| Not too concerned | 21% | 20% | 21% |
| Not at all concerned | 6% | 12% | 7% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 83% | 70% | 54% |
| Very concerned | 60% | 29% | 26% |
| Somewhat concerned | 23% | 41% | 28% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 17% | 29% | 46% |
| Not too concerned | 11% | 25% | 29% |
| Not at all concerned | 6% | 4% | 17% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

f. The impact of technology on jobs, such as automation of jobs

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 64% |
| Very concerned | 22% |
| Somewhat concerned | 42% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 36% |
| Not too concerned | 29% |
| Not at all concerned | 6% |
| Total | 100% |

Subgroup analyses embargoed for future release.

g. The impact of artificial intelligence on jobs (artificial intelligence, or AI, is the use of machines or technology to complete tasks by simulating human intelligence)

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 71% |
| Very concerned | 30% |
| Somewhat concerned | 41% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 29% |
| Not too concerned | 22% |
| Not at all concerned | 7% |
| Total | 100% |

Subgroup analyses embargoed for future release.

h. The cost of living

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 94% |
| Very concerned | 67% |
| Somewhat concerned | 26% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 6% |
| Not too concerned | 5% |
| Not at all concerned | 1% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 97% | 91% | 94% |
| Very concerned | 74% | 61% | 68% |
| Somewhat concerned | 23% | 30% | 26% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 3% | 9% | 6% |
| Not too concerned | 2% | 7% | 5% |
| Not at all concerned | 1% | 2% | 1% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 94% | 95% | 91% |
| Very concerned | 75% | 69% | 54% |
| Somewhat concerned | 19% | 26% | 37% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 6% | 5% | 9% |
| Not too concerned | 2% | 5% | 9% |
| Not at all concerned | 3% | 0 | 1% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

i. The possibility of an economic downturn or recession in the next 12 months

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 83% |
| Very concerned | 42% |
| Somewhat concerned | 41% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 17% |
| Not too concerned | 14% |
| Not at all concerned | 3% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 89% | 75% | 85% |
| Very concerned | 45% | 36% | 46% |
| Somewhat concerned | 44% | 39% | 39% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 11% | 25% | 15% |
| Not too concerned | 9% | 20% | 11% |
| Not at all concerned | 2% | 5% | 4% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Very/Somewhat concerned | 87% | 84% | 76% |
| Very concerned | 48% | 47% | 29% |
| Somewhat concerned | 39% | 37% | 47% |
| Not too/Not at all concerned | 14% | 16% | 24% |
| Not too concerned | 9% | 15% | 19% |
| Not at all concerned | 5% | * | 5% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Q6. Thinking about the unemployment rate in the United States...would you say the following statement is true, false, or are you not sure?

The U.S. unemployment rate is near the lowest it has been in 50 years.

Based on total sample (N=1,038)

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| True | 35% |
| False | 29% |
| Unsure | 35% |
| Total | 100% |

Based on labor force (N=737)

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| True | 36% |
| False | 28% |
| Unsure | 36% |
| Total | 100% |

| | Republican | Democrat | Independent |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| True | 28% | 45% | 33% |
| False | 35% | 21% | 30% |
| Unsure | 36% | 34% | 37% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| | Less than \$50K | \$50K to Less than \$100K | \$100K+ |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| True | 33% | 31% | 46% |
| False | 34% | 28% | 21% |
| Unsure | 34% | 41% | 33% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Sample size | 259 | 248 | 229 |

Methodological Statement

The current survey was fielded from November 17 to 19, 2023 online (via a unique password-embedded link, N=1,008) and by telephone (via CATI system, N=30), in English (N=1,012) and in Spanish (N=26), with a national probability sample of 1,038 U.S. residents age 18 or older using the SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus, designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and managed by SSRS.

The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus uses the SSRS Opinion Panel, which randomly recruits members based on nationally representative address-based sample design by Marketing Systems Group through the U.S. Postal Service's computerized delivery sequence file. The panel is multi-mode: Internet households participate via web and non-Internet households participate via phone. This survey was included as part of the Omnibus, which is fielded twice monthly. All respondents who completed the survey received a check as compensation. Design is managed by SSRS: there is subject area exclusivity for each client question insert. Quality checks were incorporated in the online survey, and were monitored by interview staff for the phone survey. The study has been weighted and calibrated first using a base weight to account for panelists' probability of selection and raking on various demographic categories such as age, gender/sex, race/ethnicity, census region, education, civic engagement, population density, frequency of Internet use, voter status, religious affiliation, and party identification based on various data sources, including the 2023 Current Population Survey, Claritas Pop-Facts Premier 2023, the Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Survey, the September 2021 Current Population Survey Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement, and voter data from Aristotle and the U.S. Census Bureau.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for the total survey sample of 1,038 respondents is +/- 3.6 percentage points at a 95% confidence interval (design effect is 1.42, the effect of post-data collection statistical adjustments to adjust tests of statistical significance when using the data). Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by employment status, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. For example, the sampling error for the labor force sample of 737 respondents in the labor force is +/- 4.3 percentage points at a 95% confidence interval. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or contextual effects. The completion rate (completions/total invited to participate) for this Omnibus survey is 43.2%. The cumulative response rate, which considers the panel recruitment survey response rate and the survey response rate is 2.5%. For more information, see: <https://srs.com/wp-content/uploads/SSRS-ESOMAR-37.pdf>.

November 2023 Total Sample Characteristics (N=1,038)

| | Unweighted Sample Size | Weighted Sample Percent |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 481 | 48% |
| Female | 539 | 50% |
| Other/Don't know/Refused | 18 | 2% |
| Total | 1,038 | 100% |
| Age | | |
| 18 to 29 | 162 | 19% |
| 30 to 49 | 384 | 35% |
| 50 to 64 | 269 | 25% |
| 65+ | 219 | 22% |
| Other/Don't know/Refused | 4 | * |
| Total | 1,038 | 100% |
| Employment Status | | |
| Employed full time | 517 | 48% |
| Employed part time | 120 | 12% |
| Unemployed/looking | 60 | 7% |
| Unemployed and not looking | 70 | 6% |
| On temporary furlough | 2 | * |
| In the military | 3 | * |
| Retired but now working | 38 | 4% |
| Retired and not working | 227 | 22% |
| Refused | 1 | * |
| Total | 1,038 | 100% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 681 | 61% |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 86 | 11% |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 79 | 8% |
| Hispanic | 164 | 17% |
| Don't know/Refused | 28 | 3% |
| Total | 1,038 | 100% |
| Household Income | | |
| \$0 to \$49,999 | 410 | 44% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 170 | 17% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | 158 | 14% |
| \$100,000+ | 298 | 25% |
| Uncategorized | 2 | * |
| Total | 1,038 | 100% |

| Political Party | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Republican | 363 | 32% |
| Democrat | 322 | 33% |
| Independent/Something else | 353 | 35% |
| Total | 1,038 | 100% |

Background

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was founded as a research and policy organization devoted to strengthening New Jersey's and the nation's workforce during a time of global economic change. The Heldrich Center researches and puts to work strategies that increase worker skills and employability, strengthen the ability of companies to compete, create jobs where they are needed, and improve the quality and performance of the workforce development system. Since 1997, the Heldrich Center has experienced rapid growth, working with federal and state government partners, Fortune 100 companies, and major foundations. The center embodies its slogan "Solutions at Work" by teaming with partners and clients to translate cutting-edge research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, unions, schools, community-based organizations, and government officials can leverage to strengthen the nation's workforce.

Since its inception, the Heldrich Center has sought to inform employers, union leaders, policymakers, community members, the media, and academic communities about critical workforce and education issues that relate to the emerging global economy. To better understand the public's attitudes about work, employers, and the government, and improve workplace practices and policy, the Heldrich Center produces the Work Trends surveys on a regular basis. (The complete set of reports is available at www.heldrich.rutgers.edu). The surveys poll the general public on critical workforce issues facing Americans and American businesses. The survey findings are promoted widely to the media and national constituencies. The series is directed by Carl E. Van Horn, Ph.D., Director of the Heldrich Center and Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at Rutgers University.

Sour Assessment of the U.S. Labor Market and Inflation Cuts Across Party Lines on the Eve of National Elections in 2024 continues to advance the goals of the *Work Trends* series to give American workers a voice in the national economic policy debates, and thereby provides policymakers and employers with reliable insights into how workers across the nation are judging and acting upon the realities of work and the workplace.

The authors of this brief were Jessica Starace, MPP and Carl Van Horn, Ph.D. Robb C. Sewell was the editor and graphic designer.