



CompTIA.

Job Seeker Trends

Research Brief

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

January 2025 release

Key Points

- 27%** Percent of the US labor market reporting pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months, a rate consistent with prior waves of CompTIA's job market tracking research.
- 45m** Twenty-seven percent translates to approximately 45 million active job seekers. Two-thirds of job seekers report exploring opportunities in their current field, while 62% are considering a career change into a new field.
- 60%** Percent of job seekers that rate the current hiring environment as average, somewhat strong, or very strong (net). This compares to a rate of 64% in the January 2024 wave of job seeker tracking data. The remaining segment rates the state of hiring as weak or very weak.
- #4** Rank of consideration (tie) among job seekers in pursuing a career in a technology field, also known as the Tech Intent. This position is consistent with the long-term average ranking for tech career consideration.
- 48%** 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 21% fall into the Skills Curious segment.
- #1** Job seekers rank of earning a technical industry-recognized certification as the top strategy when pursuing a career in technology.
- 89%** Rating of importance (net) of digital fluency skills in today's workforce.
- 40%** Percent of job seekers that believe AI will be both a positive and a threat to jobs and wages; a slight increase from the 35% rate of the June 2024 wave of data. Equal percentages (20%) rate AI a positive or a threat to jobs and wages.

See Methodology for survey and sample details



Job Seeking Continues at a Robust Rate

27%

Approximately 27% of the US labor market report pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months, a rate consistent with prior waves of CompTIA's job market tracking research.

Career change consideration by age:

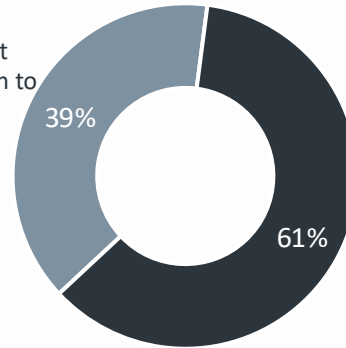
45%	Age 18-34
35%	Age 35-44
26%	Age 45-64
15%	Age 65+

45m

Twenty-seven percent translates to approximately 45 million active job seekers. Two-thirds of job seekers report exploring opportunities in their current field, while 62% are considering a career change into a new field.

Prompt that initiated job seeking

Specific factor that prompted decision to start looking



Culmination of factors that contributed to decision to start looking

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 Values or life priorities changed
- 3 Stuck in a rut and wanting something new
- 4 Burnout or stress — Slightly higher rate among women (39% vs. 31%)
- 5 Unhappy with current career trajectory

See Methodology for survey and sample details

6 in 10

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

Among the 73% of the labor market that is not actively pursuing a new job or career change, 61% indicate the reason is contentment or satisfaction with their current job. CompTIA designates this segment the **Career Content**.

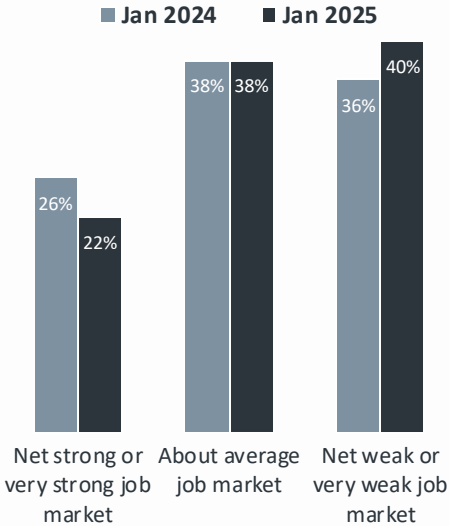
The remaining 39% falls into the passive category known as the **Career Curious**. This segment is fluid and may shift into active job seeking mode when an opportunity presents itself.

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

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

See Appendix for data segmentations

Job seeker perceptions of the state of the job market

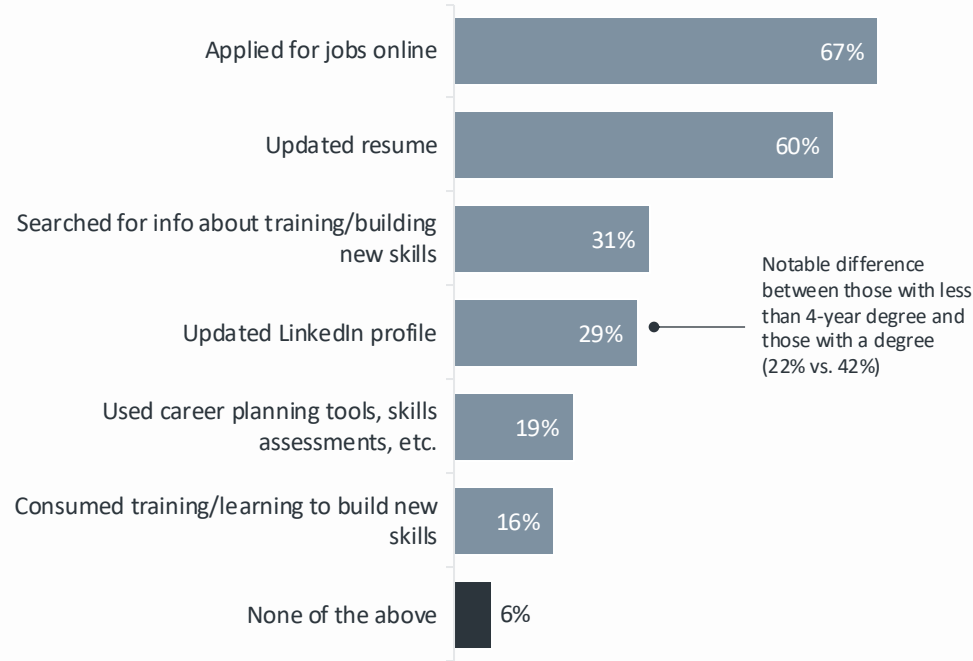


As expected, perceptions of the job market softened over the past 12 months. Job posting and hiring data corroborate the trend.

The data indicates correlation with income: those with lower incomes report more pessimism with job prospects.

Actions taken by job seekers in pursuing career opportunities

The data changed little from the prior wave of research, with most job seekers engaging in a similar pattern of activities.

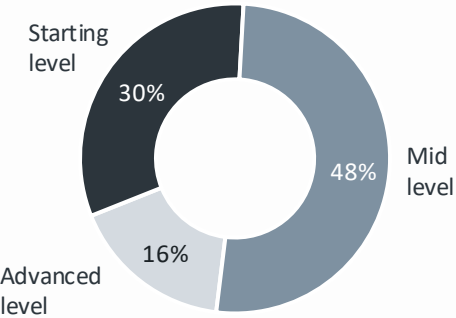


Notable difference between those with less than 4-year degree and those with a degree (22% vs. 42%)

	Gen Zers	Millennials	Gen Xers
Updated resume	54%	60%	63%
Updated LinkedIn profile	21%	31%	31%
Searched for information about training and building skills	29%	35%	29%
Used career planning, skills assessments, career coach etc.	17%	24%	17%



Desired job level of job seekers



See Appendix for data segmentations

Top reported job seeking challenges

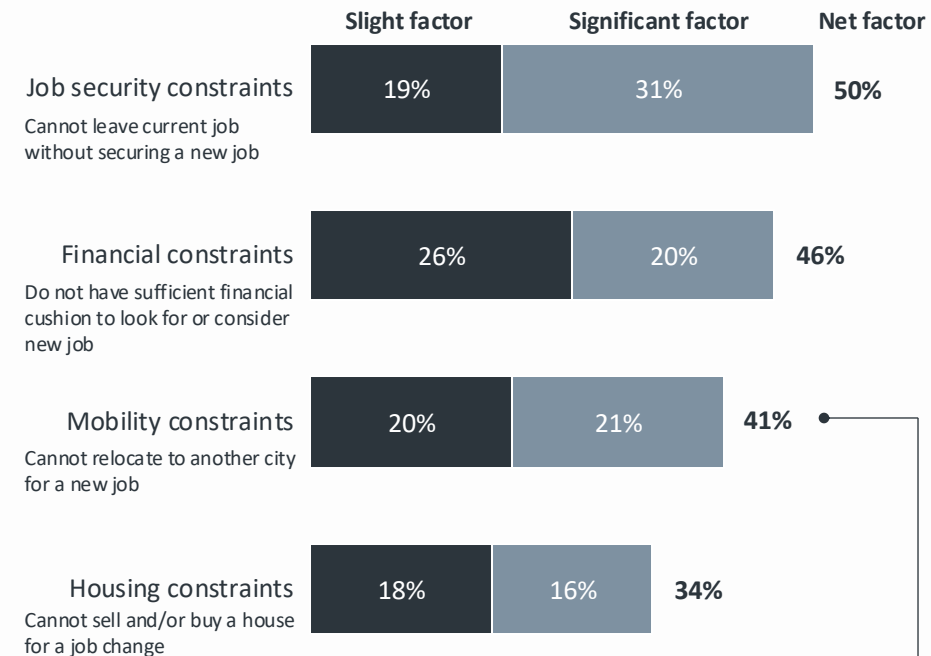
- 1 Time to apply for jobs, fill out applications, interviews
- 2 Mental fatigue and stress of lengthy job searches
- 3 Automated application systems that screen out candidates
- 4 Balancing job searches with the demands of work or family
- 6 Information overload with job boards and career sites
- 7 Figuring out where/how to start job search strategy

The January 2025 wave of data remains similar to data from a year ago (45% vs. 47%)



Life factors constrain many potential job seekers

Reported constraints among non-active job seekers



Interestingly, younger demographics report higher rates of mobility constraints; which runs counter to societal perceptions of young people with fewer roots and more flexibility to pick up and move. Since mobility, housing and finances are intertwined, there are inevitably multiple constraining factors at play.

41% Gen Zers
49% Millennials
39% Gen Xers
35% Baby Boomers

Job Seekers Consider a Diverse Mix of Career Fields

Career consideration was mostly in line with the prior wave of research and long-term mean rates. The January 2025 data indicates the largest gain in consideration occurred in the Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, or Architects category (+5 percentage points). Tech was unchanged, consistently holding the #4 or #5 position among all career categories.

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

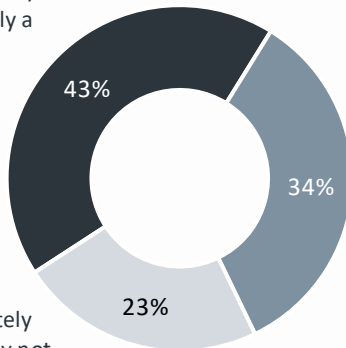
See Appendix for data segmentations

Overcoming Confidence Gap Barriers

Confidence gap¹ remains a barrier to a tech career for many job seekers

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

Net definitely
or probably a
factor



Net definitely
or probably not
a factor

Examples of
confidence gap
concerns

29%

Concern over
starting too far
behind

25%

Concern over
not having a 4-yr
degree

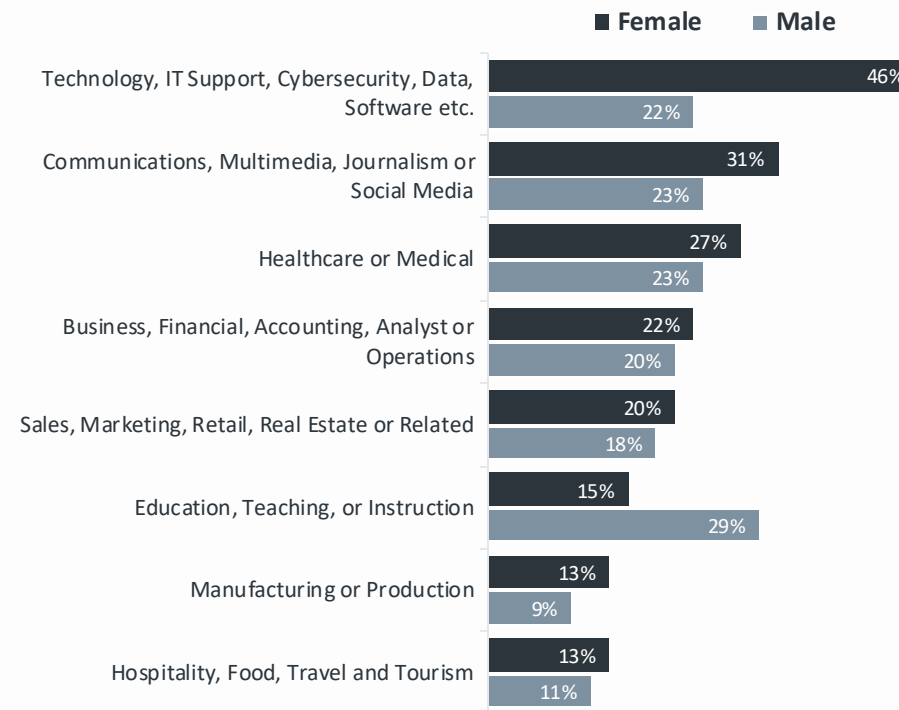
Reported challenges and perceived barriers to pursuing a tech job

Jun 2024	Jan 2025	
28%	27%	Not interested in technology
25%	26%	Believe tech jobs don't pay enough
23%	22%	Believe training takes too long
22%	21%	Believe insufficient math or science skills a barrier to working in tech
22%	21%	Believe not enough tech jobs in my region
22%	21%	Believe training too expensive

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



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.

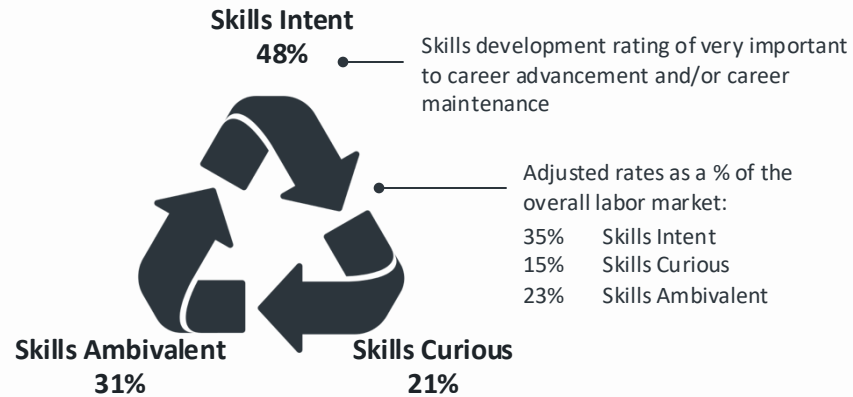


Job seeker approaches to pursuing a career in technology

- #1** Earning a technical industry-recognized certification [53%]
- #2** Training in an in-demand technical skill [48%]
- #3** Guidance from someone currently working in tech [42%]
- #4** Training in a business or leadership skill [41%]
- #5** Developing a career change plan [32%]

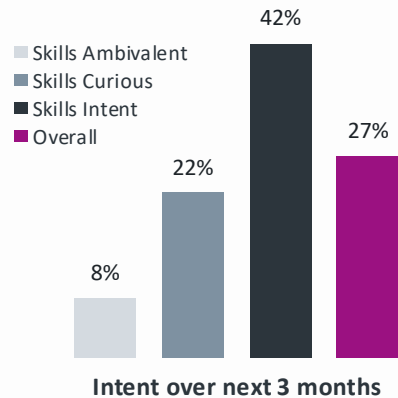


Profiling the Skills Intent



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



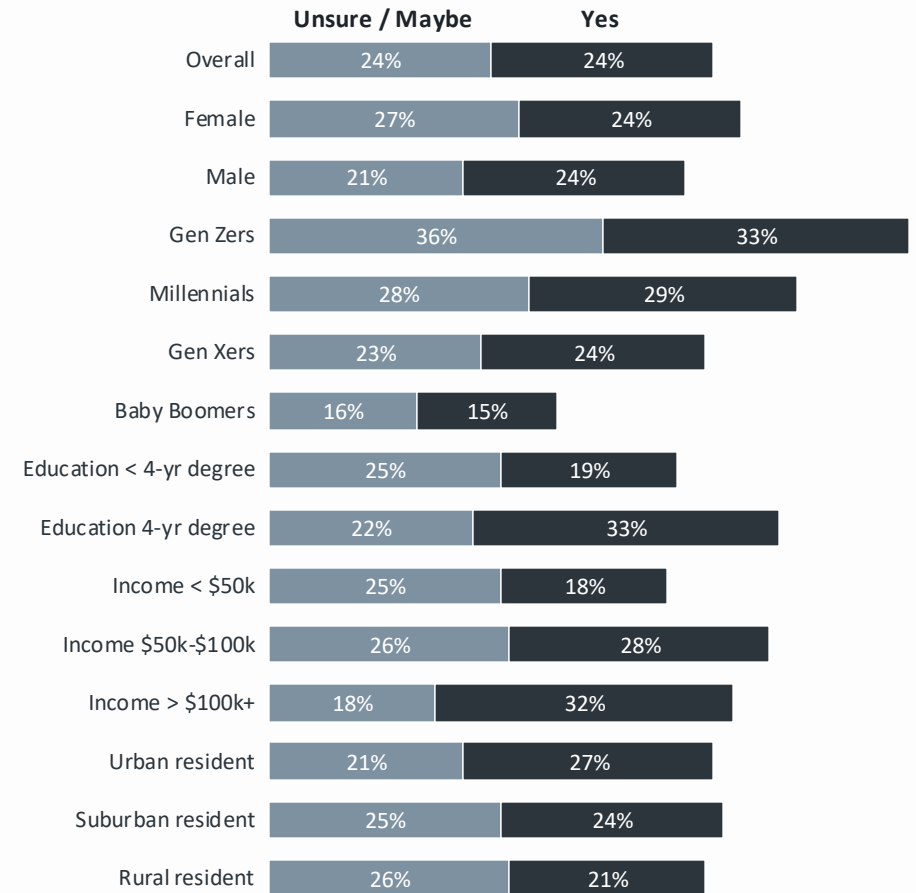
Expectation for who will drive skills development training

68% Mostly driven by self
 10% Mostly driven by employer
 19% About an even split
 3% Unsure

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.

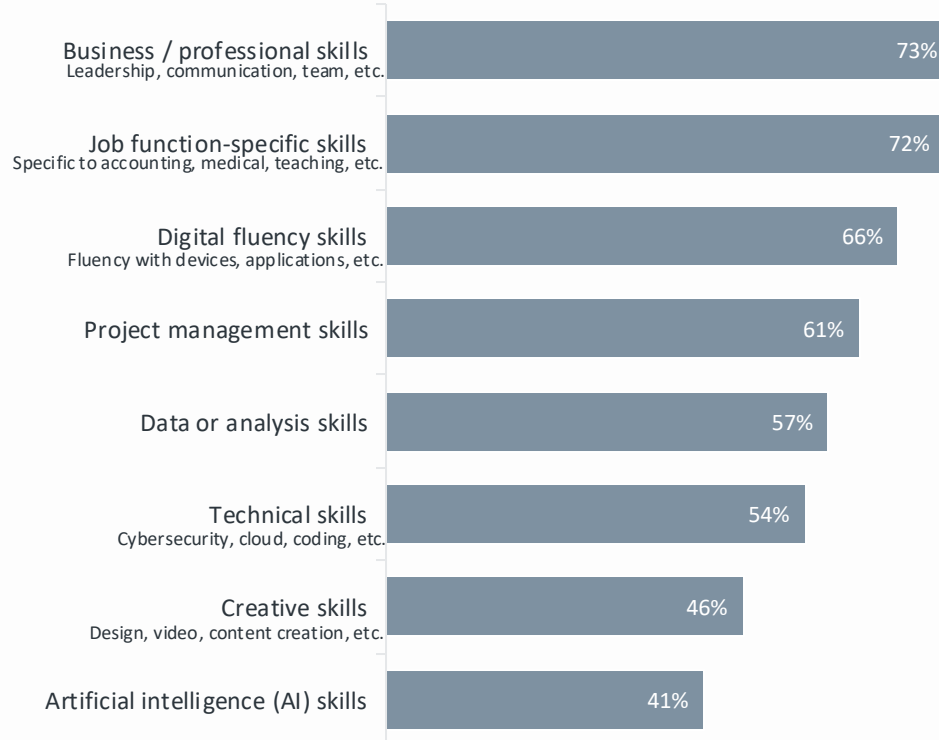
Training intent profiling segmentation

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

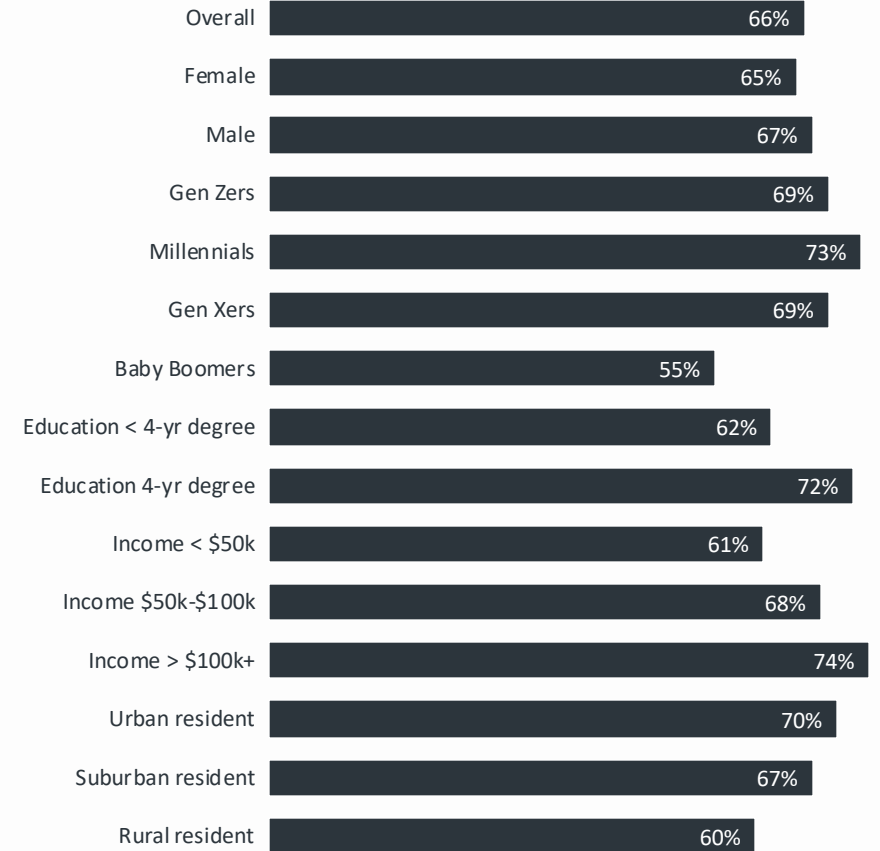
Net rating of very important + somewhat important



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





89%

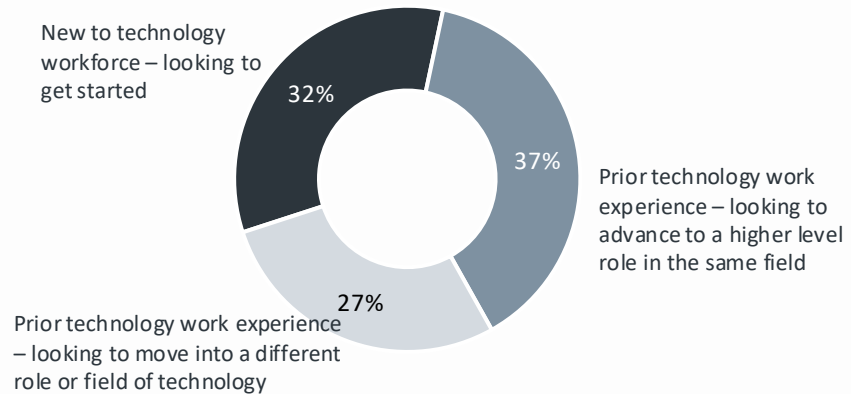
Job seeker rating of the importance (net) of digital fluency skills in today's workforce

- 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

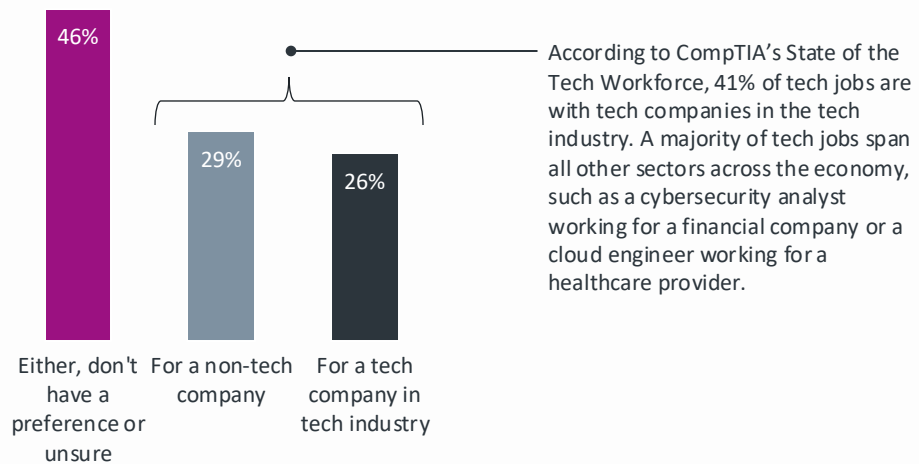
Note: these responses are among the job seeker segment – the 27% of the labor market actively seeking a new position.

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.

Profile of job seekers already working in a technology field



Job seeker preference for working within tech



Methodology

CompTIA's Job Seeker Trends study was conducted via a quantitative survey fielded online during January 9 -17, 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=2,002 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.

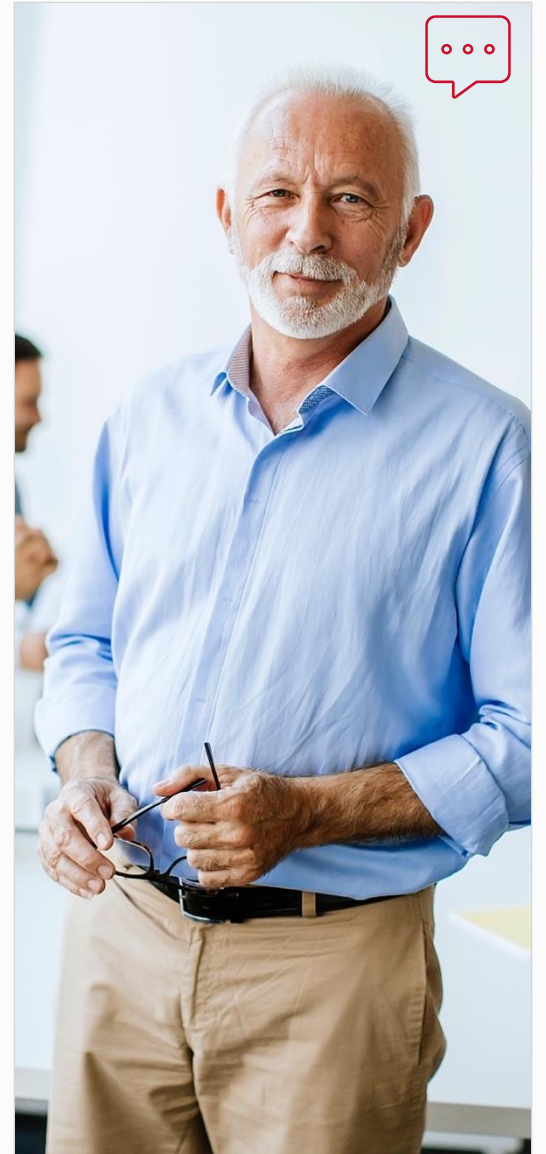
The survey was administrated by the research firm Morning Consult.

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.

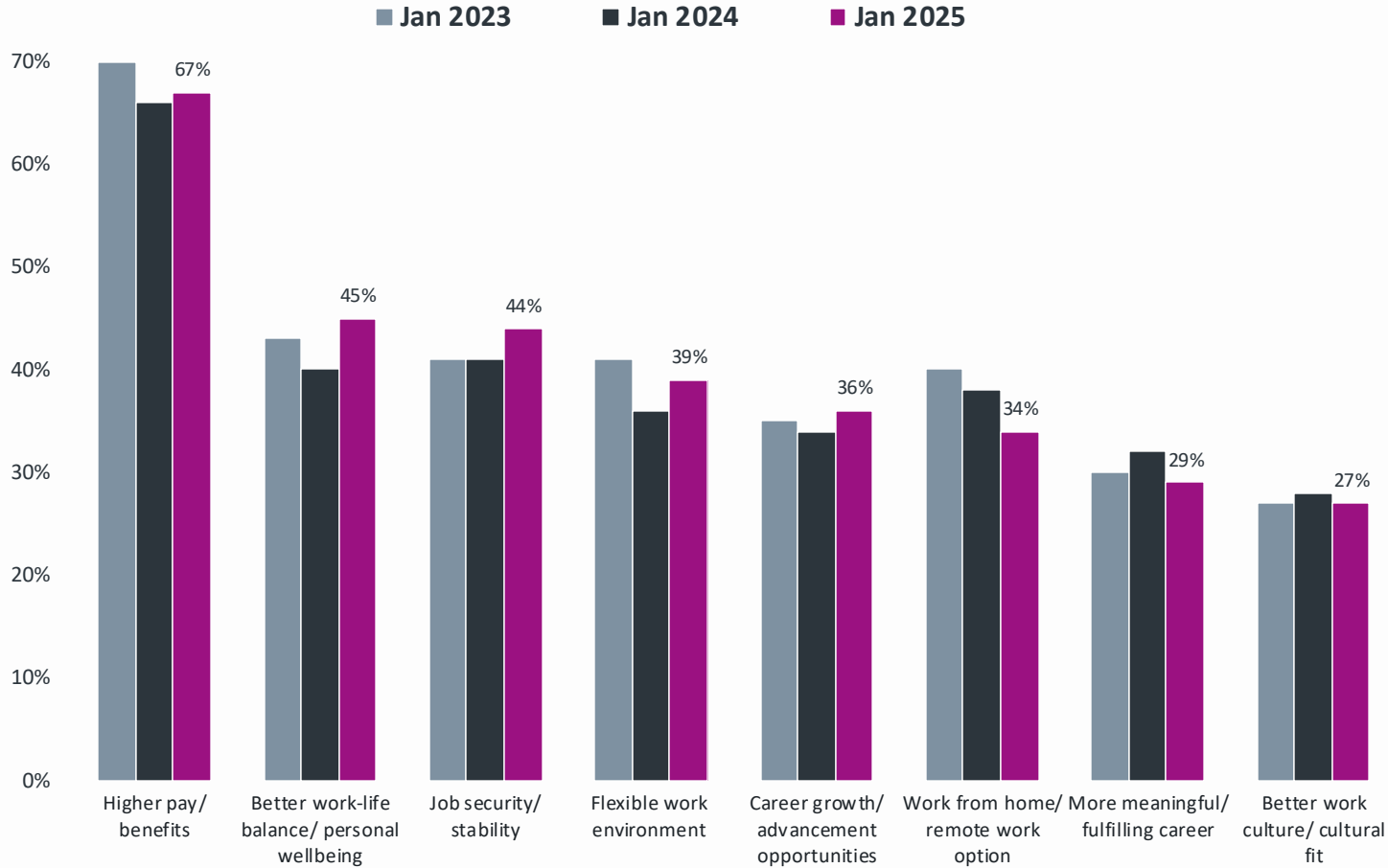
CompTIA, Inc. is a member of the market research industry's Insights Association and adheres to its internationally respected Code of Standards. Any questions regarding the study should be directed to CompTIA Research and Market Intelligence staff at research@comptia.org.



Appendix



Factors driving job seekers to pursue new employment opportunities



Deterring factors in considering a job opportunity with new employer

Female	Male	
50%	41%	Red flags with hiring manager / team you'd be working with
46%	42%	Job posting with unrealistic requirements for experience, skill or education
45%	45%	New position not sufficiently better than current job, e.g. in work, salary, etc.
30%	33%	Employer reputation / cultural fit with your values
29%	34%	Employer not committed to career growth and advancement opportunities
27%	21%	Lack of remote work or WFH option / work location

The data is generally consistent across demographic categories with segments rating deterring factors similarly.

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

