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For Immediate Release

Job Seeker Confidence Survey

MORE JOB SEEKERS UNSURE WHETHER CURRENT ADMINISTRATION CAN HELP THEM FIND NEW EMPLOYMENT

CHICAGO, January 15, 2019 – Uncertainty in the economy and the stock market, stoked by the government shutdown, legislation, and trade concerns, seems to be spilling into the job search, according to a survey released Tuesday by global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. While over half of job seekers reported they were employed, up from 37 percent in 2016, fewer job seekers believe President Trump’s policies will help them find new positions.

Fifteen percent of job seekers said the current administration will help their chances of finding a job. That’s down from 17 percent who reported they were confident Trump’s policies would help them find work in 2017 and 29 percent who believed this nearly one year after he took office in 2016.

Do you think President Trump’s policies will benefit job seekers?	2018	2017	2016
Yes	15%	17%	29%
No	28%	33%	18%
Not sure	57%	50%	53%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

The survey was conducted by phone on December 26 and 27 among nearly 500 job seekers nationwide during the firm’s annual Challenger Career Help Hotline.

While fewer respondents believe the president will benefit job seekers, more report uncertainty in whether his policies will help them find new positions. Nearly 60 percent of job seekers were unsure, compared to half of job seekers who reported this last year.

“The uncertainty that may be causing employers to restructure their workforces is being followed by the nation’s job seekers. Despite strong job numbers in the December employment report, we have seen indicators that the economy may begin to slow. Announced job cuts are up and CEO turnover is at its highest since the recession, according to our tracking” said Andrew Challenger, Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“Meanwhile, the shutdown, which had lasted one week when this survey was conducted, was noted as a looming concern by a number of callers,” he added.

Though job seeker confidence in the administration wavered, the majority of job seekers reported they were currently working and fewer reported they were underemployed. Fifty-one percent of job seekers had a job in December 2018, compared to 48 percent who were employed last year and 37 percent who had work in 2016. Fifty-nine percent reported they were underemployed, working a job for which they were overqualified, compared to 65 percent who felt this way in 2017.

“Wages are also on the rise, as companies battle to find qualified workers. It’s a good time for those who do not feel content in their current situation to find something new,” said Challenger.

The majority of callers who were unemployed had been out of work for fewer than six months, 63.6 percent, with 36 percent fewer than three months. Meanwhile, 23 percent have been out of work for over a year, the lowest percentage since Challenger began tracking this statistic in 2010.

Job seekers were also confident they would find work quickly. One-third of job seekers believed they would find work within three months. Another 45 percent believed they would find new positions within six months.

Finding job openings was reportedly the most difficult part of the job search, followed by getting interviews.

“Seventy-five percent of job openings are found through what we call the ‘hidden job market.’ They’re word-of-mouth positions that are never advertised. These unadvertised positions are why networking is so important to the job search,” said Challenger.

Meanwhile, over 3 percent of callers identified their age as the main reason they were not getting offers. Age discrimination does indeed exist in the hiring process, as do other types of discrimination. In fact, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) handled over 18,000 age-related discrimination allegations in 2017 alone.

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2018 CHALLENGER CALL-IN SURVEY RESULTS

Gender	2018	2017	2016	2015
Female	60%	58%	52%	66%
Male	40%	42%	48%	33%

Are you employed?	2018	2017	2016	2015
No	49%	52%	63%	44%
Yes	51%	48%	37%	56%

If employed, are you underemployed?	2018	2017	2016	2015
Yes	59%	65%	38%	61%
No	41%	35%	62%	39%

If unemployed, how long have you been out of work?	2018	2017	2016	2015
1 – 3 Months	36.4%	47%	29%	53%
4 – 6 Months	27.2%	10%	25%	12%
7 – 9 Months	7.5%	7%	7%	3%
10 – 12 Months	5.2%	3%	5%	3%
More than a year	22.7%	32%	34%	28%

How long do you think it will take to find a new position?	2018	2017	2016	2015
1 – 3 Months	33.1%	30%	31%	38%
4 – 6 Months	44.9%	50%	38%	42%
7 – 9 Months	12.6%	12%	15%	11%
10 – 12 Months	4.7%	4%	4%	6%
More than a year	4.7%	3%	12%	3%

Most Difficult Part of the Job Search	2018	2017	2016	2015
Finding job openings	27.2%	30%	23%	18%
Getting interviews	21.1%	24%	25%	29%
Other	19.5%	5%	19%	14%
Networking	12.5%	14%	13%	10%
Interviewing well	6.7%	14%	10%	14%
Changing jobs	6.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Preparing the resume	6.0%	8%	7%	11%
Ageism	3.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Filling out applications	2.3%	3%	2%	2%
Dealing with rejection	2.1%	4%	2%	2%
Finding full-time work	1.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.