

# Supplemental Survey Report

## Most Businesses Having Difficulty Filling Job Openings

Supplementary questions in the August 2021 *Business Leaders Survey* and *Empire State Manufacturing Survey* focused on the degree of difficulty businesses have been having filling job openings. These questions had not been asked previously, in their current form.

The first set of questions focused on how much difficulty businesses have had hiring to fill open positions since May. In both the service sector and manufacturing surveys, slightly over one in five businesses reported that they have not had any job openings to fill since May. Of those that did have openings, the vast majority—four in five service firms and nearly nine in

ten manufacturers—said they have had difficulty. Within the service sector, fairly widespread difficulties were reported across all major industry groups.

Businesses that reported difficulties in filling positions were also given a list of possible reasons for such difficulties and asked which one(s) applied. The most widely cited reason, by far, was a lack of qualified applicants. A sizable share of respondents also cited applicants declining job offers—both due to compensation and other issues—as a source of difficulty. A relatively small proportion of firms cited applicants failing drug tests or refusing to take them as a problem. COVID-related

health concerns among applicants were also mentioned as a factor by a small number of survey panelists. Businesses were given the opportunity to provide reasons beyond those listed—a number of respondents mentioned generous unemployment benefits, as well as job applicants “ghosting” them (in other words, not showing up for an interview or not showing up for work once hired).

Businesses were also queried on changes in the flow of job applicants since May. Considerably more respondents have seen a decrease than an increase in the flow of applicants per job, especially among manufacturers. ■

## Supplemental Survey Report, *continued*

### QUESTION 1

Thinking of positions your firm has filled or attempted to fill since May, have you had difficulty hiring workers?

	Business Leaders Survey	Empire State Manufacturing Survey
	Percentage of Respondents	
We have not had any job openings since May	21.1	20.5
No, we have been able to hire without difficulty	16.0	8.9
But we have had trouble retaining new hires	1.6	2.7
Yes, we have had difficulty hiring workers (check all reasons that apply below*):	62.9	70.5
A lack of qualified applicants	50.5	58.9
Applicants have failed or refused drug tests	4.1	3.6
Candidates have rejected job offers due to coronavirus-related health concerns	5.7	2.7
Applicants are not willing to accept the compensation levels we are offering	28.9	23.2
Candidates rejected job offers for other reasons	20.1	21.4
For reasons not listed above	17.0	14.3

\* Subcategories add up to more than the major category due to multiple responses.

### QUESTION 2

Have you seen any change since May in the flow of job applicants per job opening at your firm?

	Business Leaders Survey	Empire State Manufacturing Survey
	Percentage of Respondents	
No, we have not had any openings	20.4	20.5
No, the flow of job applicants has been about unchanged	29.6	42.0
Yes, we have seen a decrease in the flow of applicants per job	39.8	33.0
Yes, we have seen an increase in the flow of applicants per job	10.2	4.5