



The 10 Best Cities for Middle-Aged Workers to Find Jobs

By **LEAH KONEN**, The Fiscal Times March 15, 2012

We'd like to think of middle age as a time of comfort and stability, but for many Americans, that's simply not the case. While the U.S. economic outlook has certainly improved in recent months, American workers aren't out of the woods yet. The unemployment rate in the U.S. remained at 8.3 percent last month – a long way from the 4.4 percent before the recession.

PHOTO GALLERY: [Click Here to See the 10 Best Cities](#)

Unemployment can be particularly hard on middle-aged workers and baby boomers who find themselves job-hunting in an era where newspaper want ads have been replaced by LinkedIn messages. The national unemployment rate for this age group has more than doubled since the recession began, going from 3 percent for workers ages 45-54 in 2007, to 6.4 today. For those 55 and older, it's gone from 3.3 percent to 5.9 percent. And the duration of unemployment is much longer for them.

In February, the median amount of time unemployed workers ages 55-64 remained on the job market was 33 weeks, compared to 14 weeks for those ages 20-24. "For middle-aged workers, searching for a job in today's economy can be particularly challenging," says Joel Garfinkle author of *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*. "They likely have higher financial demands than their younger counterparts ... and in today's world, innovation and flexibility are often perceived as being far more critical to an organization's success than experience."

Van Haan, a heavy equipment operator from Rock Hill, S.C., was laid off three years ago when his company lost a major contract, and has yet to find work. He is 59. "Any time I was ever off work before, I just looked in the paper, and almost every job I went to, I found work," Haan says, recounting an interview in Atlanta years back – he arrived at noon, showed them his skills, and by the end of the day, walked out as an employee. "Now I look online and in newspapers, but sometimes you don't even know who you're sending a resume to," he says. "I did go on Facebook the other day in case there was anything there, and I deleted the year of my birth. I think people are looking at my age and thinking that I won't be there very long if I was hired."

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But despite the challenges middle-aged workers face, employers haven't completely lost sight of the value of expertise and leadership that they can bring to the workplace. The national unemployment rate for workers ages 45-64 is consistently lower than their **younger counterparts**, and due to concerns of retirement, many middle-aged workers plan to stay in the workforce longer and are taking the necessary measures to stay competitive – whether that means heading **back to school** or embracing technology.

Recent employment data shows the number of people over age 55 who are in the workforce increased by nearly 1.7 million over the past year, a larger increase than any other age group. "Older workers are less likely to lose their jobs than younger workers because they generally have more seniority," says Richard W. Johnson, director of the program on retirement policy at the Urban Institute. "Employers still tend to lay off the most recent hires first."

And in many part of the country, jobs in this age bracket – especially ones in healthcare and education – are actually booming. According to the 2010 Current Population Survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (the most recent data available), some cities have impressively low unemployment rates for middle aged workers and baby boomers, including ones that rival even the country's pre-recession unemployment numbers. We looked at unemployment data for 45-54-year-old, as well as 55-64-year-olds, in 116 of the country's largest metro areas, to find the **10 best cities for middle-aged workers to find jobs**.