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For Employers (https://www.aarp.org/work/employers/)

For Many Older Workers, Layoffs Mean Learning New Job-Search Skills

Applying for jobs during the pandemic includes video interviews and résumé upgrades

by Jon Marcus, AARP (https://www.aarp.org), July 16, 2020 | 🗭 Comment: 1



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<u>En español (/espanol/trabajo/busqueda-de-empleo/info-2020/nuevas-estrategias-para-</u> <u>trabajadores-mayores.html?intcmp=AE-WORK-TOSPA-TOGL-ES)</u> | Even though he had been looking for work on the job-search website Indeed.com and elsewhere since being laid off in April, R.D. Childers didn't know Indeed has a "hiring immediately" filter on its site until his 16year-old showed it to him.

A 52-year-old senior manufacturing engineer who lives in Austin, Texas, Childers has worked for companies that make everything from computer chips to heart valves. Now, like millions of others, he has to look for a new job <u>due the recession the coronavirus pandemic (/work/job-search/info-2020/coronavirus-job-gains.html)</u> has triggered. Nearly 1.3 million people filed new claims for unemployment insurance benefits during the week that ended July 11, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. More than 50 million people have filed such claims since the pandemic started in March.

Trying to keep up with the tools he needs to get a new job in the midst of a pandemic is "incredibly frustrating," Childers says.

"People who are my age and older are disconnected from how the game is played," Childers says. "I had to go and take a college course just to figure out <u>how to fill in a résumé (/work/job-search/info-2020/resume-employment-gaps.html)</u>."

He's not exaggerating. Some older workers who are suddenly back in the job market may face a process vastly different than the last time they folded cover letters and résumés into envelopes to drop off at the post office.

Today, before they're ever read by humans, résumés have to get past artificial intelligence tracking systems. Interviews are virtual. A good LinkedIn profile is essential. Everything is online.

Older adults "need to upgrade job search skills that might be very rusty," says Roger Forrester, coordinator of the Back to Work 50+ program at Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona, which helps them do it.

This recession is different for older workers

On top of everything else, the competition is extreme.

Unlike in previous recessions, when they were generally protected by seniority, Americans over 55 are more likely this time to be out of work than their younger counterparts. Their unemployment rate could be as high as 22 percent, according to an analysis by the Education Policy Institute, compared to the average for all workers of around 15 percent.

That's the biggest gap ever, says Richard Johnson, director of the Program on Retirement Policy at the Urban Institute.

One reason, Johnson says, is that older people may be reluctant to jump straight back into the workforce, considering the risks they may face if they have underlying health conditions. Others are looking for jobs that will let them work remotely (/work/job-search/info-2020/finding-work-from-home-jobs.html), further narrowing their options.

One thing is constant: Once they're out of the workforce, it typically takes longer for older people to get back in, Johnson says. And only 1 in 10 will ever earn as much again, his research has found.

"Even in good times, it's substantially harder for older workers to find a job than it is for younger workers," Johnson says.

The news is not all grim. Older workers have a lot of what employers want, says Ramona Schindelheim of the advocacy organization <u>WorkingNation</u> (<u>https://workingnation.com/</u>), including experience managing people, solving problems and working in teams.

Older candidates for jobs "may not even realize the value of the skills they have," says Schindelheim.

The trick is getting a hiring manager to see that.

"People who are my age and older are disconnected from how the game is played. I had to go and take a college course just to figure out how to fill in a résumé."

R.D. Childers

"It's a matter of how to help them showcase these things," says Beth Hobbs, a career adviser in the <u>Generations@Work (https://www.adworks.org/index.php/generations-at-work/)</u> program in Arapahoe County, Colorado.

That means boning up on such skills as <u>how to write a résumé (/work/job-search/info-</u>2020/resume-mistakes-to-avoid.html), use LinkedIn to job-search and network (/work/jobhunting/info-2017/top-linkedin-tips-for-job-seekers.html), and even set up the <u>best lighting for</u> an interview on Zoom (/work/job-search/info-2020/video-job-interview.html).

"We have a lot of people who frankly haven't been in this position before," Hobbs says. "They haven't looked for a job in 20 or 30 years."

Opportunities to gain new skills

A few have seized the opportunity to go back to school and learn entirely new trades. Mauricio Oliveira, 58, of Miami, who lost his job as a logistics manager for an international freight forwarder in April, has enrolled at Miami Dade College to study graphic design — a longtime avocation he hopes to turn into a new career.

"I never thought I'd go back to college," says Oliveira. "But I think in the internet era, graphic design is a good idea."

Kim Coleman, 55, who previously worked as an executive assistant, says she may also end up taking classes toward certification to become a life coach or patient advocate.

"It's like starting from scratch," she says.

Further education can take time and money, however, two things many older workers may not have.

"Mid-career and older workers have mortgages, kids in college, they're supporting older parents. They don't have the luxury of saying, 'I'm going to take the next two years and acquire this new skill,' even if it's in demand," says Maria Heidkamp, director of the <u>New Start Career</u> <u>Network (https://www.newstartcareernetwork.org/)</u>, a Rutgers University program serving people 45 and over.

What they need most "are the technical skills to apply for a job, because it is virtual now, and that may be new for people," says Forrester, in Tucson.



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Very new, to one Washington, D.C.-area nonprofit executive and attorney in her 60s — she asked that her name not be used — who says she never before had to actively look for work. "I always networked to a job," she says.

Now she's learning new ways to network: on Zoom and LinkedIn.

"In some ways it's the same skill set: how to speak comfortably and quickly in a concise way," she says. "But what I didn't realize is how valuable LinkedIn has become."

Hal Rogoff, who is also in his 60s and lives in Maryland, has worked in fields as varied as public administration, finance and engineering. But he always got those jobs "by hearing something from a friend and hopping on it."

Looking for work now, he says, "requires a different approach. And I haven't done this for a long time."

The competition for what jobs exist, meanwhile, "is really, really young," Coleman says — especially in Austin, where she also lives. "They're coming out of school and starting work with really new technological skills that a lot of us in our 50s don't have."

To catch up, Coleman took a course in job-seeking strategies, part of the <u>Digital Skills for</u> <u>Today's Jobs program at Austin Community College</u>

(<u>https://www.austincc.edu/students/career-services/strategies-for-jobs</u>). Sixty percent of the people in the class are 50 and older, the college says.

"You've got to sell yourself," she says. "You have to spell out your accomplishments. You have to make then quantitative. You have to have keywords in your résumé to match the description and show how qualified you are."

Childers took the same class. He's had a few interviews here and there since April, but his teenager, who just turned 16 and is proficient with digital technologies, landed six in just one week.

"My kiddo," Childers says, "is outpacing me at job-hunting."

More on Job Searches

 20 side jobs you can do for extra money now (/work/job-search/info-2020/side-jobsextra-money.html)

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f 20 Side Jobs You Can Do forf Extra Money Now

Part-time work and freelance gigs offer opportunities to pull in additional pay

by Kenneth Terrell, AARP (https://www.aarp.org), July 8, 2020 | Comments: 17



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En español (/espanol/trabajo/busqueda-de-empleo/info-2020/oficios-para-ganar-dineroextra.html?intcmp=AE-WORK-TOSPA-TOGL-ES)

- <u>1. Bookkeeper</u>
- 2. Customer Service Representative
- 3. Proofreader

4. Social Media Manager

8. Consultant

<u>9. Editor</u>

10. Executive Assistant

11. Graphic Designer

5. Transcriber12. Health Coach6. Tutor13. Interpreter7. Virtual Assistant14. Lead Generation Specialist15. Medical Coder14. Lead Generation Specialist16. Online ESL Teacher14. Lead Generation Specialist17. Photographer14. Lead Generation Specialist18. Project Manager14. Lead Generation Specialist19. Quantitative Market Researcher14. Lead Generation Specialist20. Writer14. Lead Generation Specialist

For some people, a side job is a second job they do for a few hours every week to help make ends meet. For others, it's a job they only do occasionally to be able to afford large purchases, perhaps a new appliance or a vacation.

But with millions of Americans struggling financially due to the <u>coronavirus pandemic</u> (<u>/health/conditions-treatments/info-2020/coronavirus-facts.html</u>), many people may increasingly turn to side jobs — sometimes referred to as side gigs or freelance jobs — as a primary way to make money. "If the past is any indicator, it is likely that a healthy amount of freelance jobs will continue to be available across industries and career levels, despite the economic downturn," says Sara Sutton, CEO and founder of FlexJobs, a job-search website that specializes in positions that offer flexible hours and work-from-home opportunities.

FlexJobs recently combed through its current job postings to identify which side jobs are offering the best opportunities now. The positions range from tutoring and teaching to administrative work and accounting. Clicking on the job titles in the list below, which is based on FlexJobs research, will take you to the page of currently available job postings for that position, either on FlexJobs or the <u>AARP Job Board (https://jobs.aarp.org/)</u>. Note that job openings on FlexJobs can be viewed for free, but a paid membership is required to apply. There is no fee to use the AARP Job Board. The average hourly wage for each position in this list was calculated by PayScale.

<u>1. Bookkeeper (https://jobs.aarp.org/index.php?</u> action=advanced_search&page=search&keywords=bookkeeper&cc

Average hourly wage: \$17/hr

This field job, helping businesses keep track of their revenues and expenses, is a popular choice for older adults who are looking for flexible hours and opportunities to work remotely. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the median age for all bookkeepers in 2019 was 50.9 years old, one the highest among all professions.

2. Customer Service Representative

(https://www.flexjobs.com/search? jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/ Term&schedule%5B%5D=Occasional&schedule%5B%5D=Long-Term&search=Customer+Service+Representative)

Average hourly wage: \$14/hr

These jobs require you to field phone call from customers who need assistance with products or services they have purchased. Most of the necessary training is provided by the employer and, in many cases, employees can work from home.

3. Proofreader (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/

Term&schedule%5B%5D=Short-Term&search=proofreader)

Average hourly wage: \$18/hr

You may have an eye for detail and strong English grammar skills, but those may not be enough to help you land one of these jobs. Why not? Proofreading positions often specifically are for helping with translating text from one language to another. In July, FlexJobs posted openings for proofreaders who speak Thai, Swedish, Polish and Japanese, among other languages. If you're fluent in a foreign language, this could be the perfect side gig for you.

Are you looking for your next job? Find it on AARP's Job Board (https://jobs.aarp.org/)

<u>4. Social Media Manager</u> (<u>https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/

Average hourly wage: \$16/hr

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are one of the primary ways that businesses speak directly with their customers and others. Social media managers play the role of go-betweens, distilling their employers' message into a pithy post that attracts enough likes and shares to go viral.

5. Transcriber (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/

Average hourly wage: \$15/hr

You'll need good listening skills for these jobs, which require you to listen to recordings of legal proceedings or other conversations — such as students' reading assignments — and then type them accurately into documents that can be read by others. Companies also sometimes hire transcriptionists part-time to help put captions on the videos they create for the internet.

6. Tutor (https://jobs.aarp.org/index.php? action=advanced_search&page=search&keywords=tutor&country=

Average hourly wage: \$18/hr

If you have experience teaching or mastery of a particular field — especially one that is science- or math-related — you can earn extra income tutoring students. Your skills might be particularly valuable this fall, as families and schools navigate the challenges of learning during a pandemic, when not all students may be able to be on campus five days a week.

7. Virtual Assistant (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/ Term&schedule%5B%5D=Short-Term&search=virtual+assistant)

Average hourly wage: \$16/hr

If you have ever been employed as an administrative assistant, these positions let you use those skills while working remotely with flexible hours. Job responsibilities will vary, but you should be comfortable using software such as Microsoft Office, PowerPoint and QuickBooks, for example. Most employers also will want candidates who have at least one or two years of experience.

8. Consultant (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loca Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/ Term&schedule%5B%5D=Long-Term&search=Consultant)

Average hourly wage: \$59/hr

Here's your opportunity to share your expertise without necessarily needing to commute to the office every day. Perhaps the most in-demand field for freelance consultants is information technology specialists. But the July job postings on FlexJobs showed companies also seeking consultants in fields such as education and nursing.

<u>9. Editor (https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/ Term&schedule%5B%5D=Short-Term&schedule%5B%5D=Occasional&search=editor)

Average hourly wage: \$20/hr

Most of the positions available in this field involve producing articles for various websites. The editor typically is responsible for assigning story ideas and polishing up the writers' articles for publication. Previous editing experience is required in most cases, but almost all of these positions can be done while working from home.

<u>10. Executive Assistant</u> <u>(https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> <u>accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loca</u> <u>Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/</u> <u>Term&schedule%5B%5D=Long-</u> <u>Term&search=Executive+Assistant</u>)

Average hourly wage: \$21/hr

As workers start to return to their offices, they will need executive assistants to help get back to business. These assistants manage schedules, answer phone calls and emails, help with basic accounting tasks, and fill other duties to help executives manage their teams.

A man is working at his desk GETTY IMAGES

<u>11. Graphic Designer</u> <u>(https://jobs.aarp.org/index.php?</u> action=advanced_search&page=search&keywords=graphic+design

Average hourly wage: \$17/hr

Can you help a business communicate its ideas and goals visually? If so, freelance positions in this field could be a good fit for you. Most employers will want you to be able to produce graphics, illustrations and other content for print products, websites and videos.

<u>12. Health Coach</u> <u>(https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> <u>accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loca</u> <u>Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/</u> <u>Term&schedule%5B%5D=Long-</u> <u>Term&search=Health+Coach</u>)

Average hourly wage: \$20/hr

Health coaches are professionals who help people make lifestyle changes so they can lose weight and better manage other chronic illnesses. Where a physical trainer might focus primarily on what you do in your workout, a health coach also offers guidance on better nutrition and behavior changes. Many of these jobs require a bachelor's degree in a health-related field along with some experience.

<u>13. Interpreter (https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=(

Average hourly wage: \$20/hr

Business is a global language, but it needs talented interpreters to make sure that everyone's message is heard correctly. If you're fluent in a second language — no matter how uncommon its use is in the United States — you could land a side job in this field. One particularly indemand field for interpreters: American Sign Language.

<u>14. Lead Generation Specialist</u> (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loc Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/ Term&schedule%5B%5D=Long-Term&search=Lead+Generation+Specialist)

Average hourly wage: \$14/hr

Helping businesses identify potential clients is the focus of jobs in lead generation. You should have strong sales skills and experience. These jobs also require workers to be comfortable cold-calling prospects as well as able to nurture business relationships.

<u>15. Medical Coder</u> <u>(https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> <u>accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loca</u> <u>Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/</u> <u>Term&schedule%5B%5D=Short-</u> <u>Term&search=Medical+Coder&tele_level%5B%5D=Remote+-</u> <u>+During+Pandemic&tele_level%5B%5D=Option+for+Telecommutin</u>

Average hourly wage: \$19/hr

Medical coders play a vital role in the business side of medicine, accurately updating medical records and other documents so patients receive the correct treatments and health care workers get paid properly. You don't need a college degree to work in this field, but you will need some training and — in some cases — a certification. It is an in-demand field, with jobs projected to grow by 18.2 percent by 2028, according to the BLS.

<u>16. Online ESL Teacher</u> <u>(https://jobs.aarp.org/index.php?</u> action=advanced_search&page=search&keywords=esl+teacher&cc

Average hourly wage: \$20/hr

Experienced educators will likely be in high demand this fall, as the coronavirus pandemic is poised to disrupt how schools operate. As education moves online, there will be increased need for instructors who can teach courses in English as a Second Language. Most of these

<u>17. Photographer</u> (<u>https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-<u>Time&search=photographer)</u>

Average hourly wage: \$17/hr

The internet and social media apps have created high demand for great pictures. If you have some experience working as a professional photographer, several companies are offering part-time contract positions that will let you make use of your talents.

<u>18. Project Manager</u> (<u>https://www.flexjobs.com/search?</u> <u>accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loca</u> <u>Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/</u> <u>Term&schedule%5B%5D=Long-</u> <u>Term&search=Project+Manager</u>)

Average hourly wage: \$26/hr

These positions require more commitment than most other jobs that can be done freelance, including sometimes signing a contract for six to 12 months of work. Many of these roles also cannot be done remotely. If you have the right skills and experience, these positions offer the fulfillment of helping a team of professionals complete a large project, such as launching a new product or upgrading information technology systems.

<u>19. Quantitative Market Researcher</u> (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? accolade=&country=&exclude=&jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&loca Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/ Term&schedule%5B%5D=Long-Term&search=Quantitative+Market+Researcher)

Average hourly wage: \$19/hr

These positions require you to go out and gather information about the prices of different products and services, usually entering that data into an app on a smartphone or tablet. Companies then use that information to determine which products to make, how much they should cost, and how they should be marketed.

20. Writer (https://www.flexjobs.com/search? jobtypes%5B%5D=Freelance&location=&schedule%5B%5D=Part-Time&schedule%5B%5D=Flexible+Schedule&schedule%5B%5D=/

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Average hourly wage: \$20/hr

If you have a passion for a particular subject and some experience in journalism or a similar field, you can find a freelance writing job that will let you earn money while exploring your interest. Almost all of these positions can be done remotely.

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