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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fewer Teens Are Working This Year

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY MAY HOLD TEEN JOBS AT BAY

CHICAGO, May 14, 2025 – The labor market remains steady, but anticipated tariff impacts this summer may introduce new headwinds. As costs rise, employers who traditionally hire teens could pull back on summer hiring.

Outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. predicts teens will gain 1 million jobs in May, June, and July 2025, down from the 1.3 million jobs the firm predicted last year and the 1.1 million teen jobs employers actually added. This would be the lowest number of summer jobs added for teens since 2010, when teens accepted 960,000 new positions in the summer months.

“Over the last few summers, there were ample opportunities for teens, but they seemed to shun them,” said Andrew Challenger, labor and workplace expert and Senior Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“This summer, we may not see the opportunities manifest. With the current socio-political climate, we may see fewer tourists; with the expected impact of tariffs, we may see higher prices and lower consumer demand. Those who traditionally hire in the summer may hold off this year,” he added.

In April, 5,488,000 workers aged 16 to 19 were employed, according to non-seasonally adjusted data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). That’s the lowest April total since 2022, when 5,319,000 teens were working. The participation rate, at 34.7%, is also at its lowest point for April since 2022, and the unemployment rate for teens, at 11.5%, is the highest for the month since 2020 when shutdowns caused a 32.2% unemployment rate for teens.

Last summer, employers added 1,077,000 jobs, a 4% increase from the 1,034,000 jobs added the summer prior. It was the second-lowest number of new teen jobs since 2010, when 960,000 jobs were added in the summer for teens.

“It’s not just the economic uncertainty that may make teen jobs unavailable. Employers are using new technologies and automation for things the teen worker would have otherwise done. Teens are also competing with older workers who are keeping a toe in the workforce. And it remains true that teens often have competing interest that keep them from working,” said Challenger.

IMPACT OF ICE DEPORTATIONS AND RESULTING LABOR SHORTAGES

The recent uptick in immigration enforcement and deportations may indirectly drive some teen employment, particularly among U.S.-born children of immigrants. A [2022 study](#) published in Spring 2024 in the Journal of Population Economics found that when deportations increase, immigrant parents reduce their working hours or leave their positions, often spurring their American-born teen children to find jobs.

“With the increased rhetoric against immigrants and recent actions of ICE, we may see a surge in teen employment in this population this summer,” said Challenger.

Meanwhile, labor shortages exacerbated by deportations are causing some state legislators to ease child labor laws. [A House bill in Florida](#) would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to work full time and would lax rules for 14- and 15-year-olds who are homeschooled or virtually educated. Some children as young as 13 would be allowed to work, if they are about to turn 14.

“These circumstances may increase teen employment in some locations who rely on immigrant labor or for children of immigrants. But the long-term costs—educational disruptions, mental health consequences, and reduced spending power among immigrant households—likely outweigh any short-term benefits,” said Challenger.

Reasons Teens Want Jobs This Summer

Financial Needs: Many teens work to support themselves or contribute to family finances.

Skill Development: Jobs can provide critical skills and experiences valuable in future careers.

Independence: Working helps teens gain independence and confidence.

Reasons Teens May Avoid Typical Employment:

Academic Pressure: Some teens prioritize their studies over jobs, especially if they are preparing for college.

Extracurricular Commitments: Sports, arts, and other activities can take significant time, competing with work.

Lack of Interest: Some teens may lack motivation to work, especially if they have other sources of financial support.

TIPS FOR TEEN JOB SEEKERS

Start Now: For teens seeking summer employment, June is traditionally the most popular month for teen hiring. However, teens who want to find work for the summer would be wise to start applying before school ends, when competition for these jobs becomes fiercer.

Create and connect to your network: Many teens may not think they have a network, but that could not be further from the truth. Teens should reach out to their friends, parents, instructors – both current and past, coaches, and friends’ parents to inquire about potential opportunities. They should also seek out the managers of places they frequent to see if they are hiring.

Create a resume, cover letter, and email template to send employers (use AI): Teens should include extra-curricular activities, volunteer experience, or any other information that would show an employer you are able to work as part of a team, are a self-starter, or can manage a project. Teens should also explore generative AI to help facilitate these written communications to help ensure professionalism.

Look in unexpected places: While summer camps, retail establishments, theme parks and movie theaters come to mind for teens, many offices need administrative staff who can organize files, take calls, or even manage social media profiles. Teens can also investigate summer paid internships in industries they find appealing or for which they are passionate. These are great avenues for teens to gain real work experience.

Practice common interview questions: Be ready to talk about your strengths, experiences, and why you are interested in the job. Ask parents, teachers, or coaches for feedback on how you present yourself and answer certain questions.

Make and leave a good impression. Dress professionally and arrive on time for interviews. Be polite and respectful to everyone you interact with during the interview process. Often, the entire team will discuss a candidacy to make sure the person is a good fit for the organization.

Learn from rejections: If you do face rejections, view them as learning opportunities. Ask for feedback on why you weren't selected and use that feedback to improve your resume, interview skills, or qualifications for future job applications. You may not get the feedback, but it's worth asking.

Stay professional online: Many employers may check your social media presence during the hiring process. Review and clean up your social media profiles to ensure they reflect a positive and professional image.

Follow Up After Applying If you haven't heard back after submitting an application, follow up politely via email or in person after about a week. It shows initiative and genuine interest in the role.

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AMONG WORKERS AGED 16 TO 19

Year	May	June	July	Summer Jobs Gained	Change from Prior Year
1998	270,000	1,058,000	675,000	2,003,000	
1999	415,000	750,000	852,000	2,017,000	0.70%
2000	111,000	1,087,000	311,000	1,509,000	-25.20%
2001	58,000	1,124,000	560,000	1,742,000	15.40%
2002	161,000	985,000	510,000	1,656,000	-4.90%
2003	152,000	859,000	458,000	1,469,000	-11.30%
2004	168,000	827,000	597,000	1,592,000	8.40%
2005	183,000	1,007,000	546,000	1,736,000	9.00%
2006	230,000	1,033,000	471,000	1,734,000	-0.10%
2007	62,000	1,114,000	459,000	1,635,000	-5.70%
2008	116,000	683,000	355,000	1,154,000	-29.40%
2009	111,000	698,000	354,000	1,163,000	0.80%
2010	6,000	497,000	457,000	960,000	-17.50%
2011	71,000	714,000	302,000	1,087,000	13.20%
2012	157,000	858,000	382,000	1,397,000	28.50%
2013	215,000	779,000	361,000	1,355,000	-3.00%
2014	217,000	661,000	419,000	1,297,000	-4.30%
2015	182,000	609,000	369,000	1,160,000	-10.60%
2016	156,000	691,000	492,000	1,339,000	15.40%
2017	75,000	1,023,000	190,000	1,288,000	-3.80%
2018	130,000	951,000	307,000	1,388,000	7.80%
2019	216,000	1,053,000	468,000	1,737,000	25.10%
2020	594,000	1,129,000	469,000	2,192,000	26.19%
2021	219,000	625,000	451,000	1,295,000	-40.92%
2022	153,000	885,000	201,000	1,239,000	-4.32%
2023	50,000	762,000	222,000	1,034,000	-16.55%
2024	190,000	792,000	95,000	1,077,000	4.16%
AVERAGE Since 1998	172,889	861,259	419,741	1,453,889	
AVERAGE Since 2013	199,750	830,000	337,000	1,366,750	

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. with non-seasonally adjusted data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)