

More Job Openings, But Job Hunters Don't Have Skills Needed

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The U.S. Department of Labor recently reported a gain in job openings to 3.4 million at the end of December and a decrease in the unemployment rate to 8.3%. However, experts say the recovery is not as robust or broadly based as previous recoveries, citing figures that 1.1 million workers have stopped looking for employment and the number of people unemployed for more than six months has dropped only to 43% from 44% a year ago. Troy Davig, senior U.S. economist at Barclays Capital, says job opportunities are expanding for workers with particular skills.

There are fewer job openings in construction, manufacturing, and government as these sectors are hiring more slowly than others. In the professional and business services sector, Davig says there is a mismatch between workers seeking employment and the jobs available, as employers are seeking 3.6 workers for every 100 they have now but the number of workers hired fell to 787,000 in December from 845,000 in November. Over 33% of entrepreneurs polled by the National Federation of Independent Business in January said they have not found candidates with the right skills.