

Russians Upbeat on Labor Outlook

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Young people attending a job fair. A recent poll found fewer job losses. **Sergei Porter**

A labor market survey recently conducted by the state-run VTsIOM pollster showed that workers' optimism has reached a high not seen since before the global financial crisis.

The number of Russians with friends and relatives who lost their jobs in the last two to three months has reached a record low of 26 percent, the survey showed. Meanwhile, the number of working respondents who had faced or feared they would face a wage cut declined from 56 percent in July 2009 to 33 percent in July 2012.

The problem of late payment of wages does not worry 64 percent of working Russians, compared to the July 2009 total of 48 percent.

In addition, the percent of respondents who said they did not fear the closure of their business was pegged at 56 percent during the crisis, compared to a more confident 77 percent in the latest poll.

Data from Rosstat, the State Statistics Service, corroborated the results of VTsIOM's poll. The amount of late wages as of Aug. 1, 2012 amounted to 2.16 billion rubles (\$67 million), or less than 1 percent of the monthly salary total for economic activities monitored by the service. This stands in contrast to the July 2009 figures, when wage arrears were three times higher at 6.48 billion rubles, or nearly 2 percent of total salaries.

According to data from the State Statistics Service, 7.1 million people were unemployed at the height of the crisis in February 2009. In June 2012, only 4.1 million were unemployed.

The poll included 1,600 respondents in 138 cities or towns in 46 regions.

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