

**GORDON REPORT, March 2022**  
**by Edward E. Gordon, President Imperial Consulting Corporation**

**“The New Plague: Vacant Jobs”**

“Hiring Now” signs are sprouting across the United States. Businesses can’t fill the tidal wave of empty positions. Many are not new jobs but replacements for the unprecedented number of 79 million baby boomers retiring by 2030. The largest number reach age 65 in 2022. This will be a terrible year for recruiters.

As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, job openings have soared. Since October 2021, the number of vacant jobs reported in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic’s monthly JOLTS report has remained at about 11 million. The latest report shows that jobs openings are high in many key industry sectors including:

Construction	380,000
Manufacturing	855,000
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	479,000
Professional & Business Services	2,065,000
Education & Health Services	2,129,000
Retail Trade	1,046,000
Accommodation & Food Services	1,497,000
State & Local Government	567,000

However, many businesses for proprietary reasons or because of repeated failure to find qualified candidates, do not report their job openings. As a result, we estimate the current number of vacant jobs at between 12 to 13 million vacant positions.

People are reentering the workforce, but many lack essential educational qualifications or specific job skills. Too many Americans graduate from high school or even college without “learning how to learn” or failing to attain the math or literacy levels needed for employment in today’s in-demand career areas. Meanwhile technological advances across all industry sectors demand continuous education and training updates.

After assessing the current job situation, a *Wall Street Journal* analyst predicts, “If employment keeps growing like it has, by this summer the jobs market will either be extraordinarily tight, or excruciatingly so.” (March 5-6, 2022)

There is some evidence that American businesses have finally begun to increase their investments in worker training and education. But to produce more educated and skilled workers, systemic change is needed. If regional efforts do not grow appreciatively over the remaining decade, job vacancies will rise substantially. Our current analysis predicts that by 2030 over 95 million empty positions globally with up to 30 million U.S. vacant jobs. The resulting economic and social upheaval will have dire consequences overseas and across America.

The next Gordon Report will focus on why systemic workforce preparation and training efforts have thus far failed to reach the scale needed to meet America’s labor market demands.

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