



The Career Counselor Most People Never Had

Why the worst entry-level job market in 37 years
demands a new kind of career guidance

Introducing **Careervo** | AI-Powered Career Coaching for Everyone
careervo.io

A product of The Herron Group, LLC | Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
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Note: The Herron Group integrates AI-assisted tools into our research, analysis, and document development processes to enhance quality and efficiency. All strategic direction, client engagement, and final deliverables are led and reviewed by THG team members. We take your privacy seriously. Client information is treated as confidential, is not used to train AI models, is not shared with third parties, and is used solely in service of your project.

Something Has Broken

In the summer of 2025, NBC News asked recent graduates of technical schools, colleges, and graduate programs a simple question: How is your job search going?

More than 100 people responded. They described months of searching. Hundreds of applications. Zero responses from employers. Even graduates with degrees in computer science and engineering, fields that were supposed to be safe, reported being ghosted, ignored, or offered salaries far below what they had prepared for.

One graduate from Temple University with a degree in international trade summed it up: out of 70 applications, three interviews, and two of those ended with silence.

This is not a collection of bad luck stories. The federal data confirms a structural shift.

5.7% Unemployment rate for recent college graduates (Q4 2025)	42.5% Underemployment rate: grads working jobs that don't require a degree	37-Year Worst entry-level job market since tracking began
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The Federal Reserve Bank of New York reports that the underemployment rate for recent college graduates, meaning those working in jobs that do not require their degree, has reached 42.5%. That is its highest level since the pandemic. Nearly half of all new graduates are working in roles their education was not designed to prepare them for.

And this is not a temporary dip. The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland found that the job-finding advantage college graduates have held over high school graduates has been eroding since 2000 and has now effectively disappeared. For the first time since tracking began in the 1990s, workers with occupational associate degrees in skilled trades posted better employment outcomes than four-year college graduates for six months in 2025.

Three Forces Closing the Door

1. AI Is Eliminating the Entry Point

BlackRock CEO Larry Fink warned in March 2026 that this year's graduates could face the highest jobless rate in years, driven in part by AI making entry-level roles obsolete.

Research from the Stanford Digital Economy Lab puts a number on it: within firms, early-career workers ages 22 to 25 in AI-exposed occupations have experienced a 13% relative decline in employment since the widespread adoption of generative AI.

The industries that used to be the on-ramp for college graduates are now shedding jobs. Finance and information services have lost an average of 9,000 jobs per month since 2023. Before the pandemic, those same industries were adding 44,000 jobs per month.

2. Employers Have Stopped Hiring New Graduates

More than half of employers surveyed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers rate their hiring outlook for the Class of 2026 as "poor" or "fair," the most pessimistic outlook since 2020. Full-time job postings for entry-level roles have dropped 16% year over year, while applications per opening have surged 26%.

This is the "low-hire, low-fire" economy. Companies are not doing mass layoffs, but they are not bringing anyone new in, either. Mid-career workers stay in place. Senior workers delay retirement. And the entry-level door stays shut.

Recent graduates comprised just 7% of new hires in 2024, down 25% from the year before.

3. The Safety Net Has Holes

The people who are supposed to help graduates navigate this, career counselors and advisors, are stretched beyond capacity or being cut entirely.

University career centers have lost staff to budget cuts even as demand is surging. School counselors at the K-12 level carry caseloads so large that meaningful career guidance is impossible for most students. Workforce development boards, traditionally focused on displaced workers and populations with fewer credentials, are now seeing college graduates walk through their doors.

The result: millions of people making life-shaping career decisions with no professional guidance.

The Gap Nobody Is Filling

Here is what these graduates needed but did not have:

- Someone to help them understand what their skills are actually worth and where those skills are in demand, not just polish a resume.

- Someone to show them career paths they had not considered, paths where their capabilities match real openings, not the jobs they assumed they would get.
- Someone to identify the gap between where they are and where they want to be, and build a concrete plan to close it.
- Someone to give them an honest assessment of their readiness, not just whether their resume will pass a software filter, but whether they are genuinely prepared for the role they are pursuing.

In short, they needed a career counselor. The kind of advisor who sits with you, learns your story, and helps you see what you cannot see about yourself.

Most people never get that. Not in middle school, when career awareness should begin. Not in high school, when course selections shape options. Not in college, where career centers are overwhelmed. And not after graduation, when the stakes are highest.

"Careervo exists because too many people are in that same position. High school students choosing a direction without understanding what their options actually lead to. College students with valuable coursework who have no idea what careers their education qualifies them for. Mid-career professionals who feel stuck or displaced by industry changes."

Dr. Marsha Herron, Founder, The Herron Group

Careervo™: Built for This Moment

Careervo is an AI-powered career coaching platform created by The Herron Group. It was designed from the ground up for the people the current system leaves behind.

It is not a resume builder. It is the career counselor most people never had. Available 24/7, in 16 languages, through three input modes, with guidance that meets people wherever they are in their journey, from middle school through mid-career transition.

Three Ways to Connect

Not everyone communicates the same way. Careervo meets users through the input mode that works best for them:

- **Voice.** Speak naturally and get real-time career guidance. Designed for users who are more comfortable speaking than typing, including ESL speakers and people with literacy challenges.
- **Text.** Type your questions, upload your existing resume, and have a conversation at your own pace.

- **Handwriting.** Upload handwritten notes, certificates, or intake forms. Careervo reads what you wrote and works with it. No other career platform offers this.

More Than a Resume

Resume builders are everywhere. They solve a narrow problem. Careervo solves the bigger one.

What Most Tools Do	What Careervo Does
Generate a resume from a template	Guide career exploration from middle school through mid-career transition
Check for ATS keyword matches	Provide both an ATS score and a job readiness score that measures real preparedness
Offer generic interview tips	Build a personalized training plan with specific courses, certifications, and timelines
Require typing and digital fluency	Accept voice, text, or handwritten input in 16 languages
Serve digitally comfortable users	Designed from the ground up for low-literacy and underserved populations
Stop after document delivery	Identify barriers, evaluate skill gaps, and create a path forward

The Dual Score: Measuring What Matters

Every Careervo session produces two scores that tell the user, and the organization serving them, where things actually stand:

ATS Readiness Score: How well will this resume perform against the automated screening systems that filter out 75% of applications before a human ever sees them?

Job Readiness Score: Beyond the resume, how prepared is this person for their target role? What barriers exist? What skills need to be built? This score accounts for the full picture, not just the document.

Together, these two scores create a measurable baseline. When a user returns after completing part of their training plan, the scores update. Progress becomes visible. For workforce development agencies, career centers, and Pell-funded training programs that need to demonstrate outcomes, this is the evidence framework they have been missing.

Who Careervo Serves

Students Finding Their Way

Middle school students exploring what different careers look like. High school students connecting their course selections to future options. College students discovering what their degree actually qualifies them for. Careervo fills the career advisement gap across the entire education pipeline.

Workers in Transition

Mid-career professionals displaced by layoffs or industry shifts. Workers whose roles have been automated. People reentering the workforce after time away. Careervo helps them identify transferable skills they may not see in themselves and builds a bridge to what comes next.

The Hardest to Serve

People with limited literacy. People who speak English as a second language. People who are more comfortable talking than typing. People navigating the workforce development system for the first time. Careervo was designed for them first, not as an afterthought, but as the starting point.

The Organizations Serving All of Them

Workforce development boards stretched thin by rising caseloads. University career centers operating with fewer staff. K-12 school districts where counselors carry hundreds of students. Community colleges preparing to launch Workforce Pell programs in July 2026. Careervo extends their capacity without adding headcount.

Why Now

Three forces are converging that make this moment urgent:

The entry-level job market is at a 37-year low. Graduates and early-career workers are flooding the market with no professional guidance and no clear path forward. Every month of delay deepens the damage to their long-term earnings and career trajectory.

Workforce Pell launches July 1, 2026. For the first time, Pell Grant funding will be available for short-term training programs. The institutions offering those programs will need tools to help users discover the right pathway, document their starting point, and demonstrate measurable progress. Careervo does all three.

AI is creating the problem and can be part of the solution. The same technology eliminating entry-level roles can also deliver the personalized career guidance that human systems cannot provide at scale. Careervo uses AI to give every person access to the advisor they deserve.

Get Started

Careervo is available now at careervo.io for individual users. For institutional partnerships, workforce development agencies, school districts, and career centers, contact The Herron Group to discuss deployment options.

<p>For Individuals careervo.io Sign up and start your first session today.</p>	<p>For Organizations theherrongroupllc.net Contact us for institutional pricing and deployment options.</p>
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Sources

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