ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOBS

MOTION

Job applicants across California increasingly report applying to positions that are never filled, paused, or never existed. These "ghost job" postings distort labor market signals, waste applicant time, and undermine confidence in the hiring process. Recent academic and governmental research confirms that ghost job postings are a measurable and growing phenomenon with implications for workforce development, economic planning, and consumer protection.

A 2025 peer-reviewed study found that approximately 20 percent of online job postings show indications of being ghost jobs, creating significant labor-market distortions and imposing measurable time, financial and emotional cost on job seekers. The study further found that ghost postings disproportionately harm older workers, workers with employment gaps, and individuals with lower digital literacy, exacerbating inequities in the labor market. Another survey found that the construction, legal, and artistic industries had the highest proportion of ghost jobs.

A recent Congressional Research Service (CRS) report similarly documented that ghost job postings have existed for decades but have become more prevalent with the rise of online job boards. CRS identified multiple causes , including resume collection, investor-signaling, and automated reposting. CRS also warned that ghost postings may contaminate official labor-market statistics, including Bureau of Labor Statistics' Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), which cities often rely on for workforce-development planning.

Several jurisdictions across the country have taken steps to better understand and curb ghost job postings and other algorithmic and artificial intelligence-based hiring processes, including California, New York City, Colorado, Texas, and Illinois. Los Angeles has a strong interest in understanding how ghost job postings affect local job seekers, workforce development outcomes, and the accuracy of labor market data used by City departments

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council INSTRUCT the Community Investment Department to report back within 90 days on the prevalence of ghost job postings in Los Angeles, including: estimates based on available datasets; analysis of sectors most affected, and impacts on job seekers in Los Angeles. This should include a review of policy responses in other jurisdictions, including Ontario, New York, Pennsylvania, California, New Jersey, and Kentucky, and an assessment of which approaches may be feasible or advisable for the City of Los Angeles which could include creating a local (voluntary) "job posting transparency standard" for employers with 25 employees or more.

PRESENTED BY: _____
HEATHER HUTT
Councilmember, 10th District

SECONDED BY: _____

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