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Help Wanted: Lenders Staff Up at Twin Towers Job Expo

NEW YORK, Nov. 15 (LendingIntelligence.com) — Arms outstretched, a mass of people pressed forward to hand their resumes to two towering men staffing the [Household Finance Corp.](#) booth at today's Twin Towers Job Expo at Madison Square Garden here.

"We are not here to talk to the press," said one of the Household representatives when approached by a reporter. "We are here to hand out jobs."

Then, the man put his hands on his hips, stepped toward the reporter in a menacing way, and said, "Move along."

The scene at Household's booth was typical not only at the lending companies recruiting at the expo, but for nearly every company with a recruitment booth. At the [FleetBoston Financial Corp.](#) booth, for example, an inches-high stack of resumes had already developed less than an hour after the expo opened.

Today's job fair was the third since terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, although, like the previous events, the expo was not necessarily for people displaced from their jobs by the attacks. (The line to get into the expo snaked for more than five city blocks.) Many lending companies, trying to staff up for the current home-loan refinance boom, took booths at the fair.

"The drop in interest rates has meant more business as consumers are taking out new mortgages and refinancing existing ones," said Gaelle Labissiere, director of human resources at [Carver Federal Savings Bank](#), Harlem, NY, thrift with six New York branches. "More business means we need more manpower, and not just in one area, but across the board."

Yesterday, the [Mortgage Bankers Association of America](#) said

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its seasonally adjusted refinancing index jumped 6% to 5,534.5 for the week ending Nov. 9, — surpassing the index's all-time record level for the second consecutive week.

Among the lenders recruiting at the expo: American Express, Atlantic Bank of New York, [First Union Corp.](#), and World Financial Group.

"I've been in this position for two years, and have noticed a steady rise in job opportunities, especially this year," said Jack Morrison, First Union's Northeast regional recruitment manager. "There's been an ongoing need building ... which I'm not just seeing in New York, but also in our Westchester and North Jersey operations. And while we don't handle the collections part of the business up here — it's done in our operations down south — I've heard they're facing rising needs as well."

Yet, one loan-maker was not seeking mortgage staffers at today's job fair.

"It may not be one of the departments we're looking to fill today," said a staffing manager at Atlantic Bank, of the home lending department. "But, I think that has more to do with the fact that we are seeing a lower rate of turnover than we did just last year."

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