

## Tough economy, poor job market force many to make long commutes

BY LORE CROGHAN - DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER - Saturday, May 16th 2009, 7:00 PM



Finkelstein for News

Liz Zeuschner on the roof of her apartment in New York - she now commutes from NYC to Washington.

On Sunday nights, [Liz Zeuschner](#) leaves her West Village apartment to head for work – in [Washington, D.C.](#) She's there Monday through Friday as an analyst, doing a financial recovery project for a consulting firm.

After losing her job as a marketing vice president at real estate finance firm [MuniMae](#) in midtown [Manhattan](#) last December, she looked outside the city to find a new gig.

"The job market in [New York](#) is, sadly, very bad," said Zeuschner, 33.

Growing numbers of jobless New Yorkers are getting work in other cities and leaving homes and families behind to work. Among online networks of former banking employees, it seems everybody knows somebody who has taken an out-of-town job while leaving the spouse and kids in New York. Despite occasional tales of family tension and marital strife, several job-placement execs said their clients are remarkably stoic about the stresses of living in another city to make a living.

Even before the recession, this set-up was more common than you might think. More than 3.5 million Americans lived apart from their spouses for reasons other than marital discord in 2005, according to the most recent U.S. Census data. Now, the economic meltdown has led a new crop of jobless New Yorkers to seek work far from home. The trend seems to be growing among white-collar financial workers rather than construction workers or other trades. Until a year ago, just 4% to 5% of the New Yorkers were willing to take jobs in other cities. The number has doubled to 9% to 10%.

**"A lot of people have eaten a lot of humble pie, and are going into jobs that would have been of no interest to them,"** said [Gustavo Dolfino](#), of executive search firm [WhiteRock Group](#).

He's placing mid-level personnel such as vice presidents and directors in financial services jobs in [Boston](#), [Miami](#), [Chicago](#), [Seattle](#) and [Los Angeles](#). Others go abroad to [Singapore](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Shanghai](#) or [Abu Dhabi](#), taking posts that used to offer better pay and perks and were filled by senior executives.

The ones with overseas jobs don't come home much; it's a 19-hour plane ride from Hong Kong, he said. The families of jobless software sales and tech consulting execs are quick to support their decision to leave them behind for jobs as far away as [Silicon Valley](#), [California](#).

Others, including Zeuschner, keep a foothold in the city because they vow to work here again when the job market improves. The [Long Island](#) native always dreamed of working in New York - and still holds onto that dream.

"Otherwise," said Zeuschner, who bunks in an old roommate's spare bedroom in [Washington](#), "I wouldn't be paying two rents."