



JOB MARKETS

Which City Has the Best Job Market?

By **CHRISTOPHER MATTHEWS** | [@crobrmatthews](#) | March 30, 2012 | 4



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The U.S. economy has finally started to see some steady, robust job growth — adding more than 220,000 jobs each of the past three months. This is surely good news for the country, but we all know that America is anything but a monolithic place. The unemployment rate for individual states varies widely. The most **recent estimate** by the Labor Department has Nevada with an unemployment rate of nearly 13%, while only 3.2% of North Dakotans are out of work. So it's safe to assume that these recent job gains, and the jobs we add going forward, will not be distributed evenly.

The polling service Gallup's **Job Creation Index** helps to answer the question, "Where exactly are these jobs?" Gallup compiles its index by asking workers around the nation whether their employers are hiring or letting go. The metric is a capable predictor of jobless claims nationally, and digging into the numbers gives us a good idea of which cities in America have the best job markets.

(MORE: Millennials vs. Baby Boomers: Who Would You Rather Hire?)

So what's the best city to be looking for a job? The Oklahoma City metro area comes in with the highest Job Creation Index Score, followed by Pittsburgh, PA, and Richmond, VA. The worst job markets in America belong to Providence, RI; Riverside, CA; and New York, NY. You can see the full results [here](#).

The good news is that even the metro areas that performed the worst have a positive job score, meaning there are more employers out there hiring than firing. The nature of the poll, however, means that we can't understand the magnitude of hiring and firing, so it has a limited predictive ability with regards to total jobs gains.

For that, we'll have to continue to rely on the Labor Department's monthly employment situation report, which is set to come out next Friday, April 6. While weekly jobless claims — a good predictor of the trend in employment — have hit **four-year lows**, there's still reason to believe that the reports going forward will be more muted than in the previous three months. Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, **said in a speech** Monday that recent employment gains are probably unsustainable given the level of GDP growth we've seen recently. Some economy watchers have also suggested that a mild winter could have had an unusually stimulative effect on employment by pushing up economic activity and hiring that would have otherwise happened in the spring. Others suggest that the warm winter could be **skewing the seasonal adjustments** the Labor Department makes to their unemployment figures so that month-to-month comparisons are coherent.

(MORE: Summer Jobs: Students in Demand Again, But They'd Better Start Now)

We'll have to wait until next week to see what the Labor Department's figures are, but this most recent Gallup poll, on top of the other, recent good news, may offer some hope to the millions of Americans who remain unemployed — especially if they're living in Oklahoma City.

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