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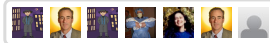
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Texas Dominates The Best Cities For Good Jobs

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Best Cities For Good Jobs



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Dallas

The Big D shrugged off the bankruptcy of American Airlines to add thousands of jobs last year and is expected to keep up the pace with growth in financial services, energy and healthcare.

Earlier this month, [Texas](#) Gov. Rick Perry made a quick tour of [California](#) to remind business owners that life's a whole lot easier in the Lone Star State. Perry's California critics called him "Governor Oops" for his miscues during the presidential debates, and Gov. Jerry Brown dismissed the Texan's

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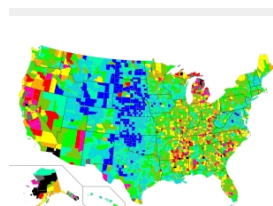
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Daniel Fisher
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recruiting drive as “not a burp,” and barely even a certain bodily release of gas.

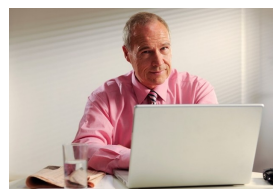
Laugh away, Californians. But Perry is playing the stronger hand here. Texas trounced the rest of the country our latest survey of the [Best Cities for Good Jobs](#), with five metropolitan areas in the Top Ten, including the four best cities to find jobs in the next few years.

(See Also: [How We Picked The Best Cities For Jobs](#))



How We Picked The Best Cities For Jobs

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Forbes Staff



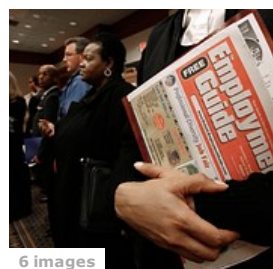
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This year’s winner is [Dallas](#), which shrugged off the Nov. 2011 bankruptcy of American Airlines parent [AMR Corp.](#) to rack up 2.1% job growth last year and is projected to continue adding jobs at a 2.8% rate through 2019 – more than 300,000 on top of the 2.1 million already in Dallas and its Plano and Irving suburbs.

“The explanation is we have an incredibly diversified economy,” said [Bernard Weinstein](#), who’s been tracking the north Texas economy since 1975 and is associate director of [Southern Methodist University’s](#) McGuire Energy Institute. “As the national economy improves, we’re getting better.”

To construct this list, Forbes gathered data from [Moody’s Analytics](#) on the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas. We then ranked the cities according to recent and expected job growth, current unemployment rate, and current and expected per-capita income. We threw out cities with high unemployment rates or that are clearly rebounding from severe economic distress, such as Stockton, Calif., which came in first on 2012 job growth at 3.7% but still sports a 14% unemployment rate. We also gave increased weight to areas with high and growing per-capita incomes, to avoid steering people to cities that are adding lots of low-wage jobs. A description of the methodology is [here](#).

The Moody’s data show that Texans didn’t suffer as much in the financial crisis, and they’re doing much better now. The Texas unemployment rate rose from below 5% in 2007 all the way to a little above 8% in 2010, but now it’s falling back down again to a current 6.2%. The U.S. unemployment rate peaked at 10% and is still stuck at about 8%, with states like California, Illinois and New York well above that.

“You’ve got these two economic powerhouses, Texas and California, and you have to ask why we are outperforming,” Weinstein said. “It’s a real testament to the diversity and strength of our economy, that through good times and bad we are outperforming the nation.”

(See Also: [How We Picked The Best Cities For Jobs](#))



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One explanation that is definitely false: Texas isn't growing on the backs of underpaid, non-union workers. While Texas is a right-to-work state, many of the highest paying jobs in the Dallas area are with unionized defense manufacturers like [Bell Helicopter](#) and Lockheed Martin, which produces the [F-35 Lightning II fighter](#) at a mile-long plant in Fort Worth.

Asked about the state's reputation for union-busting and low-wage jobs, Dallas Federal Reserve Economist Pia Orrenius said "we get a lot of that."

"People say it's all low-pay jobs, so I looked at employment growth by wage quartile," she said. And guess what? Not only is the Dallas-area per-capita income of \$39,548 comfortably above the national average of \$37,000, but it's growing fastest in the top half of wages above \$16 an hour.

Dallas doesn't have the booming energy industry of Houston – No. 2 on the list with expected 5-year job growth of 2.6% a year – but it has a prosperous and growing financial and professional-services sector. Bank of America has large back-office operations in the Dallas area and the city is home to large law and accounting firms as well as professionals who serve the energy industry. "Those are your extremely high paying jobs," Orrenius said, paying an average of \$28 an hour.

The relatively higher wages in Dallas are what pushed it to the top of the list, but for raw growth the Austin area wins at No. 2 in the nation with an expected 5-year annual growth rate of 3.9%. (No. 1 was Honolulu, which but for recent hiccups in its job market and lackluster projected income growth would be in the Top 10 overall). Austin is sucking in high-tech jobs from more expensive California and struggling to keep up with growth in demand for houses and roads.

"The hottest place to be in Texas is Austin," said Orrenius. "They're just booming."

The fastest-growing city for [good jobs](#) outside of Texas was another tech capital, Seattle, which is expected to add 136,000 jobs over the next five years. Others include Oklahoma City, prospering on the shale-fracking boom in oil and gas, and Denver, which is adding jobs in construction, professional services and mining.

(See Also: [How We Picked The Best Cities For Jobs](#))

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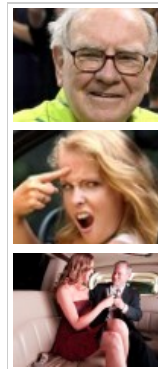
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