

BEST CITIES TO START A CAREER

The first job after college is so important in launching a career and positioning a person for their lifelong earnings. As shown in the past, it's just not the level of pay but also associated living costs, growth potential (in responsibility and remuneration) and quality of life that need consideration.

Where should college and trades graduates look for the optimum starting position? To help answer this, Realtor.com focused on these five metrics:

- Job Growth – as measured by declines in the unemployment rate from Q1 2014 to Q1 2017 using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data
- Business Growth – number of new businesses vs the number of businesses that closed in 2014 using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data
- High Salaries – median salaries of the top 25 percent of earners across all occupations using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data
- Happiness Index – Hedonometer.org's analysis of Twitter data
- Affordability – only included were metros with median prices of \$400,000 or less

Realtor.com then created their own methodology and came up with the following top-10 city ranks. In addition to some of the data reported by Realtor.com, also included are the job growth rates for the latest 12-months for each of these respective markets. It is impressive that all but one, Madison, Wisconsin, had job growth rates greater than the U.S. average of 1.50 percent. Six of markets had more than double the U.S. job growth rate, and Ft Collins, Colorado growth factor was more than four times. These are impressive economies indeed. Three states have two cities each making up a total 60 percent of the top-10. That says a lot about how some states, due to policies, infrastructure and people, better foster economic activity.

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Best Cities to Start a Career 2017				
Rank	City, State	Top 25% Median Income	Median Home Price	12-Month Job Growth
1	Ft Collins, Colorado	\$ 59,810	\$ 391,400	6.76%
2	Charlotte, North Carolina	\$ 58,970	\$ 334,300	2.70%
3	Madison, Wisconsin	\$ 63,370	\$ 299,900	1.31%
4	Colorado Springs, Colorado	\$ 60,460	\$ 386,500	2.19%
5	Dallas, Texas	\$ 63,110	\$ 355,000	3.62%
6	Austin, Texas	\$ 61,710	\$ 396,500	2.80%
7	Fayetteville, Arkansas	\$ 52,670	\$ 280,200	3.81%
8	Durham, North Carolina	\$ 71,630	\$ 347,000	3.40%
9	Kansas City, Missouri	\$ 60,000	\$ 248,800	3.22%
10	Nashville, Tennessee	\$ 54,930	\$ 359,900	3.09%

Source: Realtor.com & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics