

# Top 10 cities and states for job growth

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With the U.S. economy on the mend, it's interesting to note which cities and states are growing the fastest.

Lee McPheters, a research professor in ASU's W. P. Carey School of Business, provides rankings and analysis based on the latest [jobs](#) figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Below is a list of the top 10 cities followed by top 10 states.

## Top 10 cities

including surrounding metro areas (1 million or more workers) for non-agricultural job growth, comparing January 2011 to January 2012.

1. Houston – up 3.7 percent
2. Atlanta – up 3.1 percent
3. Denver – up 2.5 percent
4. Dallas – up 2.4 percent
5. Seattle – up 2.2 percent
6. Cincinnati – up 2.1 percent
7. Phoenix – up 1.9 percent
8. Riverside, Calif. – up 1.7 percent
9. Tampa, Fla. – up 1.7 percent
10. Pittsburgh – up 1.6 percent

## Top 10 states

for non-agricultural job growth, comparing January 2011 to January 2012

1. North Dakota – up 6.3 percent
2. West Virginia – up 2.6 percent
3. Utah – up 2.6 percent
4. Texas – up 2.5 percent
5. Louisiana – up 2.4 percent
6. Oklahoma – up 2.2 percent
7. Georgia – up 2.2 percent
8. Colorado – up 2.1 percent
9. Tennessee – up 2 percent
10. Kentucky – up 1.9 percent

### Analysis

The overall growth rate for the United States, comparing January 2011 to January 2012, was 1.5 percent. The actual number of jobs went up by 1.986 million nationwide.

“As far as the cities, Houston and Dallas have fared especially well since they’re located in Texas, a state that has stayed ahead of most, throughout the recession and recovery,” explains McPheters, who is director of the JPMorgan Chase Economic Outlook Center at the W. P. Carey School of Business.

Looking at the states, McPheters notes, “One common theme among those doing well on the list is the use of natural resources at a time of high energy prices. North Dakota, Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma are all oil-producing states, and West Virginia and Utah mine coal. North Dakota has ranked first for 33 consecutive months.”

McPheters explains many of the states at the top of the list also have a relatively small labor force, so even a modest boost can register as a big jobs percentage gain. For example, first-place North Dakota added 23,900 jobs year-over-year, while Texas only ranked fourth, even though

it added 262,100 jobs.

Four states continued to lose jobs year-over-year: Alaska, Missouri, Rhode Island and Wisconsin. Wisconsin has ranked last for the past three months, and employment there was down by 19,400 workers in January compared to the prior year.

“Here in Arizona, the state ranked No. 12 in job creation,” says McPheters. “That’s a vast improvement from last year at this time, when it ranked No. 40.”

McPheters expects to see states in the Southwest and Southeast begin to push up in the rankings by the middle of the year. These are the [states](#) that typically do well during big-growth periods, benefitting from desirable climates and industries like construction and health care.

More analysis from McPheters, including population numbers, can be found at KnowWPCarey, the school’s online resource at [knowwpcarey.com/article.cfm?i=25&aid=1152](http://knowwpcarey.com/article.cfm?i=25&aid=1152). McPheters also compiles current and historical job-growth data at his “Job Growth USA” website: [wpcarey.asu.edu/bluechip/jobgrowth/index.cfm](http://wpcarey.asu.edu/bluechip/jobgrowth/index.cfm).

Provided by Arizona State University

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