

# THE NEW STARTER CITIES

These sleeper locales offer hot jobs for young workers—plus reasonable rents

Sure, Silicon Valley, New York and follow-on tech hubs such as Austin and Denver count as some of the hottest job markets in the country. They are also among the most expensive, and affordable rents are often far from the action. So where can a new graduate find a solid footing on the career ladder, a lively entertainment scene and enough of a paycheck to enjoy it? To determine the next potential hot spots for entry-level professionals, The Wall Street Journal pored over dozens of metrics, including housing costs, the number of highly rated bars and restaurants, and growth in tech employment—a tell-tale indicator of a dynamic job market. Here are three “sleeper” cities that stand apart.

— Vanessa Fuhrmans



▲ Park City Ski Resort, one of many nearby ski resorts.

## SALT LAKE CITY | SILICON SLOPES

Daunted by the high costs of established tech hubs, more tech companies are flocking to a belt of Rocky Mountain cities, from Provo, Utah, to Boise, Idaho. In that stretch, Salt Lake City, where adults under 35 make up a quarter of the population, may offer the best of all worlds for tech-savvy grads. With big employers such as Adobe Systems, [Overstock.com](http://Overstock.com) and

Symantec, the area already has a high share of tech jobs per capita, and local tech-job postings on the jobsite [Indeed.com](http://Indeed.com) climbed 12% last year. Yet the Utah capital is relatively affordable—for now. A recent Cushman & Wakefield report found residents spend about 32% of their income on housing, compared with 40% in Denver and 78% in San Francisco.



▲ Chef Justin Severino has boosted the city's dining scene.

## PITTSBURGH | RUST BELT RENAISSANCE

Pittsburgh has led a wave of Rust Belt cities in an urban renaissance; it has a robust food-and-arts scene and a surplus of entry-level tech and other professional jobs. Among residents with bachelor degrees, Pittsburgh's unemployment rate is a relatively low 2.2%. In a recent survey by recruiting firm Robert Half, 92% of hiring managers there said they aimed to hire new gradu-

ates. With more than 2,200 restaurants and bars, Pittsburgh has ample nightlife and culinary options. Recent grads can partake without blowing their budget: The median monthly rent in Pittsburgh is around \$800, according to 2017 U.S. Census data, and the city has the ninth-lowest cost of living out of 108 metro areas analyzed this spring by [SmartAsset](http://SmartAsset).



▲ A \$5.5 billion redevelopment project is in the works.

## BALTIMORE | CHARM CITY FLOURISHES

Think of Baltimore as the affordable alternative to Washington, D.C. While the nation's capital and its northern Virginia suburbs enjoy a tech-sector boom, Baltimore—less than an hour away—isn't far behind. Its size and concentration of tech job postings make it the country's eighth-largest tech hub, according to [Indeed.com](http://Indeed.com). And while its median tech wage of \$98,000 comes

close to Washington's \$106,000, median rents are 20% less in Baltimore, according to real-estate site [Trulia](http://Trulia). A \$5.5 billion redevelopment project is in the works to turn a 235-acre waterfront area at South Baltimore's Port Covington into a complex with an open-air market, new headquarters for Under Armour and what developers envision as an East Coast cybersecurity hub.