

## 10 Great Cities For Young Adults

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Free from ties to kids or a mortgage, young adults can settle virtually anywhere they choose. So which place is best for you when the world is your oyster?

Here are 10 cities in the U.S. that offer exceptional opportunities for those starting out in life. We began our search using the criteria we used to select our overall list of Best Cities for the Next Decade: healthy economies fueling new job growth. We fine-tuned our search using other youth-friendly factors such as large percentages of people under 35, cost of living and rental costs, culture, nightlife, and the time you're likely to spend in traffic. Take a look - and tell us what you think.

### [Austin, Texas](#)

**Metro population:** 1,705,075

**Cost-of-living index:** 97 (average is 100)

**Median monthly rent (includes utilities):** \$864, nat. average+\$819)

**Average annual wage:** \$41,380 (as of 2007)

**Unemployment rate:** 6.9%

**Percentage of Gen Y residents:** 30%

**Top employers:** [Austin School District](#), Dell, city and federal government, IBM, Seton Healthcare Network, St. David's Healthcare Partnership, University of Texas at Austin

[Austin](#) has the fourth-lowest jobless rate among cities with populations of one million or more. Living costs fall below the national norm. It doesn't hurt that this is the capital of [Texas](#) and home to eight colleges and universities, including the University of Texas. [Austin's](#) cultural scene is exceptional, with two giant music festivals each year, a vibrant nightlife, and eclectic, up-and-coming neighborhoods, There's certainly more than enough here to keep a recent grad busy.

**PROS:** Below-average cost of city living, hundreds of bars and music venues for the twenty-something set, reasonable rent

**CONS:** Long, hot summers, accelerating urban sprawl, limited public transportation (though the average drive will last only 23 minutes)

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**