

Austin ranked 4th out of 200 large cities in the Milken Institute's annual survey of Best-Performing Cities. Austin has consistently ranked well in this prestigious survey having ranked number 2 in 2010 and number 1 in 2009. The Best Performing Cities index includes both long-term (five years) and short-term (one year) measurements of employment and salary growth. There are also four measurements of technology output growth, which are included because of technology's crucial role in creating good jobs and driving regional economies. Leaders in this year's index, which ranks U.S. metros based on their ability to create and sustain jobs, are cities that most benefited from renewed investment in business equipment; have diversified technology bases, which also drive growth in business and professional services; are exposed to America's booming energy sector; and are home to a large military presence.

Texas overall did excellent with San Antonio coming in number 1 out of large metro areas, and Houston was first among the 10 biggest metros. In fact, Texas metros occupied four of the Top 5 positions (vs. three last year), and nine of the Top 25 (vs. 11 in 2010).

The Milken report stated:

“For the five-year period ending in 2010, Austin had the third-fastest job growth in the nation. It is the largest metro to exceed its peak level of employment prior to the recession. Given its concentration in chips and computers, both volatile industries, the region's economic stability is remarkable. The University of Texas, Austin, and the state capital have helped insulate Austin from the national economic contractions.

Austin is a center of semiconductor production. After weathering a collapse in demand, Samsung Austin Semiconductor (SAS) is expanding its huge fabrication facility. An incremental \$3.6 billion investment is under way, bringing its total investment in the Austin area to 9.2 billion. The facility is expected to create 7,600 jobs directly and indirectly, \$296 million in wages annually, and 1.4 billion in total local economic activity per year. In addition, eBay is expanding its Austin office, and the city is attracting some operations from Facebook.

Based in Round Rock, Dell is the largest technology employer in the metro area with more than 14,000 employees. It is investing heavily in data centers and rapidly adding high-skilled employees. IBM, Freescale Semiconductor, AT&T Computer, National Instruments, and AMD are major employers in the region as well.

Retail and housing markets are recovering, thanks to job and wage gains at these tech

employers. Due to an influx of new residents, housing prices barely slipped during the recession. Austin has one of the most educated populations in the country; over 37 percent of adults have at least a bachelor's degree."

The Milken index ranks 379 metropolitan areas, grouped into large (population of more than 200,000) and small (population of less than 200,000) metros.

The **2011 top 10 performers** (with 2010 rankings) of the 200 largest metros:

1. San Antonio, TX (14)
2. El Paso, TX (9)
3. Fort Collins- Loveland, CO (50)
4. Austin-Round Rock, TX (2)
5. Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX (1)
6. Salt Lake City, UT (49)
7. Anchorage, AK (8)
8. Huntsville, AL (3)
9. Provo-Orem, UT (25)
10. Kennewick-Richland-Pasco WA (5)

PLAY WITH THE DATA: Compare and view stats for all 379 metros.

READ THE REPORT: Download a PDF or purchase a printed copy.