

Best States for Millennials 2019

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If you are among the wave of new graduates and young workers entering the job market right now, you may also be wondering how best to blend your opportunities with quality of life.



It's that time of year, the time when many young adults graduate from school and start their adult lives and careers.

The next wave of students is already starting to grapple with how to afford a college education too.

These life events naturally come with a slew of decisions, many of which can affect quality of life, access to education and even success in the job market.

One of those decisions is often where to live as you start out. It's an important choice that you'd hope to make by design, after careful thought, and based upon information as opposed to your own perceptions.

If deciding where to live is something you'll be doing soon, you should know that the living conditions young adults might encounter vary greatly from state to state. Here are some examples of the good and bad extremes you could find depending on where you live:

- **Unemployment**

Unemployment among young adults is more than three times as bad in Mississippi as it is in Hawaii, Idaho, North Dakota, Massachusetts or Colorado.

- **College tuition**

For in-state students, a year at a four-year public college costs a third as much in Wyoming as it does in Vermont or New Hampshire.

- **Housing availability**

A residential rental property is more than six times as scarce in Massachusetts as it is in Alabama or Kansas.

- **Cost of housing**

Renting a place will cost you twice as much in California, the District of Columbia or Hawaii than it would in Mississippi.

- **Internet access**

While people in most of the country may take access to broadband for granted, at least 25 percent of the households in Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas still go without it.

- **Nightlife**

If you like the nightlife, you might be interested (and somewhat surprised) to learn that Montana has 27 times as many bars per capita as Virginia.

- **Fitness**

On the other hand, if physical fitness is your passion, you might be attracted to New Hampshire, which leads the country in fitness-facility capacity per capita with twice the concentration of Hawaii and 14 other states.

Best states for millennials 2019: Methodology

For a more comprehensive look than considering just cost of living by state, MoneyRates.com grouped eight sets of data into three major categories: **job market, affordability and access, and lifestyle**. Based on the average ranking in each of these

three categories, MoneyRates.com ranked all 50 states plus the District of Columbia to determine which are the best states to live in if you are a young adult.

The data sets:

- **Young-adult employment, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics**
- **Percent of population aged 20 to 24, based on data from the US Census Bureau**
- **Affordability of a four-year public college education for in-state students, based on information from the College Board**
- **Rental availability, based on Census Bureau data**
- **Rental costs, based on Census Bureau data**
- **Percentage of households with broadband, based on Census Bureau data**
- **Number of bars and other night spots catering to the young-adult population, based on Census Bureau data**
- **Number of fitness facilities relative to the young-adult population, based on Census Bureau data**

Top 10 best places to live for young adults

To help recent grads know what to expect - and where they might find the most favorable conditions - MoneyRates.com produced a ranking of the best states for millennials this year.

1. North Dakota

This state has become something of a magnet for young adults, as it has the highest proportion in the 20-to-24 age group of any state. Why the attraction? You can chalk it up to a combination of business and pleasure.

North Dakota has the third highest rate of [young-adult employment](#) while also having the third highest per capita concentration of bars and other drinking establishments. North Dakota also ranks well for availability of rental property, something of great concern for a generation that is delaying buying a home -- and, along with that, it has relatively affordable rents.

2. Nebraska

Like North Dakota, Nebraska may not be traditionally associated with youth culture, but it actually has a higher proportion of young adults than places like New York and California. Also like North Dakota, Nebraska combines practical and nightlife considerations with top-ten rankings for both young-adult employment and bars per capita.

3. Iowa

The job market for young adults in Iowa is better than average, and it is among the ten best states for affordable rents and availability of nightlife. The numbers don't lie: As is the case with North Dakota and Nebraska, Iowa has one of the largest proportions of young adults in its population.

4. Montana

If you are on a tight budget, you might want to consider a move to Montana. Four-year public tuition for in-state students is fourth cheapest in the nation, and rents are seventh cheapest. It's not all about frugality, though, since the state ranks number one in bars per capita.

5. Wyoming

This may be a better state to live in as a college student than as a graduate because, while the young-adult-employment rate is middle of the pack, it does offer the nation's cheapest [public college tuition](#) for in-state students. It also has some decent lifestyle choices, with top-ten rankings for both bars and fitness facilities per capita.

6. (tie) Kansas

Here is yet another state on this list whose appeal to young adults is borne out by the fact that it has one of the ten-highest proportions of people in the 20-to-24 demographic. If you want to join them, you should find it relatively easy to move to Kansas as it ranks very high for rental availability and its rents are more affordable than in most states.

6. (tie) Wisconsin

What's not to like about a state that makes it easy both to find a job and then to go to happy hour after work? Wisconsin is one of the ten best states for young-adult employment and ranks second overall for per capita concentration of bars.

8. South Dakota

While the job market for young adults is not as strong in South Dakota as in its neighbor to the north, it scores well in this study due to top-ten rankings for affordable rent and concentrations of both bars and fitness facilities.

9. (tie) Idaho

Having the second-best level of young-adult employment in the nation and the seventh-most affordable college tuition makes Idaho a good state to work in and to study.

9. (tie) Minnesota

Another top-ten state for young-adult employment, Minnesota also scored fairly well for both broadband access and concentration of fitness facilities.

Note that MoneyRates.com used a variety of different ranking factors, recognizing that different people have different priorities. While the above list may or may not appeal to your tastes, at least it can help you get a feel for some of the factors to assess when choosing a place to live.