

2016's Best & Worst Florida Cities for Finding a Job

by [John S Kiernan](#)



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The Sunshine State's economy has seen its fair share of storm clouds in recent years, with the Great Recession taking a significant toll on both the housing market and tourism industry. But things are looking brighter of late, despite some recent Latin American trade woes weighing on the state's southernmost economic hubs.

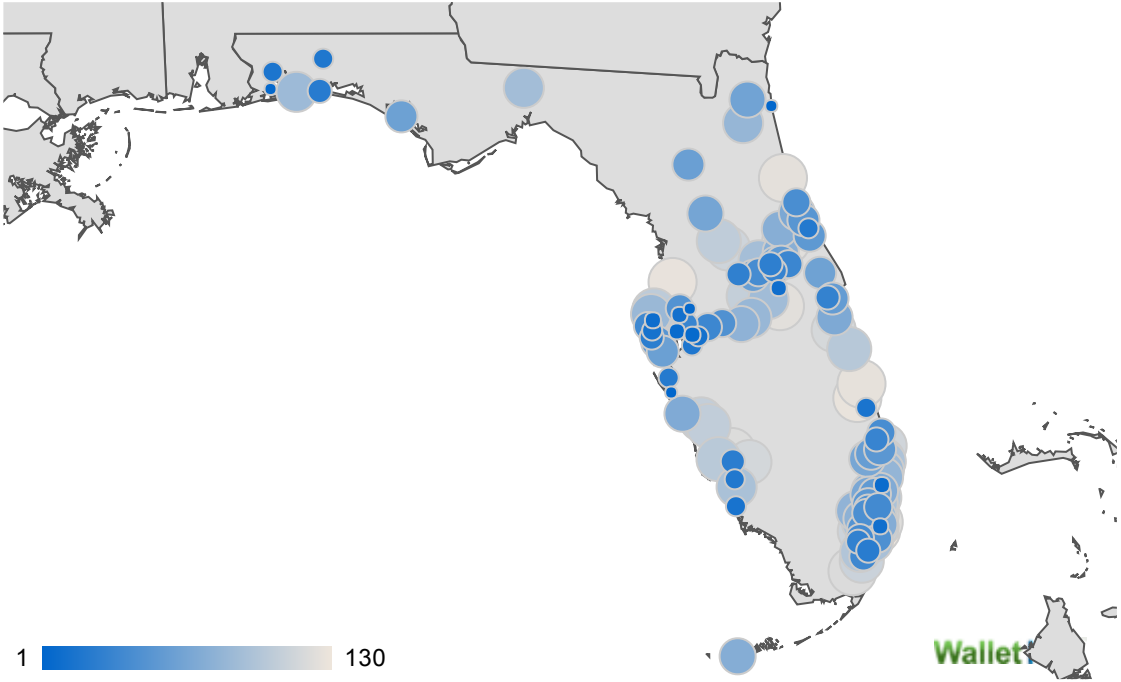
Florida's economy is expected to expand at an annual rate of 3.2% through 2018, with incomes rising at a 4.0% annual rate, according to the University of Central Florida's Institute for Economic Competitiveness. And the unemployment rate is right around a comfortable 5.0%, or about half of what it was just five years ago.

But such a seemingly pleasant economic climate is by no means comfortable for the nearly

500,000 Floridians currently looking for a job, or any out-of-towner contemplating relocation. In order to help them make all the right moves, WalletHub compared 130 Florida cities based on 16 metrics that collectively speak to the employment environment that can be found in each. We considered factors ranging from the number of job openings and the average starting salary to the percentage of employers providing benefits and the length of the average work day.

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Main Findings



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Overall Rank ↕	City ↕	Total Score ↕	'Job Market' Rank ↕	'Socioeconomic Environment' Rank ↕
1	Sarasota, FL	60.20	9	12
2	Jacksonville Beach, FL	60.11	4	23
3	Pensacola, FL	59.78	10	19
4	Wesley Chapel,	59.64	1	66

	FL			
5	Brandon, FL	59.14	2	68
6	Tampa, FL	59.03	15	9
7	Boca Raton, FL	58.75	20	2
8	Palm Harbor, FL	58.33	5	56
9	Orlando, FL	57.26	14	47
10	Sunny Isles Beach, FL	57.20	8	49
11	Lutz, FL	57.00	16	27
12	Valrico, FL	56.95	6	79
13	Clearwater, FL	56.26	19	22
14	Naples, FL	56.22	33	7
15	Palm City, FL	56.19	13	61
16	Pace, FL	55.96	3	112
17	Riverview, FL	55.93	11	75
18	Crestview, FL	55.68	7	82
19	Estero, FL	55.39	42	5
20	New Smyrna Beach, FL	55.07	22	24
21	Bradenton, FL	54.93	27	17
22	Fort Walton Beach, FL	54.83	26	20
23	Coral Gables, FL	54.79	69	1
24	Fort Myers, FL	54.52	21	50
25	Largo, FL	54.20	41	8
26	Altamonte Springs, FL	53.94	38	13
27	Clermont, FL	53.87	24	39
28	Sweetwater, FL	53.60	12	108
29	Rockledge, FL	53.58	43	15
30	Winter Park, FL	53.51	46	14
31	Palm Beach Gardens, FL	53.42	31	25

32	Temple Terrace, FL	53.30	28	40
33	Oviedo, FL	53.29	73	3
34	Plant City, FL	53.28	18	89
35	Dunedin, FL	52.67	63	10
35	Palmetto Bay, FL	52.67	40	26
37	Fort Lauderdale, FL	52.60	30	48
38	Doral, FL	52.30	61	16
39	Ocoee, FL	52.16	25	71
40	Jupiter, FL	51.98	65	18
41	Ormond Beach, FL	51.90	49	28
42	Davie, FL	51.81	48	31
43	Miami Beach, FL	51.80	23	93
44	Lakeland, FL	51.49	47	38
45	Plantation, FL	51.46	54	33
46	Land O' Lakes, FL	51.40	17	113
47	Miami Lakes, FL	51.08	44	59
48	Pinellas Park, FL	50.94	36	70
49	Port Orange, FL	50.81	67	29
50	West Palm Beach, FL	50.63	55	57
51	Sunrise, FL	50.56	64	36
52	Edgewater, FL	50.55	29	83
53	Coconut Creek, FL	50.50	70	30
54	Winter Springs, FL	50.40	66	37
55	Merritt Island, FL	50.20	56	62
56	Royal Palm Beach, FL	50.11	52	69
57	Winter Garden, FL	50.03	45	81

58	Gainesville, FL	49.94	82	21
59	St. Petersburg, FL	49.83	59	65
60	Panama City, FL	49.79	32	101
61	Titusville, FL	49.74	53	72
62	Jacksonville, FL	49.73	39	90
63	Casselberry, FL	49.64	62	64
64	Ocala, FL	49.58	77	32
65	Wellington, FL	49.50	76	35
66	Margate, FL	49.42	78	34
67	Coral Springs, FL	49.27	75	45
68	Daytona Beach, FL	49.17	37	104
69	Melbourne, FL	49.16	74	53
70	Venice, FL	49.02	119	4
71	Deerfield Beach, FL	48.81	57	88
72	Aventura, FL	48.79	81	42
73	Key West, FL	48.63	68	78
74	DeLand, FL	48.59	34	116
75	Sanford, FL	48.58	60	92
76	Parkland, FL	48.41	106	6
77	Pembroke Pines, FL	48.31	85	43
78	Winter Haven, FL	48.23	71	74
79	Weston, FL	48.23	86	44
80	Cooper City, FL	48.10	104	11
81	Delray Beach, FL	47.86	88	46
82	Fleming Island, FL	47.75	87	58
83	Haines City, FL	47.66	35	114
84	Tarpon Springs, FL	47.57	94	51

85	Hollywood, FL	47.56	90	54
86	Navarre, FL	47.55	58	105
87	Boynton Beach, FL	47.47	91	55
88	Kissimmee, FL	47.12	79	87
89	Tallahassee, FL	46.97	95	52
90	Apopka, FL	46.90	72	102
91	Tamarac, FL	46.50	84	85
92	Miami, FL	46.44	89	76
93	Bonita Springs, FL	46.43	83	95
94	Oakland Park, FL	46.18	98	60
95	Lake Worth, FL	45.82	93	84
96	Miramar, FL	45.67	96	73
97	Kendall, FL	45.62	50	121
98	Pompano Beach, FL	45.32	97	80
99	North Lauderdale, FL	44.90	99	77
100	Sebastian, FL	44.84	112	63
101	Cape Coral, FL	44.13	110	67
102	Greenacres, FL	43.86	100	100
103	Holiday, FL	43.84	102	98
104	The Villages, FL	43.79	120	41
105	Port Charlotte, FL	43.44	107	94
106	North Port, FL	43.43	105	97
107	Four Corners, FL	43.36	51	129
108	Palm Springs, FL	42.90	101	110
109	North Miami Beach, FL	42.46	108	107
110	Cutler Bay, FL	41.48	113	111
111	Hialeah Gardens, FL	41.43	116	106

112	Leesburg, FL	41.36	103	118
113	Riviera Beach, FL	41.35	92	127
114	Dania Beach, FL	41.17	118	99
115	Lehigh Acres, FL	40.56	80	130
116	Palm Bay, FL	40.50	115	115
117	Lauderdale Lakes, FL	40.34	114	117
118	Lauderhill, FL	39.87	125	86
119	Homestead, FL	39.81	111	122
120	North Fort Myers, FL	39.78	122	109
121	Hallandale Beach, FL	39.76	123	91
122	Deltona, FL	39.28	109	126
123	St. Cloud, FL	38.36	127	96
124	Palm Coast, FL	37.80	117	128
125	Fort Pierce, FL	37.60	124	119
126	Spring Hill, FL	37.41	121	125
127	Port St. Lucie, FL	36.89	128	103
128	North Miami, FL	36.21	126	123
129	Hialeah, FL	35.00	129	120
130	Miami Gardens, FL	32.84	130	124

Highest Number of Job Opportunities

1. Sarasota, FL
2. Fort Myers, FL
3. Pensacola, FL
4. Orlando, FL
5. Panama City, FL



Lowest Number of Job Opportunities

89. Lauderdale Lakes, FL
90. Deltona, FL
91. Hialeah, FL
92. Cutler Bay, FL
93. Miami Gardens, FL

Highest Employment Growth

- 1. Ocoee, FL
- 2. Ormond Beach, FL
- 3. DeLand, FL
- 4. Casselberry, FL
- 5. Daytona Beach, FL



Lowest Employment Growth

- 89. Miami Gardens, FL
- 90. Doral, FL
- 91. North Port, FL
- 92. Cutler Bay, FL
- 93. Homestead, FL

Highest Monthly Median Starting Salary

- 1. Homestead, FL
- 2. Plant City, FL
- 3. Palm Springs, FL
- T-4. Tampa, FL
- T-4. Brandon, FL



Best City
vs
Worst City

Lowest Monthly Median Starting Salary

- 126. Coral Gables, FL
- 127. Parkland, FL
- 128. Key West, FL
- 129. Naples, FL
- 130. Palm Coast, FL

2x Difference

Lowest Unemployment Rate for High School Graduates

- 1. Clermont, FL
- 2. Miami Beach, FL
- 3. Wesley Chapel, FL
- 4. Miami Lakes, FL
- T-5. Pace, FL
- T-5. Haines City, FL



Best City
vs
Worst City

Highest Unemployment Rate for High School Graduates

- T-66. Miami, FL
- T-66. Orlando, FL
- T-66. Hialeah, FL
- T-66. Tallahassee, FL
- T-66. Fort Lauderdale, FL
- T-66. Cape Coral, FL

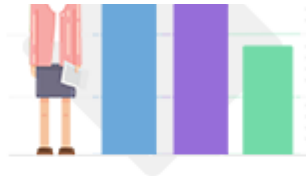
5x Difference

Lowest Unemployment Rate for Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Highest Unemployment Rate for Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

- T-1. Cutler Bay, FL
- T-1. Dunedin, FL
- T-1. Key West, FL
- T-1. New Smyrna Beach, FL
- T-1. Pace, FL
- T-1. Edgewater, FL
- T-1. Sweetwater, FL



Best City
vs
Worst City

- T-126. Lauderhill, FL
- T-126. Hallandale Beach, FL
- T-126. Lauderdale Lakes, FL
- T-126. Palm Springs, FL
- T-126. Venice, FL

13x Difference

Lowest % of Workforce Living Under Poverty Line

- 1. Parkland, FL
- 2. Cooper City, FL
- 3. Estero, FL
- 4. Palmetto Bay, FL
- 5. Palm City, FL



Best City
vs
Worst City

Higher % of Workforce Living Under Poverty Line

- 126. Homestead, FL
- 127. Lake Worth, FL
- 128. Fort Pierce, FL
- 129. Tallahassee, FL
- 130. Gainesville, FL

13x Difference

Highest Median Annual Income (Adjusted for Cost of Living)

- 1. Palmetto Bay, FL
- 2. Parkland, FL
- 3. Fleming Island, FL
- 4. Oviedo, FL
- 5. Cooper City, FL



Best City
vs
Worst City

Lowest Median Annual Income (Adjusted for Cost of Living)

- 126. Sweetwater, FL
- 127. Daytona Beach, FL
- 128. Hialeah, FL
- 129. Miami, FL
- 130. Fort Pierce, FL

3x Difference

Most Affordable Housing

1. Fleming Island, FL
2. Wesley Chapel, FL
3. Parkland, FL
4. Oviedo, FL
5. Pace, FL



Least Affordable Housing

126. Sunny Isles Beach, FL
127. Key West, FL
128. Hialeah, FL
129. Miami Beach, FL
130. Miami, FL

Ask the Experts

In search of additional insights into the Florida job scene, we posed the following questions to a panel of leading experts in the fields of human resources, economics and more. You can check out their bios and responses below.

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2. Which are the biggest challenges faced by Florida's job seekers today?
3. Looking just within Florida, what are the most common mistakes that job seekers make?
4. What types of programs have proven effective in helping unemployed persons to find work in Florida?

Vanessa Perez

Job Placement Officer at Florida National University

[Back to All Experts](#)



Will the IT industry still play a major role in Florida's economy in the coming decades?

The IT industry not only plays a major role at the moment but will definitely increase a lot more as time goes on. Everything we do on a daily basis depends on technology, and it is definitely up to the IT experts to assist us when technology fails or we come across issues ultimately not only affecting our productivity, but the assistance that we need to provide to others as well.

What other fields are expected to grow the most in the near future?

Medical fields are definitely on the rise as we speak. One that has recently taken off very quickly and strongly is Physical Therapy, from Aides and Assistants to Therapists.

Which are the biggest challenges faced by Florida's job seekers today?

The biggest challenge I have seen is the amount of jobs available versus the amount of applicants for each specific job. Competition in South Florida is very strong, and for every single job opportunity, employers are usually interviewing anywhere from 5-10 people.

Looking just within Florida, which are the most common mistakes job seekers make when seeking employment?

Common mistakes that I see are applicants not preparing enough for their job search, applying for jobs and not following up afterwards, having the same resume for all jobs, and forgetting the importance of having proper interview skills. These things are definitely hurting many job seekers, and the problem is that they are not aware until someone educates them otherwise.

Should benefits be extended in Florida for unemployed people who have been out of work for

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employed, then a deeper issue is being formed, which needs assistance. Extending the unemployment longer may hurt the person more than help. Finding out the major setback that the unemployed person has been having for so long would be necessary so that the appropriate assistance can be given.

Should unemployed people from Florida that receive help from state and local administration be required to do something in order to earn their unemployment benefits? If so, what?

In my opinion, people who are currently job hunting whether receiving benefits or not should be required to better their job seeking skills. Workshops for employability skills, resume writing, applying to jobs, and networking are crucial to the professional development of every job seeker.

Methodology

WalletHub analysts compared 130 Florida cities using 16 relevant metrics that speak to two key factors important to job seekers: the local "Job Market" and the area's "Socioeconomic Environment." Each metric was graded on a 100-point scale, with the weighted-sum of each city's individual-metric scores comprising its overall score, which we used for the final rankings. You can find a complete list of the metrics we used, along with their corresponding weights, below.

The cities in our sample were selected based on population size and the availability of reliable data. Furthermore, we considered the city proper in each case, excluding surrounding metro areas from our analysis.

Job Market - Total Points: 67

- Job Opportunities (Number of Job Openings per Number of Population in Labor Force Minus Unemployed Rate): Double Weight (~14.89 Points)
- Employment Growth (rate of annual job growth, adjusted for working-age population growth): Full Weight (~7.44 Points)
- Monthly Median Starting Salary (adjusted for cost of living index): Full Weight (~7.44 Points)
- Unemployment Rate for High School Graduates: Full Weight (~7.44 Points)
- Unemployment Rate for Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: Full Weight (~7.44 Points)
- Industry Variety: Full Weight (~7.44 Points)

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- Percentage of Persons Employed but Living Under Poverty Line: Full Weight (~7.44 Points)
- Percentage of Persons with Disabilities in the Workforce: Half Weight (~3.72 Points)

Socioeconomic Environment - Total Points: 33

- Median Annual Income (adjusted for cost of living index): Full Weight (~5.50 Points)
- Time Spent Working & Commuting (average commute time plus length of average workday): Half Weight (~2.75 Points)
- Benefits (percentage of employees with private health insurance): Half Weight (~2.75 Points)
- Housing Costs ((median annual household income divided by median house price) plus (median annual household income divided by price of rent for a two-bedroom apartment)): Full Weight (~5.50 Points)
- Annual Transportation Costs: Full Weight (~5.50 Points)
- Safety (Crime rate): Full Weight (~5.50 Points)
- Social Life (number of cafés per capita plus number of nightlife options per capita): Full Weight (~5.50 Points)

Sources: Data used to create these rankings were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Council for Community and Economic Research, Areavibes, Indeed and Yelp.

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