

COLUMBUS - The area's affordability luring, keeping tech talent, according to report



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Columbus' affordability is helping to grow its already-significant tech industry, according to a new report.

A [report](#) by [CBRE Group](#) Inc. this week shows that Central Ohio is doing a good job of bringing in and keeping tech talent.

Overall, Columbus ranked 28 of 50 metro area, well ahead of Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Cleveland. Tech jobs represent about 4.7 percent of the jobs in the area.

"The highly competitive and supply constrained market for tech talent, along with advanced communications infrastructure, has accelerated the expansion of tech talent labor pools beyond major hubs and into smaller markets," the study says. "These previously untapped and undersupplied regions are gaining appeal from start-ups and established companies."

The study also shows a significant talent pool for tech talent in Columbus – an estimated 48,230, which has grown nearly 13 percent over five years and is larger than other neighboring cities including Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Cleveland and Nashville.

The data show that high-paying jobs are making a dent, too — wages in the Columbus market for tech talent has grown 20 percent over five years to \$92,510.

Among the jobs are software developers and programmers, who are paid an average salary of more than \$100,000. That grew by 17 percent.

Demographics are favorable, too, according to CBRE, noting that 35 percent of the adult population has a four-year degree and the population of Millennials in their 20s grew by 6.4 percent since 2010.

In that time, office demand has reflected the change. Average rent rates since the beginning of 2012 are up 10.5 percent to \$19.23 per square foot and vacancy is down to 12.3 percent.

Big office deals this year have included Pillar Technology Geoup LLC's [25,000-square-foot office at 711 N. High](#), and [BarkBox's](#) new 13,000-square-foot office at 445 N. High.

The region also enjoys a reasonable cost of living, with apartment rents at \$874 on average, a bit below national averages though having grown in recent years.

Ohio's three biggest cities overall, though, have not done a good job of finding jobs for its grads – 18,898 tech degrees were awarded in Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland from 2011 to 2015. At the same time, 16,820 tech jobs were added in that time, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

That means a net "brain drain" of more than 2,000 tech-specialized people.