

TECH HUB

Five Top Tech Areas to Watch

A look at five up-and-coming tech zones.

Each of these cities have thriving tech communities, startups, software development companies and universities that provide multiple opportunities for entrepreneurs to expand their visions. Startups

help attract technical talent to these areas. They develop communities of creators, entrepreneurs, collaborators and mentors. The right location can energize employees, inspire creativity, or connect leaders to mentors and resources.



Huntsville, Alabama

NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, US Space and Rocket Center, and Army's Aviation and Missile Command Center are located in Huntsville. The low cost of living encourages investment in tech startups. Groups like Urban Engine provide necessary resources for entrepreneurs to bring their ideas and technologies to market and tech jobs are expected to increase by 6% in the next five years. Mayor Thomas Battle Jr. has prioritized job growth in STEM fields ushering in GEO Huntsville, Cyber Huntsville, Energy Huntsville and Bio Huntsville initiatives to bring government and industry together to make Huntsville a global leader in research and development. Battle's office also launched the Gig City initiative — a partnership in which Google provides fiber internet access in homes citywide.



Raleigh, North Carolina

The NC Research Triangle Park (RTP) is home to hundreds of incredible startups. Tech giants like IBM, Redhat, Epic Games, Cisco Systems, Lenovo and Fidelity have also established roots in the area. Every year, the Triangle Tweener List publishes the top 150 startups in Raleigh. Tweener companies include innovative AI, IOT and machine learning startups like Arya, Diveplane, and Bright Wolf, as well as software platforms and tools like Appraisal Nation and Archive Social. Pendo was founded in Raleigh in 2013 and is now a prominent late-stage startup. Raleigh also includes top-rated universities like the University of North Carolina (rated #8 by *U.S. News and World Report*) at Chapel Hill and Duke.



Minneapolis

This Top 10 U.S. City for Entrepreneurs and Startups according to Business.org (2018), proclaimed Minneapolis's start-up growth — a remarkable 121.3% along with the state's inexpensive cost of living is encouraging startup growth. The city's tech pay of \$103,271 is almost twice as high as the average state wage. *The Tech Tribune* in 2021 compiled the best tech startups in Minneapolis considering factors like revenue potential, leadership team, brand traction and competitive landscape. Its top five startups include Gravie, When I Work, NovuHealth, ClickSWITCH and Revel. The tech sector has an estimated direct economic impact of \$31.1 billion, or about 9.3% of Minnesota's total economy. (CompTIA's *2019 Cyberstates Report*).



Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore is affordable and close to other East Coast hubs making it attractive for startups. The tech ecosystem in Baltimore is incorporating workforce development programs, funding efforts and partnerships. For example, a new Baltimore-based startup organization called UpSurge aims to provide mentorship, networking, educational tools and resources for entrepreneurs who anchor their companies in the city. UpSurge targets startups focused on using tech to improve equity highlighting women founders and people of color. Many partners have committed funds to support UpSurge, including Brown Advisory, the Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland and T. Rowe Price Group. South Baltimore also aims to attract more cyber companies in a vision dubbed "Cyber Town USA" at Port Covington.



Tampa, Florida

The city is witnessing a surge of tech startups and IT jobs that are expected to rise by 6% through 2024. Tampa is strong in cybersecurity, back office and startups around the MSP (managed service provider) space. *Forbes* recently named it among the "Top 10 Best Cities for Young Entrepreneurs." The Tampa Bay Economic Development Council is collaborating with city and county partners to foster economic opportunity for residents of underserved districts and attracting development to underserved communities to ensure the focus is on projects that positively impact local communities. Top startups include: vxchnge, Healthmap Solutions, Peerfit, ComplianceQuest and Homee. ■