

Large metropolitan areas that had the fastest employment growth, 1998-2003 (percent)

The Golden State shone for employment growth from 1998 to 2003, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Between January 1998 and January 2003, California boasted 4 of the 7 large metropolitan areas in the United States in which employment growth was more than triple that of the Nation's overall. Total U.S. nonfarm payroll employment increased 4.7 percent over the period, as the Nation struggled through an economic downturn. During that time, many metropolitan areas experienced little employment growth or lost thousands of jobs. As the chart shows, however, employment in 11 of the

metropolitan areas with at least 300,000 jobs in January 2003 grew by at least 2½ times the national rate over the same period—and 2 of them increased at more than 5 times the national rate.

But before packing your bags for one of these metropolitan areas, remember that these data do not show the variation in the kinds of jobs added. For a discussion of occupational earnings by location and other considerations for relocating, see “Whereabouts and wealth: A study of local earnings and how they vary” in the spring *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*. The article is online at www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2003/spring/art02.pdf.

