



Why “The Great Place” Is Your Great Place!

Fort Hood is commonly referred to as “The Great Place.” This paper proposes why Fort Hood is not only “*The Great Place*” but also “*Your Great Place!*” The Central Texas area’s combination of great location, education opportunities, communities, quality of life, people, cost of living, and services together form a military friendly eco-system that is unique to Fort Hood. As with any term of endearment, the challenge is how to demonstrate its veracity. The following provides examples of what makes Fort Hood and Central Texas “*The Great Place.*”

Background: Fort Hood is located on 342 square miles of land in Central Texas bordered by the cities of Killeen to the east, Copperas Cove to the west and Gatesville to the north with the cities of Harker Heights, Belton, Temple and Lampasas just outside the installation. Fort Hood is home to 37,000+ soldiers and 50,000+ family members with over 70% living in the neighboring communities. Fort Hood generates \$29.9B in annual economic impact which is over 24% of the total economic impact from the 13 military installations located in Texas. Fort Hood is the largest single site employer in Texas with direct employment of 56,023 and total employment over 152,701.

- **Great Education** - Outstanding educational opportunities from elementary through the doctorate level offered through eight (8) school districts, two (2) community colleges, and two (2) universities surrounding Fort Hood across all student interests. Collaborative efforts across the spectrum to ensure students are college and career ready depending on their goals and interests.
 - ✓ In 2019, Texas implemented legislation in HB1597 to ease the burden on military children moving to Texas schools. HB1597 allows Military children to be enrolled in school with their PCS orders and education records before arriving in Texas. This allows military children to enroll in summer programs and high demand classes before the classes are filled and before they arrive in Texas.
 - ✓ Commitment to Educational Excellence demonstrated in the \$826M in new bond funding by the eight Independent School Districts in the last few years.
 - ✓ Early College High School programs delivering upon graduation an Associate degree with transferability to Texas A&M – Central Texas resulting in a Bachelor Degree for a total cost of \$13,000.
 - ✓ Associate degree programs through community colleges with transferability to Texas A&M-Central Texas for Soldiers and Spouses delivering a Bachelor degree for a total cost of \$17,000.
 - ✓ Central Texas College ranked as the #2 two-year school in the nation for military vets by 2021 Military Times survey of 300 institutions. https://kdhnews.com/news/local/ctc-named-no-2-two-year-school-for-military-veterans/article_a5ba95ae-2066-11ec-87ca-b3b14c945820.html
 - ✓ In 2022, Central Texas College designated a Top 10 Military Friendly School by Victory based on a survey of academic results of over 1800 schools which ranked CTC as the #6 Community College in the nation. https://kdhnews.com/copperas_cove_herald/ctc-



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[named-a-top-military-friendly-school/article_21231d28-a0c4-11ec-8074-2355915fcb92.html](https://www.heartoftx.com/2022/03/15/named-a-top-military-friendly-school/article_21231d28-a0c4-11ec-8074-2355915fcb92.html)

- ✓ Texas provides in-state tuition rates for servicemembers and their family members assigned in Texas. <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.54.htm#54.241>
- ✓ Community Colleges offering over 100 degrees and Professional Certifications with CTC ranked #85 of top 100 Community Colleges for Adults. <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2019college-guide/adult-two-year>
- ✓ Texas A&M-Central Texas is home to the best scanning electron microscopes in the the state and one of the top Solar/Photovoltaics researchers in the nation, Dr Taylor Harvey.
- ✓ Killeen ISD’s Early College High School recognized as a model College and Career Readiness School by Educate Texas for its transformational, innovative, and evidenced based programs – one of only three selected in the state in 2019. http://kdhnews.com/news/education/early-college-high-school-among-state-schools-in-special-tour/article_603086f6-606f-11e9-8170-43d95e7d2d67.html
- ✓ Texas A&M-Central Texas recognized by US News & World Reports for online Master’s Programs in the Top 100 in the nation. The Masters of Criminal Justice ranked #30, Masters of Business (non-MBA) #32, Masters of Business (MBA) #71, and Masters of Science in Business (non-MBA) #75 in the nation. https://kdhnews.com/news/education/a-m-central-texas-recognized-for-masters-programs/article_16ecbf5a-37d8-11ea-ae48-8f18eb44f4aa.html
- ✓ In 2022, Texas A&M-Central Texas University ranked in the top 25% in an Intelligent.com assessment of 704 programs in more than 2,900 universities across the US scored on five areas of program strength, student readiness, return on investment, cost and student engagement. Four (4) degree programs were ranked even higher: Online Masters in Criminal Justice Programs ranked #8, Online Bachelors in Aeronautics & Aviation Programs ranked #18, Online Criminal Justice Degree Programs ranked #29, and Online Human Resources Degree Programs ranked #34. https://kdhnews.com/news/education/a-m-central-texas-recognized-for-masters-programs/article_16ecbf5a-37d8-11ea-ae48-8f18eb44f4aa.html
- ✓ Opportunities for a variety of educational experiences in area schools. A few examples are:
 - ❖ Killeen ISD received a 2018 \$1M DODEA Grant and Copperas Cove ISD received a 2019 \$750K DODEA Grant to expand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics programs because of their large military student populations.
 - ❖ In 2019 Copperas Cove High School teams placed first in Medical Assisting at the International Competition for the Health Occupation Students of America and placed second in the World DECA competition. http://kdhnews.com/copperas_cove_herald/community/cove-student-named-hosa-world-champion/article_7623ac80-9919-11e9-b82b-8bf160478035.html



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http://kdhnews.com/copperas_cove_herald/community/cchs-deca-students-place-second-in-world-contest/article_cd347b1a-83d6-11e9-aaf7-0312cc5644cc.html

- ❖ In 2019, Belton High School construction trades team placed first in the SkillsUSA TeamWorks national championship.

http://www.tdtnews.com/news/article_d94b9c88-7bfa-11e8-8c98-5f13c7d6ed7d.html

- **Great Communities** – Diverse collection of military-friendly communities offering everything from city to country lifestyles. The Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area includes over 451,000 residents with one in three (1 in 3) residents (over 159,000) either an active duty servicemember, a retired servicemember, or a family member of either.
 - ✓ Common values with the community and our military families that echo the multi-cultural themes of diversity you find around the world in military service.
 - ✓ In 2019, US News and World Report ranked Killeen #5 of the Best Place to Live in Texas. <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/slideshows/the-best-places-to-live-in-texas?slide=7>
 - ✓ In 2019, Military Times ranked Killeen #21 of 234 medium-sized cities as Best for Vets: Places to Live. <https://rebootcamp.militarytimes.com/transition/news/2018/09/10/best-for-vets-places-to-live-2019/>
 - ✓ In 2019, a Walton Foundation on the Most Dynamic Metropolitans ranked the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA #99 of 379 metropolitan areas. <https://8ce82b94a8c4fdc3ea6db1d233e3bc3cb10858bea65ff05e18f2.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/3a/65/0ee1fa164ea2bda45cbee8472368/hf-metro-rankings-final.pdf>
 - ✓ In 2018, US News & World Report ranked Killeen in the top 125 best places to live in the USA. https://killeenchamber.com/killeen_ranked_in_125_best_places_to_live_in_the_usa
 - ✓ In 2018, the SmartAsset financial publication ranked Temple #25 of the top 190 Technology Cities. http://www.tdtnews.com/news/article_9c060f12-fd95-11e8-9aac-8f0f09da1e8a.html
 - ✓ In 2018, the Urban Institute and CNN Money reported Killeen has the smallest racial homeownership gap in the USA. https://money.cnn.com/2018/04/17/news/economy/killeen-texas-homeownership/index.html?section=money_news_economy&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2Fmoney_news_economy+%28CNNMoney%3A+Economy+News%29
- **Great Quality of Life** – affordable housing with low cost of living and ready access to healthcare, and recreation situated in the beautiful topography of Central Texas. Local access to a variety of recreation activities including two lakes, nearby rivers, and parks providing water recreation, fishing, hunting, hiking, cycling, and equine activities. Local and



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nearby nightlife offer outdoor and indoor music venues, theaters, wineries, pubs, restaurants, and family friendly events that celebrate historical, ethnic, and local events.

- ✓ Temple area ranks 26th in the US for lowest cost of living with a lower cost of living than 90% of the metropolitan areas in the US.
http://www.tdtnews.com/news/article_6b82de38-2ccf-11e9-8b28-b73dd6e30741.html
- ✓ In 2019, Killeen ranked #20 of 300 cities for the Best Places to Retire with Low Rent.
<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/great-places-retire-where-rent-090000183.html>
- ✓ In 2019, Patch.Com Killeen ranked in the 125 Best Places to Live.
<https://patch.com/texas/across-tx/u-s-news-where-killeen-ranks-best-places-live>
- **Great Location** – located in central Texas adjacent to IH-14 and IH-35 in the heart of the Texas Triangle (DFW-HOU-SA). The Texas Triangle contains 5 of the 15 largest cities in the US, 53 of 500 Fortune 500 companies, 77% of Texas economy, and 66% of Texas population – all within 200 miles of the Central Texas region. You can find anything you are looking for from outdoor recreation to symphonies to one of the fastest growing Tech industries all within easy reach.
 - ✓ Centrally located in the US with a strategic airfield, state of the art rail facility, easy access to Texas seaports, and nearly equidistant access to strategic East Coast and West Coast seaports enabling deployment no matter the situation.
 - ✓ Located in the Heart of the *Texas Triangle* (DFW-HOU-SA) which is home to 66% of the Texas population, 77% of the Texas economy, and 5 of the 15 largest cities in the USA within a few hours travel. <https://www.expressnews.com/business/local/article/Texas-triangle-cities-make-up-the-economic-12206493.php>
 - ✓ In 2019, Magnify Money, ranked Killeen #17 of 171 cities for Best Places for Early Retirement. <https://www.magnifymoney.com/blog/retirement/best-cities-for-fire-early-retirement/>
- **Great People (Veterans/Multi-cultural)** – Central Texas is home to a diverse collection of people that generally reflect the values and traditions of the military. The rich cultural diversity of Texas provides educational opportunities to experience and learn about multiple cultures from around the world that have migrated to Texas over its storied history. Texas also has a long-standing reputation as a military friendly and veteran friendly state. Nowhere is this more evident than in Central Texas. The
 - ✓ One (1) in three (3) people in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) population are an active-duty servicemember, a retired servicemember, or a family member representing over 160,000 of the 460,000 residents. This creates an environment of shared experiences and support that is uncommon near other military installations.



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- ✓ Home to three (#2 Harker Heights, #7 Copperas Cove, & #20 Killeen) of the Top 25 cities in the USA, on a per capita basis, from which young people join a military service. <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/nation-world/national/article232022122.html>
- ✓ The Central Texas region has over 229 organizations that support or assist the military and veteran population in the area with a range of services. From the traditional organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion to state organizations like the Texas Veterans Commission, to local organizations and non-profits.
- ✓ In 2019, the Society of 40 and 8 veterans organization presented Harker Heights the “City of the Year Award.” Harker Heights is the first Texas city to receive the award. http://kdhnews.com/harker_heights_herald/local/harker-heights-first-texas-city-to-receive-city-of-the/article_aa785aa0-bfaa-11e9-a0e4-33b26a15484e.html
- **Great Cost of Living** – located in the heart of Texas with low cost of living resulting from good wages, affordable housing,
 - ✓ In 2019, SmartAsset ranked Temple as one of the Top 10 Best American Cities to Work in Tech. <https://smartasset.com/mortgage/tech-workers-2019>
 - ✓ In 2019, Realtor.Com ranked the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA as #7 on the list of 10 Markets Where Home Prices Are Unstoppable. <https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/10-markets-where-home-prices-are-unstoppable/>
 - ✓ In 2019, Where to Retire Magazine named the Killeen area as a top retirement destination and one of the Top 8 Tax Friendly Cities in the USA. <https://www.kwtx.com/content/news/Local-city-named-top-place-to-retire-504211181.html>
 - ✓ In 2019, Kiplinger.Com rated the Temple Area as #16 of the 25 Cheapest Cities to Live. <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/25-cheapest-u-cities-live-182824879.html>
 - ✓ In 2018, US News and World Report ranked Killeen in top 100 places to live in the USA. The rankings were based on strong job market, value, desirability, and quality of life. <https://www.kcentv.com/article/news/local/national-report-ranks-killeen-one-of-the-top-100-places-to-live-in-the-us/500-537516247>
- **Great Services (Healthcare, Bandwidth, Employment, Veterans)** – access to a variety of services including employment programs, healthcare services and education, veterans service organizations, and nearby tech Central Texas Workforce Solutions, technology industry
 - ✓ In 2019, Texas implemented legislation in SB1200 to ease the burden on military spouses transferring professional licenses and certifications moving to Texas. A military spouse may submit their license or certification along with their permanent change of station orders to Texas for approval by the respective state agency and subsequently will be granted the ability to practice in Texas for up to three years.



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- ✓ Central Texas Workforce Solutions provides a variety of employment services including programs targeted to military spouses, veterans, and transitioning service members. Opportunities are coordinated with Fort Hood’s Soldier for Life Program to provide internships, career skills programs, and licensing/certification programs.
- ✓ Killeen based information technology company, CENTEX Technology, included in INC’s 5000 fastest growing companies at #2811 with three-year growth of 134%.
- ✓ Temple is home to the Texas Health and Bioscience District which is a municipally funded non-profit incubator targeting health and bioscience industries.
<https://www.templebioscience.org/>
- ✓ In 2020, Central Texas College was ranked among the top 10 best online community college in Texas by Optimal/SR Education Group.
https://kdhnews.com/news/education/ctc-named-to-top-10-list-of-texas-online-community-colleges/article_0c84f262-ab2d-11ea-bdb2-ff53c0eab36b.html/?&logged_out=1
- ✓ In 2019, IBM Watson Health named Seton Medical Center Harker Heights one of the top 100 hospitals in the USA. <https://www.kxxv.com/hometown/bell-county/harker-heights-medical-center-named-in-nations-top-100-hospitals>
- ✓ In 2019, US News and World Report ranked Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Temple in the top 10% in the nation for Nephrology and Pulmonology & Lung Surgery. The hospital is also ranked #7 in Texas overall.
https://starlocalmedia.com/friscoenterprise/news/baylor-scott-white-recognized/article_cc7a6212-b571-11e9-a897-d733a0a341e0.html
- ✓ In 2019, the American College of Surgeons recognized Carl R Darnall Army Medical Center with a Meritorious Award for Surgical Patient Care given to the top 10% of hospitals. <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Display/Article/1761517/four-military-treatment-facilities-earn-prestigious-surgical-quality-awards/>
- ✓ Abundant access to healthcare services at one of the six hospitals located in Central Texas - Carl R Darnall, Army Medical Center, Baylor Scott & White Medical Center, Seton Medical Center, Advent Health Central Texas Hospital, Coryell Memorial Hospital, and the Olin E Teague Veterans Medical Center.