

More graduates choosing to work in 2nd-tier cities



Graduates participate in a job fair at a vocational college in the Qianxinan Bouyei and Miao autonomous prefecture in Guizhou province in June.
[Photo/China Daily]

After graduating from Tsinghua University this summer, Xu Yingqiang left Beijing to work for a chemical trading company in Chengdu, Sichuan Province.

“In cities like Chengdu, I can still pursue my dreams – but without all the struggling,” the 24-year-old graduate said.

This year, the number of college graduates in China is expected to reach 7.95 million, an increase of 300,000 over last year, according to the Ministry of Education.

Other than swarming into megacities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, more students want to start their careers in second-tier cities, including provincial capitals and coastal cities, according to a recent survey.

The survey, which was conducted by Zhaopin.com, one of China’s leading recruitment websites, found that 37.5 percent of new college graduates this year wanted to work in second-tier cities, while 29.9 percent preferred top-tier cities.

“A few years ago, only a couple of students graduating from universities

outside Chongqing came for a job interview,” said Huang Zuge, a human resources official at an internet company in Chongqing. “But this year we have a long line of people with master’s and doctoral degrees from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.”

National Bureau of Statistics figures show that besides Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, eight smaller metropolises stepped into China’s 1-trillion-yuan (US\$148 billion) GDP club in 2016. They include Chongqing, Chengdu, Wuhan, Suzhou and Hangzhou.

The rapid economic development of second-tier cities is the main factor that attracts fresh graduates, said Su Hainan, vice-president of the China Association for Labor Studies.

Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, a host city of the 2016 G20 Summit, set a record with double-digit GDP growth for seven consecutive quarters in 2015 and 2016.

Chengdu is home to the offices of 278 Fortune Global 500 companies, and is also a key city in China’s Belt and Road Initiative. More than 7,000 new companies have registered in Chengdu during the past three months.

Besides economic growth, favorable employment policies in these cities appeal to new college graduates.

Changsha, Hunan Province, provides housing and living subsidies of 6,000 to 15,000 yuan per year for many graduates. Those with doctoral degrees can get 60,000 yuan in subsidies when they purchase their first residence in the city.

Liu Xuezhi, an analyst at the Bank of Communications, said adopting favorable employment policies meets the need for innovative development in second-tier cities.

High-quality human resources are becoming a strong driver of the industrial transformation and upgrading of mid-level cities, said Liu Yuanchun, an economist and vice-president of Renmin University of China.