

# Where Should I Practice?

By: *Laura Overcash*  
*Bentson Clark & Copple, LLC*



According to the United States Postal Service, there are more than 42,000 ZIP codes in the United States. It is hard to imagine the vast number of communities that compile these zip codes. Let's take a moment to step back and imagine being in the shoes of an orthodontic resident who is finishing up his or her program. After spending years perfecting your craft it is finally time to start creating beautiful, life-changing smiles. However, one small, yet, hugely important question stands in your immediate future: "Where should I choose to practice?" It is ultimately the million dollar question for each and every resident.

With all of the possible locations to practice, are some places more popular than others? According to Bentson Clark & Copple's 2012 Annual Resident Survey, the answer is yes. The most sought-after locations have remained fairly consistent over the past few years. California is the most popular state, followed by Texas and Pennsylvania. The top five states of interest are rounded out by Florida and Washington.

When examining the ten least desirable states residents say they want to practice in, there were slight modifications on the least popular states, but many of the same states appear in every one conducted since 2010. If you plan to practice in one of these states new competition may be lower, but when it comes time to add an associate or to sell you will need to plan on the process taking longer.

An orthodontic resident's spouse's home state still remains a significant influence when selecting a practice location. According to the 2012 Annual Resident Survey data, 37% of residents' first choice of practice location is that of their spouse's home state. The number of residents who respond that spousal influence is not applicable, however, continues to increase. According to many residents, there is no single reason why some states are chosen over others. Some residents may enjoy one state's weather over another or enjoy the area's geography. Overall, residents are most interested in large metropolitan areas. This seems logical because there are more rooftops and more practice opportunities in these areas. Residents tend to also seem to prefer a location that is within a few hours from a coastline, large body of water or mountains.

The two charts below list the most popular and least popular states for residents with regard to practice location when surveyed about the states they wish to practice. We have included the past three years of data from our Annual Resident Survey to provide a better illustration of the location trend.

***Most Popular States for Orthodontic Residents***

<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
1. California	1. California	1. California
2. Texas	2. Texas	2. Texas
3. Pennsylvania	3. New York	3. New York
4. Florida	4. Florida	4. Illinois
5. Washington	5. Virginia	5. Pennsylvania
6. New York	6. Colorado	6. Washington
7. North Carolina	7. Georgia	7. Colorado
8. Colorado	8. Pennsylvania	8. Virginia
9. Virginia	9. Illinois	9. Georgia
10. Georgia	10. Utah	10. Florida

Source: Bentson Clark & Copple, LLC Resident Survey 2010-2012

***Least Popular States for Orthodontic Residents***

<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
1. West Virginia	1. West Virginia	1. Vermont
2. Vermont	2. Vermont	2. Montana
3. South Dakota	3. Rhode Island	3. Arkansas
4. New Hampshire	4. North Dakota	4. Delaware
5. Washington, DC	5. Iowa	5. Maine
6. Rhode Island	6. Arkansas	6. Hawaii
7. Wyoming	7. Wyoming	7. Idaho
8. Nevada	8. South Dakota	8. Iowa
9. Montana	9. New Mexico	9. North Dakota
10. Iowa	10. New Hampshire	10. Wyoming

Source: Bentson Clark & Copple, LLC Resident Survey 2010-2012

To purchase Bentson Clark & Copple's 2012 Orthodontic Resident Survey booklet, call 1-800-621-4664 or visit [www.bentsonclark.com](http://www.bentsonclark.com) and click on 'Shop our Publication Store.' The booklet features the entire survey's results, our commentary and a comparison of this year's data to that of the previous two years.

*Bentson Clark & Copple*  
**InSight**

*Volume 9, Issue 1*

© 2013, Bentson Clark & Copple, LLC