

# ‘Spokane Doesn’t Suck’ creator finds support for message on Kickstarter

**Rachel Alexander/SR**

**On the Web:** View Oliver’s campaign at <http://kck.st/1PZF7Nu>.

“Spokane Doesn’t Suck” is far from the best thing Derrick Oliver could say about his adopted hometown.

The 31-year-old Texas transplant would rather tell people about The Bartlett’s upcoming concert schedule or his plans for Terrain, the eighth annual art extravaganza scheduled for the first Friday in October.

But it’s hard to fit all that on a T-shirt, and Oliver is in the business of T-shirts. He’s raised \$6,000 (and counting) on [Kickstarter](#) to make shirts, prints and stickers emblazoned with “Spokane Doesn’t Suck” – a rejoinder to the all-too-common teasing he hears from people who live in other cities in the Northwest.

Often, Oliver finds telling where he lives elicits responses like, “Oh, I’m sorry,” an attitude he believes is based on ignorance.

“Like, no, why would you be? Spokane’s awesome,” he said. “I don’t want to hype it up too much because I don’t want everyone to start moving here. The cost of living you can’t argue with.”

Oliver moved to the Lilac City four years ago with a group of friends to start the Inland Church, a nondenominational Christian church downtown. He coordinates music and does design and website work.

“My title is creative arts pastor, but we just made that up,” he said with a laugh.

He also works at online retailer Etailz and sits on the Spokane Arts Commission.

When he and his friends were deciding where to move, Oliver researched other cities in the Northwest.

“I got a lot of negativity about us considering moving here,” he said.

He came anyway and found a friendly community eager to show him the ropes, a burgeoning arts scene and a plethora of new restaurants, venues and other “stuff that people like to do,” he said.

Though his Kickstarter campaign launched Sept. 1, Oliver has a longer history with the “Spokane Doesn’t Suck” slogan. He sold prints bearing the slogan at the Perry Street Fair earlier this summer and has run a blog on Tumblr under the same name since 2011, posting photos showcasing the best side of the city and interviews with residents.

“Cities that have mountains visible in the background of skyline shots don’t suck,” the blog proclaims under a photo of downtown.

The reaction to his work has been mostly positive, appealing to “people who are tired of other cities hating on Spokane,” Oliver said.

He raised his campaign goal of \$3,750 in two days on Kickstarter, but the campaign is open until the end of the month for people who want to order shirts and stickers.

“I did way better than I thought I was gonna do,” he said.

Once he’s shipped out a first run of shirts and other merchandise to Kickstarter backers, Oliver plans to offer Spokane Doesn’t Suck merchandise in an online store at [spokanedoesntsuck.com](http://spokanedoesntsuck.com). And he’ll continue spreading the word about the virtues of his new hometown.

“Never say never, but I don’t plan on leaving Spokane,” he said.