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2025

America's Best Cities

100 American Cities
Shaping Tomorrow
The definitive place
power rankings

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Welcome to the 2025 America's Best Cities Report

As leading advisers in placemaking, place branding and place marketing, Resonance has conducted extensive research on the rise of cities, the key trends propelling their growth and the factors that shape our perception of urban areas as desirable places to live, visit or launch and grow a business.



Chris Fair

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At Resonance Consultancy, we specialize in helping cities and regions compete more effectively for talent, tourism and investment. Our proprietary Place Power™ Score—backed by a decade of performance benchmarking—ranks America's Best Cities using the data and signals that matter most for economic developers, real estate investors, corporate strategists and destination marketing leaders.

And in 2025, those signals are more complex—and consequential—than ever.

American cities are navigating a converging set of headwinds: rising climate volatility, interest rate uncertainty, infrastructure strain and geopolitical tensions reshaping global capital and talent flows. Urban wildfires, extreme heat events and water access issues are no longer outliers—they are key considerations for development and site selection.

Meanwhile, the once-reliable influx of international visitors—critical to downtown recovery in many gateway cities—has plummeted due to federal policies coming out of the White House. According to U.S. National Travel & Tourism Office projections, 2025 inbound visitation from markets like China, Japan and the UK will still lag 2019 benchmarks by as much as 15%, even as domestic travel stabilizes. Undeterred, cities like San Francisco, Chicago and New York are responding with new high-impact tourism infrastructure for when visitors return—from San Diego's Seaport Village redevelopment and the Hudson River Park build-out in Manhattan to the

\$2-billion O'Hare Global Terminal expansion and Atlanta's 2025 Centennial Yards debut.

Yet amid this volatility lies opportunity.

Cities that top our 2025 rankings are not just reacting—they're leading. They're reshoring advanced manufacturing, doubling down on R&D ecosystems, investing in multimodal connectivity and creating magnetic cultural districts that attract talent and visitors alike. Think Pittsburgh's robotics corridor, Miami's health tech ascent or Nashville's surge in creative class in-migration. These metros are aligning investment attraction with livability and cultural capital—redefining what a "best city" means in this decade.

Our methodology reflects this evolution. While we continue to track fundamentals like airport connectivity, housing affordability and GDP, we also measure emerging proxies for urban momentum: start-up ecosystem strength, digital storytelling by locals and visitors, and cultural vibrancy at the street level.

For those building America's urban future—whether through capital deployment, headquarters decisions, retail footprint strategy or place marketing—this data offers more than rankings. It offers clarity, risk context and a roadmap to opportunity.

If you'd like to explore how this year's insights can inform your next project, partnership or investment, I'd welcome the conversation.

The American city's signal through the noise (so much noise)

Welcome to the latest edition of our America's Best Cities report, which reveals how the current political landscape, emerging tourism trends and shifting global perceptions are shaping the appeal of U.S. urban centers today.



Jason McGrath

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American cities have been facing a range of challenges. Climate issues, increasing infrastructural demands, and shifting geopolitical landscapes affecting international relations and travel are evident across the country. Despite these hurdles, cities are creatively reinventing themselves to shine as examples of cultural vibrancy and innovation, keeping their competitive edge both locally and globally.

Our report shows that the allure of American cities remains strong, thanks to their rich diversity and vast attractions—from natural wonders to buzzing cultural hubs.

With shifting global perceptions influenced by tariff disputes and politics, U.S. cities are leveraging their cultural assets and innovative spirit more than ever. Nashville's thriving creative scene is attracting new talent, while Charleston captivates with its historic allure and modern flair. These cities demonstrate how the fusion of heritage and contemporary vibes can positively shift perceptions and drive livability, lovability and prosperity.

Recent Ipsos polling data reveals that global perceptions of America's positive impact on world affairs have declined. On top of this, international travelers are encountering new hurdles and considerations when visiting the U.S. due to recent federal policies. Despite these challenges, U.S. cities are carving out new paths. Las Vegas is transforming its Strip with new entertainment complexes and luxury hotels. Washington, D.C., is revitalizing the National Mall. And Austin is enhancing its music scene with new venues and festivals that attract crowds worldwide, boosting its tourism appeal through unforgettable cultural experiences.

In preparation for this year's America's Best Cities report, Ipsos, in partnership with Resonance, conducted survey research among more than

2,000 citizens across the United States. Respondents were asked to identify the towns and cities where they would most like to live someday, where they would most like to visit, and where they believe they will find the best job opportunities. This research was guided by the following three open-ended questions:

1. Thinking about places across the United States, including small towns and large cities, what are the top three towns or cities you would most like to live in someday?
2. Thinking about places across the United States, including small towns and large cities, what are the top three towns or cities you would most like to visit in the next 12 to 24 months?
3. Thinking about places across the United States, including small towns and large cities, what three towns or cities do you believe currently offer the best job opportunities?

Our findings suggest that America's top cities brilliantly weave local culture with economic prospects, aligning with global and domestic travel trends to create premier experiences for both residents and travelers. Understanding these insights is a must for anyone invested in urban growth and tourism strategy, providing a blueprint for future opportunities.

We invite you to explore the study's insights and are here for any discussions about how these findings could fit with your strategies in building global urban appeal.

Thanks for your interest in our latest America's Best Cities report. We look forward to helping you navigate this dynamic and ever-evolving field.

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Our Methodology

How we ranked America's Best Cities for 2025

To rank the performance and perception of America's Best Cities for 2025, Resonance analyzed the principal cities of metropolitan statistical areas in the U.S. with a population greater than 500,000 (according to the U.S. Census Bureau, our population source). We determined the Top 100 cities using a combination of core statistics and user-generated data from online sources such as Google, Tripadvisor and Instagram to measure quality of place when it comes to experiential factors.

This blend of data led to the creation of Resonance's proprietary Place Power™ Score, the foundation of all of our Best Cities rankings. So how does Resonance choose the metrics to effectively measure an urban region's performance relative to its competitors? While many factors shape our perception of urban regions as desirable places to live, work or visit, Resonance's proprietary Place Power™ Score rankings are focused on the shared factors that demonstrate moderate to strong correlations with the performance of urban regions when it comes to attracting prime-age population (age 25–44), visitor expenditure and/or business formation.

Based on our ongoing analysis, these factors are an eclectic mix that ranges from the number of large companies and ease of airport connectivity to the number of nightlife and outdoor recreation experiences and the volume of check-ins on Facebook and mentions on Instagram. Since these factors can change and evolve over time, we're continually updating our methodology to reflect these shifts. Case in point: we've included factors like "Price-to-Income Ratio" (to track affordability) and Healthcare System Index (to measure a city's concern for the well-being of residents) in this year's America's Best Cities index.

As part of our new partnership with Ipsos (see page 4), we combined the performance data of the subcategories that comprise our overall Livability, Lovability and Prosperity indices with perception data reflecting the opinions and preferences of 2,003 respondents across the United States.

The survey was constructed to extract the towns and cities where these 2,003 people would most like to live, where they would most like to visit, and where they believe they would find the best job opportunities.

This was accomplished with three open-ended questions where respondents could identify the towns and cities that they prefer.

We asked them: when thinking about places across the United States, including small towns and large cities, which three towns or cities would you most like to live in, most like to visit, and think currently offer the best job opportunities?

This open-ended question methodology enabled us to capture the destinations that are top of mind to survey participants, rather than restricting them to a predetermined list of cities. The responses to these questions were aggregated and coded to benchmark the perception equivalent of our performance results, creating a true balance across our three overall indices of Lovability, Livability and Prosperity.

Livability

Our most layered overarching category quantifies a city's physical sense of place.

To score a city within our Livability category, we evaluate the perceived quality of its natural and built environments. This includes how much of an urban area is dedicated to green space and how many quality parks, sights, neighborhoods and landmarks are recommended online by locals and visitors. We also look at key socioeconomic factors such as the affordability of monthly rents and the cost of housing—factors that not only retain talent, but also attract it (and, by extension, attract skill-seeking companies as well). Livability also looks at the natural attributes of a region such as the amount of tree cover and the quality of the air residents and visitors breathe.

LIVABILITY METRICS

Sights & Landmarks

The number of sights and landmarks rated above four stars, as listed on Tripadvisor (Tripadvisor.com)

Housing Affordability

This indicator is an index of housing affordability in a metropolitan area, based on the median cost of renting a one-bedroom apartment in the area and the median rent cost as a share of household income. (U.S. Census Bureau)

Air Quality

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a measure of air pollutant concentrations in ambient air and their associated health risks. As the AQI increases, this denotes a higher level of air pollution and, as such, a higher percentage of the population is likely to experience adverse health effects in the area. The air quality index ranges from 0 to 500. Good air quality ranges from 0 to 50, while measurements over 300 are considered hazardous. (IQAir)

Healthcare System Index

The Health subcategory evaluates the overall population well-being, access to healthcare, and public health outcomes of a city or region. These indicators are critical to understanding a city's livability and resilience, particularly as urban centers compete for talent and investment in a post-pandemic world. The subcategories comprising the index are: 1) Life Expectancy at Birth: Captures long-term public health outcomes and the overall standard of living. Higher life expectancy reflects access to healthcare, nutrition, safety and other determinants of well-being. 2) Crude Mortality Rate: Offers a baseline measure of population health by quantifying deaths relative to population size. Helps contextualize life expectancy and detect short-term public health shifts, like pandemics or health crises. 3) Physicians per 1,000 Residents: A proxy for access to healthcare services. A higher density of physicians usually correlates with better healthcare access and outcomes, particularly in urban environments. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development—OECD)

Green Space

This indicator measures the share of an urban area's land that is covered with vegetation that is at least 16 feet in height and with canopy cover that is greater than 50%. (OECD)

Nature & Parks

This indicator measures the number of natural areas, parks and outdoor activities rated above four stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Heat Stress

On average, the number of days in a year that residents are exposed to extreme heat of over 90° Fahrenheit. (OECD)

Biking

This subcategory measures whether an area is good for biking based on bike lanes and trails, hills, road connectivity and destinations. (Bike Score)

Walkability

Walk Score measures the walkability of any address based on the distance to nearby places and pedestrian friendliness. (Walk Score)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 2,003 respondents from across the United States about the top three cities and towns that they would most like to live in someday. (Ipsos)

Lovability

Lovability speaks to the relative vibrancy and quality of place of a city relative to its competitive set.

For almost a decade, Resonance research has shown that the more vibrant a city or region is in terms of its culture, dining and nightlife, the more visitors, young professionals and large corporations it attracts. A region's lovability also inspires residents, businesses and visitors to promote a region to the world more effectively and cost-efficiently than destination marketers can ever hope to. Resonance ranks a city's performance in each of these areas based on the number of stories, references and recommendations shared online about that city in key user-generated digital channels like Tripadvisor, Instagram and Facebook, and sought out on Google.

LOVABILITY METRICS

Nightlife

The number of local nightlife experiences rated above four stars, as listed on Tripadvisor, including bars, pubs and clubs. (Tripadvisor.com)

Shopping

The number of local shopping experiences rated above four stars, as listed on Tripadvisor, including shopping malls, farmers markets, department stores, airport shops and factory outlets in an area. (Tripadvisor.com)

Facebook Check-ins

The total number of check-ins posted by residents and tourists in a region. (Facebook.com)

Tripadvisor Reviews

The total number of reviews a destination has on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Restaurants

The total number of restaurants listed within a city on TripAdvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Culture

The number of concerts, shows and events, rated above 4 stars in a city, as listed on TripAdvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Instagram Posts

This indicator measures the total number of geographically tagged posts, including Reels, in a city. (Instagram.com)

Google Trends

Popularity of a city on Google Trends in the past 12 months, relative to the other cities analyzed, choosing the larger total of the city (for example, "Seattle") or the city and region ("Seattle, Washington"). (Trends.Google.com)

Museums

The number of museums in a city rated above four stars, as listed on Tripadvisor (Tripadvisor.com)

Attractions

The number of zoos, aquariums, amusement parks and gaming attractions rated above 4 stars, as listed on Tripadvisor. (Tripadvisor.com)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 2,003 respondents from across the United States about the top three cities and towns that they would most like to visit in the next 12 to 24 months. (Ipsos)

Prosperity

Human capital is becoming a region's most valuable resource when it comes to generating wealth and prosperity. For many cities, it is increasingly in short supply.

To evaluate the relative strength of human capital from one region to the next, Resonance not only measures the number of large companies headquartered in the city, the level of the city's population, and the percentage of people participating in the labor force, but also the support a city provides for start-ups and how the innovation ecosystem is distributed across each city. Wealth and prosperity are also evaluated by core statistics like business infrastructure, such as the region's airport connectivity to other destinations and the presence and size of the convention center and its ability to welcome global investment events.

PROSPERITY METRICS

Labor Force Participation

A city's active workforce, defined as the percentage of all people of working age who are employed or are actively seeking work. (U.S. Census Bureau)

Large Companies

The number of companies with over 1,000 employees that are headquartered in a city. (Crunchbase)

Airport

Number of direct destinations from major airports within a 50-mile radius of the primary city. (Flightsfrom.com)

Convention Center

The size of the largest convention center in a city based on exhibition space in square feet. (Venue websites)

University

The aggregate score of the highest-ranking university in a city. (QS Top Universities, U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings, and Times Higher Education World University Rankings)

Educational Attainment

This indicator measures the proportion of the population that has at least a bachelor's degree in a city. (U.S. Census Bureau)

GDP per Capita

The GDP per capita in a region in U.S. dollars. (Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Business Ecosystem

The quantity, quality and overall state of a city's business environment that contributes to the success of start-ups. (StartupBlink)

Unemployment Rate

The rate of unemployment in a region. (U.S. Census Bureau)

Poverty Rate

The percentage of the population living below the poverty line in a city. (U.S. Census Bureau)

Perception

Ranking in a survey of 2,003 respondents from across the United States about the top three cities and towns that they think offer the best job opportunities. (Ipsos)

America's Top 100 cities, in detail

The urban centers of America are the engines of our national economy and, increasingly, the global marketplace. As powerhouses generating over 80% of U.S. GDP, these cities have long stood as testaments to American innovation, cultural diversity and economic resilience.

In 2025, and likely beyond, American cities face unprecedented challenges—from the lingering impacts of housing affordability crises to infrastructure modernization demands. The post-pandemic landscape has revealed critical vulnerabilities in our urban networks, from digital connectivity gaps to essential service delivery. Yet true to their adaptive spirit, U.S. cities aren't merely recovering—they're pioneering new approaches to governance, sustainability and community development.

The dramatic shifts in workforce mobility, technological integration and climate adaptation have accelerated the rise of mid-sized cities and emerging regional hubs across the country. From Boise to Greenville, new centers of economic vitality are flourishing, offering compelling combinations of livability, opportunity, and connectivity that increasingly attract both domestic talent and

global investment. Federal initiatives focusing on domestic manufacturing, climate resilience and digital infrastructure have further established these cities as critical nodes in the national economy.

America's urban centers are more than economic hubs—they are cultural catalysts where innovation happens, communities strengthen, and futures take shape. From the tech corridors of Austin to the revitalized industrial districts of Pittsburgh, these cities are redefining what it means to thrive in an era of rapid technological and social transformation.

The 100 cities profiled in this report represent the vanguard of America's urban renaissance. Each one, in its distinct way, is helping to shape the nation's trajectory and global position for the remainder of this decade and beyond.

1

New York

New York

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 1 Livability
- 1 Lovability
- 1 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sights & Landmarks
- 1 Culture

POPULATION

Metro 19,498,000



Little Island against the downtown Manhattan skyline

New York City, the perpetual heartbeat of America, has finished **#1** since we started ranking U.S. cities almost a decade ago. This year, the city also tops our three overall indexes: Livability, Lovability and Prosperity. What's the Big Apple's special sauce in 2025? Read on.

The Big Apple epitomizes urban recovery, marked by a whirlwind of new shows, hotels, cultural spaces and transformative developments—backed by record real estate prices and an influx of both visitors and new residents. With a rebound as impressive as its skyline, NYC's resurgence is remarkable, embodying the city's indomitable spirit.

The city's ability to bounce back from the depths of the pandemic is nothing short of extraordinary. Just a few years ago, skeptics were quick to proclaim the end of NYC's dynamic urban experiment as offices emptied and tourism plummeted. But in a powerful resurgence, Manhattan rents have now skyrocketed to unprecedented levels, with the median doorman rent hitting \$5,200 in March 2025—still 5% above last year despite a 3.22% vacancy rate. Brooklyn's market signals even stronger demand as concessions have virtually disappeared, indicating that housing demand continues to outpace new supply.

Tourism, a cornerstone of NYC's global reputation and economy, has come roaring back, reinforcing the city's position as a must-visit destination. Following the 62.2 million visitors in 2023, NYC hosted nearly

65 million visitors in 2024. But given across-the-board declines in international travel into the U.S. in 2025, the city is projecting a decline for the year, at 64.1 million visitors, which represents "an estimated loss of over \$4 billion in direct spending," according to the city. Local leaders are trying to leverage restored international routes and a calendar now featuring the 2026 World Cup final across the Hudson to right the ship, while also showcasing the legendary thriving cultural and entertainment scene (NYC ranks **#1** in our Culture subcategory), along with world-class Broadway shows, restaurants, sporting events and museums (for which it also ranks **#1**).

"We are delighted that New York City has ranked **#1** on Resonance's 2025 America's Best Cities list," said Julie Coker, NYC Tourism + Conventions President and CEO. "This recognition is a testament to the enduring appeal of the five boroughs. New York City's unmatched energy, cultural vibrancy, and world-class experiences—from Broadway and museums to our diverse culinary scene—keep us firmly positioned as a must-visit destination. Looking ahead to milestone events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup Final and America 250, we are excited for



The High Line

what's to come and proud to share the spirit of NYC with the world."

The visitor economy now contributes over \$74 billion in economic impact.

NYC's transportation infrastructure investments are eagerly awaiting visitors and ROI. Significant renovations have been completed at all three major airports: LaGuardia, Newark Liberty International and John F. Kennedy International. The most ambitious project remains the ongoing \$19-billion transformation of JFK Airport, where the \$9.5-billion New Terminal One topped off in March 2024 and will open its first 14 gates in 2026, bringing 300,000 square feet of retail and dining space and 10,000 jobs. The city's #1 Airport Connectivity ranking will only solidify as these projects complete.

The city's controversial foray into congestion pricing is off to a promising start, with data showing a 13% traffic drop and faster crosstown buses south of 60th Street since its launch at the beginning of 2025. The program has already brought in \$48.6 million in its first month and is on target for \$500 million annually, effectively plugging the

MTA's \$35 billion gap and securing its \$68.4-billion 2025-2029 capital plan that prioritizes new signals, the Interborough Express light rail and 67 more ADA-accessible stations. Transit improvements continue with the OMNY contactless payment system fully in place by 2026, while the MTA's pending bond issue—backed by new toll revenue—accelerates signal modernization from four lines per year to seven.

Housing global travelers has evolved dramatically with the controversial Local Law 18's strict short-term rental regulations causing an 80% decrease in listings. The luxury hotel scene has responded robustly, with the Four Seasons New York roaring back in November 2024 after a four-year closure, while reservations just opened for the reborn Waldorf Astoria (soft-opening spring 2025, full launch in September). In addition to Firmdale's Warren Street Hotel and The Surrey's Corinthia relaunch, Manhattan will add more than 700 ultra-luxury keys before next summer, reinforcing the city's position as a global hospitality leader.

NYC's cultural institutions continue their vital role in the city's renaissance. Google's 1.3-million-square-foot St. John's Terminal

HQ welcomed 3,000 employees in Hudson Square last February, injecting tech dollars and foot traffic into the West Village fringe. The Metropolitan Museum of Art will break ground on its \$500-million modern wing revamp in 2026, while the expansion of the Bronx Museum and recently launched PAC NYC are anchoring the outer-borough arts surge. These cultural investments complement Lower Manhattan's dramatic transformation—once primarily a financial district, now increasingly a 24/7 destination as office buildings convert to residential spaces.

Lower Manhattan's metamorphosis hit another milestone with the recent opening of Printemps' 55,000-square-foot U.S. flagship inside the One Wall Street conversion. The Parisian retailer joins Whole Foods and Life Time Fitness in the 566-unit tower, sealing FiDi's shift from suits to shoppers.

Hudson Yards West released a \$12-billion phase two plan in August 2024, featuring a Wynn casino bid, 1,500 apartments, 2 million square feet of offices and the 5.6-acre Hudson Green park. On the east side, JPMorgan's 1,388-foot-tall HQ at 270 Park topped out, while Brookfield's Two Manhattan

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Julie Coker

NYC Tourism + Conventions
President and CEO

West opened fully leased—marking the final chapter in the Hudson Yards development.

The city’s economic fundamentals remain robust, with private-sector jobs climbing to a record 4.19 million and NYC’s labor force participation at 62.6%—one of the highest since records began in 1976. The city drew \$11 billion in FDI and \$97 billion in VC between 2021 and 2023, led by life science labs, AI start-ups and climate tech manufacturing, driving it to a Top 3 ranking in our Business Ecosystem subcategory. This on top of the country’s #1 ranking for Large Companies and in our overall Prosperity index. With 500,000 new college grads since 2021, a \$2-trillion metro GMP and the nation’s highest concentration of trophy retail, New York remains the #1 U.S. market for discretionary spending.

Adaptive reuse has evolved from novelty to policy with the December 2024 “City of Yes” zoning overhaul, plus the new \$467-million incentive for office-to-residential conversions, projected to unlock 109,000 units over 15 years. Already, the 1,320-unit 25 Water Street has claimed the title of America’s largest office-to-residential conversion, with a 1,250-unit remake

of 5 Times Square and SL Green’s 222 Broadway reset following suit. The City’s M-CORE program now underwrites deep-green retrofits for 10 million square feet of Class-B/C space, complementing the GreenHOUSE Fund that subsidizes Local Law 97 upgrades in affordable buildings.

McKinsey and NYCEDC are projecting more than 200,000 net regional jobs by 2030, primarily driven by the AI, life sciences and clean tech sectors. The Big Apple’s skyline isn’t just adding height—it’s adding velocity, turning its pandemic recovery into a full-scale urban renaissance that’s reshaping the very definition of a 21st-century global city.

2 Los Angeles California

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 6** Livability
- 2** Lovability
- 2** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Instagram Posts
- 2** Museums

POPULATION

Metro 12,799,000



Aerial view of Venice Beach

The planet's city of stories is telling a few of its own these days. Over drinks, over dinner and on the train ride home. All with the nagging trauma that Mother Nature's wrath spares no one.

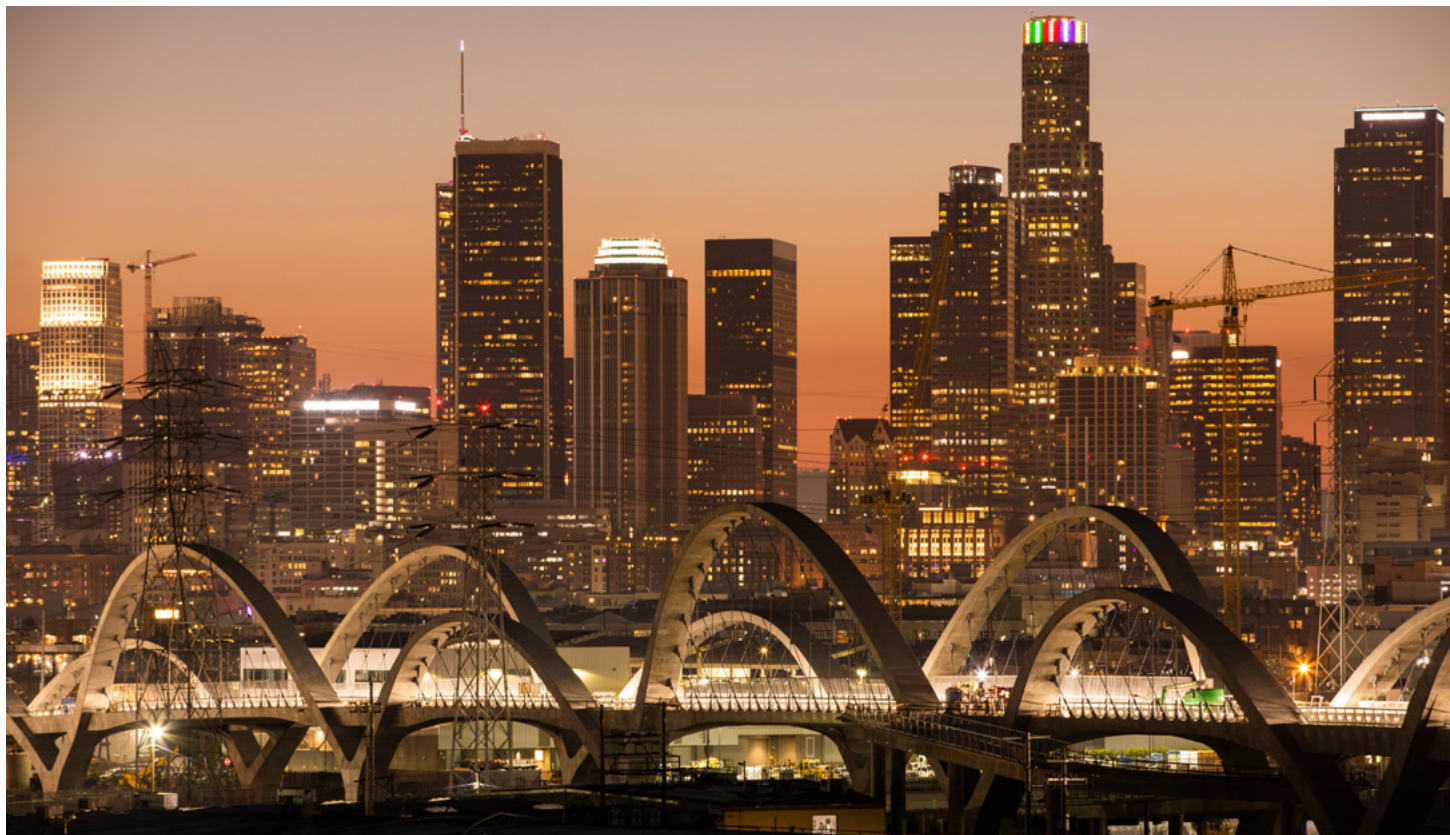
After celebrating a dizzying number of centennials in 2023, from the Hollywood Sign to Warner Bros. Studios, Los Angeles has pivoted toward transforming global showcases into catalysts for long-term economic growth and urban reinvention.

The city's "Decade of Sport" is accelerating, with SoFi Stadium set to make history as the first venue ever to host the FIFA World Cup (2026), Super Bowl (2027), and Olympic and Paralympic Games (2028). But beyond sports (sort of), 2025's real estate headliner is Rams Village at Warner Center—a 52-acre mixed-use campus in Woodland Hills backed by Stan Kroenke. The project will include a 350,000-square-foot headquarters, apartments, offices and entertainment venues connected by nine acres of parks, signaling confidence in the West Valley's office-to-residential evolution. For investors, Warner Center's 2035 zoning already permits 24 million square feet of new commercial development and 14,000 residential units, with the Rams' presence de-risking early phases.

Cultural developments are equally ambitious. The Pacific Standard Time's PST ART: Art & Science Collide has recently explored

the connections between art and science through city-wide and regional exhibitions on climate change, artificial intelligence and alternative medicine. Meanwhile, the Natural History Museum just opened its 75,000-square-foot NHM Commons—a new \$75-million wing and community hub in Exposition Park. With Gnathale, a giant long-neck dinosaur, greeting visitors and architecture firm Frederick Fisher and Partners tasked with creating an outside-in community space, the Commons will become one of the city's living rooms. The nearby Exposition Park is being reimagined for the 2028 Olympic Games. Before then, locals and visitors will get to experience the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art when it opens in 2026 with its 11-acre campus complete with seismic retrofits and 3D façade panels.

The Arts District continues to validate L.A.'s #2 ranking in our Restaurants subcategory, with Michelin-starred Camphor recently joined by new rooms this year. The area has been reinvigorated by the reopened Sixth Street Viaduct, connecting Boyle Heights to Downtown and sparking new gallery openings, independent shops and daily events drawing locals from across the county.



6th Street Bridge

Another emerging neighborhood to watch is the 1.3-mile stretch along Crenshaw Boulevard, positioned as “the spine of Los Angeles’ Black community” and undergoing transformative projects focused on economic development and cultural preservation. When completed, the area aims to be “the place to experience the most dynamic expression of Black American culture in the United States.”

Infrastructure investments are reshaping mobility across the city. The LAX Automated People Mover is nearly complete and tracking for a January 2026 opening. This 2.25-mile electric train will link every terminal with the Consolidated Rent-A-Car Facility (the world’s largest at 18,000 vehicles—this is L.A., after all) and the new Metro K Line station—critical for World Cup visitors. The Regional Connector Transit Project has already transformed commuting with its 1.9-mile underground light rail system, offering one-seat rides across Los Angeles County and cutting up to 20 minutes off commutes.

Perhaps most ambitious is Brightline West, America’s first true high-speed rail project, which is boring test shafts along the I-15 median. The 218-mile, 200-mph, all-electric

line promises a 2-hour Los Angeles–Las Vegas run by 2028, eliminating 400,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually and creating 35,000 jobs. For site selectors, these rail investments unlock significant density bonuses—parcels around Little Tokyo/Arts District Station are already entitling 175 dwelling units per acre without variances.

Housing affordability remains critical, especially after horrific wildfires in January exacerbated L.A.’s housing crunch. Average rents sit 18% above the U.S. mean, with only 11% of households qualifying for median-priced homes. Not surprisingly, the city ranks well out of the Top 100 in our Housing Affordability subcategory. City Hall has responded with zoning-lite pilot districts along major corridors permitting by-right six-story projects on former single-family lots, plus an adaptive reuse fast-track for downtown office conversions, where vacancy tops 28%. The city is stepping up with incentives like a 10-year property tax abatement for affordable housing components.

Despite tourism challenges exacerbated by spooked Canadian and Mexican visitors hearing White House bluster and passing

on the city, the hospitality sector remains bullish. Governor Newsom (and his emergency tourism marketing budget) is certainly doing all he can. Hotel Lucile is repurposing a 1931 Silver Lake church into 25 rooms plus a rooftop lounge and should be open by the time you read this. The Fairmont Century Plaza completed its \$2.5-billion renovation, adding 63 branded condos above 400 enlarged guest rooms, and Aman Beverly Hills secured approvals for 42 rooms and 37 residences. Although not opening until 2027, the Aman’s \$3,000-per-square-foot presales underscore luxury traveler confidence (and the city’s #2 spot in our Overall Lovability index). For enterprises targeting growth markets, hospitality ADR is up 11% year over year, with wellness-oriented properties focusing on “longevity travel” projected to grow 16% annually through 2027.

Los Angeles County’s population decline has officially stabilized with net gains in 2024 buoyed by international in-migration coming here for the nation’s #4-ranked business ecosystem and #8-ranked large companies, to say nothing about the #6-ranked Healthcare subcategory. Unemployment is forecast to rise slightly to 6.1% in 2025, but healthcare, creative tech, and leisure

Despite tourism challenges exacerbated by spooked Canadian and Mexican visitors hearing White House bluster and passing on the city, the hospitality sector remains bullish. Governor Newsom (and his emergency tourism marketing budget) is certainly doing all he can.

and hospitality are projected to add 54,000 jobs—offsetting manufacturing losses. The labor pipeline remains unmatched, with four-year universities within 50 miles graduating 82,000 STEM majors annually—#1 in the U.S.—while UCLA's new DataX center offers a ready-made AI talent funnel.

Foreign direct investment inflows hit \$3.2 billion in 2024, led by Canadian pension funds acquiring logistics assets near the Ports of L.A. and Long Beach. For site selectors and enterprises, a stabilized population, plus the nation's deepest multilingual labor pool, makes L.A. attractive for regional headquarters needing both engineering talent and cross-border sales teams. Companies targeting consumer growth should note that greater L.A.'s \$1.1-trillion economy already exceeds Saudi Arabia's GDP.

The feeding frenzy around the city and its record valuations has had mixed results: Amazon Fresh exited two Studio City leases, but the Arts District continues attracting chef-driven ventures. Meanwhile, West Hollywood's Sunset Strip has seen legacy clubs replaced by luxury members-only venues, prompting the city to study small business protections.

While wildfires, water scarcity and housing affordability remain challenges, the macro bet is clear: a once-in-a-lifetime convergence of mega-events, climate-friendly rail, adaptive reuse policies and institutional capital is resetting Los Angeles's value proposition. Real estate investors are increasingly targeting transit-rich submarkets like the Downtown/Arts District and emerging nodes along the K Line.

Over the rest of this kinetic decade, L.A.'s story is starting a new chapter where infrastructure underpins imagination—and the city's future is looking bright long after the Olympic cauldron is extinguished and the beautiful game leaves the fields.

3

Chicago

Illinois

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 3 Livability
- 4 Lovability
- 4 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Nightlife
- 2 Airport

POPULATION

Metro 9,263,000



Navy Pier

Few cities on the planet are firing on all cylinders like America's great Midwest metropolis. An expanding talent pool and relative affordability only accelerate its performance.

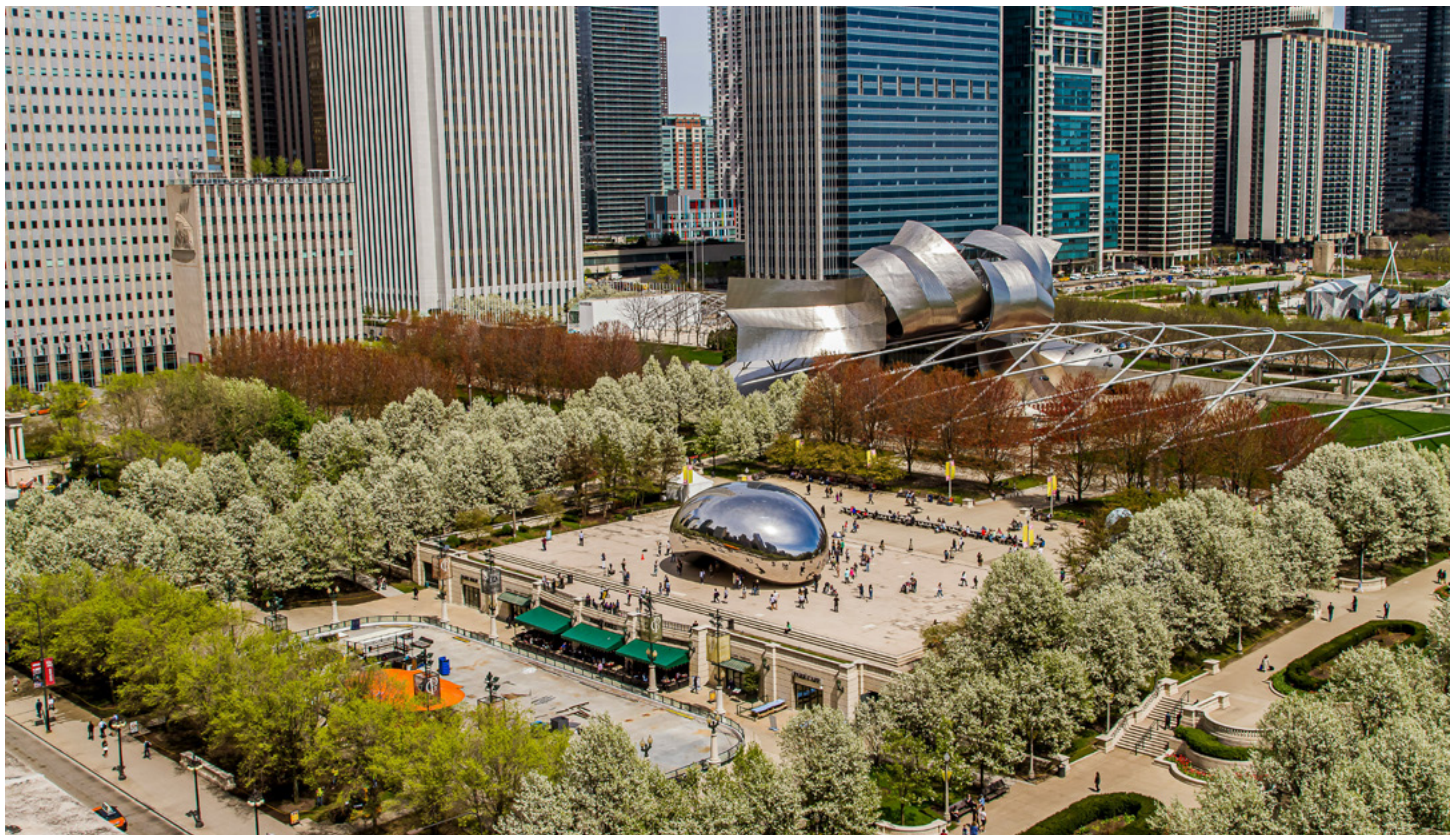
Chicago's reputation as America's most quietly productive metropolis has crystallized into a 2025 growth story built on hard infrastructure, a deep tech surge and the country's steadiest stream of corporate expansions. The result is a market that still prices like the Midwest but increasingly performs like a diversified global hub.

Two once-in-a-generation infrastructure projects are now fully financed and moving forward. At O'Hare International (ranked #2), bond documents lock in Satellite Concourse 1 for completion in 2028 and Studio Gang's Global Terminal for 2032—a 25% gate capacity lift for the country's second-busiest domestic hub. On the ground, the CTA Red Line Extension—a 5.6-mile, \$5.3-billion venture linking the Far South Side to the Loop—will break ground in 2026 for completion by 2030. Together, these projects widen the labor catchment by more than 100,000 potential employees and cut commute times from suburbs and South Side neighborhoods by up to half an hour.

Chicagoland topped Site Selection Magazine's Tier-1 metro rankings for an astonishing 12th straight year, with a project pipeline nearly 100 deals larger than its nearest competitor.

The city is leaner and more efficient than ever, boasting the second-highest number of Fortune 500 headquarters in the country, behind only New York. Standout new assets include Google's Thompson Center HQ—a \$280-million redevelopment delivering 1.3 million square feet of office space and bringing 2,000 employees to the Loop in 2026. The Chan Zuckerberg Biohub Chicago—a \$275-million research facility in Fulton Market—is employing 50 principal investigators and driving roughly 1,000 indirect positions.

The Illinois Quantum & Microelectronics Park anchors the new Bloch Quantum Tech Hub on the former U.S. Steel lakefront with \$640 million in public seed funding and a projected \$60-billion economic impact over the next decade, while Microsoft's data center build now controls more than 80 suburban acres with investment approaching \$10 billion. Add relocations by McDonald's, Mondelez, and scores of mid-cap companies, and Chicago's central business district is the only CBD in the U.S. posting two consecutive years of positive net absorption across office, biotech and flex tech space.



Millennium Park

This corporate momentum translates into tangible residential value. Zillow's March 2025 Chicago Home Value Index sits at \$303,595—up 2.8% year over year and less than half the typical value in Boston or Seattle. That bargain pricing kept apartment demand robust, with net absorption of 5,200 units in 2024, even as new deliveries hit a seven-year low. Class-A cap rates hover around 5.3%—roughly 90 basis points above coastal peers, offering rare upside in a gateway city still priced below \$305K per typical home.

The affordable talent equation remains equally compelling. Metro non-farm payrolls hover near 4.82 million while office support wages average \$19.52 an hour, well below the U.S. mean. Professional services salaries remain cheaper than in Boston and San Jose. This affordability, combined with unrivaled domestic connectivity through O'Hare and a freight-rail hub handling a quarter of U.S. intermodal traffic, gives Chicago the lowest logistics cost basis of any million-plus talent market.

Even retail—long considered the Achilles' heel of urban America—shows remarkable resilience. Vacancy on the Magnificent Mile fell to 18.2% in Q3 2024, buoyed by Aritzia's 46,000-square-foot flagship at 555 N.

Michigan. City-wide, retail vacancy hit a record-low 5.1% by mid-2024 as suburban nodes absorbed COVID-era out-migration demand. These numbers reflect a market that adds roughly 20,000 net new high-income households yearly, even while the overall population holds flat—rocket fuel for luxury retail and experiential concepts.

Chicago's post-pandemic hospitality scene is booming with new properties. The St. Regis Chicago, Jeanne Gang's 101-story statement piece, has changed Chicago's skyline as the third-tallest building in the city and the tallest building in the world designed by a woman. Korean luxury brand L7 Chicago by Lotte debuted at Wacker and Wabash with 191 rooms, while CitizenM's 280-room tower opened on Michigan Avenue and Marriott's Midland Hotel has just opened in time for IPW—the world's largest inbound-tourism trade show—in June 2025.

The city is playing as hard as it's working, with summer festivals from Lollapalooza to Millennium Park's Summer Music Series. The city is reclaiming its live music crown with venues like The Salt Shed in the former Morton Salt factory. The country's second-best nightlife scene thrives, especially since

Diageo opened the third global location of the Guinness Open Gate Brewery in the West Loop last summer—part of Chicago's beer culture built on 160 breweries, the most of any U.S. city.

The culinary scene burns equally bright, with Chicago's #3-ranked restaurants delivering excellence beyond the recent immortalization by FX series *The Bear*. From Chef José Andrés' Bazaar Meat and Bar Mar to the city's youngest Michelin-starred chef, Donald Young, at Venteux, this town is fed well. One standout is Anelya, a Ukrainian restaurant by James Beard Award-winning Chef Johnny Clark and Chef Beverly Kim, staffed by recent Ukrainian arrivals—embodying Chicago's quality, community and empathy.

The city is finally tapping into its 77 neighborhoods through Choose Chicago's "The 77" YouTube series, which has won 13 Telly Awards and now streams on United Airlines' seat-backs. South Chicago's Jackson Park will welcome the \$500-million Obama Presidential Center in 2026, with projections of 750,000 annual visitors and economic impact exceeding \$3 billion. More than half of the ambitious Marquette Greenway trail—connecting Chicago to New Buffalo, Michigan, by 2027—has now been completed.

With substantial infrastructure funding, a tech and biotech investment pipeline north of \$4 billion, and retail and hospitality indicators that outperform pre-pandemic peaks, Chicago stands as America's most quietly productive metropolis—where investors capture above-average yield, employers tap a 4.8-million-strong labor force, and brand builders gain a culturally rich consumer base in 77 distinct neighborhoods now reaching the world.

Mega-developments continue reshaping the cityscape. Bally's Chicago Casino has secured a \$2.07-billion construction facility with demolition crews active on the 30-acre Tribune site, aiming for a late 2026 opening (pending a contractor investigation—Google it). The 78—a \$7-billion riverfront district—is in talks to land a Chicago White Sox ballpark, while Lincoln Yards saw its northern acres change hands this spring. Together, these three projects will generate more than 28,000 construction jobs and up to 50,000 permanent positions over the next decade.

The Windy City isn't as much "back" as it is rewriting the playbook for inclusive, high-margin urban growth while keeping its no-drama, midwestern work ethic intact. With substantial infrastructure funding, a tech and biotech investment pipeline north of \$4 billion, and retail and hospitality indicators that outperform pre-pandemic peaks, Chicago stands as America's most quietly productive metropolis—where investors capture above-average yield, employers tap a 4.8-million-strong labor force, and brand builders gain a culturally rich consumer base in 77 distinct neighborhoods now reaching the world.



DuSable Lake Shore Drive

4

San Francisco

California

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 2 Livability
- 7 Lovability
- 3 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Walkability
- 1 Business Ecosystem (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 4,567,000



Early morning low fog at Golden Gate Bridge

The golden city—deeply wounded by the addiction crisis, a lack of affordable housing and violence unimaginable a few years ago—is getting up off the mat.

Despite the panicky (and even warranted) headlines, San Francisco is experiencing a renaissance fueled by AI innovation and bold urban reinvention. After weathering pandemic-era commercial vacancies that peaked at a staggering 36.6% in early 2024 (and held essentially flat at 36.5% in Q1 2025), the city's recovery is gaining momentum through adaptive strategies now transforming its downtown core.

New Mayor Daniel Lurie has recently announced ambitious initiatives—from a Breaking the Cycle plan to address homelessness and addiction to his Family Zoning Plan to reform neighborhood zoning and add up to 36,000 new homes by 2031, dramatically reshaping San Francisco's urban fabric (already ranked #1 in the country for its walkability). Biking also ranks #4 and the city is constantly rolling out daring bike and pedestrian infrastructure like few other U.S. cities. Transit is also growing, with BART upgrades ranging from downtown escalator replacements to tap-and-go Clipper payments that ease commutes.

The tech sector remains the city's economic engine: Bay-Area start-ups attracted \$50.5 billion in venture capital

during 2024—roughly a quarter of all U.S. investment. They're pulled here by the #1-ranked business ecosystem and the nation's third-most educated residents. AI leader Databricks is cementing its commitment with a larger zero-carbon headquarters and locking its annual 12,000-delegate Data + AI Summit in the city for the foreseeable future, while Singapore's trade agency and Italian luxury brand Bulgari have placed their West-Coast beachheads here.

Housing markets show renewed vigor, with average asking rents hitting \$3,419 in March 2025, a 5.2% year-over-year rise. New developments like Mission Rock's 23-story Verde tower, leasing since April 2024, and Treasure Island's first waterfront apartments are expanding inventory, yet a tightening 5.5% vacancy rate suggests continued upward pressure on rents—a promising signal for income-focused investors.

Hospitality is also surging: the 130-room Hotel Julian reopened in late 2024, and San Francisco Travel projects 23.3 million visitors spending nearly \$10 billion in 2025.

5

Seattle

Washington

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 4 Livability
- 9 Lovability
- 12 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Air Quality
- 3 GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 4,045,000



Ferry Wenatchee crossing Puget Sound

America's understated West Coast urban wonderland is quietly blossoming into a talent and visitor magnet. Now if it can only keep the cost of entry reasonable.

Few North American cities are stacking high-impact wins as fast as Seattle. Less than a year after cutting the ribbon on the Aquarium's Ocean Pavilion in August 2024, the city unveiled Overlook Walk, knitting its iconic Pike Place Market to a rebuilt Pier 58 and its 25-foot-tall jellyfish climbing tower playground.

Momentum is already visible at street level: the Downtown Seattle Association logged almost 90 new ground-floor businesses downtown in 2024, a pulse of cafés, boutiques and service firms that re-energized long-quiet blocks. Hospitality investors followed—Marriott opened the 200-key AC Hotel Seattle Downtown in 2024, and Residence Inn Northgate Station started greeting its first guests in early 2025. Meanwhile, the 208-room InterContinental Bellevue opened in the summer of 2024, anchoring the Eastside's Avenue Bellevue mixed-use towers.

Better mobility is the catalyst. Sound Transit's 8.5-mile Lynnwood Link launched recently and the 2 Line will tie the Eastside to the Chinatown-International District in 2025, widening Seattle's sub-30-minute commuter time that will further optimize the nation's

third-best GDP per capita and keep the second-best air quality where it needs to be. Freight capacity leapt ahead: the modernized, 185-acre Terminal 5 offers shore power berths and on-dock rail after Phase 2 went live in March 2024, while Sea-Tac's four-story Concourse C expansion is currently slated for completion in 2026.

Speaking of wait and see, tourism roared back last year and Visit Seattle tallied 40 million visitors and \$8.8 billion in 2024 spend. The city's Port estimates a record 1.7 million cruise passengers last year.

Tech industry expansion remains fierce: CBRE again ranks Seattle the #2 tech talent market, powered by the #8-ranked business ecosystem in the U.S. Australia's Commonwealth Bank opened a 200-employee AI hub downtown in March 2025, and fintech Brex launched a new office last October with plans to double its local headcount. For real estate investors, Zillow pegs the median home value at \$887,994, up 3% year over year. Mayor Harrell's One Seattle plan would unlock capacity for roughly 330,000 additional housing units, and work is nearing completion on twin 47-story WB1200 towers with 1,050 apartments atop 100,000 square feet of retail.

6

Miami

Florida

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 5 Livability
- 5 Lovability
- 14 Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Airport (Tied)
- 4 Nature & Parks

POPULATION

Metro 6,183,000



View of Brickell and Downtown Miami's Central Business District

Miami's creativity is powered by its arms-wide-open acceptance of newcomers. But over the past few years, they arrive with a taste for the finer things and the means to buy them in town.

Miami's magnetic fusion of tropical beauty and financial might continues strengthening its position as America's premier global gateway. The city ranks Top 5 in our overall Livability and Lovability indices, powered by its incredible outdoor bounty (#4) that fuels a torrent of social media love (Instagram Hashtags ranks #4 and Facebook Check-ins #6). And the word of mouth is working. University of Florida projections show Miami-Dade's population—which currently boasts the nation's largest concentration of foreign-born talent—growing by an astonishing 15% by 2030. This lifestyle and demographic advantage has attracted high-profile relocations like Jeff Bezos, whose three Indian Creek property acquisitions now exceed \$237 million in value.

The local economy demonstrates remarkable resilience, with the Beacon Council's latest scorecard tallying over 10,000 new jobs and over \$806 million in capital investment last fiscal year, while Amazon has leased 50,000 square feet in trendy Wynwood for its expanding 400-person hub.

Investment capital is dramatically reshaping the skyline at unprecedented scale. PMG's Waldorf Astoria broke ground with a record \$668-million condo construction loan,

while hedge fund titan Ken Griffin's 1,032-foot Citadel headquarters should begin construction this fall, cementing Brickell's status as "Wall Street South." The fintech sector further solidifies Miami's financial prominence with Vera Capital and Blocksquare launching a \$1-billion real estate tokenization program downtown. No wonder the city ranks #15 in both our Business Ecosystem and Large Companies subcategories.

All that revenue is flowing into luxury hospitality that's keeping pace, with Aman Miami Beach on track for a 2026 debut—featuring 56 suites and 23 branded residences—and the oceanfront Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne undergoing a \$100-million transformation. Retail gravity continues shifting northward as the \$6-billion, 27-acre Miami Worldcenter secures tenants like Apple, Sephora and Lucid Motors.

Transportation infrastructure amplifies these advantages. Brightline's 235-mile Miami-to-Orlando service launched in late 2023, projected to generate \$6.4 billion in economic impact and 10,000 jobs statewide. Locally, The Underline's final seven-mile phase broke ground in 2023, completing a 10-mile multimodal corridor beneath the Metrorail.

7

Boston

Massachusetts

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 7** Livability
- 11** Lovability
- 9** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** University
- 3** Walkability

POPULATION

Metro 4,919,000



Fan Pier Park, South Boston Waterfront

America's oldest big city continues redefining the nation's intellectual and innovation landscape. To say nothing about its ability to be a coveted hometown for centuries.

While Harvard (ranked #1 in our University subcategory) may anchor Boston's impressive constellation of 75 colleges and universities, the real story is the talent that chooses to stay and build careers—with the Boston Planning & Development Agency projecting 734,300 residents by 2035, driven primarily by ambitious 25-to-34-year-olds bringing housing demand and disposable income.

Transportation infrastructure keeps pace with this demographic momentum. Logan International Airport (ranked #20) handled a record 43.5 million passengers in 2024, bolstered by Terminal E's sophisticated four-gate expansion featuring duty-free retail, smart-glass windows and sustainable photovoltaic facades. On the ground, the eagerly anticipated, 51-story South Station Tower opens in late 2025, seamlessly connecting Amtrak, MBTA, intercity buses and 166 luxury condominiums above a reimagined transit concourse. The investment will only help the city's #3-ranked walkability.

The hospitality sector responds with equal ambition. Raffles Boston Back Bay's North American debut in late 2023—featuring 147 keys, 146 branded residences and a stunning sky lobby triple-height bar—elevated the city's

luxury standards. Samuels & Associates' Lyrik Back Bay development is further transforming the cityscape with an elevated, retail-lined park spanning the Massachusetts Turnpike alongside an upscale hotel. The development pipeline remains robust with 5,000 new rooms targeted by 2030.

Investment capital continues flowing to Boston's knowledge economy, which ranks an impressive #4 for GDP per Capita. Eli Lilly opened its \$700-million Seaport Innovation Center in August 2024—a 346,000-square-foot genetic medicine hub housing 500 scientists and the first East Coast Gateway Labs for biotech start-ups, reinforcing Boston's leadership in RNA/DNA research. Danish icon LEGO is relocating its Americas headquarters to a sustainable mass-timber tower on Boylston Street by 2026, citing unmatched talent density and transit connectivity. Meanwhile, Harvard's ambitious 14-acre Enterprise Research Campus broke ground in Allston in 2023, integrating laboratories, housing and hospitality near the future West Station. Real estate markets show resilience amid transition. Despite 7.6 million square feet of new laboratory space entering the market in 2024, rents are holding firm.

8

Washington District of Columbia

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 10** Livability
- 13** Lovability
- 8** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Healthcare
- 2** Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 6,304,000



Washington Monument

Few global cities are as paramount in our collective psyche as the U.S. capital, as seismic changes and their reverberations fan out from the White House across the city and planet.

The world is watching D.C. like few times before, but today Washington's story is written as much in cranes and term sheets as in C-SPAN sound bites. Museum momentum shows no sign of slowing: alongside the National Gallery's recent blockbuster Rothko show, the Smithsonian will be breaking ground in 2025 on the Bezos Learning Center, funded by \$130 million of Jeff Bezos's \$200-million gift and set to crown the revamped Air & Space Museum by 2027. The #6 Museums ranking will improve as a result.

Hotels are racing to capture the surging demand. Lifestyle brand Arlo Washington DC debuted 445 rooms in late 2024 inside the landmark Harrison Apartments, with impressive views from its ART DC rooftop lounge, while Canal House of Georgetown opened in February 2025 with townhome-style suites on the C&O Canal. Destination DC's announcement of a record 27 million visitors in 2024 (and record \$11.4 billion visitor spend) signals the runway is clear for the 1,200 keys now in the pipeline.

Developers are taking their piece, too. Canada's PSP Investments acquired the \$3-billion The Wharf in April 2025, affirming worldwide faith in the 3.5-million-square-foot

waterfront. Across the river, the 183-acre St. Elizabeths East campus is delivering a 421-unit mixed-income community, incubator retail village and 20,000-square-foot library this fall. Mobility upgrades will follow: DDOT's much publicized K Street Transitway, promising center-running bus lanes and protected cycle tracks through downtown, is currently on hold, with other transportation improvements being pursued. Still, biking ranks #8 and walkability #6, all part of DC's Top 10 overall Livability finish. The best Healthcare in the country helps, too.

Corporate capital is following people capital. Water-tech giant Xylem has relocated its headquarters to Capitol Riverfront and Monex USA cut the ribbon on a new FX hub in April 2024. For deal hunters, inventory is finally catching up: active listings jumped nearly 30% and median prices climbed 6.6% to \$597,000 this spring, yet a third of luxury sales still close all-cash. Would you expect less from a city ranking #8 in our overall Prosperity index, with the nation's second-most educated residents?

Add it up and D.C. looks less like a company town and more like an investable, diversified metropolis—one that just happens to run the country.

9

Las Vegas Nevada

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 20** Livability
- 3** Lovability
- 26** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Attractions
- 1** Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 2,337,000



Bellagio Fountains and the Las Vegas skyline

Las Vegas is back with a vengeance as the visitor economy surges to near records and those already in are enjoying rising home prices.

Las Vegas keeps betting big—and winning—as the city welcomed 41.7 million guests in 2024, a 2.1% jump that is almost back at its 2016 high while also driving record per-capita spend. Formula 1's show-stopping debut and the Instagram-friendly Sphere (the city ranks #6 for Instagram Hashtags) helped keep average daily room rates hovering near \$200 and overall occupancy around 84%.

The skyline is morphing once again. Foundations are in for the 700-foot Hard Rock Guitar tower on the former Mirage site, tracking a 2027 opening with 650 suites and a reimagined casino poolscape. Just south, the 33,000-seat Oakland A's ballpark is slated to break ground any day now, locking in MLB's first Strip address and an estimated \$1.5-billion capital injection. Boutique-scaled Dream Las Vegas has secured fresh financing for a late-2025 debut, and Wynn's third tower concept, across from its flagship campus, remains alive after regulators extended entitlements through 2026. Access is getting faster. Brightline West broke ground last April on America's first 200-mph high-speed rail, promising a two-hour Las Vegas–Los Angeles trip by 2028. Underground, Elon Musk's Vegas Loop now has approvals for 68 miles of tunnels engineered to move

90,000 passengers an hour between the airport, Strip, downtown and UNLV.

Downtown is rising, too. The \$450-million Origin at Symphony Park just broke ground on its six-acre campus, anchored by the 32-story Cello Tower—Vegas's first ground-up luxury condominium high-rise in 15 years—and joined by offices, retail and dual Marriott-flagged hotels. Retail is also ascendant (Shopping already ranks #7), with the BLVD complex opposite MGM Grand boasting flagship Lululemon and Abercrombie stores and the world's largest In-N-Out this year, while Tiffany & Co.'s new 5,000-square-foot CityCenter store and incoming Cartier and Graff boutiques at Fontainebleau sharpen the luxury edge (as well as the city's Top 3 spot in our overall Lovability index).

Tech capital is diversifying the Strip's service-heavy economy, with Google pouring another \$400 million into its Henderson cloud campus, taking its Nevada outlay above \$2.2 billion, while industrial networking specialist Antaira has relocated its global headquarters from California. Those moves support a median single-family home price of \$485,000, up 4% in a softening national market.

10

San Diego

California

PLACE POWER™ SCORE

- 9** Livability
- 6** Lovability
- 23** Prosperity

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2** Nature & Parks
- 6** Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 3,270,000



Sunset at Coronado Beach

Southern California's urban ideal still promises 263 days of sunshine but, in 2025, San Diego's lure is increasingly economic.

Southern California's urban paradise continues dominating quality-of-life rankings with its 263 sun-drenched days annually, 31 pristine beaches stretching across 70 miles of coastline, and an outdoor playground that lures entrepreneurs and scientists alike. (And trails only Honolulu in our Nature & Parks subcategory.) But beneath this postcard perfection lies a sophisticated binational innovation corridor extending from Torrey Pines laboratories to Tijuana scale-ups—a powerhouse ecosystem transforming both sides of the border.

The biotech sector's momentum is unmistakable: Novartis is acquiring RNA pioneer Regulus for up to \$1.7 billion, while Creydon Bio recently secured a \$1-billion co-development agreement with Eli Lilly. Venture capital continues flowing with local start-ups attracting \$5.8 billion in 2024—a remarkable 45% increase year over year. Downtown's transformation advances as IQHQ raised \$900 million in January to complete its 1.7-million-square-foot Research & Development District along the bayfront, with more than half of the retail space already leased. No wonder the city ranks Top 5 in the nation in our Healthcare subcategory and Top 10 for overall Livability.

Infrastructure investments match this ambition. San Diego International's \$4-billion Terminal 1 replacement will unveil its first 19 gates in late summer 2025, supported by fresh FAA grants. The innovative Otay Mesa East Port of Entry and its tolled SR-11 connector promise 24-hour freight flow and reduced wait times for cross-border commerce. Meanwhile, the waterfront Gaylord Pacific Resort & Convention Center just opened in Chula Vista, delivering 1,600 rooms and 477,000 square feet of premium meeting space.

Visitors will discover new attractions beyond the beaches, with SeaWorld's "Jewels of the Sea" jellyfish pavilion debuting this spring and the San Diego Museum of Art's Foster + Partners-designed west wing breaking ground for a 2026 completion. The World Design Capital designation in 2024 enhanced the city's cultural credentials, which rank #8 in our Culture subcategory, helping the city to an impressive #6 overall in our Lovability index. Tourism experts project 32.9 million arrivals generating \$15.3 billion in visitor spending this year—both exceeding pre-pandemic records. Housing remains premium with February's median single-family price reaching \$1.04 million, up 6.1% year over year despite elevated mortgage rates.



11 Orlando Florida

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Attractions
- 3 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 2,818,000

The Mouse's house has the hometown dynamism to draw talent and residents alike.

Orlando's visitor economy still gets the headlines, but today the story is increasingly how the city is scaling for the people and capital following the theme park pilgrims. Central Florida logged a record \$92.5-billion tourism impact in 2024, yet the metro also led every large U.S. region for job creation last year, adding 37,500 positions for 2.5% growth—welcome traction for the 1,000 newcomers arriving each week, en route to a projected population of 5.2 million by 2030.

Investors are seeing inventory: active listings jumped 46% year over year in January and median mortgage payments are slipping, making Orlando one of only a dozen big U.S. metros where monthly housing costs are easing. Downtown, shovels are in the ground on the \$500-million Westcourt sports and entertainment district and the \$365-million Creative Village Phase II tech campus. Universal's 750-acre Epic Universe debuts this spring while connectivity to get everyone to town keeps compounding. Brightline's Miami-Orlando trains are running, and a new regional resolution backs the spur west to Tampa. Global capital is following the infrastructure, with the Nobu Hotel Orlando opening in 2026 and the Kimpton Orlando slated for 2027.



12 Atlanta Georgia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Large Companies
- 4 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 6,306,000

Ambitious and dripping with history, ATL keeps inventing its future mid-flight.

With a population approaching 6.5 million, Metro Atlanta continues to attract thousands of new residents monthly. They come for the #4-ranked large companies and the 7th-highest overall Prosperity ranking in the country. Mayor Andre Dickens has his hands full to maintain the city's once-lauded affordability and is trying to deliver 20,000 attainable homes to push back against rising shelter costs. Downtown is blooming fast, giving more content to a town already Top 5 for Instagram Hashtags and #7 for Facebook Check-ins. Centennial Yards has moved from vision to construction on an 8-million-square-foot entertainment district targeting the 2026 World Cup crowd, while the BeltLine's last northeast link will finally close the famed 22-mile loop this fall. Jamestown's \$175-million Phase 2 at Ponce City Market is topping out a mass-timber loft, a 21-story Scout Living tower and retail flagships like Pottery Barn. Investors also track twin surges in visitor beds and transportation. The 976-room Signia by Hilton opened last year (downtown's biggest ground-up hotel in 40 years, located right next to the Georgia World Congress Center). Watch the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport's #8 ranking rise with the rollout of the \$11.6-billion ATLNext capital improvement.



13 Houston Texas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Large Companies
- 4 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 7,510,000

H-Town is a coveted hometown for the best and brightest on earth. And beyond.

Houston keeps defying gravity. The metro added nearly 200,000 residents last year—second only to New York—pushing the population above 7.5 million. Chevron's shifting of its headquarters from California to Houston, backed by \$100 million in renovations, crowns relocations drawn by record 2024 Port Houston throughput of more than four million containers and a projected 71,000 new jobs in 2025. Incredibly, Zillow pegged the 2024 median home value around \$265,000—well below the U.S. norm (despite boasting a Top 3 spot for large companies in town). Energy transition dollars are cascading. The HyVelocity Hydrogen Hub just locked in up to \$1.2 billion from the U.S. DOE, targeting 45,000 jobs and slicing 7.7 million tons of CO₂ a year. Hospitality and retail are sprinting to keep up. A 221-room Home2 Suites/Tru by Hilton debuted near Toyota Center in March, while Marriott's newly renovated Residence Inn NASA/Clear Lake keeps surging visitors happy. West Houston's Greenside will convert 35,000 square feet of warehouses into a park-laced retail hub by 2026, while America's inaugural Ismaili Center, rising along Allen Parkway, remains on schedule for later this year, adding yet another cultural jewel to H-Town's festival-fueled mosaic. Given all that diversity, no wonder Houston ranks #4 in our Restaurants subcategory.



14 Dallas Texas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Airport (Tied)
- 6 Large Companies

POPULATION

Metro 8,100,000

The city's maverick, can-do spirit runs through increasing investment, population growth and cultural ascent in the Big D.

Dallas keeps scaling up its ambitions—and lately, the skyline can barely keep pace. American Airlines just green-lit a \$4-billion Terminal F that will double gate capacity by 2027, with Terminal C's refresh timed for the 2026 FIFA World Cup crowds. Downtown, Goldman Sachs' 800,000-square-foot river-view campus is rising, while Wells Fargo's twin tower Las Colinas HQ tops out for a 2025 debut. The Harwood District flaunts its Swiss-Texan swagger, with Kengo Kuma's 22-story Hôtel Swexan showcasing natural materials, elegant interiors and a rooftop infinity pool. Meanwhile, uptown retail gets an urban-format IKEA in late 2025, adding to a flurry of luxe flagships and the JW Marriott that opened in the Arts District last year. Beyond the glam, investors track fundamentals: Dallas-Fort Worth added 59,000 jobs since March 2024—second only to New York—and finance payrolls keep swelling on what locals now call “Y'all Street” (validated by ranking Top 5 in our overall Prosperity index). The Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center replacement and a \$1.6-billion plan to trench I-345 promise fresh, developable acreage and long-overdue neighborhood reconnection—updating city planning that cut off Black neighborhoods in the early 1970s.



15 Austin Texas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Labor Force Participation
- 8 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 2,473,000

The American dream has a new hometown. And the price of entry is actually dropping.

Austin's hyper-growth party is still going (although a little more restrained than a few years ago), with the metro adding 29,000 jobs last year and projections calling for 3 million people by 2030, especially as housing affordability increases. Median list prices slid to \$510,000 in March (-7.2% year over year) while active listings rose 28% and new supply jumped 10%, giving buyers a rare breather. The skyline isn't resting, however: the 66-story Sixth & Guadalupe stacked 589,000 square feet of offices above 349 rentals in 2023, and the 1,022-foot Waterline is halfway to its 2026 crown. Office vacancies are over 25%, but the city's booming creative-media cluster is expected to help things this year, as should Austin's #4-ranked Labor Force Participation and Top 10 Business Ecosystem (and #11 spot in our overall Prosperity index). Samsung's \$17-billion Taylor fab is now scheduled for 2026 mass production, while Tesla is doubling Gigafactory Texas for cheaper EVs and future robotaxis, and has filed plans for an adjacent 3.8-mile riverfront “ecological paradise.” It can only help the city's current Top 10 Nature & Parks spot. Austin's buzzing airport (#31) handled 21.8 million passengers in 2024 and is working on much-needed light rail infrastructure.



16 Denver Colorado

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Labor Force Participation
- 4 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 3,005,000

Lifestyle matters, and The Mile High City is selling it to a new mobile, ascendant investment class.

Metro Denver's population should top 3.6 million by 2030, with forecasters calling for a 1.2% job bump this year that should keep unemployment parked below 3%—catnip for investors scanning labor-force depth and wage growth. Forward-looking capital is taking note: Austria-based VertiGIS just planted its U.S. utilities HQ downtown, citing the region's geospatial tech talent, and the city approved \$29 million in bonds to flip a vacant Tech Center office building into 143 attainable apartments—one of several office-to-residential pilots aimed at recalibrating the core. Hospitality's newest landmark is Populus, the 265-room, carbon-positive “aspen” tower that opened in October 2024 and is already drawing ESG-minded conference traffic. It headlines a 1,200-room pipeline that includes Virgin, Train Denver and a dual-brand Fairfield/TownePlace in the Theater District. Retail is also a must-watch, with Costco debuting two metro stores this summer, underscoring Denver's magnetism for high-growth consumer brands. Transformative riverfront megaprojects like The River Mile are also rezoned and ready to rise and welcome locals and visitors next decade, while Denver International shattered records with 82.3 million passengers in 2024, fortifying its Vision 100 plan to handle 100 million flyers by 2030.



17 Portland Oregon

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Biking (Tied)
- 5 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 2,510,000

America's Left Coast utopia is figuring it out and welcoming 'em back.

Portland's famed DIY ingenuity powers local stalwarts—from Nike to the newly opened Flock food hall inside the Ritz-Carlton (the luxury company's first flag in the Pacific Northwest), currently anchoring a culinary revival downtown. The \$2.15-billion main terminal expansion at #34-ranked PDX debuted last year, doubling capacity under a soaring mass-timber canopy and adding 20 new concession spaces packed with local icons like Powell's and Blue Star Donuts. Investors note Intel's ongoing \$36-billion R&D build-out in suburban Hillsboro and Daimler's quiet electric truck ramp-up, fortifying a tech-manufacturing cluster that helps push metro weekly wages to almost \$1,500, well above the U.S. average. Housing is stabilizing: the median sale price hit \$518,000 in early 2025, up 6% year over year, while the city logged its first post-pandemic population uptick in 2024. Big projects have also returned, with ground breaking on a 14-story, 230-unit affordable anchor for the 34-acre Broadway Corridor, and a \$1-billion remake turning the aging Lloyd Center into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. America's #1 biking city is also big on transit: TriMet's \$1.75-billion plan wants to connect 50,000 more residents to 15-minute bus service and expand park-and-rides. No wonder the city is #8 in our overall Livability index.



18 Philadelphia Pennsylvania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 University (Tied)
- 7 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 6,246,000

The City of Brotherly Love gives locals and visitors plenty of Americana.

Philadelphia keeps layering fresh ambition onto its centuries-old streets (and yes, they're Top 10 for Walkability). Construction cranes in University City signal the first lab tower in the 14-acre, \$3.5-billion Schuylkill Yards life sciences district, part of an ecosystem that just kept Philly in the nation's top five bio hubs this spring. South of downtown, the Navy Yard's next build-out adds apartments and R&D space. Median home sale prices climbed 4% last year to \$265,000, while the region added 28,400 jobs—up 3.9%—led by healthcare hiring. Along the Delaware, new segments of the riverfront trail open this summer, stitching 500 acres of green waterfront into a runnable loop (and #12-ranked biking). Visitor momentum continues: 26.6 million came in 2024, spending a record \$4.5 billion and driving demand for fresh properties like Marriott's new AC Hotel Newtown Square and a planned 110-room Broad Street Diner conversion. Speaking of which, Philly is also a stealthy American food town as its #7 Restaurants ranking indicates, boasting more restaurant and chef awards than any other at the 2023 James Beard Foundation competition. The city's #7 Museums ranking is also solidified with recent investments like the 90,000 square feet of new public and exhibition space at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as part of its Frank Gehry-led expansion.



19 San Jose California

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Educational Attainment
- 1 Business Ecosystem (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 1,946,000

Talent, smarts and money empower San Jose's citizens to be bold with recovery.

As the global heart of innovation and the urban center of Silicon Valley, San Jose's #6 spot in our overall Prosperity index is powered by #1 rankings in categories ranging from Business Ecosystem to GDP per Capita. Talent, smarts and money fuel this resilience, with the city's economic engine roaring back to life after recent challenges. Stanford-fed brainpower and America's #1 ranking in Educational Attainment create an unmatched foundation for growth within its moat of 2,500 high-tech companies. The AI revolution has transformed San Jose into America's third-largest AI hub, with tech payrolls surging 25% to 385,000 jobs. This innovation ecosystem thrives on the symbiotic relationship between the city's prestigious universities and local tech firms, providing unique funding and training opportunities unlike anywhere else. Evidence of this innovative spirit abounds with nearly 9,800 AI patents filed locally—invention remains the city's favorite pastime. Connectivity improvements are narrowing crucial gaps: VTA's ambitious BART Silicon Valley Phase II is tunneling toward downtown, promising four new stations and 55,000 weekday riders. Meanwhile, housing development accelerates with Jay Paul's CityView Plaza pivoting from idle offices to 320 apartments en route to 680 homes—among the nation's largest office-to-residential conversions.



20 Honolulu Hawaii

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Nature & Parks
- 2 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 989,000

An urban paradise blooms quickly and rewards the adventurous.

Honolulu's travel economy is shaking off its pandemic hangover. While vital Japanese arrivals remain roughly 54% below 2019 levels, six hotels have opened since 2023, led by the 462-room Ka La'i Waikiki Beach, Hilton's first LXR outpost in Hawai'i, and O'ahu's inaugural, adults-only Romer House Waikiki. The buzzy Renaissance Honolulu Hotel & Spa now anchors the Ala Moana corridor, where the mall has lured a number of new international retailers. Skyline—the nation's only fully autonomous metro—will extend to Pearl Harbor and Daniel K. Inouye International Airport by late 2025, slashing cross-town travel and unlocking transit-oriented sites. Investors are moving: Ward Village's Kalae tower is already 96% pre-sold, and O'ahu's median sale price hit \$698,000 in March amid still-tight housing supply (+7.8% year over year), while unemployment slid to 2.9% on 11,800 new jobs, led by construction and professional services. The city's famed clean air (#2) and #12-ranked Culture endure, now amplified by the Lei Stand's revival at Romer House and the forthcoming \$500-million, 93-acre, 25,000-seat New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District, aligned with Skyline's new stations. Just remember to explore the bounty behind America's top-ranked Parks & Nature subcategory.



21 Minneapolis Minnesota

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Biking (Tied)
- 7 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 3,712,000

Urban renewal and progressive city-building (and the great outdoors!) at a price you can afford.

Lakeside living meets skyway swagger in Minneapolis, where locals brag you can drop a kayak on the car roof and reach a Fortune-500 boardroom ten minutes later. The newest flex? North Loop Green, a "live-work-cheer" development ribbon-cut in 2024 with 449 homes in a 34-story residential tower and 350,000 square feet of offices in an adjoining 14-story office tower near Target Field. Bike lanes hum even in January (the city ranks #1 in our Biking subcategory, after all), and the Chain of Lakes frames pick-up hockey. South on Nicollet, the former Kmart block is coming down: the New Nicollet plan will see the avenue reopened and revitalized with indie shops and hundreds of mixed-income units by 2030. Downtown hotels posted a sizzling 22% revenue per average room surge last summer, and a 321-room Sheraton Convention Center hotel will debut on Nicollet Mall by the time you read this. MSP airport (ranked an impressive #18) is chipping in with a \$571-million concourse and runway refresh this year. Capital is following confidence: Polar Semiconductor's \$525-million expansion in nearby Bloomington anchors a CHIPS-era wave of foreign investment (at least for now). Metro unemployment sits at 3.1%, and downtown vacancy is also mercifully trending downwards.



22 New Orleans Louisiana

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Shopping
- 3 Museums

POPULATION

Metro 962,000

The Big Easy is savoring the fruits of its hard work.

Laissez-faire? Hardly—New Orleans still bounces like a brass line three centuries on. The Warehouse District got hotter with the 54-key Nobu Hotel's New Year's Eve debut inside the freshly rebranded Caesars New Orleans, part of a \$435-million revamp that adds a 340-room tower this year. Upriver, Audubon's \$30-million Riverfront for All is clearing Gov. Nicholls wharf to stitch a 2.25-mile greenway from Spanish Plaza to Crescent Park by year's end, while shovels hit sand this fall on the \$23-million revival of Lincoln Beach—a historically important Black public space that will be the city's first public beach to open in decades.

The River District's first vertical—Shell's Gulf of America HQ—broke ground in February; the district also lands a \$40-million Topgolf promising 450 hires and forecasting 9,000 construction jobs. Downriver, the \$1.8-billion Louisiana International Terminal begins construction this year, poised to lift trade just as Port NOLA logged a record 1.2 million cruise passengers in 2024.

Galleries and boutiques still groove in the Warehouse District and power the #2 Shopping ranking, while brass echoes on Frenchmen and across the city's Top 5 nightlife. Just a few hours here makes it obvious why NOLA regularly finishes Top 10 in our overall Lovability index.



23 Nashville Tennessee

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Unemployment Rate
- 9 Nightlife

POPULATION

Metro 2,104,000

Music City sounds better than ever. Especially if you work in tech and own property.

Fresh off CMA Fest, Nashville is turning up the volume with the just-opened, 4,500-seat Pinnacle at Nashville Yards. Across town, Rock Nashville's 55-acre rehearsal campus in Whites Creek readies for a fall debut, while the century-old Arcade downtown completes a retail-art reboot. Cranes are rocking, too: Ashwood 12 South's street-level lineup—Birkenstock, Reformation and Sushi-San—joins riverfront Peabody Union's six-story office and 27-story residential towers, arriving this spring. Locals are also buzzing about Oracle's \$60-million grab of an additional 2.73-acre East Bank parcel, hungry for talent in a town that already boasts the country's 8th-lowest unemployment and a housing market where the median sold price is moving in on \$500,000. Hospitality supply is racing to keep pace: Caption by Hyatt, Holiday Inn Express West End and Hilton Garden Inn Opryland all just opened, with a dual-branded Canopy/Homewood Suites in The Gulch and the 187-room Printing House Hotel set for summer. Meanwhile, passengers will soon arrive through BNA's five-gate Concourse D extension—part of the \$3-billion New Horizon expansion—while the city's newly funded \$3.1-billion mobility plan is introducing improved transit, smarter signals and safer sidewalks.



24 Tampa Florida

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 Attractions
- 16 Nature & Parks

POPULATION

Metro 3,343,000

Florida's outdoor wonderland has a taste for the finer things.

Tampa makes the good life look effortless—and lucrative. The sun-drenched Riverwalk still hums, but the 56-acre Water Street Tampa is already pushing north: SPP unveiled plans for three live-work towers linking downtown to historic and captivating Ybor City, including the district's tallest condo and a trophy office stack. East in Ybor, the 50-acre Gas Worx welcomes its first residents this fall at La Union Apartments, igniting a spine of lofts, offices and a food-hall marketplace. Investors are tracking rooftops: Tampa's median listing price hit \$465,500 in March 2025, up 3.4% year over year even after thousands of new downtown units were delivered. Foreign investment continues to pour in: German med-tech firm Medability chose downtown for its U.S. HQ in January, while London-based PEI Global Partners just doubled its Water Street footprint. With the world curious about the Tampa story, SpringHill Suites Downtown debuted a skyline view rooftop pool in April, and the 42-story, 225-unit One Tampa tower will be the tallest in the city when it opens in late 2026. A \$16-million federal grant propelling Brightline's Orlando-Tampa rail link will make it easier than ever to experience Tampa's 246 annual days of sun, five Michelin-starred restaurants (Restaurants rank #21) and #14-ranked attractions.



25 Phoenix Arizona

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 Airport (Tied)
- 15 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 5,070,000

Rapid growth, ambitious architecture and a reverence for the outdoors create a heady mix in the desert.

Phoenix just keeps getting hotter. In a good way. Fresh Census 2024 estimates confirm tens of thousands of new residents and jobs. Home values? After a scorching 14% jump in 2023, still impressive 2.3% year-over-year increases were reported in early 2025. Downtown, South Central Light Rail linking South Phoenix with Sky Harbor and Tempe should be open by the time you read this—gold for site selectors chasing untapped talent pools. The Phoenix Bioscience Core is bursting: ASU Health's HQ promises a \$19-billion impact and 200,000 jobs, while CAMI's seven-story immunotherapy lab broke ground in October 2024. The city's #27 overall ranking in our Prosperity index will rise as TSMC's third semiconductor plant and "learn-and-earn" apprenticeships come online. Same goes for Eternity Technologies' \$20-million battery plant. And retail is equally exciting, given that Kierland Commons has lured Aritzia, Mejuri and Saatva to Arizona for the first time. The city's hospitality scene is blooming with the new 25-story Fairmont Phoenix Hotel & Residences and its must-visit rooftop desert-view bar, while the new Caesars Republic Scottsdale is now hosting rooftop DJ sets. And this fall, the world's first amphitheater hotel—with stage-facing rooms and skyboxes—opens in the \$1.2-billion VAI Resort.



26 Baltimore Maryland

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 University
- 12 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 2,834,000

A legacy of hustle, entrepreneurship and intelligence makes for a captivating hometown.

Baltimore keeps polishing its Charm City badge. The Fort McHenry shipping channel was back online barely 11 weeks after the Key Bridge collapse, restoring full port flow and confidence months ahead of projections. These days, South Baltimore's 235-acre Peninsula is humming: Under Armour's net-zero, mass-timber HQ campus and 24,000-square-foot brand house opened in late 2024. Downtown, voters green-lit a \$900-million, Gensler-designed Harborplace redo, and ground is being prepped for four mixed-use towers. The city's industry capacity is also expanding with Tradeport Atlantic's TiL container terminal boosting port capacity by 70% and creating 8,000 jobs, while \$100 million in state funds pushes the revived Red Line light rail toward a 2028 debut. Even with all that buzz, the early 2025 median list price sat at just \$242,000—around 40% below the national median. Tourism is surging as well: 27.5 million visitors explored Baltimore in 2023 and 55 conventions pumped \$115.7 million into the local economy. The Greater Baltimore Committee is proactively pursuing business investment, capital, talent and innovation with its "Bold Moves" brand, tool kit and \$4.4-billion investment scorecard showcasing coveted assets like its universities (ranked #5 in the U.S.) and educated workforce (#16).



27 Salt Lake City Utah

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Labor Force Participation
- 3 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,268,000

The great outdoors—and high salaries—are calling.

Combining spectacular natural and built environments, Salt Lake City is no longer just a gateway to the great outdoors—it's also a welcoming destination with Top 3 biking, impressive healthcare (#12) and the highest labor force participation in the nation. That is potent growth fuel. The just-opened Astra Tower adds 41-story views and 377 LEED-Gold rentals—proof investors are betting on downtown living. Next door, the once-industrial Post District has delivered both apartments and maker space, with the 580-unit Post District Residences winning CoStar's 2024 redevelopment of the year. Both will feed the newly approved Sports, Entertainment, Culture & Convention District orbiting the Delta Center, now being retooled to host the NHL's newest team, the Utah Mammoth, alongside the Jazz by next year. Travelers land at an ever-growing SLC International, adding 10 more gates and a dozen shops this year. The 225-room Asher Adams Autograph Collection revived the 1909 Union Pacific Depot last November, and a 140-room Fairfield Southwest just opened. And the Silicon Slopes sobriquet has never been more fitting: Texas Instruments is pouring \$11 billion into a second Lehi semiconductor plant, creating 800 high-tech jobs, while CBRE now ranks the metro No. 12 for tech talent in the U.S. Just wait until the full 2034 Winter Olympics build-out hits.



28 Madison Wisconsin

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Unemployment Rate
- 10 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 694,000

This oft-cited example of livability, job creation and millennial magnetism checks all the boxes.

Madison's small-city superpowers keep growing stronger. The state capital-university combo still spins out talent, threading the needle on both the lowest unemployment in America and a Top 10 for Labor Force Participation. Biotech star Exact Sciences keeps hiring, while overseas backers share in the 170 FDI projects tallied statewide since 2014, doubling down on the city's research parks and low-carbon grid. Capital is also flowing into local real estate, with median home prices rising to \$450,000 in early 2025. Fortunately, crews broke ground on 553 affordable units at Huxley Yards in 2024, transforming the long-idle Oscar Mayer campus into a transit-oriented neighborhood. Across town, Madison Yards sealed final approvals for a five-story, 145-room hotel beside Whole Foods, state offices and 500 apartments, welding retail to policy brainpower on the west side. Curious visitors exploring this midwest miracle have plenty of lodging options, with Marriott's 159-room Moxy debuting on East Wash in 2024 and channeling the corridor's craft beer and indie music vibe. The long-awaited Madison Public Market now targets a late 2025 opening and expects 500,000 annual visits. And TruStage's new LEED Gold Lighthouse HQ is another example that in Madison, growth still aims for sustainability.



29 St. Louis Missouri

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Housing Affordability
- 16 Large Companies

POPULATION

Metro 2,796,000

Lots of jobs and attainable housing meet ambitious placemaking in the Gateway to the West.

St. Louis still offers one of the planet's easiest on-ramps to homeownership—owners here spend just 22% of income on housing, a steal next to the U.S. average of 36%. It's a big part of why the city ranks #13 in our Housing Affordability subcategory and why talent and capital are pouring in. Especially as the \$1.7-billion National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency HQ begins its phased move-in this fall, bringing 3,100 high-skill jobs and a catalytic innovation district to North City. This is on top of an already solid #16 ranking in our Large Companies subcategory.

Downtown, the \$256-million AC Next Gen expansion wraps in late 2025, adding 72,000 square feet of exhibit space, a river-facing outdoor plaza and a 61,000-square-foot ballroom—fuel for the region's record \$5.8-billion visitor spend in 2024. The parks renaissance continues: the Brickline Greenway is building out its Market Street connection to CityPark and Harris-Stowe State University, stitching together 14 neighborhoods by 2030 and improving on the already impressive Top 20 walkability. Transit upgrades are next, although new Mayor Cara Spenser has just paused the \$1.1-billion north-south MetroLink Green Line to assess its viability and competitiveness in the current political climate.



30 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Housing Affordability
- 9 University

POPULATION

Metro 2,423,000

Good things are brewing in a place so affordable, just call it 'Steal City'.

No city ranks this high in our index while boasting a Top 5 spot in our Housing Affordability subcategory. Typical home values hover around \$230,000, up a mellow 2% year over year, leaving investors room to pencil deals while downtown rents tick up. Pittsburgh's skyline just welcomed the 26-story FNB Financial Center, a \$300-million anchor reconnecting the Lower Hill District with the Golden Triangle. A few blocks downstream, CMU's forthcoming 150,000-square-foot Robotics Innovation Center at Hazelwood Green and the new Robotics Factory accelerator in Lawrenceville bulk up a 125-firm autonomous systems cluster already supporting 7,300 high-impact jobs—catnip for site selectors chasing STEM talent. Especially given Carnegie Mellon's #9 spot in our University subcategory. Visitors curious about the three-river charmer will land in style this fall, when Pittsburgh International unveils its \$1.7-billion terminal; five new local-first stores are already teasing the art-and-tech vibe in the existing concourses. Visitor spend is forecast to top a record \$7 billion this year. At street level, the six-block Pop District keeps pulsing, joined by indie boutiques like Steel City's new Strip District flagship and 2025's slate of openings—from food markets to speakeasies.



31 Charleston South Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Air Quality
- 11 Unemployment Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 849,000

Few U.S. cities are as revered as the Holy City.

Charleston's momentum is palpable, from harbor cranes to daring hotels to vital museums (for which it ranks #12). Charleston International logged a record 6.3 million passengers in 2024, is already sketching a bigger terminal, and just welcomed the Element Charleston Airport and Drury Plaza hotels this spring. In town, the six-story, 191-room Cooper debuts on the harbor this fall with five restaurants and its own marina.

Charleston's newest and most important draw is the \$100-million International African American Museum on the former site of Gadsden's Wharf, the disembarkation point into American slavery for an estimated 100,000 African people over centuries—the largest such port in the country. A new genealogy center helps visitors research their own history. The modern waterfront is moving forward with the Union Pier redo, unlocking 65 acres of waterfront parks, flood-proof streets and mixed-income housing beside the French Quarter. Investment is flooding in, with Google breaking ground on two \$2-billion data center campuses in Dorchester County and investing another \$1.3 billion into its Berkeley site. Hundreds of high-wage cloud jobs should come online as a result. King Street retail is equally hot (Shopping ranks #19) with Gucci's new 4,200-square-foot flagship just opened in Charleston Place.



32 Providence Rhode Island

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9** Walkability
- 10** University

POPULATION

Metro 1,678,000

The smallest state in America has a capital city thinking big.

Fresh air and big ideas still barrel down the Providence River, and 2025's skyline hums with city-building like few other periods in Providence's four centuries. April saw the ribbon-cutting of the 66-unit Tempo and shovels in the ground for the 61-unit Tandem, together bringing mixed-income homes, childcare and maker space to the I-195 District's Fox Point parcel. One block north, approvals for 12-story Dyer Wharf add 214 riverfront apartments and retail to the growing Innovation District. Downtown's 1928 Industrial Trust Building—dubbed the "Superman Building" because its Art Deco crown mirrors the Daily Planet—is finally being gutted for 285 lofts despite costs rising 43% since 2022. The #9 Walkability ranking in the historic center is well deserved. Brown University (#10 in our University subcategory) is simultaneously erecting its seven-story, 300,000-square-foot Danoff Life Sciences Labs and committing 30,000 square feet rent-free to Ocean State Labs, a \$16-million biotech incubator primed to spin out home-grown IP. At ProvPort, Ørsted-Eversource's \$100-million upgrade now fabricates offshore wind components, anchoring clean-energy jobs. With the state seeing a record 28.4 million visitors in 2023, there are concrete plans to expand Providence's cruise terminal, and Breeze Airways' expansion at nearby T.F. Green is promising 400 new jobs.



33 Columbus Ohio

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 18** Labor Force Participation (Tied)
- 20** Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 2,180,000

A Midwest masterpiece is rising and getting noticed.

You'll be hearing more about Ohio's capital soon enough. The Midwest magnet added more than 30,000 residents in 2024, lifting the metro to 2.23 million and growing 38% faster than the U.S. average—fueled by Ohio State talent and steady in-migration. Intel's \$28-billion Ohio One campus—with first chips now moved to 2030—will ultimately field 7,000 construction workers, promising years of high-skill paydays. Tech giants are stacking servers, too: Amazon is adding another \$10 billion and 1,000 jobs, while Google tacked on \$2.3 billion to its three-site footprint. Life sciences heat up as Amgen's 300,000-square-foot biomanufacturing plant came online in 2024. Downtown is building, with Phase 2 of the Scioto Peninsula rising around The Junto, the 28-story Merchant Building targeting a 2026 debut and Astor Park's first 261 apartments underway beside the MLS Crew's stadium. Small wonder that with such homebuilding, #18-ranked Labor Force Participation and Top 25 overall Prosperity, Columbus is #20 in our Housing Affordability subcategory. Rents may have climbed to \$1,337 this year, but with 95% occupancy and median home values at \$253,000 there's still plenty of runway left. Speaking of which, a new \$2-billion terminal just broke ground at the #46-ranked John Glenn International Airport.



34 Raleigh North Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Green Space
- 7** Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,509,000

A booming economy and a global intellect position this Carolina powerhouse for the future.

Raleigh's Research Triangle magnetism keeps the investment flowing like few times in the city's history. A big driver is the three major research universities, which supply a pipeline of young, cheap and brilliant talent that ranks Raleigh #7 for Educational Attainment and Top 20 in our overall Prosperity index. Appropriately, the new 20-story 400H tower is leasing its 242 luxury apartments and 150,000 square feet of offices on Hillsborough Street. Tempo by Hilton and a conjoined Homewood Suites opened in December, adding 261 rooms and a rooftop bar downtown, with a 179-room Kimpton still slated for late 2025. Cary's \$850-million Fenton district just green-lit a seven-story, 186-room hotel for phase two. All those biotech site selectors need places to stay, after all. Genentech picked nearby Holly Springs for a \$700-million biologics plant with 400 jobs, while Solvias launched a cell-gene analytics hub in RTP this January. Non-farm employment is up 2% year over year and Labor Force Participation ranks #13 in the country. Homes now average \$439,000 (with housing affordability #55 nationally). The top Green Space ranking in the country demands a premium. To keep everyone pouring in, the RUS Bus hub debuts this summer, stitching rail, BRT and six GoTriangle routes into one downtown gateway.



35 Charlotte North Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5** Green Space
- 14** Airport (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 2,805,000

Affluent, easy to love and bursting with southern charm.

America's Old South is up to new tricks in Charlotte, a global banking powerhouse (the second-most important in the U.S. after New York) and ranked #16 in our Large Companies subcategory. This year's headlines are all about what's sprouting across the already robust skyline. June sees the grand opening of The Pearl: 26 Midtown acres anchored by Wake Forest University's new medical school, lab space and 1,000 apartments, plus buzz-magnet bars and a hotel, promising thousands of new jobs. The Moxy Charlotte Downtown and SpringHill Suites Arrowood are also new hotels to watch. Down the line, CLT's \$608-million terminal lobby expansion finishes this fall, adding art-filled concourses and smoothing the ride for the 59 million annual passengers (and improving its impressive #14 Airport ranking). Siemens Energy is pouring \$150 million into transformer production and 475 high-skill jobs, while Germany's HSP will spend \$50 million on its first U.S. plant. In 2024 alone, the region banked \$991 million in new investment, while median home prices climbed to \$420,000—still a deal for newcomers chasing booming paychecks—while rental demand stays robust. Visitors are joining the rush—tourism generated a record \$1.1 billion in 2024, and May's PGA Championship packed Quail Hollow with 200,000 fans.



36 New Haven Connecticut

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3** University (Tied)
- 9** GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 568,000

A history-packed town with a knack for launching residents who change the world.

Five U.S. presidents studied and lived here, as well as countless Supreme Court justices, members of Congress, Hollywood stars and captains of industry. Yale (#3 in our University subcategory) still anchors historic Elm City, but New Haven circa 2025 hums with the buzz of construction and jet engines. Tweed-New Haven Airport (#63) smashed records—departures are up 1,100% since 2019—and its privately funded, \$75-million, four-gate terminal rising in East Haven will serve a projected 700,000 passengers, with Avelo's new links to Dallas, Detroit, Jacksonville and Portland recently launched. A mile inland, the 10-story 101 College Street bioscience tower opened last spring, while home-grown Arvinas quietly expanded to 67,500 square feet of labs at Science Park under leases running to 2029. More than 1,000 apartments debuted in 2024 and values are projected to climb another 3.5% by late 2025, balanced by state-backed West Ridge and Ella Blake Commons adding 119 affordable units. Downtown Crossing Phase 4, funded through 2026, will finally stitch Route 34 back to the street grid (ranked #14 in both our Walkability and Biking subcategories) and deliver 280,000 square feet of mixed-use space and facilitate the flow of talent that drives the ninth-highest GDP per capita in the nation.



37 Milwaukee Wisconsin

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11** Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 25** Walkability

POPULATION

Metro 1,560,000

Milwaukee is rebuilding as an honest hometown for everyone.

Milwaukee threads the needle on post-pandemic magnetism, offering economic opportunity courtesy of its low unemployment rate (#11) and human-scale urban authenticity (ranking Top 25 in our Walkability subcategory). Typical home values are approaching \$220,000, up roughly 7% year over year yet still Midwest-affordable. City-building is led by The Couture, the 44-story lakefront residential tower with 42,600 square feet of dining that opened last year, weaving a streetcar and BRT hub into its podium. Nearby, crews broke ground in early 2025 on the 32-story Edison, set to become North America's tallest mass-timber residence—a beacon for climate-smart investors. Average weekly wages already top \$1,240, giving newcomers spending power without coastal price tags. Downtown, the \$456-million Baird Center expansion debuted in May 2024, doubling convention floor space (and soon to improve Cream City's #49 Convention Center ranking). Mitchell International Airport (#61) is pursuing federal dollars for a new international terminal, smoothing export and talent flows. Bronzeville's comeback surges with Gallery 507 and a 50,000-square-foot Bronzeville Center for the Arts underway. Battery maker Clarios matched the optimism with a \$6-billion U.S. build-out announced from its Glendale HQ in March 2025, reinforcing the skilled worker pipeline.



38 Portland Maine

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Unemployment Rate
- 11 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 566,000

Under the radar (for now) and on top of a warming world.

The smallest city in our Top 50 is growing fast and attracting global attention for its climate resilience and fresh air. Tower cranes mark the next \$660-million phase of Portland Foreside—nearly 400 new homes, a 128-room waterfront hotel and 50,000 square feet of retail are all climbing skyward for a 2026 debut, extending the Old Port's grid toward the Eastern Prom. It's only going to improve the city's impressive Top 25 walkability (and 11th-best biking). Just inland, Northeastern's \$500-million Roux Institute campus broke ground last fall on the former B&M Baked Beans site. When the AI and biotech hub opens in 2027, it will pour research dollars—and a pipeline of talent—into Maine's fast-growing \$2.3-billion life sciences sector, already forecast to outpace every other industry next year. Given the 5th lowest unemployment in the country, talent attraction is going to be paramount. Good thing housing supply is catching up: the West Bayside master plan begins its first of five buildings in 2025, ultimately delivering 800+ new rentals, a quarter of them affordable, threaded with greenways and bike lanes. Tourism is also booming, with the 48-room Longfellow—Portland's first wellness-centric boutique—now open and the port expecting a record 97 cruise calls this season.



39 Rochester New York

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 Green Space
- 21 University

POPULATION

Metro 1,052,000

The once-mighty industrial Great Lakes titan is doing the work.

Rochester's reinvention from rustbelt relic to livable innovator keeps gathering steam. (Literally: the state's third-largest city ranks #28 in our overall Livability index, powered by its 11th-ranked green spaces and Top 25 biking.) No wonder home values now average about \$231,000—up 6% year over year—while Monroe County ranked as the nation's fifth-hottest housing market in March 2025, with listings disappearing in a matter of days. The city's deep bench of RIT and University of Rochester grads (driving the city's #21 University ranking) keeps advanced manufacturing employers coming. QED Technologies just broke ground on a world-class precision optics plant and customer-experience center, and the Luminate NY accelerator welcomed a record eighth cohort of 10 global photonics start-ups this spring. Big urban projects match the talent story. A fresh, \$100-million federal-state grant is burying the last stub of the Inner Loop North, freeing 22 acres for mixed-income housing, parks and bike lanes, while the shuttered Riverside Hotel on Main Street is being reborn as a residential-retail hub steps from the Genesee River. Visitors will arrive through a \$38-million modernization of Frederick Douglass International Airport (#71) and can bunk at the new Hampton Inn & Suites that opened in 2023 to anchor the Strong Museum's growing Neighborhood of Play district.



40 Cleveland Ohio

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Convention Center
- 16 Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 2,159,000

Where American second-tier-city cool meets affordability.

Few American cities boast a rebirth story like Cleveland's. The City of Champions walks tall with urban investments like the new \$150-million reimagining of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and its 375,000 square feet of galleries as Ohio's first LEEDv4 Platinum museum. The city's #26 Museums ranking should rise as a result. Downtown, Sherwin-Williams starts a phased 2025 move-in to its 36-story global HQ, securing 4,000 jobs on Public Square and further cementing the city's #33 spot in our Large Companies subcategory. Meanwhile, a \$218-million W Hotel + Residences is converting Erieview Tower into 210 rooms, 227 condos and a rooftop bar by 2026. Bedrock's \$3.5-billion riverfront plan just cleared city financing, promising 12 walkable acres stitched to MLB's newest "it" ballpark, Progressive Field. All this progress is a relative bargain in The Cleve, which boasts a #16 spot in our Housing Affordability subcategory. The new Cleveland Talent Alliance aiming to draw talent to the city is certainly touting affordable home ownership. Infrastructure is stepping up, too, with the RTA's \$250-million Siemens rail fleet arriving in 2026, and Hopkins Airport launching a \$1.6-billion terminal modernization with 1,600 new parking spots and an RTA link. Aer Lingus has even increased its non-stops to Dublin to six days a week—Cleveland's lone European route.



41 San Antonio Texas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Attractions
- 8 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 2,704,000

San Antonio keeps proving that tactical urbanism can scale.

A city synonymous with its River Walk just keeps adorning its waterside promenade, most recently with the 21-story InterContinental San Antonio Riverwalk—390 rooms of Hollywood-glam river views and four new eateries. As though meeting planners and leisure travelers needed yet another excuse to linger in a place that already ranks #23 in our overall Lovability index, including a #8 spot for its stealthy restaurants and #7 for its bounty of attractions. A few blocks west, guided sneak-peek tours are lighting up the long-dormant 1949 Alameda Theater before its full Latino-arts rebirth in late 2025. Beyond the postcard corridor, cranes define 2025. Port San Antonio's board has green-lit a \$275-million, 12-story Innovation Tower—complete with vertiport and childcare—to keep cyber defense tenants from eyeing Austin. On the Southside, UK equipment giant JCB is pouring \$500 million into a one-million-square-foot plant that will hire 1,500 locals, underscoring American manufacturing's comeback. Retail loves the growth: Burlington is adding three off-price boxes while Marshalls lands at The Rim luxury center later this year, proof that value-hungry shoppers keep ringing registers north and west in a city that already enjoys a Top 25 spot in our Shopping subcategory.



42 Buffalo New York

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 Walkability (Tied)
- 19 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 1,156,000

Understated urban revival in one of America's architectural bounties.

Buffalo's quiet glow-up keeps adding fresh layers, with impressive walkability (#16) and biking (#19) powering the ascent of a city that ranks an impressive #33 in our overall Livability index. The 2024 debut of The Richardson Hotel on Frederick Law Olmsted's West Side campus returned overnight life to one of America's great architectural ensembles, setting the stage for a new era of heritage-driven hospitality. The \$230-million expansion of the renamed Buffalo AKG Art Museum has since made the city a pilgrimage for modern art lovers. Next up: the long-slumbering DL&W Terminal is being reborn as a multi-level public market and light rail hub, and a privately funded 7,600-seat pro soccer stadium is already reshaping the Valley into an entertainment district ahead of the 2026 USL season. Job momentum is anchored by Amazon's five-story, 3.1-million-square-foot robotics fulfillment center near Niagara Falls, slated to hire 1,000, and by Ontario-based Lifco Hydraulics' new \$2-million parts plant—evidence of Buffalo's deepening cross-border trade pipeline. Zillow again crowns Buffalo the nation's hottest housing market for 2025; typical values remain about \$235,000—still roughly a third below the U.S. norm—even after a nearly 9% jump in the past year.



43 Richmond Virginia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 26 Labor Force Participation (Tied)
- 28 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 1,350,000

Mellow and understated by design, Richmond keeps spreading out—and up.

Emerging from its pandemic slumber, the river city has leaned into its quiet boom. On the James, CoStar's one-million-square-foot global HQ is rising, with 1,000 hires slated for 2025 ahead of a spring 2026 ribbon-cutting, cementing the region's property tech cred and tapping into the #26-ranked Labor Force Participation. Steps away, the 67-acre Diamond District finally broke ground; CarMax Park is on deck for the 2026 Flying Squirrels minor league baseball season amid new apartments, a 180-room hotel and 20,000 square feet of retail that will stitch Scott's Addition to the Boulevard. Overseas capital also keeps flowing: Danish clean-energy giant Topsoe chose Chesterfield for a \$400-million electrolyzer plant, promising 150 direct jobs and 1,000 more in the supply chain, while UK-based Haleon is investing \$54.2 million to expand its Northside R&D campus. There's also impressive transit build-out with GRTC's Pulse BRT pushing four miles west to Parham Road next year, adding eight stations and a park-and-ride. Curious visitors will have lots of new choices, with Candlewood Suites near Meadowville Tech Park just opened, and the Holiday Inn & Suites West End back online after a complete reno. Awaiting them are amazing museums and historic sights, both ranked #29.



44 Albany New York

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 GDP per Capita
- 23 Walkability

POPULATION

Metro 905,000

Central, prosperous and sophisticated, New York's state capital knows its worth.

Central no longer means sleepy in Albany. The state-backed NanoFab Reflection building rising at SUNY-Poly's nanotech campus—now a \$614-million, EUV-ready marvel—cements the Capital Region's place in the CHIPS Act's \$10-billion High-NA lithography cluster. Forty minutes north, GlobalFoundries has broken ground on its \$13-billion Fab 8.2, adding 1,500 construction jobs now and thousands of permanent jobs later. Looks like word on Albany's #22 spot for GDP per Capita is out. Confidence is spilling downtown. NeoVista Equities is reviving 112-year-old Jack's Oyster House while adding a market and daycare nearby, and Market 32's June 2024 reboot of the former ShopRite on Central Ave anchors fresh food access. The #23-ranked walkability will only improve. Site work also begins this spring for the region's first 163,000-square-foot Costco at Crossgates. The #29 ranking for Housing Affordability is holding firm: February 2025's median list price was \$269,000—up 17% but still two-thirds of the U.S. average. Developers are pouncing, from the \$29.4-million, 67-unit Clinton Square affordable build to the revived 180-key riverfront hotel gaining a new developer in March. Travelers will arrive through a \$100-million modernization of Albany International Airport (finished next year).



45 Omaha Nebraska

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Unemployment Rate
- 9 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 985,000

The discreet economic powerhouse of the Midwest lives large while keeping it small.

Nebraska's largest city has always worked overtime to carve out the good life on the banks of the Missouri River in pretty much the middle of the (contiguous) country. The skyline now sports the 29-story core of Mutual of Omaha's 44-floor HQ, already 382 feet tall and headed for 677 feet in 2026. But after six decades, Warren Buffett won't be there as the Oracle of Omaha retires this year. But the next generation of Silicon Prairie builders is hard at work, with crews laying rails for the three-mile streetcar linking Midtown to the RiverFront for a 2028 debut. Nearby, the \$108-million Tenaska Center for Arts Engagement is doubling rehearsal and classroom space at the Holland Center. North Omaha's new 52,000-square-foot Pacific Engineering plant adds high-skill jobs and grant-backed revival. U.S. News just named the metro America's hottest housing market; rents rose 3.7% while vacancy hovers near 5%. Omaha's Top 5 lowest unemployment rate in the country sits at just 2.8%, with rising tech wages keeping the talent pipeline stocked.

Hospitality build-out is also fierce. WarHorse Casino just expanded and its boutique hotel is coming soon, and a new \$57-million, 135-room hotel and rooftop bar now energizes Millwork Commons.



46 Tucson Arizona

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 Museums
- 13 Nature & Parks

POPULATION

Metro 1,063,000

Arizona's second city is ascending fast, with bold city leadership and placemaking.

Fast-growing Tucson is getting its sun-kissed, well-toned arms around its distinct sense of place and economic runway. The \$1.2-billion American Battery Factory gigafactory now rising south of the airport will ship its first LFP cells next year, anchoring 1,000 high-wage jobs on a 2-million-square-foot campus. Suppliers are following, from Schnitzer's \$73-million, 334,000-square-foot industrial parks that broke ground in January to NextEra's \$314-million Wilmot II solar-plus-storage array—due online this summer. Retail and hospitality are racing to keep up: Bass Pro's 100,000-square-foot Outdoor World and a 160,000-square-foot Walmart Supercenter land next year at The Bridges, while Spark by Hilton debuted at TUS in February 2025 and Hilton's 144-room Tempo will crown the Foothills Mall remake in 2026. The UNESCO City of Gastronomy (ranking #33 for Restaurants) is also feeding its culinary buzz with Casa Madre's Himalayan salt wall dining, TABU's modern Sonoran plates and BATA's new wood-fired patio kitchen. Then there's the anticipation around Barrio Viejo as it awaits National Historic Landmark status. Good thing that Southwest and Alaska launch Sacramento nonstops this spring, with #83-ranked TUS on pace to serve nearly four million passengers—its busiest year since 2008.



47 Detroit Michigan

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Convention Center
- 22 Sights & Landmarks

POPULATION

Metro 4,342,000

America's great urban comeback story is writing its next chapter.

Detroit's ascent to and fall from the top of the world is now part of global urban lore, with Motor City leaning into its bright future. Michigan Central's public opening last June turned the long-empty Beaux-Arts depot into Detroit's buzziest coworking and food hub, with a 30-acre mobility district drawing Ford teams and start-ups. Next, Hudson's Detroit is opening this summer; GM has pre-leased offices, and a 210-room Edition hotel and 97 condos arrive in late 2025. The city's #12-ranked convention center is ready for the resulting events boom. Just up Woodward, city filings confirm Apple's first downtown store beside the Shinola Hotel—an amenity most Midwest cores still dream of. Speaking of which, the 154-room AC Hotel at the Bonstelle opened in January, and Little Caesars Arena's 291-room hotel breaks ground this year. Affordability remains Detroit's superpower: homeowners spend just 17% of their income on housing, ranking #42 in our Housing Affordability subcategory. Exciting local placemaking efforts include Little Village, a reimagining of a 1911 church into Shepherd Arts Center, with an inclusive artist-led campus of sculptures, a skate park, artist residencies, the culinary BridgeHouse, Lantern nonprofits and the forthcoming Stanton Yards riverfront. Watch the #22 Sights & Landmarks ranking ascend with this local pride.



48 Sacramento California

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Biking
- 15 Healthcare

POPULATION

Metro 2,421,000

Green, bountiful and affluent, California's capital is big on local stewardship.

California's state capital is prosperous and proud, ranking well for its natural attributes, including epic weather that nourishes this self-declared "Farm-to-Fork Capital" and its fertile surroundings. The city is putting its investment money where its well-fed mouth is. May's ribbon-cutting for UC Davis's \$1.15-billion Aggie Square opened wet labs, classrooms and mixed-income housing that will host 3,200 permanent life science jobs. Up the rail line, Kaiser Permanente has begun building a 310-bed hospital in the Railyards (bolstering the city's #15 Healthcare ranking), where the 12,000-seat Republic FC stadium also breaks ground this year. Hotels are also trying to keep up with the demand, with an AC Hotel Downtown, Aloft Sacramento Airport and Residence Inn Cal Expo all having recently opened. Midtown's Ice Blocks keeps locals fed and the #29 Restaurants ranking solid: Urban Roots' new Good Neighbor just opened and is firing up must-try pizza, joining Shake Shack on the buzzing R Street corridor. Sacramento International just landed a federal TIFIA loan that keeps its \$1.3-billion SMForward expansion—new walkways, parking garage and Terminal A rebuild—on schedule, cementing the airport's role as a gateway to the capital region and its 2.5 million residents.



49 Provo Utah

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Labor Force Participation
- 7 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 733,000

Sometimes good cities come in small packages. Welcome to Utah's urban gem.

One of the smallest cities by population in our Top 100, Provo is only the fourth-largest city in Utah. Still, with the Wasatch peaks to the east and Utah Lake to the west, Provo is an outdoor playground. It's home to Brigham Young University (contributing to the #51 in our University subcategory) and forms part of what's become known as Silicon Slopes, Utah's start-up and tech community that's largely responsible for more than 60,000 new residents coming to the metro area over the past three years, yielding the Top 3 labor force participation in the nation and seventh-lowest unemployment rate. Median home values hover at \$487,000, up 2.2% year over year, while new rules now cut building permit approvals to about six months. Capital likes the signal. Provo-based Dynamic City Capital vaulted past \$1 billion in assets after a \$303-million dual-Marriott deal, and Sundance Mountain Resort's 2025 "Act Two" adds a lodge and new terrain. Retail momentum shows in Target's 2024 debut, sparking Provo Towne Centre's reinvention into an open-air "mini-town" connected by the UVX BRT, which introduced fares in August 2024 and will add two BYU stops this spring. Or you can always cycle in a town ranked #19 for Biking.



50 Hartford Connecticut

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4** Green Space
- 11** GDP per Capita

POPULATION

Metro 1,152,000

With a big birthday on the way, Hartford wants to make some more history.

An original American town, Hartford's roots trace back to the 1630s when it was just a trading post on the Connecticut River. Centuries later, history still burns bright in Connecticut's capital city. Stroll through the Pratt Street Historic District to see it for yourself. Now, with a 400th birthday coming up in 2035, Hartford is looking ahead—with ambition. Its Hartford400 vision aims to turn the city's riverfront into a pedestrian paradise. That is, after all, the Hartford way. This is among the greenest, most walkable cities in America, its pre-car urban grid and abundant parks propelling it to **#4** in our Green Space subcategory and **#16** for Walkability. A city that's no stranger to struggle—it nearly filed for bankruptcy in 2017—Hartford has been busy cultivating prosperity. Property values and household incomes have risen, GDP per capita is sky-high (**#11**), and the "Insurance Capital of the World" remains the epicenter of the sector, home to the likes of Aetna, The Hartford (no surprise there) and the largest office of Travelers. The city will welcome a new \$335-million federal courthouse in 2030, and it seems ready to invest in its cultural capital. It opened its first Office of Arts, Culture and Entertainment in 2024.



51 Cincinnati Ohio

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11** Housing Affordability
- 20** Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 2,273,000

Cincy is Ohio's fun-loving economic epicenter.

Watch out, Columbus. Cincinnati is hopping, fueled by a cohort of Fortune 500 companies that bring business and opportunity to this vibrant second city. Kroger, P&G and Cintas—all giants in their own right—are all headquartered here. The **#25** Large Companies ranking shines accordingly, as does its GDP per capita, at **#32** in our rankings. Add the 11th-best housing affordability in the nation, and Cincinnati has a decisive formula on its hands. (And did we mention **#20**-ranked green spaces?) Meanwhile, more than \$2 billion in ongoing developments dot the city. The new Duke Energy Convention Center should be completed in 2026, dramatically improving the city's already solid **#47** Convention Center ranking. A skywalk will connect it to the 800-room convention headquarters hotel, offering luxury stays to city visitors—and there are many. The Queen of the West welcomes millions of tourists every year, and it's an effusive host. Its restaurant scene is diverse and locally driven, ranking **#31**, with new openings on the regular. The nightlife is bound to surprise at **#32**, fueled by fine bourbon and live music. (Stop by Ludlow Garage if you can.) Safe to say, this hard-working town knows how to let loose.



52 Des Moines Iowa

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5** Labor Force Participation
- 7** Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 737,000

Iowa's capital city works hard and plays hard—at a nearly unbeatable bargain.

In 2025, Iowa's capital city remains The Corn State's attainable, opportunity-rich business hub. Its affordability has ascended even higher this year, ranking **#7** in our Housing Affordability subcategory. In a city where industry titans like Wells Fargo, Google and Nationwide run court, rent for a one-bedroom apartment still hovers around \$1,000. The Des Moines magic isn't reserved for the Fortune 500, either. Small businesses here are thriving, thanks in part to a new 3.8% flat tax that took effect in 2025—reducing liabilities for most SMBs.

Even as the city adapts to remote work, Des Moines's labor force is 5th in the nation for participation, with a lower unemployment rate than the national average, at 3.7% (and **#19** in our rankings). That's fertile ground for growth. Off the clock, this hard-working town finds peace in its 4,000-plus acres of **#27**-ranked green spaces. Come evening, its **#51** nightlife—perhaps its best-kept secret—awakens, tempting visitors and locals alike with local beer (don't leave without sipping a pint of Confluence Brewing's Extinction Event 39 IPA), craft cocktails and live music at the famed Val Air Ballroom.



53 Indianapolis Indiana

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

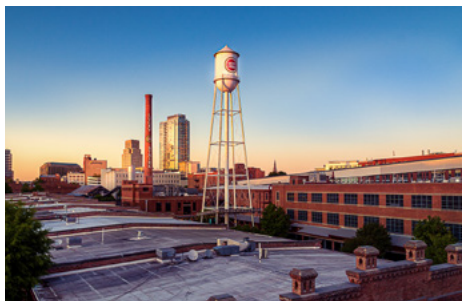
- 18 Labor Force Participation (Tied)
- 20 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 2,140,000

Indy's special blend of work, fun, and affordability gets ever-more compelling.

Welcome to the home of the Indy 500, where the only thing roaring louder than the cars is the city itself. Red hot economic growth, lower-than-average unemployment, and healthy pharmaceutical and insurance sectors—Eli Lilly and Elevance, both Fortune 500 companies, are headquartered here—are driving prosperity in a city that was already easy to love. As expected, the capital of speed isn't interested in moving slowly in 2025. Nearly a billion dollars has been pledged to improve infrastructure, transportation and pedestrian safety, and with its #94 Walkability ranking, the latter is a welcome effort. Meanwhile, new developments are everywhere—from mall revitalizations to new billion-dollar districts. Yet this is also a city that delivers on fun like few others, and race days at Indianapolis Motor Speedway continue to be a good time. Play is big here, too. Spots like the Canal Walk promenade and the Children's Museum of Indianapolis (the largest institution of its kind in the world) earn Indy an impressive #20 ranking for Attractions. That feels right for a city you can call home—and with the 34th-most affordable housing in our rankings, a city famous for going fast is increasingly looking like a good place to stop and stay a while.



54 Durham North Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Educational Attainment
- 8 University

POPULATION

Metro 609,000

The ascendant college town gets straight A's for opportunity.

With a combined #22 ranking for Prosperity, Durham is outclassing its peers with brains and a thriving opportunity economy. Home of Duke University, this is one of America's top college towns, ranking #8 in our University subcategory and boasting an alumni list that needs few introductions, from Melinda Gates to Tim Cook. Today, its downtown is shaping up to match the university's prestige: Since 2000, nearly \$2 billion has poured into downtown Durham, which only measures less than a square mile. Meanwhile, the Triangle—the region comprising Durham, Raleigh and Chapel Hill—was second only to Austin for population growth from 2020 to 2024 at 10.2%, emerging from the pandemic stronger than other metros and growing every year since. What gives Bull City its pull? Opportunity, be it in the classroom or after graduation from big tech tenants like Google, Meta and IBM—all vying to snatch up top talent in a city ranked #4 in the nation for Educational Attainment. And while the housing prices are rising, Durham ranks a solid #59 in Housing Affordability—a bargain compared to coastal tech enclaves. With an ever-improving international airport (#37)—and an iconic taqueria, La Vaquita, slinging traditional carne asada—it's easier to get to Durham than ever, and even easier to stay.



55 Bridgeport Connecticut

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 GDP per Capita
- 6 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 952,000

Big-city talent and a transforming waterfront give this storied city an edge.

Connecticut's largest city, Bridgeport has seen several booms in its time—from farming to whaling and, until the 1970s, manufacturing. Today's Bridgeport, advantageously located an hour's train ride from NYC, is a thriving service-based city with the talent and equity to prove it. The citizenry here—priced out of NYC or Boston or tempted by floorplans with a bit more elbow room—are well-educated and well-monied (ranking #6 for Educational Attainment and #5 for GDP per Capita), continuing a legacy of business savvy started by P.T. Barnum, circus mogul and former Bridgeport mayor. Healthcare, education and hospitality jobs are filling the space once occupied by manufacturing, and the city is investing in itself—attracting new residents and businesses alike while it's at it. All eyes are on the waterfront, where Steelpointe Harbor is coming to life: a 2.8-million-square-foot development equipped with a luxe marina, public spaces and high-end living. There's also a recent proposal for a new waterfront soccer stadium; it's getting traction, but approval is still a ways off. Until then, the best waterfront views can be found at Seaside Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux—the pair behind New York City's Central Park. It's a big reason Bridgeport ranks #37 in our Green Space subcategory.



56 Kansas City Missouri

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Green Space
- 17 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 2,220,000

Affordable, delicious and scenic to boot, life is good in KC.

Kansas City's barbecue alone could charm the foodies among us, but with a #35 ranking for overall Lovability, the Paris of the Plains is cooking with more than just hickory. Here, a one-bedroom apartment costs about \$1,100—with plenty of amenities on the side. Unemployment is low (#20) and the city boasts the second-best green space ranking in the nation, with 222 parks and 27 lakes. Its restaurants rank #51, sustaining rabid Chiefs fans and a #40-ranked nightlife scene with slow-smoked goodness. So good, in fact, it's museum-worthy, thanks to the new Museum of BBQ. Sporty to the core, this town is home to the Kansas City Chiefs and landmark sports venues including the T-Mobile Center, Arrowhead Stadium and the #32-ranked Kansas City Convention Center. Appropriately, the city has a game plan of its own—the KC Spirit Playbook, with plans to create a “future-proofed” city over the next 20 years. Current city investments include the South Loop Project, which will add communal space to its downtown, and the Berkley Riverfront, a mixed-use development along the Missouri River. Both kicked off in 2025. Big companies see the opportunity, too, including Google, which is bringing a \$1-billion data center to this heartland gem.



57 Louisville Kentucky

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Convention Center
- 14 Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 1,365,000

In a state of great eating and drinking, Louisville still manages to stand apart.

Welcome to bourbon country, where the number of distilleries increased by nearly 71% between 2018 and 2024. More than 3,000 food and beverage businesses are active in the Louisville region, serving millions of hungry (and thirsty) locals and visitors each year. Unsurprisingly, the city's best PR arrives via hashtag. Louisville ranks highly for practically all digital storytelling rankings, including Tripadvisor (#32), Facebook (#34), Instagram (#42) and Google Trends (#36). The city with the 5th-best convention center in the nation is also the home of the Kentucky Derby—the horse race of all horse races—and its legendary racetrack, Churchill Downs, which turned 150 in 2024. A new Grandstand Pavillion entrance was just unveiled in May. With a zoo within city limits and endless distilleries to tour, Louisville finishes comfortably at #36 for Sights and Landmarks. Looking ahead, the city is investing in a downtown that is already attracting new businesses—more than 40 in 2024, if you're counting. Infrastructure projects like East Market Streetscape and Main Remade aim to increase pedestrian safety and boost the city's walkability (currently ranked #87). Ready for the smooth finish? Louisville has the #14 most affordable housing market, making life in bourbon country all the more tempting.



58 Syracuse New York

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 20 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 30 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 653,000

Central New York's bustling college town is also one of its savviest economic hubs.

For years, Syracuse has been hustling to become Upstate New York's enviable, livable gem—and, more recently, one of the nation's smartest cities. So far, 'Cuse seems to be right on the money. It was a finalist in the 2024 IDC Smart Cities North America Awards, thanks to its community broadband service Surge Link™, named after the City's innovative Syracuse Surge strategy. Then there's the \$2.25-billion 1-81 Viaduct Project—replacing elevated road infrastructure with a walkable community grid—which is making fast progress, with completion set for 2028. The 34th-most walkable city may grow more walkable, still. This will further entice the thousands of students who flock to the city's #40-ranked Syracuse University. The Syracuse formula seems to work on business performance, too. Its education sector is appropriately healthy, alongside defense, health and research. The big news on the street is Micron Technology's plans to invest \$100 billion in the region over the next 20 years to build the largest semiconductor cleanroom in the U.S. But big business shouldn't distract from Syracuse's impressive livability: its crisp air quality ranks #22, its green space #30, and its housing affordability #32. New restaurants are springing up, arriving alongside a new pickleball facility—a college-town necessity.



59 Harrisburg Pennsylvania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Housing Affordability
- 11 Poverty Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 606,000

Fresh talent and a prosperous legacy meet in Pennsylvania's capital.

It was here, on the banks of the Susquehanna, that 19th-century Harrisburg grew into an industrial hub, fed by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Today, this capital city remains the economic heart of 400 surrounding communities. A strong labor force (#59 for Labor Force Participation) supports an economy where the healthcare, health insurance and manufacturing sectors thrive. State and federal government hiring is strong, and six local universities provide opportunities and talent alike. The city's housing affordability—#8 in the nation—entices that talent to stick around. While they're here, they'll be wise to take a stroll. Harrisburg's historic downtown, ranked #14 for Walkability, will lead you right to the river's edge, where you can spy City Island, once a refuge for soldiers during the Civil War. More popular today with sunbathers than infantry, its beach is just one of Harrisburg's #35-ranked green spaces. Looking ahead, revitalization is at the top of Harrisburg's agenda, hoping to pair its #18-ranked convention center with other urban amenities. Enterprising chefs are eager to drive its #94 Restaurants ranking higher, and the Harrisburg Mall, which closed in 2024, will be the site of Swatara Exchange: a new state-of-the-art mixed-use development.



60 San Juan Puerto Rico

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Poverty Rate
- 1 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 2,038,00

Ocean air, stunning streets, and booming tourism. Welcome to San Juan.

Puerto Rico's capital has island beauty its continental counterparts can only dream of. Here, blue waters lap the shores of a city that wears its Spanish, American and Puerto Rican influences on its sleeve. Architecture enthusiasts will find a feast for the eyes in San Juan, from the jubilant colors of the old city to the Art Deco Miami tower in urban Condado. It begs to be explored, and the city's #3 Walkability ranking pairs beautifully with its #1 Air Quality and a well-deserved #7 Nature & Parks ranking. Unsurprisingly, people are on their way: 2024 was a record year for tourism, with 8% more passenger arrivals to its airport—6.6 million in total. They're drawn not just to San Juan's landscape, but also its kinetic nightlife (#37) and myriad shopping destinations (#22), from the glitzy Plaza Las Américas to artisanal shops in Old San Juan. Like all great hosts, the city is focused on improving itself. The poverty rate here is as low as it gets, and grants are available to all local businesses with a storefront. Larger scale, Phase 2 of the Bahía Urbana redevelopment is transforming port facilities into public spaces—bayfront Ferris wheel included.



61 Jacksonville Florida

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 23 Nature & Parks
- 24 Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 1,713,000

Everyone loves Jacksonville's riverside vibe. That includes big business.

Jacksonville has swiftly emerged as a tourism destination, attracting 8 million visitors (and \$7.4 billion of their dollars) in 2024. More exciting, 80% surveyed said they plan to return. The "why" is all around you: River City is a waterside beauty. Ranking #23 in our Nature & Parks subcategory, Jacksonville's greatest natural gifts are its waterways, including the St. Johns River, which cuts through the metro, and its coastal shores—providing 1,100 miles of navigable water and more shoreline than any other city in the nation. Swim, surf or paddle, you need not be bored during the hot Florida summers. The fun has a way of making it to feeds, with visitors taking to Instagram (#29), Google (#23) and Facebook (#25) to spread the word about the Jacksonville way—and surely its #28-ranked restaurants. Jacksonville's economy is booming as well, thanks to diversification across healthcare, tech, finance, aerospace and logistics. The unemployment rate is below the national average (#27 in our rankings) and the city ranks #29 for Large Companies, with Amazon, Baptist Health, Boeing and other powerhouses working here. Multiple developments along the waterfront are ongoing, and the city will welcome a revitalized museum of science and history—the MOSH Genesis—in 2028.



62 Worcester Massachusetts

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6** Green Space
- 16** Healthcare

POPULATION

Metro 867,000

Wicked smaht in so many ways.

The most surprising thing about Worcester isn't how it's pronounced (it's Wuh-stir, by the way). It's the innovative edge the city has been honing at the headwaters of the Blackstone River, fueled by the 8 colleges and universities—and more than 35,000 students—that call Worcester home. Given these academic chops, the city ranks **#35** for Educational Attainment among its citizenry (with over 30% of residents having a bachelor's degree or higher). Emboldened, and with a population that is, for the most part, sub-35, Worcester is investing in its future. New innovation campuses, like the 46-acre Reactory Biotech Park, are recharacterizing a region with strong roots in manufacturing, education and healthcare. Last year, it was announced that the historic and long-vacant Worcester Memorial Auditorium would be transformed (and expanded) into an AI innovation center and entertainment facility. Meanwhile, new mixed-use developments are evolving Woo-town's cityscape, which boasts the 6th-best green spaces in the nation. (Pound for pound, Green Hill Park gives any metro park a run for its money.) With one of the nation's best healthcare systems (**#17**) and a truly diverse population—23% of residents are foreign-born—few mid-size cities are set up to deliver like Worcester.



63 Grand Rapids Michigan

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 20** Unemployment Rate
- 20** Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 1,163,000

A cool urbanism runs through Michigan's second city.

Frigid winters aside, Grand Rapids may just be Michigan's jack of all trades, pairing natural gifts with urbanism, opportunity and affordable living. Its motto, "Motu Viget" translates to "Strength in Activity", and the residents heed the call. Grand Rapidians savor the outdoors (ranked **#65**) year-round—whether they're fly-fishing local streams, paddling the Grand River or ice fishing on Lake Michigan, an hour's drive away. Within city limits, Grand Rapids' Rust Belt heritage shines in its stately homes, ornate downtown warehouses and Edwardian mid-rises. Green spaces (**#49**) abound—more than 2,000 acres of them. They're a pleasure to explore, thanks to the city's **#40** Biking and **#37** Walkability rankings. As West Michigan's economic hub, Grand Rapids boasts talent-hungry manufacturing, life sciences and IT sectors, earning high rankings in both our Unemployment Rate (**#20**) and Labor Force Participation (**#24**) subcategories. It's an emerging insurance center, too—a trajectory started when Acrisure moved its headquarters here in 2021. Four years later, the Acrisure Amphitheater, a 12,000-seat performing arts center, is well into construction and expected to open in 2026. The icing (or foam) on top? Grand Rapids earned the moniker "Beer City USA" the only way a place can: with a roster of stellar local breweries.



64 Lancaster Pennsylvania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4** Unemployment Rate
- 5** Walkability

POPULATION

Metro 559,000

Bucolic-meets-modern living in a storied Amish town.

Earlier this year, pharma giant GSK broke ground on an \$800-million biopharma facility in Lancaster—the oldest Amish settlement in America, where horse-drawn buggies still trot down the street on occasion. This juxtaposition captures the magic of Red Rose City: modern, bustling life in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country. With the 5th-best walkability in our rankings, there are few better places to stroll through history. Here, your feet can take you from a covered (or "kissing") bridge to one of the country's oldest continually running theaters: the 1852 Fulton Opera House. Green spaces, ranked **#16**, are everywhere. There's Reservoir Park, smack dab downtown and sporting a hockey rink; Buchanan Park, next to the North Museum of Nature and Science; and Long's Park, with its amphitheater and, importantly, a Wegman's. Lancaster's housing is affordable (**#30**), especially when compared to the Baltimores and Philadelphias of the world, both a 90-minute drive away. Not that the city needs help from other metros. Business is good, with established manufacturing, foodservice and financial industries in the city. Online job postings are up 29% in the county, and tech firms see the potential. Two new data centers for AI and cloud computing are already underway.



65 Lexington Kentucky

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 20 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 23 Educational Attainment

POPULATION

Metro 520,000

This Kentucky hometown is off to the races.

The Horse Capital of the World is a small but mighty city with a knack for celebration, ranking #47 for Nightlife. And celebrate, they shall: 2025 marks Lexington's 250th birthday and there's a full dance card, from arts fairs to whiskey tastings. Two and a half centuries in, Lexington has diversified itself beyond the thoroughbreds it's known for. Its tech scene is burgeoning, fueled by incubators like Awesome Inc. and fresh talent from the University of Kentucky. Educational attainment is one of the city's strong suits, finishing #23 in our subcategory. Communal spaces are getting a boost, too. Gatton Park, a monumental new downtown complex, is under construction. When complete, it will sport an amphitheater, water features and plentiful outdoor space—bolstering Lex's #43 Green Space and #53 Sights & Landmarks rankings. Phoenix Park, the former site of the namesake hotel that hosted several U.S. presidents, is enjoying its own \$4.6-million renovation, and High Street continues to attract ambitious downtown visions. Restaurants are no slouch here, either, at #64. Its Distillery District—remember, this is Kentucky—recently welcomed “trailer gourmet” Little Fork, and bluegrass dining hall Granddam delivers on local flavor. All the tastier is the housing market: Lexington ranks #27 for Housing Affordability.



66 Fayetteville Arkansas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Housing Affordability
- 9 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 590,000

The most affordable housing around lives here, in the beautiful Ozarks.

With more than 200 days of sunshine and the Ozark Mountains as its backyard, the “Athens of the Ozarks” has plenty to offer to the outdoorsy among us. But a royal moniker betrays Fayetteville's decisive edge: the most affordable housing in the nation, arriving at the top of our rankings. Among the smallest cities in our report, Fayetteville has formidable industry might and low unemployment (#9) to boot. Key industries include education and technology, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' new Odyssey Clinic, specializing in schizophrenia care, adds to the city's R&D chops. Placemaking efforts are plentiful, too. The Ramble, a 50-acre arts corridor through downtown, opened in late 2024. All visitors would be wise to stroll through. Hilton and Marriott alike are busy building their presence in a work hard, play hard metro that attracted more than 7 million visitors in 2022. Fayetteville is widely considered the entertainment capital of northwest Arkansas, and Dickson Street is the heartbeat of its downtown. Eat, drink and stop into George's Majestic Lounge, where live music has lived since 1927. The city's #68-ranked nightlife promises good fun, invigorated by the nearly 29,000 university students who call the city (temporarily) home.



67 Greenville South Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Green Space
- 27 Unemployment Rate

POPULATION

Metro 975,000

In the Blue Mountains, business booms next to natural beauty.

It's easy to think the Greenville secret only just broke during the pandemic. Truth is, this Blue Ridge Mountains gem has been building momentum since the oughts. From 2000 to 2020, the city effectively added six new households a week. Today, Greenville is buzzing with new developments, new opportunities and new places to dine after a day on the banks of the Reedy. The city will soon pair its #9-ranked green spaces with South Carolina's tallest tower. The 29-story Gateway project, unveiled at the end of 2024, will introduce 340-plus apartments to a city that continues to attract talent and companies alike. It joins the \$1-billion County Square redevelopment—a formidable, 40-acre placemaking project set to open in the 2030s. Greenville also ranks #52 for Large Companies, hosting the likes of GE, TD Bank and Michelin North America's HQ. Vehicle manufacturer Isuzu arrived in 2025, a \$280-million investment in tow. EnerSys, GE Vernova and Magna International have all announced expansions in the region. But life here isn't all hard work and no play. Furman University (ranked #45 in our University subcategory) supplies a curious student population who keep its downtown lively. Meanwhile, Greenville's convention center, ranked #38, hosts events year-round.



68 Albuquerque New Mexico

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Poverty Rate
- 17 Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 924,000

Natural beauty and urban pleasures create magic on the Rio Grande.

Route 66 will turn a century old next year. Smart celebrants will take the Mother Road straight to Albuquerque, where the sky is big, the Sandia Mountains gleam and the burgers arrive dressed in green chiles—the only way in 'Burque. Beautiful inside and out, Albuquerque is diverse, authentic and culturally stacked. There are more than 100 galleries to explore, the historic KiMo theater and even an opera scene. Its Museum of Natural History & Science (ranked #21) just announced a renovation this year, and cultural festivals dot the city calendar. In a city rich in cultural heritage from Spain, Mexico and local Indigenous Americans, an ascendant restaurant scene shouldn't surprise anyone. Perfect enchiladas, roasted hatch chiles and plenty of breweries to match propel its Restaurants rank to #40, up from #52. ABQ shopping remains a local secret and ranks #17—outclassing places like Boston and D.C. Looking ahead, the city's Downtown 2050 Plan sets out to enhance the heart of the city, attract investment and tackle the housing challenge as more newcomers arrive, enticed by opportunities from Intel, Sandia and the U.S. Air Force. Netflix is growing its presence in town, too, having announced an expansion of its production studio in 2024.



69 Boise Idaho

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Unemployment Rate
- 21 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 827,000

Opportunity meets natural wonder. That's life at the center of Idaho's tech boom.

Treasure Valley's shiniest gem, Boise has mastered the work hard, adventure hard equation over a decade of explosive growth. One of America's fastest-growing cities in one of America's fastest-growing states, Boise beckons talent from all over with promising jobs, bikeable commutes and adventure just outside city limits. National forests flank Boise on nearly all sides, offering solitude to campers, hikers, fly-fishers and anyone else looking to savor the fruits of a city ranked #43 for Nature & Parks. In the city, opportunity flows like the Boise River itself, evidenced in the 3rd-best unemployment rate in the country. This is the center of a statewide tech explosion, home to a whopping 3,800 tech businesses—and they're investing big. Chip manufacturer Micron Technology, a Boise OG, has broken ground on its new memory manufacturing complex, with potential investment of \$125 billion over 20 years and jobs numbering in the thousands. Meta, too, has eyed the region as a new data center hotspot. If this is the next Silicon Valley, don't tell the housing market. It ranks #40 for Housing Affordability, with the average one-bedroom rental clocking in at around \$1,400, a far cry from its West Coast peers—at least for now.



70 Virginia Beach Virginia

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 Nature & Parks
- 26 Labor Force Participation (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 1,782,000

Virginia's golden shores win over everyone—Grammy winners included.

Virginia Beach's sobriquet as Resort City becomes obvious with one barefoot step onto its golden sand. With 38 miles of coastline at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, it offers needed respite from D.C.'s sweltering summers. The three-mile, 137-year-old boardwalk is the city's top draw, both for locals in the know and visitors who flock here to work on their tan—or gawk at the 34-foot-tall statue of King Neptune, iconic in its own right. It's all more than worthy of the #22 Nature & Parks ranking. And while Virginia Beach could win anyone over, the locals are ever-ready to show their love. None more than its very own Pharrell Williams, who has been the driving force behind the \$350-million Atlantic Park development that will transform the former site of The Dome music hall. When it opens later this year, Atlantic Park will feature a 5,000-person venue, luxury apartments and, importantly, a surf lagoon. If that doesn't boost its #29 Attractions ranking, nothing will. And if galleries are more your speed, don't fret: the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art has broken ground on a new site at Virginia Wesleyan University, bringing more art to the city's west side.



71 Ogden Utah

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Unemployment Rate
- 8 Labor Force Participation

POPULATION

Metro 658,000

Economic ambition meets adventure in Utah's epic outdoors.

Salt Lake City and Provo ought to watch their backs. Ogden, once a railroad town so central that it earned the moniker "Junction City", is swiftly regaining its gravitational pull. Milken Institute's #2 Best Performing Large City for 2025 (up from #26 in 2024) has an aerospace advantage thanks to manufacturers like Williams International, which announced that it is expanding its presence in the city, adding 300 jobs and \$1 billion in investment. Its proximity to Hill Air Force Base—which employs over 23,000—and a life sciences industry 250+ companies strong means Ogden boasts America's 2nd-lowest unemployment rate. Hearing all of this industry chatter, one could forget that Ogden sits at the foot of the wild Wasatch Mountains—but the city certainly hasn't. "Still Untamed" is its motto, and its residents live up to it, skiing, hiking and biking through the natural playground that surrounds the city, and breathing deep the crisp mountain air, ranked #33. The biggest breath of fresh air, however, may be that the city is still relatively affordable, ranked #17 for Housing Affordability—with rent averaging around \$1,200 for a one-bedroom—even as more tech talent pours in, falling hard for this adventurous slice of Northern Utah.



72 Spokane Washington

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 36 Healthcare
- 40 Biking

POPULATION

Metro 600,000

The bikeable, bustling, and progressively more delicious Washington Wonderland.

Spokane has no time to envy nearby Seattle's meteoric rise—it's far too busy with its own accelerating restaurant scene (#73), growing population and potential Tech Hub designation. Yes, Lilac City is blooming, reaping the rewards of the work-from-home movement that opened this Washington jewel to a world of new talent, immediately enchanted by a city where opportunity and the 36th-best healthcare arrives alongside a dazzling walkable riverfront (the city is #45 for Walkability) and a wealth of craft breweries. Visitors like that equation, too. Spokane's tourism numbers continue to ascend, and the city will continue to welcome new hotel after new hotel—most recently new Cambria and SpringHill offerings around its #80-ranked airport. A diverse range of industries thrive here, from manufacturing and aerospace to energy and forestry, and Washington State University's Business Incubator stokes a start-up culture that spans biotech to AI. Spokane's grid is bisected—and enriched—by its namesake river, weaving the wilderness into each and every day. Its long-time motto, "Near Nature, Near Perfect" plays out on every commute, bike ride (the city ranks #40 for Biking) and restaurant crawl. There are many new ones to crawl, by the way.



73 Knoxville Tennessee

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 19 Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 947,000

With food, fun, and natural splendor, one Tennessee city loves to do it all.

Knoxville is no longer playing second fiddle to nearby Chattanooga or Asheville. K-town is its own one-city band, delivering great eating (#57), shopping (#33) and sights (#45)—plus the country's 19th-most affordable housing. And investment is pouring in. Marriot, Hilton and Moxy hotels are all under development, with openings into 2026. They'll go to good use as visitors flock to walkable downtown Knoxville, rich with museums, murals and, of course, local music. Covenant Health Park, the publicly owned, \$114-million multi-use stadium housing the local Smokies minor league ball club, opened in April, bringing the game back to Marble City. But pocket urbanism isn't Knoxville's only strength. The city features more than 125 miles of trails and greenways, all within a quick bike or drive. Or, in the case of the 1,000-acre Urban Wilderness park, right within city limits. It all makes for an easy #26 Green Space ranking. What's next for Knoxville? Restaurants are springing up left and right, unemployment is low (#15) and 400 new business licenses were issued in January 2025. Pet genomics firm BioPet Laboratories has its new headquarters in West Knoxville, and the Tennessee Theatre is expanding into the historic 612 Building. Knoxville is at center stage.



74 Colorado Springs Colorado

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10** Air Quality
- 15** Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 769,000

This outdoorsy haven has a cutting-edge, cosmopolitan side.

Even at a mile above sea level, Colorado Springs feels tucked away at the base of 14,000-foot Pike's Peak, which towers over the city. It's a scenic backdrop for a metro that is both an outdoor haven and surprisingly cosmopolitan. For the last decade, The Springs has been exerting a magnetic pull on the outdoorsy among us, its #10 Air Quality and #29 Nature & Parks a welcome respite from larger urban centers. But this is a metro on the rise, and its urbanism is its best-kept secret. Charming boutiques, malls and high-end stores power its #33 Shopping spot, and its #15-ranked family attractions—including the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo—ensure the fun isn't confined to the backcountry. Innovative companies are putting down roots, contributing to an economy fueled by military and defense contractors like Lockheed Martin, Vectrus and Auria, which announced a \$7.8-million expansion in the city in 2024. Swisspod, a hyperloop company, joined the fray this year as well—bringing new dollars (and jobs) with it. Looking ahead, Pike's Peak has new competition: the 27-story OneVeLa Tower, soon to be the city's tallest building, is set to begin construction.



75 Allentown Pennsylvania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 16** Walkability (Tied)
- 19** Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 874,000

Scenic living, served with a side of big business.

German roots run deep in Pennsylvania's third-largest city—the first bite of scrapple will tell you that. Better yet, stride through history among the historic homes and industrial buildings in the 16th-most walkable city in America. Allentown has many names—from Silk City to A-town—and just as many higher-ed institutions within, or near, its city limits. Muhlenberg College, Cedar Crest College and nearby Lehigh University propel its University Rank to #37. At #74 in our Large Companies subcategory, Allentown has industry brawn to match its beauty and brains. Major employers include industry giant Air Products & Chemicals and PPL Corporation, among the largest regulated utility companies in the country. With a blend of scenic gifts—check out the #19 Green Space ranking—and real opportunity, it should surprise no one that Allentown's housing market is red hot. (A decade of downtown investments will do that.) Looking ahead, its ambitious The Waterfront development aims to revitalize the riverfront, introducing mixed-use property and housing along the Truckee. At the start of 2025, Mayor Matt Tuerk announced his "Welcome Home" housing plan, aimed at keeping housing affordable in a city that is steadily drawing new residents.



76 Reno Nevada

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11** Air Quality
- 26** Attractions

POPULATION

Metro 565,000

The biggest little city in the world doesn't look so little from here.

Reno sits just east of the Sierra Nevada, happily buzzing on its slice of high desert. Perhaps the 11th-best air quality in the nation has something to do with it? Whatever it is invigorating Reno, it's working. The city has been busy ticking off project after project. As a result, its downtown, like a desert mirage, is changing before our eyes. Forgotten rail infrastructure has been transformed into gathering spaces, like the new Locomotion Plaza, and plans are in action to make the city safer for pedestrians and cyclists. (Watch that #40 Biking ranking rise.) And, to match the crisp air, the EPA announced \$128 million to support the construction of an advanced water purification facility. However, all pales in comparison to the \$1-billion Grand Sierra Resort expansion—the largest private capital investment in Reno's history. Expanding the resort into its own entertainment district, the project includes a 10,000-seat arena and a timeline that spans a decade. But who's rushing? Reno's healthy roster of family-friendly attractions—ranked #26 in the country—will keep visitors engaged. Among them are the interactive science museum The Discovery, Fleischmann Planetarium and the Greater Nevada Field, home of the Reno Aces ball club.



77 Dayton Ohio

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Housing Affordability
- 8 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 814,000

The birthplace of flight is officially skyrocketing.

Welcome to Dayton: hometown of the Wright Brothers and the Birthplace of Aviation. It's still flying high. The city witnessed \$400 million in new investments in its downtown in 2024—double that of 2023. Multi-million-dollar projects are springing up, bringing housing and commerce to a metropolitan area that is blessed with myriad natural gifts, from the Great Miami River it straddles to its countless green spaces—#8 in the nation. An aerospace hub since it was just “aero,” Dayton's economy continues to cast off its Rust Belt reputation by attracting innovators. Most recently, start-up Joby Aviation—a so-called “Uber of the Skies”—announced it would build its aircraft in Gem City at a new \$500-million facility, expected to come online later this year and create nearly 2,000 jobs. Hungry talent drawn by opportunities like this—or the city's #4 ranking for Housing Affordability—will find an epicenter of the arts, where the Bach Society, Dayton Opera, Dayton Ballet, and many others thrive. Dayton's museums (#69) are no slouch either: appropriately, there's the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in addition to the Dayton Art Institute and the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery, which is currently undergoing a revitalization into a STEM and defense hub.



78 Tulsa Oklahoma

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Housing Affordability
- 20 Convention Center

POPULATION

Metro 1,044,000

Affordable and energized, Tulsa isn't slowing down.

Tulsa's motto is “A New Kind of Energy.” For half a decade, that energy has been seemingly inexhaustible. 2018's opening of the \$465-million, 66.5-acre Gathering Place urban park was followed closely by 2021's opening of Greenwood Rising—introducing the world to (and confronting) the destruction of Black Wall Street. In 2025, T-Town continues to charge ahead. A once-dormant pocket of its downtown, south of historic Caine's Ballroom, has plans to transform thanks to a multimillion-dollar mixed-use development. City dollars have been allocated to enhance its airports and highways, including \$252 million to the “Traffic Henge” interchange project—the largest the city DOT has ever undertaken. These improvements, a #10 ranking for Housing Affordability, and a cultural scene that punches above its weight make Tulsa as tempting as its barbecue for those seeking a new home city. Sweetening the deal is the Tulsa Remote program, which provides a \$10,000 stipend and relocation support to people who stay for at least a year. That'll be easy with a growing restaurant scene (#52), plenty of sights (#41) and a convention center (#20) that welcomes comedy, sports, and more. Plus, the OKPOP Museum, celebrating Tulsa's stealthy contributions to American culture, should open any day now.



79 Toledo Ohio

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Housing Affordability
- 10 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 600,000

The Glass City makes livability an art form.

Toledo has long been a major player in the glass manufacturing business; Libbey Foodservice has been here since 1888 and has nurtured hundreds of related local businesses since. But Ohio's fourth-largest city has steadily diversified its economy to include several Fortune 500 companies—Marathon Petroleum Corporation and Owens Corning among them. The Glass City is also well-connected (with its #22-ranked Airport) and is an arts and culture hub. Positioned as its anchor is the world-renowned Toledo Museum of Art, which has a vast collection of works, including pieces by Picasso, Rembrandt and Monet. Ranking #82 in our Museums subcategory, Toledo also boasts an opera and ballet company and an epic zoo. And while the good word of Toledo hasn't yet hit feeds—it comes in at #100 in our Instagram Posts subcategory—it has certainly hit some important desks. General Motors has announced a \$760-million investment in its plant here, and Site Selection magazine named the city among its Top 10 for Business Investment in 2025. This year, the city is wasting no time. By February, ground had been broken on two new workforce housing developments, serving low- to moderate-income families. Its #2 Housing Affordability ranking may top the U.S. yet.



80 Columbia South Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 14 Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 24 Green Spaces

POPULATION

Metro 857,000

Continued urban investment powers this stealthy state capital.

Like most state capitals, South Carolina's Columbia is an economically diversified jewel too often overlooked by tourists and potential residents. Those that do stop and give Cola its fair shake will find a riverside city with bountiful green spaces (ranked #24), plenty of museums (#59) and Bernie's, arguably offering the state's best fried chicken. The latter is reason enough to visit, yet Columbia remains busy investing in itself, continuing its post-pandemic campaign of self-improvement. A major renovation of the Blossom Street Bridge will make the city more walkable, as will continued momentum in the up-and-coming West Columbia neighborhood. And don't forget the \$24-million revitalization of beloved Finlay Park, set to complete later this year, which will see its iconic fountain returned to its former glory. The #41-ranked University of South Carolina adds youthful dynamism to the historic urban stock here. Its new, 300,000-square-foot School of Medicine opens in 2027—part of the new BullStreet District, the "largest city center development east of the Mississippi." Perhaps sensing Soda City's (Cola, get it?) ascendant trajectory, new housing and hotels are sprouting up all over. Newcomers already include Moxy, Homewood and Hilton, with more on the way into 2026.



81 Memphis Tennessee

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 Poverty Rate
- 27 Facebook Check-ins

POPULATION

Metro 1,336,000

A city full of American lore is writing its next chapter

Tennessee's second-largest city is an American icon that has been quietly adding to the national lore from the bluffs and floodplains that line the eastern bank of the Mississippi River for more than two centuries. The heart of the Delta Blues and famously home to Graceland, the "spiritual birthplace" of Elvis, it is the lesser-known Music City, USA. But those two honors can't hold a pick to the city's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. Or to its barbecue. With so many stories to tell (most recently in a starring role in the Elvis biopic), Memphis ranks #28 nationally in our Museums subcategory—home to the National Civil Rights Museum in addition to Graceland. It's not surprising that others are telling the city's stories these days: Memphis ranks #28 in the nation for Tripadvisor Reviews, #27 for Facebook Check-ins and #38 in our overall Lovability index. And business is good, with a #53 ranking for large companies and a number of corporate titans, including FedEx and AutoZone, headquartered here. Affordable housing and new urban investment—from the South City Redevelopment to the upscale residential community The Legacy at Colonial—keep Memphis rocking.



82 Poughkeepsie New York

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 Air Quality
- 28 Walkability

POPULATION

Metro 705,000

Something special is going on upstate.

Tucked along the Hudson River, Poughkeepsie's idyllic location makes it easy to forget just how close you are to it all. New York City is just two hours away by car—and 90 minutes by train. If that sounds enticing, it is. The "Queen City of the Hudson" has all the magnetism that would tempt a big-city cash-out: a peaceful, safe downtown that's a joy to walk (with a #28 Walkability ranking), a college-town spirit (Marist is right in town, with Vassar and another handful of schools nearby) and historic architecture that contributes to a #51 ranking in our combined Livability index. (Is it any wonder that home prices are up nearly 20%?) Its Urban Trail Project connects a range of landmarks and green spaces, including the Walkway over the Hudson State Historic Park—the world's longest elevated pedestrian bridge. Small but mighty, Poughkeepsie—perhaps fueled by New Yorkers with the means for a second property or full relocation—is buzzing. Historic Market Street is getting renovations and hotels are cropping up—check out The Heartwood at Vassar, the city's newest boutique stay. And on a larger scale, there's the ongoing Hudson Heritage development, which is transforming a former psychiatric center into a 156-acre walkable community.



83 Huntsville Alabama

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 Housing Affordability
- 28 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 527,000

'Storied' barely cuts it for Alabama's aerospace capital.

American history runs deep in Huntsville. During the Civil War, Union soldiers occupied the city—twice. Nearly a century later, it would be a center of munitions manufacturing for a nation galvanized around the Second World War. Space-age innovations then happened here (and still do), and this was the first city in Alabama to be racially integrated, playing a key role in the Civil Rights Movement. Today, Alabama's most populous city is still bristling with innovation and forward-thinking. This is Rocket City, a hub for propulsion research and home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. It's a reputation with sway, coaxing military and aerospace firms into town—most recently the lunar research firm SpaceFactory. There's a healthy biotech presence to boot, and Toyota and Meta are investing money in the region to expand factories and data centers, respectively. The city's unemployment rate (#11) benefits accordingly. Natural gifts complement all the hard graft, with over 65 parks within city limits. The largest, John Hunt Park, is a staggering 428 acres, earning the city its #28 Green Space ranking. Looking ahead, the \$325-million Front Row development has broken ground, and will transform 11 acres of downtown Huntsville with new housing, retail and restaurant space.



84 Akron Ohio

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Green Space
- 23 Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 698,000

An Ohio metropolis with an innovative past invests in a future to match.

Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens was once the family home of F.A. Seiberling, co-founder of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. With 10 gardens on 70 acres, it's Akron's first National Historic Landmark and the nation's sixth-largest historic home open to the public. We mention this not just because Akron ranks #10 for Green Space in the nation. The estate symbolizes the wealth that persists in Akron today. One of the world's leading polymer centers, it is headquarters to two Fortune 500 companies—the aforementioned Goodyear and utility provider FirstEnergy Corp. Not surprisingly, Rubber City attracts its share of innovators, and the Greater Akron Polymer Innovation Hub—announced in 2024—should keep that pipeline flowing. Its impressively affordable housing (ranked #23) won't hurt either. Meanwhile, the city continues to make massive infrastructure investments. The monumental Akron Waterways Renewed! project—which began in 2014—has completed 24 of its 26 milestones. Work on its 25th, the \$215-million, 6,660-foot-long Northside Interceptor Tunnel, has just started and will continue through 2026. In other developments, the Bowery Street Bridge Replacement Project began in March, complementing the Bowery District project: a \$42-million renovation of six historic buildings that will create 2,000 jobs and generate \$245 million in revenue over 20 years.



85 Wichita Kansas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 Housing Affordability
- 12 Large Companies

POPULATION

Metro 653,000

Word is out about Wichita, the heartland's affordable, artistic gem.

The "Air Capital of the World" (named for its aviation heritage and America's largest concentration of aerospace manufacturing employees) is an affordable, urban heart on the prairie. There are countless lists lauding Wichita as "Most Affordable" and "Best City to Move To"—and our #3 Housing Affordability ranking joins the chorus. City luxuries—like the #60-ranked restaurants or #46-ranked convention center—arrive alongside an average one-bedroom rent of around \$800. Unsurprisingly, Wichita's downtown is alight with new developments as investors seek to capture a bit of this Kansas magic. Boutique hotels are springing up, transforming historic buildings along the shore of the Arkansas River as it runs past Equity Bank Park—the city's Minor League Baseball stadium. They're joined by Ridge Point, The VUE and other luxury apartment complexes looking to tap into a talent pool drawn by the city's growing population of large companies (ranked #12). But the largest city in Kansas is also an arts beacon—often cited as the coolest in the state—with big-city cultural icons like the Wichita Grand Opera and Ballet Wichita. Improvements to the city's Exploration Place will only improve its #54 Museums ranking. The culinary scene, with its 1,200 restaurants and abundant food trucks, is a (delicious) bonus.



86 Oklahoma City Oklahoma

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 22** Housing Affordability
- 22** Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 1,478,000

Oklahoma City is looking up. 1,907 feet up, to be exact.

It comes as no surprise that this urban heart of the energy, biosciences and aerospace sectors has a stratospheric trajectory—aptly captured in the 1,907-foot Legends Tower, which begins construction this year. When completed, OKC will sport the sixth-tallest building in the world, part of the \$1.6-billion Bricktown development that also encompasses hotels, residences and commercial space. It all pairs nicely with its \$288-million downtown convention center (ranked #44), still gleaming after opening in 2021. Outside, there's the only urban whitewater rafting facility in the world—home to RIVERSPORT OKC, an Olympic and Paralympic training site—and, defying all urban definitions, OKANA: a just-opened indoor waterpark and resort equipped with all the expected thrills. That's enough to work up an appetite, and OKC's #37-ranked restaurants are happy to oblige with everything from homestyle to haute cuisine. Local sports go deep here, evident in the two new proposed stadiums: a \$71-million soccer stadium downtown and the \$900-million Paycom Center—a monumental new home for the Oklahoma City Thunder. When it's not pulling in fans, the city is increasingly a new hometown for thousands of families, drawn by its affordability, ranking #22 in our Housing Affordability subcategory.



87 Pensacola Florida

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 28** Nature & Parks
- 35** Air Quality

POPULATION

Metro 530,000

A pocket-sized beach town is cultivating industry at the shoreline.

Among the smallest cities in our rankings, Pensacola shines as bright as its Gulf Coast beaches. Historic lineage to New Orleans explains the vibe: Southern hospitality, ironwork balconies and storied bars. Over the course of its 466-year history, Pensacola has been ruled by the Spanish, the French, the British, the Confederacy and the United States—hence its nickname of “The City of Five Flags”—and has rigorously preserved its historic architecture, ranking #68 in our Sights & Landmarks subcategory. Breathe #35-ranked ocean air on its pier, or stroll along the Gulf Islands National Seashore—the longest stretch of federally protected seashore in the U.S. Of its 52 miles of beaches, Pensacola Beach is the pearl, powering the city to #28 in our Nature & Parks subcategory—poised to rise, with \$21.7 million dedicated to enhancing its parks in 2025. Tourists looking to dip their toes in will have no shortage of places to stay, with new hotels—like boutique Hotel Tristan—breaking ground every day. But people do work here. More than 500 companies in town specialize in aerospace and defense, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing or professional services, and talent continues to arrive in pursuit of the beach and the added bonus of no state personal income tax.



88 Oxnard California

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4** Business Ecosystem (Tied)
- 6** Healthcare (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 830,000

Sunny and booming, Oxnard's pull as a coveted hometown has never been stronger.

There's no keeping the Oxnard secret under wraps anymore. Sandwiched between more famous Malibu and Santa Barbara—and just an hour north of L.A.—this gem on California's Gold Coast is experiencing rising home prices and well-deserved attention. Walkable and with direct access to seven beaches (four of them state beaches), California sun and the coastal mountains, this is a coveted bedroom community for those who can work remotely most of the time, as well as an easy weekend trip from the big city. And the trips will be even more tempting with numerous properties opening over the next three years—from the Springhill Suites in the heart of Oxnard to the Hyatt House on the Channel Islands Harbor waterfront. Both will be choice places to take a deep breath and savor the city's #11-ranked air quality. Oxnard's diversified economy, including agriculture, oil, shipping and financial services—plus a roster of eager start-ups—contributes to the city's affluence and its #4 ranking for Business Ecosystem. It doesn't hurt that Port Hueneme, right next door, is the only major navigable port in California between Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay.



89 Lakeland Florida

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 3** Green Space
- 14** Poverty Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 818,000

This urban oasis has as many surprises as it has lakes—and that's saying something.

True to its name, Lakeland is a city defined by its lakes—38 of which are formally named and many others, surely, named only by the Floridians who call this city-meets-oasis home. Less than an hour east of Tampa, Lakeland ranks #3 in our Green Space subcategory, offering a bounty of natural wonder within city limits and just outside the city in the Circle B Bar Reserve. But Swan City is more than its natural gifts. Design and architecture lovers will be surprised to find a city bursting with sights, from Tudor Revival and Queen Anne residences to the largest single-site collection of Frank Lloyd Wright buildings on the campus of Florida Southern College. A steady population of students—drawn by Southeastern University and Florida Southern, to name just two—helps keep Lakeland's restaurants and breweries humming, and the #30-ranked Linder International Airport keeps the city connected—to say nothing of Tampa International less than an hour's drive away. Unsurprisingly, big business wants what Lakeland is offering: Supermarket giant Publix has its headquarters here, with plans to build a \$120-million technology campus downtown. They'll join new tenant LG Electronics, which leased nearly 350,000 square feet here in 2024.



90 Birmingham Alabama

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 19** Poverty Rate
- 39** Large Companies

POPULATION

Metro 1,184,000

The South's urban boom beats loud in Alabama's largest city.

With a confluence of new talent and downtown revitalization, Magic City has long been on its way. Today, the city's economy—the one Forbes predicted as a Top 10 promising job market in early 2020—is ascendant, lifted by a roster of large companies across biotechnology, banking, engineering and beverages. Regions Financial Corporation is headquartered here, doing business alongside Vulcan Materials and others—earning the city its #39 Large Companies ranking. That makes for some serious magnetism: Birmingham has attracted tens of thousands of new residents and many highly skilled workers, charmed by the city's opportunity, good eating and low poverty rate—#19 in our rankings. New developments and the adaptive reuse of the city's historic buildings, warehouses and fields are everywhere: The Painted Lady, a 22-room boutique hotel, just opened in the century-old Eyer-Raden Building, and the city's historic Tutwiler Hotel is set to undergo a \$7-million renovation. Those drawn to Birmingham will find a wealth of culture and history, including the largest museum in the Southeast and a buzzing jazz scene. Meanwhile, the city continues to educate the world about its history as the battlefield of America's Civil Rights Movement, and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is an essential visit.



91 Greensboro North Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 11** Poverty Rate (Tied)
- 17** Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 790,000

Where history and the land's bounty run deep.

A quest for diversity has long been part of Greensboro's legacy, and events that transpired in the city helped shape African American history. Today, Greensboro is a city that draws history buffs, antique furniture shoppers and foodies. In North Carolina, fertile farmland is a source of pride, and Greensboro residents have a strong connection to the land. (The #17 Green Space ranking is no coincidence.) Locals and visitors come together around food—at places like Greensboro Farmers Curb Market, a fixture since 1874, and at unique experiences like the Barn Dinner Theatre. While the town may be steeped in historical significance, it continues to look forward, especially as it tends to its ever-rising #67 Restaurants ranking. Greensboro's downtown nightlife (ranked #74) offers a special kind of charm, its street corners humming with buskers and bands. But the city is also an economic engine. The poverty rate is low, ranked #11, and Toyota has invested nearly \$14 billion into battery manufacturing in the region, with plans to create 5,000 jobs. The new Greensboro-Randolph mega-site will deliver its first batteries any day now. Greensboro's well-connected airport is renovating, too, sporting a manufacturing facility for Boom Supersonic planes. Watch for its #93 ranking to improve.



92 Winston-Salem North Carolina

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 7 Green Space
- 12 Housing Affordability

POPULATION

Metro 696,000

It's not the twin city you're thinking of. At least, not yet.

Gifted with a bounty of parks, not to mention its famous Southern charm, Winston-Salem—or The Dash, to its friends—is truly a tale of two cities. Until 1913, Winston and Salem neighbored one another—the former, a buzzing tobacco town, the latter, home to Moravian educators. Their merger brought these two worlds together. It's no wonder then that Winston-Salem seems to have two cities' worth of pleasures on offer. Its #7-ranked green spaces range from the sizable Reynold's Park—with tantalizing views of the city's tallest towers—to the smaller Hanes Park, where kids blow off steam on the playgrounds. Then there's the cadre of higher-ed institutions, including Wake Forest, Salem College and Winston-Salem State, earning it a #31 ranking for universities. These alone make the city an attractive place to settle down. The home market, ranked #12 for Housing Affordability, makes it practically irresistible. Winston-Salem seems to know it, too: the city just adopted Forward 2045, a comprehensive city plan for the next two decades, and its famed stage, the Stevens Center, is getting a needed renovation. Also in the works is the ambitious The Grounds development—transforming 100 acres into a mixed-use, “year-round gathering place”.



93 Little Rock Arkansas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 Housing Affordability
- 18 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 765,000

Big ambition and political capital in Arkansas.

The largest city in Arkansas coaxes talent and investment with aggressive tax breaks and some of the most affordable housing among state capitals. In fact, Little Rock ranks an impressive #15 for Housing Affordability and #18 in our Poverty Rate subcategory. Situated on the banks of the state's namesake river, the city is distinguished by a powerful and diverse corporate presence, proof that local officials have sharpened their pencils on the economic development front. Dillard's Department Stores, Windstream Communications and Stephens Inc. are just a few of the corporations headquartered in a city that has in the past suffered from an undeserved reputation as the capital of an underdeveloped state known mostly for the Ozark Mountains (and Bill Clinton). And today's Little Rock is also an increasingly coveted hometown, with great weather, cultural investment and green spaces (ranked #34). Surprises like the ESSE Purse Museum & Store showcase the city's subdued irreverence—which pairs well with the William J. Clinton Library & Museum and the newly revitalized Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. Together, they earn The Rock its #59 rank for Museums.



94 Baton Rouge Louisiana

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Poverty Rate
- 45 Green Space

POPULATION

Metro 874,000

Louisiana's capital is thriving, and having a blast doing it.

Louisiana's capital combines business with pleasure with an aplomb rarely seen elsewhere. It's what you'd expect from a state capital that's also home to one of the nation's proudest student bodies (as seen on most school-year weekends around the #59-ranked Louisiana State University campus). The 102,321-seat LSU Tiger Stadium is the seventh largest in the world, with the city's urban grid as the on- and off-ramp to the revelry (giving you a sense that, in the Red Stick, partying only has one speed). But the state's second-largest city is also a portal into the American South, awash with history and #45-ranked green spaces. A year-round calendar of festivals—from film circuits to Mardi Gras—grows ever more packed, with the Louisiana Cann Festival, focused on medicinal cannabis, returning for its third year in 2025. Then there's the growing culinary scene (#57), fed by new arrivals like The Colonel's Club—a swanky dining room in a historic mechanical shop. The city ranks #9 in our Poverty Rate subcategory, and it's primed to build on a good thing. Its Baton Rouge III Masterplan will set ambitious goals to enhance its downtown, from commerce to housing. Meanwhile, an Amtrak line to New Orleans is planned for 2027.



95 Riverside California

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4** Business Ecosystem (Tied)
- 6** Healthcare (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 4,688,000

Art and science thrive in this multicultural Golden State city.

Cruise east from L.A. and, in an hour (or two, because traffic), you'll find California's stealthy, ongoing success story: Riverside. The birthplace of the citrus industry is determined to live up to its title as the City of Arts and Innovation. A steadily growing tech sector is a testament to its hard work, as is the **#4** Business Ecosystem ranking. The arrival of innovative, talent-hungry companies—like autonomous shuttle company Ohmio—bodes well for the future of the "Inland Empire". But this is a city of arts, too, and Riverside is the vibrant, multicultural metro to deliver. It's home to the Riverside Metropolitan Museum (its Museums ranking sits at **#76**) and, as of 2022, the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture. The city boasts one of the nation's most ethnically diverse populations, with citizens of Hispanic descent making up 55% of the local population and 46% of residents speaking a language other than English. Steady growth, the 6th-best healthcare in the country and the University of California, Riverside (ranked **#30** in our University subcategory) continue to draw talent from California and beyond, ready to grow in this dynamic second city.



96 Scranton Pennsylvania

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 9** Housing Affordability
- 14** Poverty Rate (Tied)

POPULATION

Metro 569,000

Eyeing a direct link to NYC, Scranton offers affordable living and local pride.

Scranton has been the Electric City since 1880, when the lights flickered on for the first time along the Lackawanna River. Today, the city may be best known as the setting of "The Office", but that Electric City sign downtown still glows valiantly for a historic metro buzzing with local pride—most memorably from former President Biden, the city's very own. For even more proof, just smell the 30,000 flowers planted by volunteers across downtown in 2024. The poverty rate is low (**#14**) and the city's focus on taking care of its own is manifesting into a modern-day renaissance, fueled by new residents coveting affordable urban housing—ranked **#9** in the nation. Fidelity Bank has tapped the city as its new HQ, renovating the historic Scranton Electric Building, and its so-so restaurant performance (**#106**) will rise as newcomers, like the farm-to-table Alter House, arrive this year. What's lighting up the city most, however, is the fast-progressing Scranton to New York Penn Station Rail Corridor project, led by PennDOT, which will restore rail service to the Big Apple for the first time since 1970. Currently in its planning phases, officials anticipate passenger service beginning as early as 2028.



97 Daytona Beach Florida

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 15** Unemployment Rate (Tied)
- 35** Airport

POPULATION

Metro 722,000

The home of the Daytona 500 is much more than speed and spectacle.

Daytona may share the same waters as Florida darling Miami, but the "World's Most Famous Beach" has become known for one thing: NASCAR. This city is the namesake of the Daytona 500, after all—the Superbowl for NASCAR, which drew over 150,000 fans in 2025. Its **#57** Culture ranking (events are culture, even car races!) is no worse because of it. But once the dust clears and tires cool, you'll find a city connected, hard at work and blessed with a natural bounty few others can match—the Florida coast. Daytona's **#40** Nature & Parks ranking is justified in every ocean vista and shady palm tree, of which there are many. And beach-seekers will have little trouble getting there, either, thanks to the city's own international airport—not to mention Orlando International less than an hour away. Its **#35** Airport ranking is well-earned. The city isn't resting on these laurels, though. Its hustle runs deep, with a **#15** ranking for Unemployment Rate and the urban initiatives to prove it. The multi-year East International Speedway Boulevard revitalization—which is revamping a major beachside thoroughfare and improving pedestrian safety—is nearing completion. Meanwhile, stormwater studies aim to enhance Daytona's flood resilience—mitigating long-term risk for this beachside destination.



98 Chattanooga Tennessee

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 Housing Affordability
- 31 Shopping

POPULATION

Metro 580,000

North America's first National Park City offers thrills and affordable living (for now).

A gem on the banks of the Tennessee, Chattanooga—also known as Scenic City and Outside Magazine's "Best Town Ever"—seems to collect titles. In 2025, it added yet another: North America's first National Park City, joining the likes of London and Adelaide. It's hard to argue with the moniker. Few cities scratch the outdoor itch like Chatt—from climbing the Tennessee Wall to rafting down the Ocoee to camping at Chester Frost Park, it's all here. The #38 Nature & Parks ranking shouldn't surprise anyone. In addition to its natural bounty, Gig City boasts speedy internet velocity supplied by the publicly owned EPB. It's also two hours from Nashville and Atlanta. Corporations include Volkswagen and BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, and investments in its massive downtown innovation district are paying off, with a healthy start-up presence. Oh, and the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment hovers around \$1,200—enforced by local laws curbing tenant eviction and earning a #24 ranking in our Housing Affordability subcategory. The #76-ranked restaurant scene continues to sizzle (that's up from #85 last year) with plenty of new openings and two restaurant incubators—The Kitchen and Proof—stoking the culinary fire across the city.



99 Stockton California

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 Healthcare
- 38 Poverty Rate

POPULATION

Metro 801,000

Stockton is getting busy. It's about time we took notice.

Set on the San Joaquin River, Stockton has its history in the Gold Rush, when its seaport provided trade and transport across a booming California. Today, with a bankruptcy case behind it, Stockton has big plans and a stronger foundation to build on. Its healthcare system is ranked second in the country, with Saint Joseph's Medical Center calling the city home. Meanwhile, a new Housing Action Plan seeks to increase the availability of affordable housing, which suggests its #79 Housing Affordability ranking may ascend further. Stockton's low Nightlife, Museum and Culture rankings indicate room to grow its cultural capital, but for now the city seems happy to make itself a nicer place for the locals who call it home. Emblematic of this is its 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan, which sets the city's priorities for the next five years. Assessing housing, improving infrastructure and driving economic development are top of the list. Stockton has also adopted a Vision Zero Plan, aiming to eliminate roadway deaths and improve transport safety. Chuck in a \$2-billion levee project that will protect thousands of homes from flooding and its #38 Poverty Rate ranking, and it's undeniable: Stockton is hustling ahead.



100 El Paso Texas

PLACE POWER™ HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Poverty Rate
- 34 Restaurants

POPULATION

Metro 872,000

A culinary border city continues to put in the work, even in uncertainty.

Progressive and proudly Latino, this West Texas city bordering New Mexico and Mexico continues to invest in itself. Voters approved a number of civic initiatives at the end of last year, setting aside \$397 million for healthcare enhancements and \$155 million for capital improvement projects to bolster its infrastructure and parks and recreation areas—a sure boon to its #68 Nature & Parks ranking. That arrives alongside \$28 million in FAA grants to enhance the El Paso International Airport, which could mean smoother sailing for visitors (and a boost to its middling airport performance). And visit they shall—for good reason. Who wouldn't want to explore El Paso's downtown via streetcars, savoring its #34-ranked restaurants? Authentic Mexican food abounds, so grab a torta or dive into a plate of chilaquiles. Yet, the city—which has benefited economically and culturally from its ties to Mexico and Latin America—has experienced the last year up close and personal, with Trump's trade tariffs introducing economic and social uncertainty to a population that's 81% Hispanic and has the 4th-lowest Poverty Rate ranking in the nation. Now, with plans to modernize its Bridge of the Americas back on track after a recent pause, El Paso remains a vibrant, if changing, Texas gem.

Ranking cities' Place Power™ Score, by category

RANK	CITY	STATE	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
1	New York	New York	1	1	1	19,498,000
2	Los Angeles	California	6	2	2	12,799,000
3	Chicago	Illinois	3	4	4	9,263,000
4	San Francisco	California	2	7	3	4,567,000
5	Seattle	Washington	4	9	12	4,045,000
6	Miami	Florida	5	5	14	6,183,000
7	Boston	Massachusetts	7	11	9	4,919,000
8	Washington	District of Columbia	10	13	8	6,304,000
9	Las Vegas	Nevada	20	3	26	2,337,000
10	San Diego	California	9	6	23	3,270,000
11	Orlando	Florida	14	8	15	2,818,000
12	Atlanta	Georgia	29	14	7	6,306,000
13	Houston	Texas	24	12	10	7,510,000
14	Dallas	Texas	34	17	5	8,100,000
15	Austin	Texas	17	16	11	2,473,000

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
16	Denver	Colorado	12	18	13	3,005,000
17	Portland	Oregon	8	19	33	2,510,000
18	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	15	20	17	6,246,000
19	San Jose	California	46	48	6	1,946,000
20	Honolulu	Hawaii	11	24	54	989,000
21	Minneapolis	Minnesota	13	36	18	3,712,000
22	New Orleans	Louisiana	25	10	36	962,000
23	Nashville	Tennessee	50	15	16	2,104,000
24	Tampa	Florida	16	22	32	3,343,000
25	Phoenix	Arizona	37	21	27	5,070,000
26	Baltimore	Maryland	35	28	21	2,834,000
27	Salt Lake City	Utah	22	45	25	1,268,000
28	Madison	Wisconsin	27	59	19	694,000
29	St. Louis	Missouri	30	27	29	2,796,000
30	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	26	31	30	2,423,000
31	Charleston	South Carolina	23	25	65	849,000
32	Providence	Rhode Island	18	66	48	1,678,000
33	Columbus	Ohio	55	34	24	2,180,000
34	Raleigh	North Carolina	62	47	20	1,509,000
35	Charlotte	North Carolina	72	26	28	2,805,000
36	New Haven	Connecticut	31	98	31	568,000
37	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	36	44	40	1,560,000
38	Portland	Maine	21	52	56	566,000
39	Rochester	New York	28	62	49	1,052,000
40	Cleveland	Ohio	45	41	37	2,159,000
41	San Antonio	Texas	57	23	53	2,704,000
42	Buffalo	New York	33	61	52	1,156,000
43	Richmond	Virginia	43	51	41	1,350,000
44	Albany	New York	38	80	43	905,000
45	Omaha	Nebraska	56	43	35	985,000
46	Tucson	Arizona	40	30	68	1,063,000
47	Detroit	Michigan	54	32	46	4,342,000
48	Sacramento	California	53	46	45	2,421,000
49	Provo	Utah	47	102	34	733,000

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
50	Hartford	Connecticut	32	95	58	1,152,000
51	Cincinnati	Ohio	60	40	42	2,273,000
52	Des Moines	Iowa	44	79	44	737,000
53	Indianapolis	Indiana	77	39	39	2,140,000
54	Durham	North Carolina	88	78	22	609,000
55	Bridgeport	Connecticut	49	107	38	952,000
56	Kansas City	Missouri	73	35	50	2,220,000
57	Louisville	Kentucky	74	42	47	1,365,000
58	Syracuse	New York	42	88	61	653,000
59	Harrisburg	Pennsylvania	39	84	76	606,000
60	San Juan	Puerto Rico	19	53	108	2,038,000
61	Jacksonville	Florida	68	33	69	1,713,000
62	Worcester	Massachusetts	48	97	60	867,000
63	Grand Rapids	Michigan	52	73	64	1,163,000
64	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	41	70	89	559,000
65	Lexington	Kentucky	78	63	51	520,000
66	Fayetteville	Arkansas	61	94	66	590,000
67	Greenville	South Carolina	80	60	55	975,000
68	Albuquerque	New Mexico	76	37	77	924,000
69	Boise	Idaho	71	55	74	827,000
70	Virginia Beach	Virginia	66	49	86	1,782,000
71	Ogden	Utah	58	104	70	658,000
72	Spokane	Washington	64	72	83	600,000
73	Knoxville	Tennessee	90	29	63	947,000
74	Colorado Springs	Colorado	69	50	85	769,000
75	Allentown	Pennsylvania	65	103	72	874,000
76	Reno	Nevada	75	54	84	565,000
77	Dayton	Ohio	67	85	79	814,000
78	Tulsa	Oklahoma	83	58	75	1,044,000
79	Toledo	Ohio	81	89	73	600,000
80	Columbia	South Carolina	94	64	57	857,000
81	Memphis	Tennessee	89	38	81	1,336,000
82	Poughkeepsie	New York	51	110	95	705,000
83	Huntsville	Alabama	85	86	62	527,000

RANK	CITY	COUNTRY	LIVABILITY	LOVABILITY	PROSPERITY	POPULATION
84	Akron	Ohio	70	90	88	698,00
85	Wichita	Kansas	84	77	82	653,000
86	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	100	56	59	1,478,000
87	Pensacola	Florida	63	71	101	530,000
88	Oxnard	California	79	109	90	830,000
89	Lakeland	Florida	59	91	102	818,000
90	Birmingham	Alabama	101	68	67	1,184,000
91	Greensboro	North Carolina	92	76	78	790,000
92	Winston-Salem	North Carolina	97	83	71	696,000
93	Little Rock	Arkansas	93	75	91	765,000
94	Baton Rouge	Louisiana	98	74	87	874,000
95	Riverside	California	104	65	80	4,688,000
96	Scranton	Pennsylvania	82	105	99	569,000
97	Daytona Beach	Florida	86	69	105	722,000
98	Chattanooga	Tennessee	107	57	92	580,000
99	Stockton	California	87	99	106	801,000
100	El Paso	Texas	106	67	93	872,000

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