

## The 100 Best Places to Live

+ = Highest-scoring categories for each town

Some towns have it all—great schools, a thriving job market, safe streets, plenty to do. The best offer one thing more: a reason to go home again.

RANK	PLACE/Population in thousands (town + town + surrounding area)/Nearest city	JOB/ECONOMY <sup>1</sup>	CRIME <sup>2</sup>	EDUCATION <sup>3</sup>	ARTS AND LEISURE <sup>4</sup>	RANK	PLACE/Population in thousands (town + town + surrounding area)/Nearest city	JOB/ECONOMY <sup>1</sup>	CRIME <sup>2</sup>	EDUCATION <sup>3</sup>	ARTS AND LEISURE <sup>4</sup>
21	Yorba Linda, Calif. (61.9 + 64.4) Los Angeles		+		+	46	Sugar Land, Texas (77.6 + 134.7)		+	+	
22	Delmar, N.Y. (8.3 + 16.3) Albany		+			47	Hudson, Ohio (22.3 + 24.2) Akron				+
23	Papillion, Neb. (18.0 + 27.4) Omaha	+	+			48	Boerne, Texas (6.7 + 29.4) San Antonio	+	+		
24	Fishers, Ind. (46.6 + 48.9) Indianapolis	+	+			49	Merrimack, N.H. (27.1 + 27.2) Manchester		+	+	
25	Coronado, Calif. (25.1 + 25.1) San Diego			+	+	50	Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. (33.6 + 35.4) Jacksonville	+	+		
26	Saratoga, Calif. (29.4 + 30.6) San Jose		+		+	51	Centerville, Utah (15.2 + 15.2) Salt Lake City	+			+
27	Redmond, Wash. (47.1 + 64.0) Seattle	+			+	52	Crestwood, Ky. (2.2 + 16.7) Louisville	+	+		
28	Wexford, Pa. (18.3 + 18.3) Pittsburgh			+	+	53	Urbandale, Iowa (32.1 + 36.8) Des Moines	+		+	
29	Tolland, Conn. (14.4 + 14.4) Hartford		+	+		54	American Fork, Utah (23.6 + 33.7) Provo	+			+
30	Overland Park, Kans. (161.3 + 161.3)			+	+	55	Madison, Miss. (16.3 + 26.4) Jackson	+		+	
31	Hopewell Junction, N.Y. (2.8 + 24.1) New York City	+	+			56	Trussville, Ala. (14.6 + 19.7) Birmingham	+	+		
32	Evans, Ga. (20.1 + 27.6) Augusta	+	+			57	Colchester, Conn. (15.2 + 16.0) Hartford		+		
33	Yorktown, Va. (0.2 + 41.8) Newport News	+		+		58	Franklin, Tenn. (46.6 + 77.9) Nashville	+		+	
34	Cary, N.C. (11.0 + 115.3)	+			+	59	Hockessin, Del. (13.9 + 17.2) Wilmington			+	+
35	Scottsdale, Ariz. (227.0 + 289.4)	+			+	60	Riverton, Utah (27.5 + 36.1) Salt Lake City	+			+
36	Westborough, Mass. (18.6 + 19.6) Worcester			+	+	61	Hummelstown, Pa. (4.3 + 19.6) Harrisburg	+	+		
37	Midlothian, Va. (52.5 + 74.3) Richmond		+	+		62	Fairport, N.Y. (5.7 + 41.2) Rochester		+	+	
38	Olive Branch, Miss. (26.3 + 35.0) Memphis	+	+			63	Lutz, Fla. (18.2 + 52.7) Tampa	+			+
39	Rochester, Mich. (11.3 + 92.1) Detroit		+		+	64	Ballwin, Mo. (31.1 + 94.1) St. Louis			+	+
40	Colleyville, Texas (22.5 + 22.6) Dallas			+	+	65	Aptos, Calif. (9.2 + 23.6) Santa Cruz		+	+	+
41	East Amherst, N.Y. (18.5 + 18.5) Buffalo		+	+		66	Santa Barbara, Calif. (92.2 + 134.8)	+			+
42	Solon, Ohio (21.4 + 21.9) Cleveland			+	+	67	New Milford, Conn. (28.5 + 28.5) Danbury			+	+
43	Saline, Mich. (8.6 + 19.6) Ann Arbor	+		+		68	Chino Hills, Calif. (77.4 + 77.5) Pomona			+	+
44	West Linn, Ore. (23.7 + 26.9) Portland		+	+		69	Uniontown, Ohio (2.8 + 24.3) Akron		+		+
45	West Chester, Ohio (46.4 + 46.4) Cincinnati	+	+			70	Hollywood, Fla. (147.5 + 416.6)	+			+

NOTES: Unless otherwise indicated, all data as of 2004 and based on town plus surrounding area. Nearest cities are listed only for places with population of less than 100,000. <sup>1</sup>Jobs/Economy rank based on household income increase since 1990 and Bureau of Labor Statistics county unemployment figures. <sup>2</sup>Crime rank based on FBI crime reporting. <sup>3</sup>Education rank based on the county's average student-to-teacher ratio from the National Center for Education Statistics and on the Educational Climate Index, which is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's socioeconomic status measure with weights adjusted to more strongly reflect the education level of an area's residents, generally considered a good proxy for school quality. <sup>4</sup>Arts and Leisure rank based on count of arts and leisure resources, including museums, restaurants, recreation and park space. For a full list of original sources, go to [money.com/bestplaces](http://money.com/bestplaces). SOURCE: OnBoard, Brooklyn ([onboardllc.com](http://onboardllc.com)).

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## How MONEY found the Best Places:

WORKING WITH THE DATA MAVENS AT ONBOARD, of Brooklyn, we searched for Great American Towns. We started with 1,321 places of 14,000-plus population, higher than median income, positive population growth and real estate appreciation in the past five years. We screened out places that weren't within 60 miles of a major airport and 30 miles of a major teaching hospital. We eliminated towns with low education scores or any that fell below the 25th percentile in any two of the following: unemployment, income growth, crime, or arts resources. The remaining 100 towns were then ranked weighing economic, education

and safety factors twice as much as arts, leisure and park space. We limited any metropolitan area to one or two places. Arriving at the top 30, we culled more data on education, environment, housing affordability, taxes, commute times, and job market. MONEY reporters then visited and did interviews with the 12 highest ranked cities to assess vibrancy of downtowns, congestion, natural surroundings and sense of community to come up with the top ten best places to live. \$

