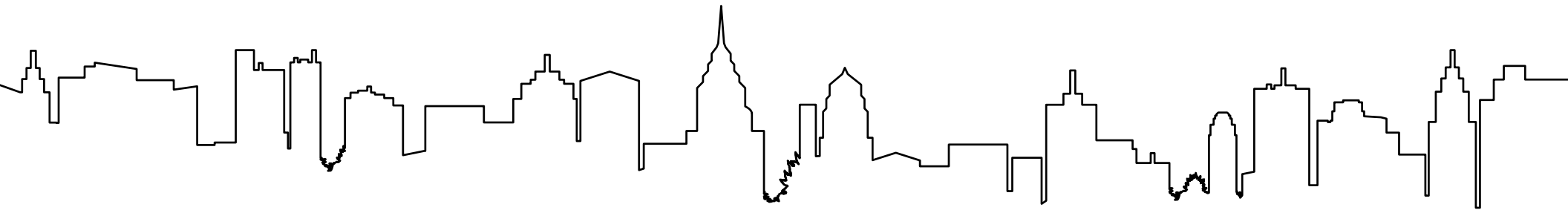




**Best Cities for  
Successful  
Aging**



**MILKEN INSTITUTE**  
CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF AGING

Sindhu Kubendran and Liana Soll  
Introduction by Paul Irving

**2017**

### About the Milken Institute

The Milken Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank determined to increase global prosperity by advancing collaborative solutions that widen access to capital, create jobs, and improve health. We do this through independent, data-driven research, action-oriented meetings, and meaningful policy initiatives.

### About the Center for the Future of Aging

The mission of the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging is to improve lives and strengthen societies by promoting healthy, productive and purposeful aging.

 @MIAging

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 Future of Aging

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### Paul Irving

Chairman, Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging



# Best Cities for Successful Aging

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**2017**

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**MILKEN INSTITUTE**  
CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF AGING



Age-friendly environments  
improve quality of life for all.  
They foster well-being and hold  
back age-associated decline.

# INTRODUCTION

“ Older people and the environments in which they live are diverse, dynamic and changing; in interaction, they hold incredible potential for enabling or constraining healthy ageing. ”

– WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

In a time when lives are extending into eight, nine, and even 10 decades, yesterday’s notion of idling away our later years is fading. While the health and economic challenges of aging remain significant concerns, an increasing number of today’s older adults are redefining the experience. They are launching companies and nonprofits, climbing mountains, creating apps, and mentoring youth. They increasingly seek lifelong engagement and purpose. They expect their communities to support their changing needs, recognize their abilities, and enable their contributions to the greater good.

With the gift of longevity, new opportunities have emerged for older adults to pursue work and education, social and civic involvement, and rich interaction with younger people—and one another. At the same time, this fast-growing cohort wants better health care and increased financial security. They seek access to amenities that ease the challenges of aging and enhance quality of life for themselves and their loved ones. In our individual and collective efforts to achieve these goals, *where* we live has never been more important.

Bearing in mind this evolving 21st-century profile of older Americans, the Milken Institute Center for the

Future of Aging, in collaboration with the Institute’s Research Department, presents the 2017 “Best Cities for Successful Aging”™ report and index. This third edition of our groundbreaking series methodically evaluates U.S. metropolitan areas on how well they serve the needs and meet the expectations of the nation’s largest-ever population of mature adults, enabling them to age productively, securely, and in optimal health.

In the pages that follow, we rank 381 metropolitan areas, using refined methodology and updated data in nine categories. Our aim is to help people fulfill the potential of their later years, a potential that, research tells us, can immensely benefit not just older adults but individuals across the age spectrum and the broader society as well. As we create better cities for older adults, we create communities that are livable for people of all ages.

Why a rankings system? By stirring virtuous competition, we hope to galvanize improvement in the social structures that serve a growing urban population. We want to encourage best practices and innovation along with solutions-focused dialogue among thought leaders, decision-makers, and stakeholders.



**BY PAUL IRVING**

**Chairman, Milken Institute  
Center for the Future of Aging**



**COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

**GENERAL  
LIVABILITY**

**HEALTH CARE**

**LIVING  
ARRANGEMENTS**



# WHAT MAKES A BEST CITY?

We include 83 indicators from publicly available data on criteria that experts commonly cite as important to age-friendly environments



**EMPLOYMENT**

**WELLNESS**



**TRANSPORTATION  
AND CONVENIENCE**



**EDUCATION**

**FINANCIAL  
SECURITY**

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# THE NEW ‘OLD’

**Demographers project that one in five Americans will be 65 or over by 2030 as the nearly 80 million baby boomers age.**

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## A Timely Focus

Four important realities underpin our focus on aging in metropolitan areas:

- **As is the case across much of the world, the U.S. population is aging at an unprecedented pace.** Demographers project that one in five Americans will be 65 or over by 2030 as the nearly 80 million baby boomers age.
- **Older people want to age in place.** AARP surveys find that the vast majority of people—including nearly nine in 10 of those 65 and older—do not plan to pack up and move to the Sun Belt but want to age in their current homes and communities.
- **The number of older residents in metropolitan areas is expanding.** Globally, the World Health Organization anticipates that by 2030, about three of every five people will live in cities, a large segment of them over age 60. In the U.S., 80 percent of people 65 and older already live in metropolitan areas large and small, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

- **Longevity is linked to location.** Put simply, life expectancy differs significantly depending on where people live. Not everyone is sharing in the benefits of longer lives. A widening longevity gap, including within cities, highlights the need to ensure that health and prosperity are spread. The variation is tied to factors that include education, income, access to health care, food choices, smoking rates, exercise, safety of housing, and pollution.

All residents deserve a chance to thrive, and age-friendly environments improve quality of life for all. They foster well-being and hold back age-associated decline. When communities enable aging adults to work, learn, volunteer, and participate socially and economically, the benefits accrue to younger people and the broader society as well.

Given the twin trends of urban living and shifting demography and the positive change within our reach, the pursuit of healthy, productive, and purposeful aging must become a priority for civic leaders. With the continuing partisanship and discord at the federal level, the nation’s cities are poised to lead, serving as incubators of innovation in response to the new realities. Will they step up to the task? This is the challenge that “Best Cities” seeks to elevate.

## More Than a Snapshot

Our “Best Cities” index goes deeper than the many top 10 retirement lists based on opinion surveys and rankings that often rely on just a few characteristics like weather or living costs. These factors are only part of the complex infrastructure and social context that affect health, productivity, and purpose as people age. Indeed, “Best Cities for Successful Aging” is not about the best places to retire. To the contrary, it offers a broad focus on livability across the life course.

Our research staff, with the input of our Center for the Future of Aging Board of Advisors, employs a weighted, multidimensional methodology based on a range of

Longevity is linked to location. Put simply, life expectancy differs significantly depending on where people live, with the variation tied to factors like education, income, access to health care, food choices, smoking rates, exercise, safety of housing, and pollution.



factors that influence aging. We use indicators from publicly available data that reflect key characteristics commonly cited by experts as important to age-friendly environments:

- **Safety, living options, and affordability.** We analyze statistics on cost of living, homeownership and rental costs, employment, crime rates, income distribution, and weather, as well as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and home health-care providers.
- **Health and wellness.** We look at access to high-quality health care by measuring the number of health professionals, hospital beds, long-term hospitals, and facilities with geriatric, Alzheimer's, dialysis, hospice, and rehabilitation services, as well as hospital quality and affiliation with medical schools. We examine health behaviors and outcomes in terms of obesity, diabetes, Alzheimer's, smoking, and mental health. The availability of recreation, wellness programs, and other healthy pursuits are also part of the equation.
- **Financial security, work, and entrepreneurship opportunities.** We look at tax burden, small-business growth, employment opportunities and rates for those 65 and over, poverty, and the number of reverse mortgages.
- **Mobility, transportation access, and convenience.** We review commute times, fares, the use of and investment in public transit, especially for older residents, and the number of grocery stores. We also look at older adults' access to and use of the Internet.
- **Engagement with communities, and physical, intellectual, and cultural enrichment.** We use volunteerism statistics and indicators reflecting the environment for purposeful engagement and encore service. We consider access to the arts, entertainment and recreational activities, libraries, and civic and religious organizations. We assess educational attainment and the availability of community colleges.

Each metro area receives three rankings: for all adults age 65 and over, for those in the 65-79 range, and for those 80 and older. Recognizing the evolving needs and desires of people in these categories, the sub-index for those 65 to 79 emphasizes active lifestyles and engagement opportunities, while more weight is given to factors such as health care and weather for those 80 and over.

#### **Wide-Ranging, With Exceptions**

Our index does not pretend to be comprehensive; many positive aspects of metropolitan living do not neatly lend themselves to measurement within its data-driven framework. For example, a region struggling to emerge from economic doldrums and job shortages—which drag down its “Best Cities” ranking—may at the same time be developing an admirable neighborhood “village” pilot program, with transportation and services that enhance independent living for older residents.

Other age-friendly factors also sidestep our index due to limited data or inconsistent measurement across metros. Individual experience tied to income and wealth is an example. Nor is cultural diversity, which often engenders a sense of community, connection, and beneficial purpose, directly measured.

Additional noteworthy characteristics that evade easy quantification include religious practices, which may influence the qualities that improve livability. A case in point is the Mormon faith's counsel against the use of alcohol and tobacco, a norm that no doubt contributes to the relatively healthy profiles of Utah cities on our list.

In such a diverse nation, views of the attributes that enable successful aging will vary, of course. Thus, “Best Cities” is intended to be a starting point to increase awareness about livability, about where and how we want to age. It is meant to spark discussion and encourage communities to prioritize these issues in their planning decisions and to consider age-friendliness as a civic ideal.

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# CITY-CENTRIC

**Globally, the World Health Organization anticipates that by 2030, about three out of every five people will live in cities, a large segment of them over age 60.**

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# HEART AND HOME

**The vast majority of people—including nearly nine in 10 of those 65 and older—want to age in their current homes and communities.**

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## **Promising Initiatives**

The “Best Cities” report updates Programs With Purpose, our spotlight on initiatives that bring positive change to lives and communities, whether spearheaded by nonprofit organizations, public agencies, or businesses. We include a range of projects that demonstrate how engagement by older adults can benefit both the people they serve and the older adults themselves. We showcase programs that reveal their vitality and multidimensionality—traits that disrupt ageist attitudes and bolster older people’s self-image, which research shows can improve health.

Our Programs With Purpose, along with Initiatives for Innovation, represent just a few of the many worthy projects across the nation that should be expanded and emulated. They call attention to the vast human resource that is our older population, a resource that too often is ignored as age bias and outdated attitudes, deeply embedded in our culture, continue to obscure the worth and potential of older people.

## **The Mayor’s Pledge**

We also acknowledge the nation’s many mayors who champion new approaches to improve the lives of older residents, and we trust that others will take note of what is working. These leaders, who face the ground-level impact of aging populations and other demographic changes, can often act quickly and explore creative solutions that might be hindered by bureaucratic barriers at the state and federal levels.

We honor the mayors, across party lines and regions, who have signed the Mayor’s Pledge, an effort launched in 2014 with the oversight of the Center for the Future of Aging Advisory Board. The Pledge commits mayors to making their communities work well for their aging populations and enabling older residents to participate in creating a better future for all. We encourage all mayors to sign the Pledge and incorporate its message and goals into their governing agendas.

## **Metro Momentum**

Numerous metropolitan regions already have launched forward-looking initiatives. Purposeful Aging Los Angeles, announced in 2016 by Mayor Eric Garcetti and the County Board of Supervisors, is an age-friendly action plan for famously youth-oriented L.A.—a region that in reality claims the largest and most diverse population of older adults in the United States. The Center for the Future of Aging, AARP, the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, and the UCLA Los Angeles Community Academic Partnership for Research in Aging are assisting city and county leadership in the effort.

New York City stands out for its well-established Age-Friendly NYC initiative, recognized as the world’s best age-friendly program by the International Federation on Aging in 2013. Engaging city agencies, nonprofits, and businesses, New York’s program pursues improvements in pedestrian safety and park access, housing options and social services, and other efforts that make the metropolis a better place to live.

‘Best Cities’ is not about the best places to retire. To the contrary, it offers a broad focus on livability across the life course.

Across the nation, other civic leaders are stepping up to meet the challenge, with age-friendly initiatives ranging from street improvements to round-the-clock transportation options for older adults. Leaders in Fayetteville, Ark., have teamed with the chamber of commerce and the University of Arkansas to assess the need. Surveys and focus groups are exploring how to better support older people, and college students have fanned out across the city to evaluate infrastructure. Louisville, Ky., promotes compassion and respect by sponsoring an annual Give a Day week, which in recent years has seen more than 160,000 people volunteer for community service. And the city-funded 8 to 80 Vitality Fund in St. Paul, Minn., takes on revitalization projects to improve infrastructure and public spaces so residents of all ages and abilities can enjoy safer, more accessible outdoor life.

Nationwide, more than 140 communities representing more than 61 million people have joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, committing them to pursue quality-of-life improvements that enable active aging. The initiative is an affiliate of the World Health Organization's groundbreaking global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program.

### **A Time for Action**

As noteworthy as these activities are, they are just a beginning. Sweeping demographic change demands that more communities follow suit, and quickly. Leaders can create agency-wide awareness and embed the consideration of aging adults into city planning as they innovate for the benefit of all residents. Cities can refer to the World Health Organization's checklist of age-friendly attributes—in categories such as outdoor space, respect and inclusion, civic and social participation, and housing and transportation—to assess their own needs.

"Best Cities for Successful Aging" also demonstrates that the dimensions of age-friendly communities extend well beyond the role of government. All of us have opportunities to foster livable cities. We can encourage municipal innovations and work with nonprofits to support older

people. We can combat the ageism that infects virtually every aspect of our culture. Organizations and programs that seek to improve livability and better their communities can incorporate aging populations into their work, whether focused on the needs of low-income people, buildings, transportation, or other aspects of urban life. We can capitalize on the perspective and experience of older people to inform the process.

The business community has a responsibility and an opportunity as well. Companies should employ workers across the age span and set policies that harness the human resource of older people, such as flexible schedules, training, intergenerational mentoring, post-career counseling, and encore service opportunities. The lucrative and growing older consumer marketplace should also be considered in the development of innovative goods and services.

Our previous "Best Cities for Successful Aging" publications acknowledged new approaches to creating more livable communities. Our third edition aims to spur additional ideas and innovations. The growing enthusiasm for "Best Cities" reveals a thirst in communities across the country for creative, positive ways to transform our later years. But the policies, programs, and features that we highlight in "Best Cities" are not just important for older adults. They enhance the quality of life for residents of every age. Both young and old need care and connection. We seek meaning and purpose throughout our lives. Efficient transportation, effective health services, accessible housing, learning opportunities, and a vibrant economy enable all individuals and communities to prosper.

A better future of aging is within our reach. We hope that "Best Cities" builds awareness, stimulates conversation, motivates action, and encourages solutions. We call on public officials, business leaders, and residents of all ages to work together, creating inclusive, age-friendly communities and an America where all people thrive.

The nation's cities are poised to serve as incubators of innovation in response to the new realities of population aging.

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**FIND THE REPORT AT:  
SUCCESSFULAGING.  
MILKENINSTITUTE.ORG**

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When communities enable aging adults to work, learn, volunteer, and participate socially and economically, the benefits accrue to younger people and the broader society as well.

# TOP 20 LARGE METROS

If there's a common thread that emerges among the Top 20 large "Best Cities for Successful Aging," it is the presence of higher education. Many in this group are college towns, and all have a high percentage of older residents with degrees. We know that education fosters mental stimulation, which in turn can promote healthy, productive aging.<sup>1</sup> This "Best Cities" report also underscores the positive impact that the presence of colleges has on quality-of-life factors that affect older adults, such as economic strength, infrastructure, walkability, and recreation.

Beyond education, the "Best Cities" index finds that the Top 20 excel in combining multiple characteristics in the categories we examine: general livability and well-being, economic strength, and opportunities for work and community engagement. This report shows, however, that even these laudable cities have work to do in elevating age-friendliness, often in the areas of convenience and cost of living.

Our index recognizes the wide regional variation in metro characteristics, especially in the cost of living and housing prices—what is expensive in one market may be a bargain by the standards of another. Our rankings thus reflect costliness relative to individual markets' income levels and home values. Similarly, drivers in traffic-jammed cities who commute to the daily radio recitation of road accidents may be surprised if their metros don't rank high in car crashes. These ratings are calculated on a per-capita basis, so a freeway-dense city with numerous accidents could be rated more favorably than a less populous place with fewer drivers and disruptions.

Recognizing that metro regions often include more than one city, we place a check in the Mayor's Pledge box if at least one mayor in the metro has signed the Pledge. The following rankings present the metros in the order of their overall age-friendliness.

<sup>1</sup> Kawachi, Ichiro, Nancy E. Adler, and William H. Dow, "Money, schooling, and health: Mechanisms and causal evidence," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1186, no. 1 (2010): 56-68.



# PROVO-OREM, UTAH

Provo-Orem reclaims the top spot in this third edition of “Best Cities for Successful Aging” (it was No. 1 in 2012), rising on the strength of the services and support systems that make it an ideal home for older adults amid a youthful, family-oriented population. With ample opportunities for outdoor recreation, including Utah’s five national parks, Provo-Orem fosters an active, healthy culture while low drinking and smoking rates boost its health profile. The area is home to Brigham Young University, with its opportunities for engagement and learning. Provo-Orem also offers good options for social support and faith-based engagement and boasts optimistic residents<sup>2</sup> and high rates of volunteerism. A healthy economy provides employment opportunities for people of all ages.

## NAILED IT

### Healthy living

- Active population fighting off disease: low rates of diabetes, obesity, and Alzheimer’s
- Binge drinking a rarity; few smokers
- Population 65-plus living mostly at home; many caregivers

### Curious minds

- Learning options: enviable college enrollment rates
- More than 90 percent of older people hold high school degrees
- Service-oriented: high levels of volunteerism among older adults
- Tech-savvy: Internet used by eight in 10 older individuals

### Vibrant economy

- Working life: high employment growth, low unemployment
- Hang out a shingle: expanding small-business sector
- Low poverty among older adults
- Sharing the wealth: one of the smallest income inequality gaps

### Safe, supportive neighborhoods

- Low crime and car-crash rates
- Public transportation improving: strong special-needs options

## NEEDS WORK

### Affordability

- Expensive services, including hospitals and transportation
- Not enough banks and financial institutions; weak culture of saving
- Meager federal funding for older-adult programs

### Health and wellness

- Too few gyms for indoor exercisers, despite many outdoor options
- Specialized health needs: few hospitals affiliated with medical schools; too few orthopedic surgeons, Alzheimer’s treatment facilities, and dialysis centers
- Not enough grocery stores

1	
RANKING #	
1	FOR AGES 65-79
1	FOR AGES 80+
1	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
26	🩺 HEALTH CARE
1	💓 WELLNESS
9	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
3	🎓 EDUCATION
11	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
16	💻 EMPLOYMENT
18	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
20	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR’S PLEDGE

## MADISON, WIS.

The top large metro in the 2014 “Best Cities” index, Madison is home to some of the nation’s leading thinkers, thanks to the University of Wisconsin. Boasting strong medical services and an educated, healthy population, it offers an abundance of recreational activities as well as entertainment and community engagement.

2	
RANKING #	
2	FOR AGES 65-79
2	FOR AGES 80+
39	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
2	🏥 HEALTH CARE
7	💓 WELLNESS
27	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
12	🎓 EDUCATION
19	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
40	💼 EMPLOYMENT
71	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
3	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Diverse array of health services

- Ample providers: primary care, physical therapy, orthopedic surgery
- Many hospitals with geriatric, Alzheimer's, and rehab units
- Short emergency room waits

#### Healthy environment

- Short commutes; many walk to work
- Many fitness centers and recreation options
- Few injury falls; low crime rate

#### Intellectual atmosphere

- Educated population; high college enrollment rates
- Many libraries and cultural opportunities
- A giving culture: high rates of philanthropy

### NEEDS WORK

#### Costs and opportunity

- Expensive living: high taxes
- Substantial unemployment among older adults

#### Health issues and drinking

- Aging in place: too few home health-care providers, few residents aging at home, pricey long-term care
- A limited number of dialysis and diagnostic centers
- Too much college-town binge drinking

## DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL, N.C.

Newly added to the large-metro category due to its population growth, Durham-Chapel Hill has generally performed with stellar age-friendliness. Part of North Carolina’s thriving Research Triangle, with health-care and economic benefits tied to University of North Carolina and Duke University research activities, the area offers cultural and employment options that make it a strong choice for successful aging.

3	
RANKING #	
4	FOR AGES 65-79
3	FOR AGES 80+
81	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
1	🏥 HEALTH CARE
32	💓 WELLNESS
24	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
11	🎓 EDUCATION
54	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
29	💼 EMPLOYMENT
45	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
55	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Quality health care

- Hospitals among the nation’s best
- Top-notch access to geriatric, Alzheimer's, hospice, and physical therapy services
- Many primary-care providers

#### Bustle and boom

- Many civic and religious organizations; culture of volunteerism
- Employment growth in health, education, hospitality, and leisure
- Low older-worker unemployment; strong small-business environment

### NEEDS WORK

#### Safety and resources

- Too much crime and too many traffic accidents
- High income inequality; low spending for transit, older-adult programs
- Inadequate walkability

#### Unhealthy trends

- Many fast food restaurants; few grocery stores
- Comparatively high chronic illness levels
- High Alzheimer's rates



# SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

This Mountain States metro is a draw for snow enthusiasts and a growing hub for finance and technology. Salt Lake City's acclaimed Intermountain Healthcare and strong primary-care network contribute to an environment that supports well-being.<sup>3</sup> It boasts an educated population, a diverse job market,<sup>4</sup> and an older population that's enthusiastic about volunteering.

4	
RANKING #	
3	FOR AGES 65-79
4	FOR AGES 80+
82	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
10	🏥 HEALTH CARE
16	💓 WELLNESS
3	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
13	🎓 EDUCATION
22	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
11	💻 EMPLOYMENT
50	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
34	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

## NAILED IT

### Health consciousness

- Easy access to primary care
- Ample geriatric, rehabilitation, physical therapy, and Alzheimer's services
- Low Alzheimer's, diabetes, and obesity rates

### Engagement

- Giving back: high rate of older volunteers
- Many cultural and recreational amenities

### Economic opportunity

- Strong 65-plus employment levels; community colleges teaching new skills
- Easy access to banks and financial services; high rates of account holders
- Low older-adult poverty and income inequality

## NEEDS WORK

### Quality-of-life obstacles

- Low funding for programs serving older adults
- Pricy housing for this region; many reverse mortgages
- Safety worries: high crime rate
- Watch the waistline: too much fast food, too few fitness facilities

<sup>3</sup> Gardner, E., "Why Does Utah Rank So High in Health Care?" NEJM Catalyst, May 2016. <http://catalyst.nejm.org/why-does-utah-rank-so-high-in-health-care/>.

<sup>4</sup> DeVol, R., Lee, J., and Ratnatunga, M., 2016 "Best-Performing Cities," Milken Institute, December 2016.

# DES MOINES–WEST DES MOINES, IOWA

A strong business environment, good health services, and a relatively low cost of living are selling points in this Midwest city. Once known mainly for its insurance companies and Iowa's first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses, Des Moines offers a growing cultural scene and has a well-educated older population.<sup>5</sup> The downside: comparatively weak healthy-living options.

5	
RANKING #	
5	FOR AGES 65-79
6	FOR AGES 80+
29	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
5	🏥 HEALTH CARE
43	💓 WELLNESS
33	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
26	🎓 EDUCATION
48	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
10	💻 EMPLOYMENT
33	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
1	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

## NAILED IT

### Easy on the wallet

- Affordable living, beating other top metros
- Large service industry; many older workers
- Reasonably priced medical and long-term care services

### Focus on older adults' health

- Hefty roster of primary-care clinicians
- U.S. leader in geriatric services with many rehab and Alzheimer's facilities

### Community engagement

- Many libraries and recreational facilities
- Lots of older volunteers; many civic opportunities
- Funding for programs targeting older adults

## NEEDS WORK

### Health and lifestyle

- Lack of magnet and Joint Commission-accredited<sup>6</sup> hospitals; few five-star nursing homes, per U.S. government rankings
- Stuck behind the wheel: sparse public transit
- Too much obesity and binge drinking, too few grocery stores
- Comparatively high Alzheimer's rates

<sup>5</sup> Woodard, C., "How America's Dullest City Got Cool," Politico Magazine, January 2016. <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/how-des-moines-iowa-got-cool-213552>.

<sup>6</sup> Joint Commission, [https://www.jointcommission.org/accreditation/accreditation\\_main.aspx](https://www.jointcommission.org/accreditation/accreditation_main.aspx)

## AUSTIN-ROUND ROCK, TEXAS

Hip and youthful, Austin-Round Rock also facilitates enjoyable lifestyles for older residents. Its creativity spurs events like the famous South by Southwest music and film festival, along with other cultural and entertainment activities. The University of Texas and a booming high-tech industry yield diverse paths to professional fulfillment.

6	
RANKING #	
6	FOR AGES 65-79
5	FOR AGES 80+
13	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
17	🏥 HEALTH CARE
12	💓 WELLNESS
2	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
49	🎓 EDUCATION
68	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
17	💻 EMPLOYMENT
32	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
65	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Modern economy

- Internet-savvy older population; high older-worker employment
- Thriving small-business climate
- Tax-friendly environment

#### Sterling health care

- Treatment when needed: many primary-care providers, short ER waits
- Med school affiliations; high rates of Joint Commission accreditation
- Healthy behaviors: low chronic disease rates; longer lives; ample recreation facilities

#### Aging at home

- Inexpensive nursing homes, adult day services
- Good access to home health-care services

### NEEDS WORK

#### Cost, commuting, college

- Pricey homes and rentals
- Shortsighted planning: too few grocery stores; long commute times; lack of walkability
- Few community colleges

## OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS, NEB-IOWA

Suggesting that he cares about livability as well as financial performance, investment titan Warren Buffett lives and headquarters his giant company in this Heartland metropolis. Affordability, quality health care, recreational amenities, and employment opportunities attract Omaha-Council Bluffs' educated population. Areas to work on: transit and convenience.

7	
RANKING #	
7	FOR AGES 65-79
7	FOR AGES 80+
43	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
4	🏥 HEALTH CARE
62	💓 WELLNESS
32	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
29	🎓 EDUCATION
49	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
5	💻 EMPLOYMENT
37	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
4	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Health and wellness

- Many orthopedic surgeons, rehab centers, geriatric facilities, and hospice services
- Affordable care with magnet and medical school-affiliated hospitals
- Short ER waits
- Working out: many fitness centers and recreation opportunities

#### A good value

- Affordable cost of living; ample jobs
- Low poverty among older people
- Low income-inequality, reverse-mortgage levels
- Zip to work: super-short commutes

#### Strong community

- Substantial funding for older-adult programs
- Numerous libraries; volunteer-oriented population

### NEEDS WORK

#### Infrastructure and convenience

- Limited transit, walkability options
- Few hospitals, dialysis centers

#### Wellness deficiencies

- High Alzheimer's, binge drinking, smoking rates
- Low life expectancy; few adults age at home
- Poor air quality

# JACKSON, MISS.

Affordable cost of living and a low tax burden are bright spots for residents of Jackson despite a struggling economy and low employment growth. This Deep South metro offers older residents jobs as well as social and civic engagement options, and its large health-care sector provides ample services and support. But to improve overall wellness, behavior needs to change.

8	
RANKING #	
8	FOR AGES 65-79
8	FOR AGES 80+
77	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
3	🏥 HEALTH CARE
71	💓 WELLNESS
8	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
27	🎓 EDUCATION
96	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
4	💻 EMPLOYMENT
13	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
5	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

## NAILED IT

### Affordable living

- Relatively low median home and rental prices
- Hospital stays that won't empty the wallet
- Low tax burden; low rates of reverse mortgages

### Convenient medical care

- Many nurses, nurse practitioners, and orthopedic surgeons
- Tops in access to rehab facilities; many geriatric facilities
- Caregiving options in abundance
- Easy access to dialysis and diagnostic centers

### Opportunities

- Paychecks: low unemployment among older adults
- Many libraries and religious and civic organizations

## NEEDS WORK

### Livability factors

- High income inequality
- Slow employment growth
- Few older adults with Internet access
- High levels of car crashes and crime

### Unhealthy habits

- Low levels of Medicare enrollment
- Couch potatoes; fast food a staple and obesity and Alzheimer's common.

# BOSTON-CAMBRIDGE-NEWTON, MASS.-N.H.

This New England metro sprawling from the Charles River boasts more than top universities and a rich history. A vibrant science hub, it hosts leading tech companies and high-quality hospitals, with walkable neighborhoods, well-planned transit, and low crime rates. Downside: Expensive services and housing pose barriers for many people.

9	
RANKING #	
10	FOR AGES 65-79
9	FOR AGES 80+
27	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
13	🏥 HEALTH CARE
17	💓 WELLNESS
46	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
19	🎓 EDUCATION
2	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
21	💻 EMPLOYMENT
98	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
28	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

## NAILED IT

### Quality medical care

- Lots of physical therapists, dialysis centers, nurse practitioners, and orthopedic surgeons
- Medical school affiliation for most hospitals
- Abundant home health-care options; high-quality nursing homes

### Active bodies, active minds

- Loads of fitness centers relative to population
- Low Alzheimer's, obesity rates; long life expectancy
- Many 65-plus workers; many universities

### Age-friendly spending

- Ample special-needs transportation
- Strong funding for transit and programs focused on older adults
- Excellent walkability; convenient amenities

## NEEDS WORK

### Pricey living

- Costly housing, assisted living, nursing homes
- Many reverse mortgages; high tax burden
- Long waits in the ER; expensive hospital care
- High income inequality

### Symptoms of stress

- Few caregivers; many older-adult injury falls
- High levels of depression in Medicare population
- High binge drinking rates

## SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND-HAYWARD, CALIF.

Economic strength, fueled by the famed Bay Area tech industry, bumped this busy region up from No. 17 in “Best Cities” 2014. It enjoys strong transit and cultural and educational offerings, with diverse resources for older adults. Unfortunately, income inequality is high and the cost of living can be prohibitive, so many people commute long distances to work.

10	
RANKING #	
9	FOR AGES 65-79
10	FOR AGES 80+
3	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
68	🏥 HEALTH CARE
5	💓 WELLNESS
28	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
21	🎓 EDUCATION
3	🚗 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
30	💼 EMPLOYMENT
93	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
72	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Livability in booming economy

- Good drivers: few car crashes per capita
- Walkable communities and mild weather
- High income levels and employment growth; many small businesses
- Focus on prevention: abundant primary care; high Medicare enrollment

#### Quality health care

- Numerous five-star nursing homes and Joint Commission-accredited hospitals
- Enhanced independent living opportunities: many continuing-care facilities

#### Healthy, active lifestyle

- Educated population, with high college enrollment rates
- Many libraries and cultural opportunities
- A giving culture: high rates of philanthropy

### NEEDS WORK

#### Costs and convenience

- Expensive living; high taxes
- Aging in place: too few home health-care providers, few residents aging at home, pricey long-term care
- Few dialysis and diagnostic centers
- Significant unemployment among older adults
- Too much college-town binge drinking

## NEW YORK-NEWARK-JERSEY CITY, N.Y.-N.J.-PA.

It's hard to match the cultural dynamism of New York City, or its unbeatable transit, access to health care, and convenience. A web of award-winning age-friendly initiatives—from arts and education to pedestrian safety—bolsters support for older individuals. But life here comes with a big price tag. And more libraries and social organizations would foster a stronger sense of community.

11	
RANKING #	
11	FOR AGES 65-79
11	FOR AGES 80+
49	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
56	🏥 HEALTH CARE
35	💓 WELLNESS
64	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
79	🎓 EDUCATION
1	🚗 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
6	💼 EMPLOYMENT
94	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
67	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Quality health care and results

- Strong Medicare signups: 90 percent of those eligible
- Long life expectancy; low obesity rates
- Med-school affiliation for over half of hospitals; 90 percent Joint Commission-accredited
- Many home health-care providers; highly rated nursing homes

#### Convenience and support

- Walkable neighborhoods; comparatively low crime; few car crashes relative to population
- Many fitness, recreational facilities
- Good funding for older-adult programs

### NEEDS WORK

#### Services and opportunity

- Stuck in traffic: longest average commute time among large metros
- Long ER waits; few continuing-care facilities and caregivers
- High poverty and unemployment in older generation
- Pricey living; wide income gap

#### Weak sense of community

- Lack of a culture of giving and volunteerism among adults
- Sparse religious and civic organizations

## DENVER-AURORA-LAKEWOOD, COLO.

Cold weather doesn't deter Denver-Aurora-Lakewood residents from healthy lifestyles. The lure of the Rockies and an active population give this mile-high metro the No. 1 ranking for physical activity. A strong economy and a vibrant arts and culture scene offer professional and community engagement opportunities for older adults.

12	
RANKING #	
12	FOR AGES 65-79
13	FOR AGES 80+
55	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
18	🏥 HEALTH CARE
4	💓 WELLNESS
20	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
42	🎓 EDUCATION
34	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
8	💻 EMPLOYMENT
74	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
64	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Employment and economic stability

- Strong income and employment growth; low poverty rates among older adults
- Service economy with growth in aging-related fields
- Educated population; many older workers

#### Active and healthy

- Let's get physical: tops in active population
- Low rates of diabetes, obesity, and Alzheimer's
- Staying fit: many recreational facilities per capita
- Strong volunteerism among older people

#### Quality infrastructure

- Well-funded transit for older adults; high transit usage
- Shortest big-city ER waits
- Joint Commission thumbs-up for most hospitals
- Highly rated nursing homes; ample continuing care

### NEEDS WORK

#### Expensive living

- Pricy hospitals and other costs
- Steep public transit fares
- Many reverse mortgages

#### Focus on older adults

- Small older population
- Meager funding to support independent aging
- Too much binge drinking

## TOLEDO, OHIO

The struggling regional economy dropped Toledo from No. 8 in "Best Cities" 2014. But this Lake Erie metro scores for affordable living, strong community feel, and engagement options for older residents. Still, people here are among the nation's least healthy, and the health-care system must meet aging population needs more effectively.

13	
RANKING #	
13	FOR AGES 65-79
12	FOR AGES 80+
12	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
20	🏥 HEALTH CARE
99	💓 WELLNESS
35	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
10	🎓 EDUCATION
39	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
79	💻 EMPLOYMENT
2	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
14	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Easy on the wallet

- Affordable living, with few reverse mortgages
- Cost-effective options for long-term care
- Reasonable transit fares, although ridership is low

#### Community feel

- Bountiful recreation options: golf courses, marinas, bowling alleys
- Many community colleges and strong enrollment
- Many libraries; high levels of volunteerism
- Good investment in transit for older adults
- Safety: low crime rate

#### Health-care access

- Joint Commission accreditation for all hospitals
- Many geriatric and rehab facilities, nursing-home beds, and home health-care providers

### NEEDS WORK

#### Economy

- Struggling, manufacturing-heavy economy
- Low growth in small business and employment
- Small paychecks; large rich-poor gap

#### Wellness weakness

- Too few grocery stores; overkill in fast food
- Few older adults living at home
- Couch potatoes: low physical activity rates, high obesity rates

## MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL-BLOOMINGTON, MINN.-WIS.

The home of radio's *Prairie Home Companion* is moving up in our rankings thanks to an expanding health-care system and stronger economy supporting its older population. With a philanthropic culture, active lifestyle, and educated population, this metro enjoys a sense of close community.

14	
RANKING #	
16	FOR AGES 65-79
14	FOR AGES 80+
23	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
22	🏥 HEALTH CARE
28	💓 WELLNESS
72	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
53	🎓 EDUCATION
31	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
33	💻 EMPLOYMENT
58	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
9	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

### NAILED IT

#### Overall livability

- Low rates of crime, vehicle crashes
- Transit-friendly environment with good special-needs support
- Low older-adult poverty levels; good income distribution

#### Busy older population

- Educated populace; low unemployment
- Helping others: many older-adult volunteers
- Recreational, arts, religious, and civic organizations aplenty

#### Health management

- Many primary-care physicians: low chronic disease rates, high life expectancy
- Well-used fitness centers, many outdoor recreation options
- Independent living; many home health providers

### NEEDS WORK

#### Access to care

- Not enough hospital beds, diagnostic centers, magnet hospitals
- High Alzheimer's rates; few treatment facilities

## SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Part of New England's "knowledge corridor," known for its many colleges and universities, Springfield offers the benefits of top educational institutions and expansive opportunities for engagement. This historic metro has the feel of a smaller city, but with transportation amenities rivaling the largest metro regions. Health care and living arrangements could be improved, however.

15	
RANKING #	
14	FOR AGES 65-79
54	FOR AGES 80+
96	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
54	🏥 HEALTH CARE
42	💓 WELLNESS
65	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
1	🎓 EDUCATION
9	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
39	💻 EMPLOYMENT
84	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
8	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓ MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

### NAILED IT

#### Tops in educational facilities

- Abundance of community colleges per capita, high enrollment
- Culture of learning: numerous libraries

#### Well-designed for aging

- Good access to rehab, geriatric facilities, and aging-focused care
- Strong funding to support independent aging
- Good transportation spending levels for older riders
- Walkable communities; short commutes
- Low rates of Alzheimer's, injury falls

### NEEDS WORK

#### Livability and cost

- Relatively high living costs and crime rates
- Low income growth in a struggling economy; many older adults in poverty
- High tax burden
- Few recreational amenities

#### Long-term services and supports

- Adults rarely age at home
- Costly assisted living, nursing homes
- Poor-quality nursing homes; few caregivers

## SAN JOSE-SUNNYVALE-SANTA CLARA, CALIF.

Thanks to its tech heartbeat—Silicon Valley—this Bay Area region boasts even higher income growth than its neighbor, San Francisco, but fewer transit, arts, and entertainment options. The most expensive housing costs of any large metro give pause, but economic strength and an educated, healthy populace recommend this sunny metro.

16	
RANKING #	
18	FOR AGES 65-79
16	FOR AGES 80+
5	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
49	🏥 HEALTH CARE
3	💚 WELLNESS
34	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
50	🎓 EDUCATION
40	🚗 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
70	💻 EMPLOYMENT
90	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
88	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Tech economy

- Email them: over 80 percent of older adults have Internet access
- Expanding economy: strong income and employment growth
- Savvy savers: lots of money in the bank

#### Health and health care

- Short ER waits; Joint Commission accreditation for all major hospitals
- Wide access to primary-care physicians
- High-quality nursing homes
- Happy and healthy: long, active lives; low rates of obesity, smoking, depression

### NEEDS WORK

#### Congestion and competition

- Costly living, despite low income inequality for a pricey metro
- Expensive hospitals; many reverse mortgages
- Long, slow commutes

#### Gaps in support

- Few geriatric centers, rehabilitation facilities
- Not enough special-needs transportation
- Many older adults in poverty

## ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Far to the north of the glittering Big Apple, Rochester offers its older residents a comfortable, healthy, and engaged life on Lake Ontario's southern shore, with affordable living and quality health care. Despite low employment and income growth, few older adults live in poverty.

17	
RANKING #	
22	FOR AGES 65-79
17	FOR AGES 80+
57	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
16	🏥 HEALTH CARE
37	💚 WELLNESS
12	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
78	🎓 EDUCATION
14	🚗 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
74	💻 EMPLOYMENT
78	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
21	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Easy living

- Affordable housing
- Short commute times, walkable environment, low crime
- Convenient diagnostic centers
- Good nursing-home capacity; many home-health providers

#### Well-planned health-care system

- Many nurse practitioners and physicians' assistants
- Magnet hospitals with quality care
- Short ER wait times

### NEEDS WORK

#### Economic downsides

- Low employment and income growth; high tax burden
- Few banks per capita and low deposit rates

#### Long-term care

- Few older adults living at home
- Expensive nursing homes and adult day services
- Few continuing-care facilities; poor-quality nursing homes

## BRIDGEPORT-STAMFORD-NORWALK, CONN.

Home to many New York commuters, Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk also hosts the nation's third-largest cluster of multinational companies, providing a wide range of employment opportunities for its healthy and affluent population. A safe environment helps older adults remain active physically and mentally. But life here is ultra-pricey.

18	
RANKING #	
19	FOR AGES 65-79
26	FOR AGES 80+
19	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
51	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
2	💓 WELLNESS
49	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
93	🎓 EDUCATION
32	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
15	💻 EMPLOYMENT
99	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
31	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Comfortable lifestyle

- Safety first: low rates of crime, car crashes
- Healthy transit investment for older adults
- Convenient access to banks, grocery stores

#### Quality health care

- Cutting edge: many med school-affiliated hospitals
- Joint Commission accreditation for all major hospitals
- Many nursing homes with top ratings

#### Health and wealth

- Fitness rules: many gyms relative to population
- Low rates of chronic disease, including obesity and diabetes
- Well-heeled population with high savings

### NEEDS WORK

#### Cost barriers

- Housing woes: costly homeownership and rents
- Expensive nursing homes
- Wide income inequality
- The taxman cometh: large tax burden

#### Economic challenges

- High unemployment among 65-plus residents
- Small businesses struggling
- Sluggish job growth
- Long commutes to work

## WASHINGTON-ARLINGTON-ALEXANDRIA, D.C.-VA.-MD.

The nation's capital hosts research institutions and universities as well as government agencies, embassies, and related businesses that keep its economy humming. With an educated, involved population, Washington and its across-the-Potomac neighbors are designed for walkability and public transportation. But commute times and high living costs, even more than political rancor, cause heartburn here.

19	
RANKING #	
15	FOR AGES 65-79
34	FOR AGES 80+
40	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
44	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
19	💓 WELLNESS
91	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
33	🎓 EDUCATION
8	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
1	💻 EMPLOYMENT
97	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
48	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Engaged older population

- High employment among older adults
- Service economy: amenable to older workers
- Tech-savvy: many older people online
- Avid volunteerism in 65-plus population
- Low income inequality for a large metro

#### Quality health care

- High Medicare enrollment
- Many hospitals associated with medical schools
- Prevention: large cohort of primary-care doctors

#### Healthy population

- Low rates of clinical depression among Medicare recipients; good longevity
- Many adults age at home
- Walkable communities; many grocers
- Well-used public transportation

### NEEDS WORK

#### Urban pressures

- Long commutes and high transit fares
- Expensive housing and assisted living
- Too much fast food; too few gyms
- Few Alzheimer's and geriatric units

#### Education and opportunity

- Too few community colleges
- Low employment growth



## SYRACUSE, N.Y.

A classic college town, Syracuse provides a wealth of educational opportunity for young people and older adults alike. This walkable upstate metro boasts quick driving commutes and many pedestrian commuters as well as abundant special-needs transportation solutions. Improved health care and living arrangements for older people could push this chilly city back toward its previous No. 13 spot.

# 20

RANKING #

21	FOR AGES 65-79
29	FOR AGES 80+
71	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
60	🏥 HEALTH CARE
38	💓 WELLNESS
19	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
8	🎓 EDUCATION
5	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
87	💼 EMPLOYMENT
81	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
11	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Welcoming community

- Affordable cost of living with low income inequality
- Abundance of libraries and community colleges
- Good special-needs transportation and funding to support independent aging
- Amenities and jobs within walking range
- Let's play: many outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly golf
- Good air quality

#### Health care

- Many primary-care clinicians, diagnostic facilities
- Quality of care enhanced by medical schools

### NEEDS WORK

#### Weak economy

- Sluggish growth in employment and income
- Few banks per capita
- High tax burden

#### Wellness weakness

- Long waits in the ER
- Too few caregivers
- Many fatal falls
- High rates of smoking
- Few adults aging at home; expensive long-term care
- Poor nursing-home quality





‘Best Cities’ demonstrates that  
the dimensions of age-friendly  
communities extend well beyond  
the role of government.  
All of us have opportunities  
to foster livable cities.

# TOP 20 SMALL METROS

Our Top 20 small “Best Cities for Successful Aging” prove that a community doesn’t have to be big to be great. These metros offer services and opportunities of all kinds that foster livability not just for older adults, but residents of all ages. These locales reflect varying combinations of moderate living costs, robust economies, quality health care, educational facilities, and healthy and engaged populations. Small cities tend to have the edge in easy living and community feeling, but they are not cookie-cutter siblings. Our Top 20 demonstrate how diverse characteristics can meet diverse needs.

As in our Large Metros category, these rankings and commentary are based on comparative analysis, taking into account the variation, for instance, in personal incomes and housing prices, and, for some indicators, incorporating per-capita rates rather than numerical match-ups among cities. The list has shifted somewhat since our 2014 report, demonstrating that sometimes small-scale changes can make a big difference in people’s lives—and in metro rankings, too.<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing that metro regions often include more than one city, we place a check in the Mayor’s Pledge box if at least one mayor in the metro has signed the Pledge.

<sup>1</sup> Additionally, data from smaller metros may represent smaller sample sizes, and thus less reliable estimates.



# IOWA CITY, IOWA

Iowa City’s literary leadership, fostered by the University of Iowa and its pioneering Writers’ Workshop, is among the qualities that anchor this Corn Belt stalwart at the top of the “Best Cities” list. Iowa City’s numerous boasts include UNESCO designation as a City of Literature and an impressive number of public library patrons, which equals the city’s population.<sup>2</sup> More broadly, older adults enjoy high rates of employment and education. Its business-friendly economic environment, accessible transit, and No. 1 standing in health care among all of our small cities help make Iowa City a consistently great locale for older residents.

**NAILED IT**

**Working and learning**

- Unemployment rate among the lowest for small cities; many older adults employed
- Small is strong: good small-business growth
- High rates of college enrollment

**Top-notch health care**

- Lots of primary-care physicians
- Strong specialty care: many orthopedic surgeons, geriatric facilities, hospices, and Alzheimer’s units
- Hospital care that won’t break the bank
- High-quality nursing homes

**Convenient neighborhoods**

- Strong public transportation ridership
- Many pedestrian commuters; short commutes overall
- Ample funding to help older adults live independently

**NEEDS WORK**

**Financial picture**

- Wide income inequality
- Expensive housing and many reverse mortgages
- Not enough banks for convenience

**Gaps in support**

- Few adults aging at home
- Too little transit funding geared to older residents
- Few diagnostic centers

1	
RANKING #	
1	FOR AGES 65-79
1	FOR AGES 80+
27	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
1	🩺 HEALTH CARE
51	💚 WELLNESS
113	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
10	🎓 EDUCATION
14	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
42	💻 EMPLOYMENT
120	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
42	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR’S PLEDGE

2 "UNESCO designates Iowa City as the world’s third City of literature," University of Iowa News Service, November 20, 2008, <http://www.news-releases.uiowa.edu/2008/november/112008unesco.html>.

## MANHATTAN, KAN.

In its first “Best Cities” appearance, Manhattan—Kansas-style—has done exceedingly well. While providing many of the supports and services of a larger city, this Sunflower State metro is more affordable and has a college-town feel. Access to specialty medical care and job opportunities at Kansas State University and Fort Riley, home of the Army’s 1st Infantry Division, make this an inviting place to call home.

2	
RANKING #	
3	FOR AGES 65-79
3	FOR AGES 80+
25	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
8	🏥 HEALTH CARE
36	💚 WELLNESS
16	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
4	🎓 EDUCATION
23	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
55	💻 EMPLOYMENT
115	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
11	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Medical services

- Tops in older-adult health care: many rehab centers, Alzheimer’s units, geriatric facilities
- High enrollment among Medicare-eligible adults
- Affordable hospital care

#### Economic picture

- Few older adults in poverty; high older-adult employment
- Strong small-business growth

#### Convenience and engagement

- Many pedestrian commuters and short drives to work
- Nearby amenities: many grocery stores and diagnostic centers
- Abundance of religious and civic organizations and libraries
- Helping others: high rates of volunteerism

### NEEDS WORK

#### Population health

- Not enough magnet and Joint Commission-accredited hospitals
- High rates of Alzheimer’s, depression, and binge drinking
- Get moving: too few fitness centers
- Gasp!: poor air quality
- Few adults aging at home

## AMES, IOWA

Improved health-care offerings pushed Ames up from sixth place in “Best Cities” 2014. Diverse cultural amenities, from libraries to civic groups, keep its educated older population engaged, and Iowa State University provides stable health and employment infrastructure. Add in its top ranking in education, and Ames is an all-around age-friendly place.

3	
RANKING #	
2	FOR AGES 65-79
5	FOR AGES 80+
5	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
43	🏥 HEALTH CARE
41	💚 WELLNESS
8	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
1	🎓 EDUCATION
10	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
79	💻 EMPLOYMENT
131	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
14	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### General livability

- Lowest unemployment rate of all small metros
- Smallest percentage of older adults in poverty
- Email them: high older-adult Internet usage
- Few car crashes per capita
- Many libraries, civic and religious groups

#### Cost-effective care

- Medicare-eligible adults mostly enrolled
- Lots of rehab centers and hospice care
- Affordable hospitals

#### Healthy bodies and lifestyles

- Getting physical: fitness centers galore
- Few smokers, low diabetes rates
- Many adults aging at home; many walkers and transit users

### NEEDS WORK

#### Livability features

- Relatively high cost of living; high income inequality
- Poor air quality
- Hold those fries: too much fast food
- Job seekers: employment for older adults lacking

#### Quality, diverse health care

- Lack of Joint Commission and magnet-hospital accreditations
- No five-star nursing homes; too few home health providers
- Limited primary care, physical therapy access

# COLUMBIA, MO.

With its young population and vibrant college scene, Columbia still is well-suited to aging and consistently lands in the “Best Cities” top five. It provides affordable long-term care and ample transit funding for older people. The University of Missouri offers undergrad and professional education while contributing to a reliable regional economy.

4	
RANKING #	
4	FOR AGES 65-79
2	FOR AGES 80+
107	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
2	🏥 HEALTH CARE
45	💚 WELLNESS
12	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
11	🎓 EDUCATION
28	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
52	💻 EMPLOYMENT
66	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
102	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

**NAILED IT**

**Health care and fitness**

- Great selection of orthopedic surgeons, primary-care doctors, and nurses
- Many med-school-affiliated hospitals
- Working out: many fitness centers and high rates of exercising

**Long-term services and supports**

- Affordable assisted living and semiprivate nursing rooms
- Many home health-care providers, caregivers, and physical therapists

**Finances and careers**

- Educated population
- Few reverse mortgages; thriving small businesses
- High levels of older-adult employment

**NEEDS WORK**

**Population health**

- Weak outreach: insufficient enrollment of Medicare-eligible population
- High rates of depression and Alzheimer's
- Burgers and fries: too many fast food outlets

**Livability factors**

- High income inequality and cost of living
- High crime rate; many car crashes per capita

# SIoux FALLS, S.D.

Sioux Falls has dropped from the No. 1 spot in “Best Cities” 2012, in part because it needs to improve the wellness status of its overall population. It continues to lead in infrastructure and services, including medical services, for older adults and has a good economic climate. Though somewhat geographically isolated, it has many cultural amenities and a philanthropically oriented population.

5	
RANKING #	
5	FOR AGES 65-79
4	FOR AGES 80+
48	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
4	🏥 HEALTH CARE
101	💚 WELLNESS
1	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
130	🎓 EDUCATION
97	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
59	💻 EMPLOYMENT
111	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
2	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

**NAILED IT**

**Cost-effective care**

- Tied for lowest hospital costs among small cities
- Many nurses, physical therapists, geriatric services, and hospices
- Short waits in the ER

**Financial strength**

- Lots of deposits filling the vaults; many banks per capita
- High growth rates in incomes and small business

**Community ties**

- Strong funding to help older adults remain independent
- Ample access to libraries and cultural recreation
- Generosity: high rates of volunteering

**NEEDS WORK**

**Independent living support**

- Few people aging at home; many older adults in poverty
- Pricy housing and many reverse mortgages
- Slow growth in health and leisure employment

**Car-centricity**

- Insufficient spending on transit for older adults and people with disabilities
- Walkable streets in short supply
- Little use of public transportation

## ANN ARBOR, MICH.

Ann Arbor is home to the powerhouse University of Michigan and its Wolverines, attracting researchers and innovators and providing strong health and transportation infrastructure. People living in its brisk climate enjoy numerous cultural and recreational amenities, but expensive living and a competitive economy may strain their wallets.

6	
RANKING #	
13	FOR AGES 65-79
6	FOR AGES 80+
68	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
3	🏥 HEALTH CARE
34	💚 WELLNESS
100	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
12	🎓 EDUCATION
16	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
245	💻 EMPLOYMENT
238	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
151	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Active bodies and minds

- Exercise-conscious population
- Strong culture around public transit; many pedestrian commuters
- Google it: high levels of Internet use by older adults
- Educated older residents

#### State-of-the-art health system

- Prevention focus: bountiful access to primary-care clinicians and nurses
- Many orthopedic surgeons and physical therapists
- Joint Commission accreditation for all hospitals

### NEEDS WORK

#### Frail foundation for purposeful aging

- High unemployment among older population
- Few religious and civic organizations; few older-adult volunteers
- Low employment growth in aging-related industries
- High rates of depression

#### Expensive

- Costly housing and hospitals
- Adult day care unaffordable for many

## ITHACA, N.Y.

Besides its stately Cornell University, Ithaca offers bountiful outdoor exploration opportunities for an active population, with scenic waterfalls and gorges nearby. Having made modest improvements in health, wellness, finances, and community engagement, Ithaca climbed from its No. 17 spot in 2014. Possible deterrent: expensive long-term supports and services and high cost of living.

7	
RANKING #	
6	FOR AGES 65-79
20	FOR AGES 80+
202	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
91	🏥 HEALTH CARE
35	💚 WELLNESS
40	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
2	🎓 EDUCATION
1	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
7	💻 EMPLOYMENT
256	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
145	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Health and wellness

- Med school-affiliated hospitals
- Few smokers; many fitness centers
- Many 65-plus adults employed
- Educated population: high levels of college enrollment

#### Public transportation leadership

- Many pedestrian commuters; frequent use of public transit
- Walkable communities; short commutes

### NEEDS WORK

#### Strains on the wallet

- High income inequality
- Pricy living: houses, rent, assisted living, nursing homes
- High tax burden; costly transit fares for older people
- Low growth in industries geared to older adults
- Few banks; weak income growth



# LAWRENCE, KAN.

Improvements in health and wellness have boosted Lawrence into the “Best Cities” top 10. Pluses: ample primary care, short emergency room waits, and affordable hospitals. Needed: more aging-specific health services. The University of Kansas and a growing tech presence<sup>3</sup> buttress a slowly improving economy, but living costs and crime rates are high.

8	
RANKING #	
8	FOR AGES 65-79
16	FOR AGES 80+
183	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
58	🏥 HEALTH CARE
46	💚 WELLNESS
21	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
5	🎓 EDUCATION
42	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
8	💻 EMPLOYMENT
109	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
43	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

## NAILED IT

### Educated and employed population

- Tied for lowest unemployment among older adults
- Few older residents in poverty; few reverse mortgages
- Highly educated populace
- Enthusiasm for volunteerism among older adults
- High growth in health and leisure employment

### Health care and chronic disease

- Joint Commission-accredited and med school-affiliated hospital
- Front lines: many primary-care clinicians; efficient emergency rooms
- Low rates of diabetes
- Many fitness centers relative to population

### Caregiving

- Numerous caregivers and home health providers
- Highly rated nursing homes

## NEEDS WORK

### Independent living and old-age support

- Expensive homeownership and rents
- High tax burden
- No Alzheimer's units, geriatric facilities, or hospices
- Few older adults living at home

<sup>3</sup> Florida, Richard, "High-Tech Challengers to Silicon Valley," The Atlantic Citylab, July 2, 2013. <http://www.citylab.com/work/2013/07/per-capita-challengers-silicon-valley/6011/>.

# LOGAN, UTAH-IDAHO

Nestled on the slopes of the Bear River Mountains, the Logan metro has moved up the “Best Cities” rankings, thanks in part to clean living and a healthy population. This comparatively safe, community-minded city with a stable economy ranks in the top three for wellness, despite a health-care system that leaves something to be desired.

9	
RANKING #	
7	FOR AGES 65-79
15	FOR AGES 80+
37	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
236	🏥 HEALTH CARE
2	💚 WELLNESS
88	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
16	🎓 EDUCATION
36	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
16	💻 EMPLOYMENT
92	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
29	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

## NAILED IT

### Livable, supportive communities

- Low crime rates
- Short commutes
- Many libraries, recreation opportunities, older volunteers

### Stable economy and strong employee base

- Low 65-plus unemployment rate
- Low income inequality levels
- Educated older adult population

### Healthy lifestyles

- Top-five ranking in low obesity and diabetes rates
- Curtailing vice: little binge drinking or smoking
- A physically active culture
- Many adults aging at home

## NEEDS WORK

### Hospital headaches

- No long-term hospitals
- No specialized hospital facilities for older adults
- Expensive inpatient stays

## FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Fairbanks leads the nation in community engagement, with cultural amenities and social organizations offering a warm vibe in a chilly climate. Economic growth is slow in this fishing, hiking, and snow-sport haven, but residents remain financially sound. Few older adults live in poverty, and health and wellness amenities are accessible.

10	
RANKING #	
9	FOR AGES 65-79
67	FOR AGES 80+
281	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
15	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
16	💚 WELLNESS
15	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
45	🎓 EDUCATION
183	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
1	💻 EMPLOYMENT
279	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
1	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

### NAILED IT

#### Primary-care focus

- Many primary-care clinicians
- Easy access to diagnostic centers
- Many family caregivers; ample hospice care
- Joint Commission accreditation for all hospitals

#### Healthy living

- Low rates of diabetes
- Forgoing the fries: few fast food restaurants
- Little depression among older people

### NEEDS WORK

#### Livability concerns

- High crime
- Long ER waits
- Hold your breath: too much secondhand smoke, particle pollution

#### Costs and care

- Household budgets: high cost of living, expensive houses and rentals
- Pricey long-term care supports and services
- Not enough home health providers

## BOULDER, COLO.

Anchored in the consistently healthy Rocky Mountain West, Boulder stands out among our 281 small metros: it's No. 1 in wellness. An educated population enjoys walkable neighborhoods, cultural amenities, and the state's largest university. The cost of living isn't cheap, however. Housing is among the priciest in the group.

11	
RANKING #	
11	FOR AGES 65-79
14	FOR AGES 80+
81	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
52	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
1	💚 WELLNESS
115	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
25	🎓 EDUCATION
25	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
102	💻 EMPLOYMENT
269	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
81	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓ MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

### NAILED IT

#### Quality of life

- Walkable neighborhoods; few car crashes
- Low unemployment
- Easy financial transactions: many banks

#### Healthy community

- Strong record preventing obesity and diabetes
- Active population: many fitness centers
- Many primary-care physicians, physical therapists

#### Lots to do

- Tech-savvy older adults; high Internet usage
- Highly educated older population
- Many cultural amenities

### NEEDS WORK

#### Costly living

- Ultra-pricey housing market
- High income inequality; many reverse mortgages
- Expensive hospitals

#### Infrastructure for older adults

- Too few magnet hospitals
- Low transportation funding for older and disabled riders
- Meager funding for programs to enable independent aging

# CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, ILL.

Convenience characterizes Champaign-Urbana, with a well-used transit system and walkability that attracts many pedestrian commuters. Residents benefit from strong health services targeting older adults, as well as University of Illinois educational opportunities. This metro has above-average numbers of older workers, but employment growth is low and income inequality is significant.

12	
RANKING #	
12	FOR AGES 65-79
11	FOR AGES 80+
230	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
27	🏥 HEALTH CARE
92	💚 WELLNESS
25	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
8	🎓 EDUCATION
4	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
62	💻 EMPLOYMENT
138	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
47	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

**NAILED IT**

**Getting around**

- Strong use of public transportation
- Many walking commuters; low commute times

**Care for older adults**

- Many hospitals associated with medical schools
- Ample geriatric units and hospice care
- Affordable semiprivate nursing home rooms

**NEEDS WORK**

**Economic issues**

- Weak growth in health and leisure employment
- Low growth in incomes and small businesses
- High tax burden; wide income gap

**Living and aging**

- Too few continuing-care facilities
- Few five-star nursing homes
- Relatively expensive housing prices
- Poor air quality; too much fast food

# GAINESVILLE, FLA.

Gainesville is the only Florida metro on our Top 20 list, despite the state's reputation as a retirement paradise. Older people benefit from a quality health-care system, linked to University of Florida amenities, and plenty of services focused on that age group. Older workers find some opportunities in the service-driven job market, but stronger economic growth would improve the locale's employment picture.

13	
RANKING #	
16	FOR AGES 65-79
7	FOR AGES 80+
97	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
5	🏥 HEALTH CARE
59	💚 WELLNESS
76	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
13	🎓 EDUCATION
59	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
63	💻 EMPLOYMENT
207	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
234	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

**NAILED IT**

**Strong health care**

- Excellent access to primary-care clinicians
- Many orthopedic surgeons and physical therapy options
- All hospitals accredited by Joint Commission

**Outdoor enticements**

- Good weather and air quality
- Widely used public transit

**NEEDS WORK**

**Not a lot to do**

- Comparatively low education rates among older adults
- Few older adults employed
- Not enough libraries, cultural activities, or social organizations
- Low volunteerism among 65-plus population

**Age-friendliness issues**

- High median rental rates
- Lack of neighborhood walkability
- Little funding for older-adult programs
- High crime

## FARGO, N.D-MINN.

This upper Midwest metro with an entrepreneurial heritage boasts a stable economy. Low unemployment and high income growth help maintain its “Best Cities” position. Fargo endures a cold climate but receives government support for programs and services for older adults, while residents enjoy many cultural amenities and possess a philanthropic spirit.

14	
RANKING #	
15	FOR AGES 65-79
22	FOR AGES 80+
23	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
33	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
126	💚 WELLNESS
77	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
32	🎓 EDUCATION
55	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
61	💻 EMPLOYMENT
178	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
4	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Strong economy

- Low unemployment and strong job growth, especially in health and leisure
- Robust upward trend in incomes
- Many deposits relative to population in its many banks

#### Quality of life

- Low rates of car crashes; short commutes
- Fighting chronic disease: many nurses and primary-care clinicians; low diabetes rates
- Quality medical care; med-school affiliations
- Lots to do: many cultural amenities, libraries

### NEEDS WORK

#### Long-term services and supports

- Few people aging at home; not enough home-health providers
- High rates of Alzheimer's disease
- Expensive nursing homes and adult day care
- Too few highly rated nursing homes
- Not enough specialty care for older people

#### General livability

- Not enough grocery stores for healthy eating
- Inadequate funding for older-adult transit
- High income inequality

## MIDLAND, TEXAS

Midland has slipped a bit since “Best Cities” 2014, but despite the shifts in the Permian Basin’s oil industry,<sup>4</sup> it still enjoys the most vigorous employment growth among small metros, and its living costs are among the lowest. However, a middling health-care system, poor transportation services, and expensive living may give some older people pause.

15	
RANKING #	
14	FOR AGES 65-79
13	FOR AGES 80+
1	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
101	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
79	💚 WELLNESS
3	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
219	🎓 EDUCATION
150	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
33	💻 EMPLOYMENT
122	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
160	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Financial practicality

- Envious income growth and cost of living
- Many banks and high rates of deposits
- Thriving small businesses

#### Engaged population

- Tops for older-adult employment
- Many religious and civic organizations
- Good access to cultural amenities

### NEEDS WORK

#### Weak health services

- Poor-quality nursing homes
- Not enough primary-care physicians
- Insufficient continuing-care facilities
- Couch potatoes: low rates of physical activity

#### Infrastructure and amenities

- Few pedestrian commuters; poor public transit infrastructure
- Not enough libraries; low philanthropy rates
- Few grocery stores
- High levels of reverse mortgages

<sup>4</sup> Collier, Kiah, “Despite Oil Bust, Midland is Still Bustling,” The Texas Tribune, June 1, 2016. <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/06/01/midland-leaders-confident-bust-has-bottomed-out/>.

# STATE COLLEGE, PA.

An expanding economy and improved community engagement opportunities have strengthened State College’s “Best Cities” ranking. Penn State University’s stabilizing presence helped steady “Happy Valley” during the Depression and continues to bolster the economy today. Its walkable streets are a plus, but the lack of specialty medical services for older adults may deter some residents.

16	
RANKING #	
10	FOR AGES 65-79
30	FOR AGES 80+
30	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
125	🏥 HEALTH CARE
37	💚 WELLNESS
130	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
7	🎓 EDUCATION
6	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
12	💻 EMPLOYMENT
212	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
65	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

## NAILED IT

### Getting around, and safely

- Low crime rate
- High public transit use
- Walkable neighborhoods; many pedestrian commuters

### Education and employment

- Strong job growth in leisure and health care
- Low rates of unemployment in 65-plus population
- High enrollment in local colleges: highly educated older-adult population
- Small-business-friendly community

## NEEDS WORK

### Health-care gaps

- No geriatric facilities, hospices, or magnet hospitals
- Too few nurses
- Expensive hospital stays

### Costly housing

- Expensive nursing homes and assisted living
- Pricey housing and rentals
- Few adults aging at home

# CHEYENNE, WYO.

Cheyenne offsets the cold winds of the High Plains with strong quality of life. It leads the nation in small-business growth rates, and its residents remain financially stable despite a slow overall economy. Unemployment is high among older adults, but income inequality is moderate.

17	
RANKING #	
17	FOR AGES 65-79
19	FOR AGES 80+
18	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
50	🏥 HEALTH CARE
54	💚 WELLNESS
2	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
84	🎓 EDUCATION
160	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
128	💻 EMPLOYMENT
172	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
20	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR'S PLEDGE	

## NAILED IT

### Quality of life

- Abundant funding for older-adult programs
- Many caregivers
- Good air quality; few car crashes
- Commuter paradise: average 15 minutes to work

### Financial savvy

- Incomes include high proportion of capital gains
- Booming small-business sector
- Many banks per capita
- Low poverty rates among older adults

## NEEDS WORK

### Aging support lacking

- Not enough home-health providers
- Expensive assisted living and semiprivate nursing homes
- Too few continuing-care facilities, nursing home beds

### Infrastructure and activities

- Open seats: public transportation rarely used
- Too few things to do: not enough libraries, entertainment and recreation, social organizations
- Too few local grocery stores for healthful eating

## MORGANTOWN, W.V.

Strong medical services, including ample access to primary and specialty care, keep Morgantown on the Top 20 list. A personalized rapid-transit system using small rail cars, associated with West Virginia University, also sets it apart.<sup>5</sup> The downsides: the state's opioid epidemic along with Morgantown's unhealthy population, high unemployment, and manufacturing-heavy economy, which may contribute to the drug problem.<sup>6</sup>

18	
RANKING #	
21	FOR AGES 65-79
12	FOR AGES 80+
129	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
9	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
141	💚 WELLNESS
43	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
28	🎓 EDUCATION
29	🚗 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
92	💻 EMPLOYMENT
171	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
60	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Strong health services

- Making your bones: large number of orthopedic surgeons
- Ample primary-care clinicians; many home health-care providers
- Affordable hospitals with lots of beds
- Access to med school-affiliated and magnet hospitals

#### Going places

- High ridership on public transportation
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Strong funding of transportation for older and disabled riders

### NEEDS WORK

#### Population health

- Poor air quality
- Few fitness and outdoor recreation opportunities
- High rates of diabetes, obesity, and smoking
- Many cases of Alzheimer's and depression

#### Economic obstacles

- Many older adults unemployed or in poverty
- Manufacturing-heavy economy: slow growth
- Expensive housing for local income levels

<sup>5</sup> Palca, Joe, "A Revolution That Didn't Happen: Personal Rapid Transit," NPR, October 3, 2016. <http://www.npr.org/2016/10/03/494569967/a-revolution-that-didnt-happen-personal-rapid-transit>.

<sup>6</sup> Jacobs, Harrison, "Here's why the opioid epidemic is so bad in West Virginia – the state with the highest overdose rate in the US," Business Insider, May 1, 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/why-the-opioid-epidemic-is-so-bad-in-west-virginia-2016-4>.

## LUBBOCK, TEXAS

Lubbock's easy lifestyle includes affordable living costs, low unemployment, short commutes to work, and mild weather. This High Plains metro provides strong access to long-term supports and services for aging adults. Of concern: low wellness scores and lack of community engagement.

19	
RANKING #	
18	FOR AGES 65-79
9	FOR AGES 80+
22	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
38	👨‍⚕️ HEALTH CARE
133	💚 WELLNESS
81	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
52	🎓 EDUCATION
125	🚗 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
14	💻 EMPLOYMENT
6	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
210	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
✓	MAYOR'S PLEDGE

### NAILED IT

#### Affordability

- Low unemployment and strengthening job market
- Inexpensive living; comparatively low median house prices
- Highly affordable nursing homes and adult day-care centers

#### Access to care

- Many orthopedic surgeons, hospital beds, and rehab facilities
- Daily living assistance: ample home-health providers
- Good availability of continuing-care facilities

### NEEDS WORK

#### Chronic disease risk factors

- Too many fast food restaurants; too few grocery stores
- Comparatively short life expectancy
- High rates of smoking, binge drinking, and depression

#### Safety and activity

- High crime rate
- Low neighborhood walkability and few pedestrian commuters
- Sweat it: too few fitness and outdoor recreation centers

# BURLINGTON-SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT.

Home to Sen. Bernie Sanders as well as Ben & Jerry’s ice cream, Burlington has a politically progressive culture that includes transportation and health-care investment. It’s relatively remote—Canada is just up the road—but offers cultural amenities and intellectual stimulation for its educated population. Housing is costly, but this metro does well in services that help people age at home.

20	
RANKING #	
21	FOR AGES 65-79
41	FOR AGES 80+
196	★ GENERAL LIVABILITY
30	🏥 HEALTH CARE
17	💚 WELLNESS
136	💰 FINANCIAL SECURITY
48	🎓 EDUCATION
13	🚌 TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE
51	💼 EMPLOYMENT
274	🏠 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
8	🤝 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR’S PLEDGE	

## NAILED IT

### Healthy aging in place

- Many caregivers and primary-care doctors
- Low rates of diabetes and obesity
- Many fitness centers and outdoor recreation opportunities
- Many grocery stores

### Infrastructure and engagement

- Pedestrian commuting common
- Avid readers: many libraries
- Strong funding for older-adult programs
- Many older workers and philanthropists

## NEEDS WORK

### Narrow range of medical services

- No magnet hospitals
- Few rehabilitation and geriatric facilities
- Substantial distance to long-term hospital treatment

### Pricey living

- High tax burden; slow income growth
- Expensive housing and many reverse mortgages
- Long commutes



Airplane Motorcycle  
Bicycle  
Rocketship Skateboard  
Helicopter Scooter  
Bus Horse  
Submarine  
Boat





Programs With Purpose calls attention to the vast human resource that is our older generation. Too often, age bias and outdated attitudes obscure the worth and potential of older people.

# PROGRAMS WITH PURPOSE

**In addition to its age-friendly rankings, the 2017 “Best Cities for Successful Aging” report continues our practice of highlighting a sampling of programs that support purposeful, healthy aging and provide opportunities for older adults to engage in their communities. We include these Programs With Purpose in the hope of inspiring more such efforts and spurring funding and innovation to help older adults realize their potential for productivity and purpose. Our selections feature a range of activities, from using the power of the arts to challenge age stereotypes to mentoring programs, recreation, and encore career opportunities.**



Photo credit: 2012 © Stuart Kandell



Photo credit: Calvert Foundation and Matthew Daesmith



## STEM VOLUNTEERS

[seniorscientist.org](http://seniorscientist.org)

#STEM  
#intergenerational  
#givingback

Whether making parachutes, observing chicken embryos, or exploring the nature of black holes, schoolkids are learning from accomplished scientists—including many who have served in key government roles—thanks to the Senior Scientists and Engineers of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Started in 2004 in Montgomery County, Md., to make the most of expertise in the Washington, D.C., region, the program enlists scientists to volunteer in K-12 classrooms. The goal, in large part, is to interest students in building careers in the vital STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering, and math. In 2015, almost 200 volunteers participated in 10 school districts around the capital city, 80 percent of them retirees. Affiliate programs have popped up around the country. The AAAS program was inspired by volunteer efforts at Boston’s Northeastern University and at the San Joaquin County, Calif., Office of Education.

## STAGEBRIDGE

[stagebridge.org](http://stagebridge.org)

#intergenerational  
#storytelling  
#artsagainstageism

Dancing, singing, acting, storytelling—the Stagebridge theater company does it all. And this Oakland, Calif., group poses a dramatic contrast to the youth-centric world of Hollywood: its performances showcase the talents of older adults, toppling stereotypes by demonstrating their creativity and energy. Emphasizing lifelong participation, the nonprofit has offered a range of performing arts classes and workshops for adults age 50-plus for nearly four decades. It entertains some 25,000 people a year with song and dance, improv, and other talents at senior centers, hospitals, in community settings, and through special bookings. Thanks to Stagebridge’s intergenerational programming, vulnerable youth become storytellers themselves when performers visit their schools and teach them the craft.

## SENIOR CORPS

[nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps](http://nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps)

#ittakesavillage  
#dogoodfeelgood  
#livewithpurpose

The federal government’s Senior Corps harnesses older Americans’ well-documented desire to give back to their communities. A program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Senior Corps counts 270,000 volunteers age 55-plus in its three programs: Foster Grandparents, RSVP, and Senior Companions. The volunteers apply their experience and talents to a wide range of tasks. They tutor children with special needs, work on environmental and emergency response, renovate homes, help older people with their daily living necessities, mentor, teach, and contribute to other community projects. Volunteers receive guidance and training that help ensure they can contribute in ways that suit their talents, interests, and availability, and modest stipends are available to enable participation by low-income people. The benefits flow both ways, as volunteers feel enriched by their service. “It’s the best part of my life,” one said.

## TREEHOUSE FOUNDATION

[refca.net](http://refca.net)

#housing  
#ittakesavillage  
#adoptgrandparent

The Treehouse community, a planned neighborhood in Easthampton, Mass., offers a multigenerational win-win—anchoring foster children in families and a nurturing community, while providing adoptive parents and low-income older adults the same opportunity to belong. The 10-year-old project currently houses about 115 people, nearly half of them “elders” living in rental cottages. These honorary grandparents, some of them retired teachers, health professionals, and administrators, mentor and nurture Treehouse children and support the parents, whether through babysitting, tutoring, or seeing the kids to school. Built with the help of investors, donors, and grants, as well as state and federal housing tax credits, Treehouse has housed 61 children adopted from foster care and their families, enabling them to thrive in a caring community. Treehouse now is working to replicate the model in other cities.

## COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM FOR SENIORS

[capseniors.org](http://capseniors.org)

#culturalcompetency  
#citiesforchange  
#socialsupport

“People don’t come to city government to get help because they don’t even know we have so many senior programs available.” That’s the simple rationale behind the Community Ambassador Program for Seniors, says Asha Chandra of the Human Services Department in Fremont, Calif. Volunteers 50 and over are trained as “ambassadors” to educate their own diverse communities on those programs and resources. Fremont is among the nation’s most ethnically diverse cities, with more than half of its households speaking languages from Asia and elsewhere. The ambassadors work with faith-based and community organizations in group and individual settings, explaining services geared to older people and their families. Those resources range from transportation and long-term care options, Medicare, and mental health care to legal aid and immigration services. Launched with grant funding, the 9-year-old program now is city-funded. In 2015, 60 CAPS ambassadors aided 1,000 older adults.

## EXPERIENCE MATTERS

[experiencemattersaz.org](http://experiencemattersaz.org)

#dogoodfeelgood  
#purposefulaging  
#unretirement

Experience Matters has converted the motivation and skill of “retirees” into a marketplace of talent and opportunity. The Maricopa County, Ariz., organization maintains a roster of retiree volunteers who seek to give back. It has a registry of 494 nonprofit groups; when one needs a position filled, whether in a professional role or to provide personal assistance such as tutoring, Experience Matters connects the organization with qualified volunteers. “We take people with years of experience in their fields and help channel that talent to a nonprofit that needs those skills,” says spokeswoman Lisa Rolland-Keith. Since 2009, she says, Experience Matters has placed 656 volunteers who, instead of having a “traditional retirement,” want to be engaged in the community. The organization also offers workshops to help nonprofits understand older volunteers’ needs and abilities and help volunteers transition to the nonprofit workforce.

## THE INTERGENERATIONAL SCHOOLS

[tisonline.org](http://tisonline.org)  
 #lifelonglearning  
 #colearning  
 #intergenerational

A pioneering education model in Cleveland, the Intergenerational Schools center their curriculum on a “lifespan perspective,” recognizing the mutual benefit of interaction among children and older adults. The first of what became three public K-8 charter schools was founded by the wife-husband team of Catherine Whitehouse, a developmental psychologist, and Peter Whitehouse, a neurologist specializing in Alzheimer’s disease. Multiage classrooms accommodate each child’s learning pace, and older adults, including those with physical and cognitive limitations, volunteer as mentors and “co-learners,” with the schools deciding how to use their skills to work with students individually or in groups. In regular visits to assisted living facilities, children participate in theater, oral history, and other programs. “As we gain an older world,” Catherine Whitehouse says, “we have more people who need to stay connected to the younger generation and so many children who need those relationships and support.”

## AGE STRONG

[agestronginvest.org](http://agestronginvest.org)  
 #impactinvesting  
 #profitforpurpose  
 #everydollarcoun

Investing is not just for the rich, and investments can be about more than simply producing wealth. Age Strong facilitates “impact investing” with loans to enterprises and projects that bring affordable housing, healthy food, job training, and social engagement to low-income older adults. People with modest means can buy a stake in the success of these projects by investing as little as \$20. An initiative of the AARP Foundation, the Calvert Foundation, and Capital Impact Partners, Age Strong raises capital for its loans by selling community investment notes, a fixed-income product similar to a corporate bond that allows investors of all ages to support successful aging. Since launching in 2015, Age Strong has made \$12.5 million in loans to four enterprises, including grocery stores—improving access to healthy food—as well as homelike assisted living facilities and a health-services program.

## INTERGENERATION ORCHESTRA OF OMAHA

[igoomaha.org](http://igoomaha.org)  
 #artsagainstageism  
 #musicforallages  
 #intergenerational

The language of music knows no age barriers, and the Intergeneration Orchestra of Omaha has been proving it for 32 concert seasons. The orchestra has featured musicians over 90 and as young as 11, ensuring a cross-generational mix by requiring that members be under age 25 or over 50. From the percussion section to the strings, friendships grow and learning takes hold as children and parents play side by side and youngsters starting their musical journeys play alongside accomplished veterans. Concert offerings range from Latin sounds to TV-show themes, led by longtime conductor Chuck Penington. Founded with a Peter Kiewit Foundation grant, the orchestra relies on donations, ticket sales, and modest member fees. Violinist Melissa Holtmeier played before she turned 25 and vows to return at 50. “I can think of nothing better to bridge the generation gap,” she says.

## AUSTINUP

[austinup.org](http://austinup.org)

#citiesforchange  
#breakingdownsilos  
#agehasvalue

In a Texas city with one of the nation's fastest-growing older-adult populations, AustinUP is helping to build a broad age-friendly agenda. Since its 2014 formation as an alliance of public- and private-sector stakeholders, stemming from a mayor's task-force recommendation, it has been a key partner in shepherding a new city plan to improve life for older residents. AustinUP convenes focus groups on older adults' concerns and informational meetings about healthy living, mindfulness, aging and technology, age-friendly neighborhoods, and the longevity-driven consumer market. One focus group on LGBT issues spurred the creation of the Austin LGBT Elders Coalition. AustinUP's 2016 job and volunteer fair for older people drew dozens of employers from the civic, nonprofit, and business sectors, including prominent retailers. Many of the nearly 400 attendees filled out job applications on the spot.

## CHAI VILLAGE LA

[chavillagela.org](http://chavillagela.org)

#virtualvillage  
#faithbasedcommunity  
#aginginplace

ChaiVillageLA adds a faith-based focus to the growing "village" concept of supportive communities for independent aging. ChaiVillageLA is a multigenerational membership network that includes older adults as well as families on Los Angeles' Westside. Launched in 2016 by and for congregants of Temple Emanuel and Temple Isaiah with assistance from a Jewish Community Foundation grant, it takes inspiration from the Hebrew word *chai*, meaning "life," and focuses on providing resources, services, and companionship to aging adults. All members are expected to volunteer for activities like driving other members to medical appointments, helping with household chores, cooking for the sick, and working on village committees. Social and educational programming for all ages includes walking groups, exercise and cultural trips, book clubs and dances, Shabbat dinners and Jewish holiday celebrations.

## ALZHEIMER'S CAFÉS

[alzheimerscafe.com](http://alzheimerscafe.com)

#dementia  
#caregiving  
#companyofothers

Jytte Lokvig, a former art teacher, noticed that Alzheimer's patients lit up when they saw her working on collages with her friend, a resident in a Santa Fe assisted-living home. Soon they all were making art when Lokvig came. Recognizing their need for uplifting interaction that didn't focus on their dementia, Lokvig turned to the Internet. She found the Alzheimer's Café movement in Holland, where memory-loss sufferers and their caregivers would meet up with others in a relaxed setting and at little cost. In 2008, Lokvig launched a replica in Santa Fe, and participants now meet monthly in the city's children's museum. She knows of at least 200 "cafés" that have opened nationwide in community centers, eateries, libraries, and other settings. The gatherings allow dementia sufferers and caregivers to socialize in a nonjudgmental atmosphere, with singalongs, speakers, and other activities.

# INITIATIVES FOR INNOVATION

**As the older population grows, so do opportunities to develop products and services that enhance successful aging in our homes and communities. The results may satisfy a market want and meet a social need, generating a profit as well as a solution. With shifting demographics expanding the world's store of knowledge and experience, older adults themselves are becoming a source of these contributions. Here we highlight examples of incentive programs that spur innovators and entrepreneurs of all ages to realize the potential of aging lives.**



## THE EISNER PRIZE

[eisnerfoundation.org/the-eisner-prize](http://eisnerfoundation.org/the-eisner-prize)

The Eisner Foundation has shifted its grant-making to focus solely on intergenerational efforts. It sponsors the Eisner Prize for programs that demonstrate leadership and excellence in uniting generations, particularly older adults and youth, for positive, lasting change in their communities. The \$100,000 awards, started in 2011, go to individuals or nonprofit groups that further these goals.



## AGING2.0 GLOBAL STARTUP SEARCH

[aging2.com/global-startup-search](http://aging2.com/global-startup-search)

Startup firms that focus on improving quality of life for older adults, supporting caregivers, or transforming the aging services industry advocate for their products in the Global Startup Search. Winners advance to an online voting round that, along with expert judges, determines finalists for a pitch competition at the annual Aging2.0 Optimize conference. The winner receives a \$2,500 cash award.





## AARP PURPOSE PRIZE

[aarp.org/purposeprize](http://aarp.org/purposeprize)

Launched by Encore.org in 2006 and now under the AARP umbrella, the Purpose Prize rewards older adults who become agents of social change. Recognizing the creativity and innovation of those who combine their passion and experience for good, the Purpose Prize has awarded \$5 million to more than 500 winners and fellows who work in paid or volunteer capacities.



## AARP INNOVATION@50+ LIVE PITCH

[health50.org](http://health50.org)

AARP's two-day pitch competition features startup companies focused on innovations in the 50-plus market. Finalists selected from hundreds of applicants discuss their ideas before expert judges and potential customers, benefiting from real-time feedback and exposure to potential investors. The competitions have spurred the acquisition of four companies and investments totaling more than \$80 million.



## THE ENCORE PRIZE

[encore.org](http://encore.org)

Building on its successful 2016 Fast Pitch competition, Encore.org seeks to overcome an "innovation gap" between the world's longevity gains and the social change that could enable older people to make the most of these added years. The group will host a three-month accelerator for social entrepreneurs to refine their ideas on engaging older people in helping younger people thrive. Eight accelerator finalists will compete for more than \$100,000 in prizes, presenting their plans to judges and an audience that includes potential funders.



## STANFORD CENTER ON LONGEVITY DESIGN CHALLENGE

[designchallenge.stanford.edu](http://designchallenge.stanford.edu)

The 2016-2017 Stanford Center on Longevity Design Challenge highlights designs that improve quality of life for people aging in place. Student designers from universities around the world compete for \$30,000 in cash prizes and entrepreneurial mentoring in a tournament focused on products and services that optimize long life. Finalists present their designs at Stanford University to leaders in industry, academia, and government.



Across the nation, civic leaders are stepping up with age-friendly initiatives, from street improvements to round-the-clock transportation options for older adults.

# MAYOR'S PLEDGE

**Mayors across the United States are embracing a new vision of population aging in which all people contribute to the vitality and productivity of their communities. The Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging created the Mayor's Pledge in 2014 to encourage local leaders to join the movement for purposeful, healthy aging and create cities that are livable for all. We issue the challenge again with this report.**

Our Mayor's Pledge initiative seeks to raise awareness about the needs of older adults as well as the human capital they represent, a resource that can be tapped to improve their own locales and the world. By elevating successful aging as a mayoral priority, we underscore the opportunity facing cities as their populations grow older. We urge mayors to embrace this demographic shift in decisions on planning, infrastructure, and services.

Mayors and other urban leaders already are heeding the call—and producing results. Led by a pledging mayor and his colleagues on the County Board of Supervisors, Purposeful Aging Los Angeles prioritizes age-friendly policies across the nation's most populous region. The mayor of Iowa City was featured at the once-a-decade White House Conference on Aging in 2015 in recognition of his forward-thinking leadership. Other pledging mayors are deeply involved in advancing initiatives to promote successful aging: building gathering places and housing for older adults, creating public spaces for all residents

to enjoy, establishing intergenerational mentorship programs, and bringing together disparate groups that serve the needs of older people. Many have joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

We encourage these and other efforts to improve aging lives and strengthen communities, whether inspired by the Mayor's Pledge or calls from the grassroots. We also celebrate the broader institutional efforts that are fueling the movement. Among these, the U.S. Conference of Mayors established an Aging Task Force in October 2015 and is now partnering with AARP, and the National League of Cities is integrating aging issues into its educational programming.

With wider awareness and vigorous leadership, we can help our cities work better for older adults, and in the process improve livability and well-being for all who call them home.



TO SEE WHO HAS SIGNED THE  
MAYOR'S PLEDGE, VISIT  
[SUCCESSFULAGING.MILKEN  
INSTITUTE.ORG/MAYORS-PLEDGE](https://SUCCESSFULAGING.MILKENINSTITUTE.ORG/MAYORS-PLEDGE)

PLEASE JOIN THE  
CONVERSATION ON SOCIAL  
MEDIA: [#MAYORSPLEDGE](https://twitter.com/MAYORSPLEDGE)





Dear Mayor:

As members of the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging's Advisory Board, we're asking for your pledge to improve lives in your community. In cities across America and the world, a massive demographic shift poses unique challenges and offers unprecedented opportunities. We share the Center's goal: to make our cities work better for older residents and young people as well. Change is needed, and mayors stand at the forefront. In 2012, the Milken Institute, a nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank, first issued its groundbreaking, data-based Best Cities for Successful Aging report. In conjunction with the publication of the second edition in 2014, the Institute called upon mayors across the nation to sign the Mayor's Pledge. With the release of the third edition of Best Cities, the Institute will again publicly recognize mayors who are leading the way and demonstrating their commitment to positive change by signing the Mayor's Pledge.

Best Cities for Successful Aging measures, compares and ranks U.S. metropolitan areas for their capacity to enable successful aging. Its methodology makes use of publicly available data on health care, wellness, living arrangements, transportation and convenience, financial security, employment, educational opportunities and community engagement.

Best Cities has received extraordinary attention from national and local media, public and private sector leaders and a wide range of other stakeholders. Regularly cited in major outlets such as PBS NewsHour, Forbes, Money, CBS, NBC, CNN, USA Today, Yahoo, Next Avenue, and the New York Times, the report has been called "a valuable resource for Americans" by the Wall Street Journal. We expect even greater visibility upon the release of the third edition.

The Center is not alone in seeking progress on this issue. Recognizing the power of cities to change the landscape, the age-friendly networks of the World Health Organization and AARP aim to transform communities as they prepare for an aging population. Both nationally and globally, cities are in the spotlight. In its July 2016 double issue, "240 Reasons to Celebrate America Right Now," Time magazine referenced the Mayor's Pledge and highlighted "Cities that embrace all generations" as a reason to celebrate.

Beyond making our cities work for an aging population, older adults should have the opportunity to work for our cities. Older residents improve the lives of all generations through volunteer activity and encore careers across the government, nonprofit and private sectors. We respectfully ask you to sign the Mayor's Pledge, and we look forward to celebrating your commitment to making your city an even better place to live and age successfully.

Thank you.

**The Advisory Board**  
Center for the Future of Aging

# I PLEDGE...

## TO MAKE OUR CITY WORK FOR OLDER ADULTS, I WILL TAKE STEPS TO:

**Ensure that the well-being of our aging population is addressed by each department, agency and division in our city government.**

**Make our city safe, affordable and comfortable for our older residents.**

**Provide older adults access to resources promoting health and wellness.**

**Support employment, entrepreneurship, education and other services to make our older residents more financially secure.**

**Offer housing options that suit the varied needs of our older population.**

**Improve access to transportation and mobility options for our older adults.**

## TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS TO WORK FOR OUR CITY, I WILL:

**Promote the engagement of older residents in volunteer and paid roles that serve the needs of our city and its residents.**

**Call upon higher education and workforce development programs to help older adults refresh their skills, train, and transition to a new stage of work focused on strengthening our city.**

**Recognize older residents as an asset for our city and celebrate their contributions to improving lives for all generations.**



“

Well-designed, livable communities promote health and sustain economic growth, and they make for happier, healthier residents — of all ages.

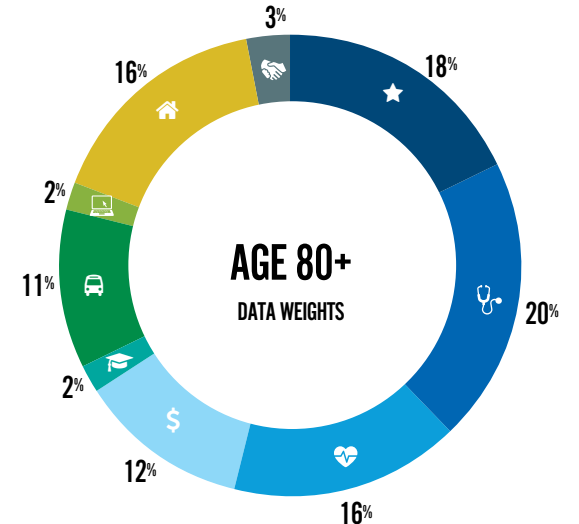
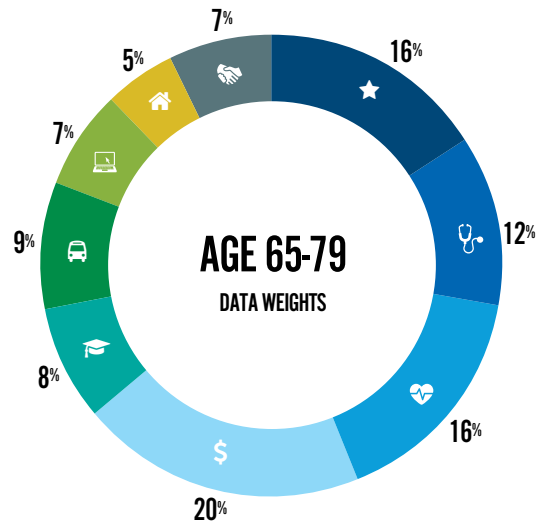
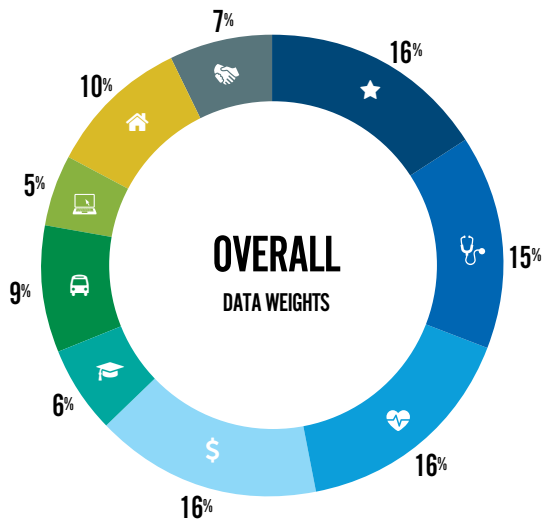
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AARP




# METHODOLOGY

**The United States is rapidly changing in terms of demographics, technology, values, and ideals. With each iteration of the “Best Cities for Successful Aging” report, we update our index and data to reflect the evolving needs, priorities, and interests of the U.S. population. “Best Cities” seeks to identify age-friendly metropolitan areas through measurable data, showcase innovative programs, and increase the reach and relevance of the study. The 2017 index is similar to our 2012 and 2014 reports, but we have refined our ranking methodology, using current research and the expertise of the Milken Institute and the Center for the Future of Aging Advisory Board. Due to changes in index methodology and the changing availability of public data, we recommend caution in comparing the 2017 index to earlier versions.**





-  GENERAL LIVABILITY
-  HEALTH CARE
-  WELLNESS

-  FINANCIAL SECURITY
-  EDUCATION
-  TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE

-  EMPLOYMENT
-  LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
-  COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The 2017 “Best Cities for Successful Aging” rankings are based on our analysis of data reflecting characteristics of metropolitan statistical regions across the country in nine categories: general livability, health care, wellness, finances, living arrangements, employment, education, transportation and convenience, and community engagement. In a departure from the 2014 report, we have evaluated employment and education factors separately rather than as one category. Each category contains multiple indicators, with our 2017 rankings based on 83 indicators in all. The following provides detail on the indicators, methodology, and weights we used.

### Included Metros

The 2017 BCSA index includes 381 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs or metros). Metros are geographic regions, defined by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), that are economically and socially integrated with a core urban area. They often are denoted by their largest city or cities, e.g. “Jacksonville, Fla.,” or “Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, Mich.,” and consist of one or more counties. This report uses OMB’s 2013 metro delineations, which are based on the 2010 U.S. Census. We were able to increase the number of examined metros from 352 in 2014 to 381 in 2017 based on increased data quality and availability. We did not include metros in Puerto Rico or the Enid, Okla., metro due to insufficient data.

Metros were categorized as large or small based on 2014 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau: the 100 with the largest population were deemed “large metros,” and the rest “small metros.” These categories are compared separately; we name a top large and top small metro in each new report. Two metros have changed categories since 2014: Spokane-Spokane Valley, Wash., moving from the large to the small classification, and Durham-Chapel Hill, N.C., from the small to the large category. All newly included metros are small metros.

### Data Creation and Resolving Data Issues

Our ranking criteria and indicators were identified through examination of peer-reviewed research, other relevant research and reports, news articles, and expert interviews. The indicators reflect age-friendly characteristics and priorities cited by these sources that can be measured and reported on through publicly available data. Some relevant data points were not widely available from public-use data sources and could not be included in the index.

Some indicators derive from data only measuring the 65+ population. Others examine regional characteristics that are relevant to the broader population, in recognition that many older adults seek to age with their families and in their longtime residential communities.

**New Variables** The BCSA index is a dynamic project that reflects ongoing research, newly available data, and the evolution in public preferences about what makes a convenient, livable, and age-friendly city. Technology is broadly integrated into our society, more people migrate toward city centers, and the costs of health and wellness are a growing national concern.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, we included new indicators that increase the relevance of our 2017 report, including: one measuring technology use by looking at Internet access among older adults, Walk Score® ([www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)) data to examine walkability and neighborhood convenience, and measurements of nurse practitioner and physicians’ assistant numbers to reflect the changing delivery of health care.

**Data Manipulation** The data analyzed in this index was often available from the source at the metro level, which could be used as-is. When only county-level data was available for the indicators, we aggregated it to the MSA level. Similarly where state-level data was the available resource—for example, per-capita tax burden data is gathered at the state level—we assign each metro the statewide value, aggregating accordingly when metros encompass more than one state.

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# 381

Number of  
metropolitan  
statistical areas  
included in the  
2017 BCSA index.

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Data is converted into scores that are relative to the best performer for each indicator. Scores for each data point for each metro are available on our website. These scores are sorted from best to worst.

**Missing Data** BCSA data is primarily obtained from free, public-use data sets administered by government agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Census Bureau, FBI, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, some of it obtained through Moody's Analytics. Some data sets are incomplete, and estimates for the same indicator may vary across data sources. To address the issue of missing data, some indicators are used for only the large metros. In other cases, proxy measures represent the missing data. Proxy data was calculated by considering state-level data, data from neighboring counties or metros, examination of alternate data sources or years, or trends of the indicator in question.

### **Weights for the Composite Index**

To create the final rankings, each variable is weighted and aggregated into a composite index. The "Best Cities for Successful Aging" index uses a combination of factor analysis and expert insight to determine the weights. Factor analysis is a statistical technique that examines numerical relationships between variables. Results from the factor analysis are combined with insights from experts in the aging field to inform an optimal weighting method. Weights were developed for the indicators that make up each category and for the nine categories that make up the composite index. While similar, the weights have changed since the 2014 report. These changes reflect changes in demographics, infrastructure, and societal values as well as changes in the structure of the index and included indicators.

Each category in this report contains a number of indicators that are combined to yield a category score using the aforementioned weights. The category scores are combined based on category weights to provide an overall score and rank. Recognizing that older adults are not a monolithic group, and may have different needs and desires as they age, we created three category weighting scenarios: overall data weights, data weights for older adults 65-79, and data weights for older adults 80+.

### **Using the Index**

We received a great deal of interest and feedback on our previous reports. We are particularly pleased to see individuals using the ranks to inform decision-making on where to live, or organizations and communities using the report as a framework to increase the age-friendliness of their cities.

For those using this report as a framework for programs to improve the age-friendliness of their communities, we note that many proposed indicators that would be relevant to the index were not consistently available for all included metros. At the same time, many variables worth examining are available on a local level that could provide more specific insight into improving the age-friendliness of a specific region.

For individuals using the report to guide decision-making on where to live, we recognize that in our diverse society, priorities for successful aging vary among families and communities, and justify differing category and indicator weights than what we have assigned. This report uses a quantitative method called factor analysis, along with expert insight, to identify the overall weights.



## GENERAL LIVABILITY

We know that Americans overwhelmingly want to age in their own homes and communities,<sup>2</sup> and a place that is good for older adults is good for people of all ages. Americans value certain general characteristics in their home regions, such as affordable cost of living, safety, and good weather. While these qualities may also pertain to our other categories (for example, employment growth may also pertain to the financial health of a region), we include them in the general category as overall quality-of-life and livability indicators.

The percentage of older adults with Internet access is a new variable that we include in the general indicator category, based on the increasing presence of technology in our society. The Internet can facilitate communication and reduce social isolation; computer literacy is a requirement for many jobs; and degrees can now be earned online. Because of its wide relevance, it is in the general category.

<sup>2</sup> Harrell, R., Lynott, J., and Guzman, S., "What is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults," AARP Public Policy Institute, 2014.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Cost of living</b>	Median housing price/per capita personal income, † <i>Data sources: National Association of Realtors, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Moody's Analytics</i>	2013	0.194	0.188
<b>Crime rate</b>	Violent and property crimes per 100,000 population, † <i>Data sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Illinois State Police Department</i>	2014	0.127	0.127
<b>Internet access</b>	Percent of older adults with Internet access, ‡ <i>Data sources: Census Bureau</i>	2012	0.119	0.068
<b>Employment growth</b>	Indexed growth (2010-2015), ‡ <i>Data sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Moody's Analytics</i>	2010; 2015	0.124	0.121
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	† <i>Data sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Moody's Analytics</i>	2015	0.079	0.108
<b>Income distribution</b>	Gini coefficient, † <i>Data sources: Census Bureau, Moody's Analytics</i>	2014	0.049	0.051
<b>Weather</b>	Composite score using heating degree days, cooling degree days, humidity, sunshine, and precipitation, ‡ <i>Data sources: Department of Energy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Milken Institute</i>	2011	0.289	0.258
<b>Fatal car crashes</b>	Number of crashes involving a fatality, per capita, † <i>Data source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</i>	2014	0.097	0.079

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.



## HEALTH CARE

In light of growing costs and a shifting legislative landscape, health care is an increasingly common concern among older adults. For optimal effectiveness, health care should be accessible, timely, affordable, and high quality.<sup>3</sup> This “Best Cities” report examines each metro for such characteristics.

We include a new indicator in 2017 to reflect numbers of nurse practitioners and physicians’ assistants, recognizing that in regions without a sufficient primary-care workforce, these professionals increasingly shoulder the responsibility to provide basic services that are key in combatting the growing burden of chronic illness.

We also look at access to aging-related health services, including availability of hospitals, rehabilitation services, hospice, and Alzheimer’s units. We moved the Medicare enrollment indicator to this category from the wellness category as it also examines access to care.

Availability of providers and medical centers is only part of the equation. Care also must be high-quality and cost-effective to produce positive health outcomes. The “Best Cities” index looks at quality by recording hospital Joint Commission accreditation and magnet designation, two national recognitions for excellence. We also examine emergency-room wait times and expenditures per inpatient stay to ensure inefficiencies or expenses do not compromise access.

<sup>3</sup> Radley, D. C. and Schoen, C., “Geographic variation in access to care—the relationship with quality,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 367(1) (2012): 3-6.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Medicare enrollment</b>	Percent enrolled of eligible population 65+, ‡ <i>Data sources: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</i>	2012	0.053	0.076
<b>Primary-care physicians</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.105	0.107
<b>Nurse practitioners and physicians' assistants</b>	Normalized composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2012	0.060	0.057
<b>Nurses</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, ‡ <i>Data sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Milken Institute</i>	2012	0.081	0.033
<b>Hospital beds</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.072	0.100
<b>Long-term hospitals</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.028	0.027
<b>Hospital with geriatric services</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.077	0.077
<b>Hospitals with rehabilitation services</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.057	0.060
<b>Hospitals with Alzheimer's units</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.042	0.033
<b>Hospitals with hospice services</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.037	0.037
<b>Orthopedic surgeons</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2013	0.037	0.042
<b>Dialysis centers</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, NAICS code 621492, ‡ <i>Data sources: Census Bureau, city websites</i>	2014	0.054	—
<b>Medical and diagnostic centers</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, NAICS code 6215 (Includes X-ray, MRI, and ultrasound imaging), ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.035	0.046
<b>Physical therapists</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2015	0.039	0.063
<b>Expenses per inpatient day</b>	Average expenses per inpatient day divided by U.S. value (state-level data), † <i>Data source: Kaiser Family Foundation</i>	2014	0.051	0.064
<b>Joint Commission accreditation</b>	Percent of hospitals, ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.041	0.043
<b>Medical school affiliation</b>	Percent of hospitals, ‡ <i>Data source: Department of Health and Human Services</i>	2012	0.046	0.049
<b>Magnet hospitals</b>	Percent of hospitals, ‡ <i>Data source: American Nurses Credentialing Center</i>	2015	0.043	0.037
<b>ER wait time</b>	Average time spent before being seen by a health-care professional, divided by U.S. value † <i>Data sources: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Milken Institute</i>	2014	0.042	0.050

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.


**WELLNESS**

A healthy lifestyle is important to maintaining high quality of life, especially for older adults. Geography can work to promote or hinder healthy behaviors such as exercising regularly, reducing junk food consumption, and limiting alcohol and cigarette use, the first steps in preventing onset and progression of disease and enhancing overall well-being. Research suggests that a social support system surrounding healthful behaviors—and social support like that provided by caregivers—can lead to healthier aging.<sup>4</sup>

Neighborhoods with numerous fitness centers or golf courses can inspire a healthy lifestyle, while an abundance of fast food restaurants can encourage the opposite. Recognizing that environment correlates to illness such as obesity and diabetes, we included such regional factors in our analysis of wellness.

Lifestyle-related health outcomes also are part of this category. We recognize that we did not include every factor driving disparities in health, such as income inequality. We looked at rates of obesity, diabetes, falls, and mental distress, common health problems affecting older adults. We also examined life expectancy. The report's health-care category quantifies access to and quality of medical services, while this category examines the health and wellness of the population.

Data for indicators about health risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, smoking, falls, mental distress, and sugary drink consumption were calculated directly from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey data file. Some variables changed from the 2014 report, which also used data points from CDC sources based on BRFSS but they were calculated using different statistical techniques. Additionally, availability of data for each location changes from year to year based on sampling technique.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Obesity rate</b>	Percent with body mass index greater than 35, † <i>Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2012	0.098	0.107
<b>Smoking rate</b>	Percent current smokers, † <i>Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2012	0.092	0.053
<b>Diabetes rate</b>	† <i>Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2012	0.068	0.076
<b>Binge drinking</b>	Per capita, † <i>Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2012	0.068	0.056
<b>Alzheimer's cases</b>	Per population 65+, † <i>Data sources: Alzheimer's Association, Milken Institute</i>	2016	0.056	0.104
<b>Caregivers</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, ‡ <i>Data sources: AARP</i>	20143	0.066	0.118
<b>Life expectancy at 65</b>	‡ <i>Data sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Milken Institute</i>	2014	0.073	0.120
<b>Depression</b>	Percent of Medicare population, † <i>Data source: Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services</i>	2012	0.039	0.041
<b>Physical activity</b>	Percent of population 65+ with no leisure time physical activity, † <i>Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2012	0.084	0.101
<b>Fitness and recreational sports centers</b>	Per capita, NAICS code: 71394, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.087	0.047
<b>Fast-food outlets</b>	Per capita, † <i>Data source: Department of Agriculture</i>	2014	0.059	0.059
<b>Golf courses, ski resorts</b>	Normalized by composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, NAICS codes: 71391, 71392, 71393, 71395, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.040	0.045
<b>Falls with injury</b>	Percent of population 65+ with falls resulting in injury, † <i>Data sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2012	0.030	--
<b>Air quality</b>	Average daily particulate matter 2.5 levels, † <i>Data sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>	2011	0.030	0.074

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.



## FINANCIAL SECURITY

With costs of health care, housing, and social services escalating, financial security is a growing concern for older individuals. We replicated the financial indicators in our 2014 report to provide the most comprehensive estimate of the financial environment for each metro.

The financial category includes the metros' numbers of banks and financial institutions since ready access to these institutions may facilitate strategic money management. Increased bank deposits and capital gains as well as low levels of poverty signify the financial health of individuals in a community.

Growth rates of small businesses and income also are part of this category, since business climate is tied to work opportunities and, thus, personal finances. Similarly, we examined tax burden to incorporate the impact of state and local taxes on older adults' financial burden in this category.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Banks and financial institutions</b>	Per capita, NAICS codes: 522 and 523, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.051	0.052
<b>Total bank deposits</b>	Per capita, divided by corresponding U.S. value, ‡ <i>Data source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.</i>	2015	0.068	0.060
<b>Tax burden</b>	State and local taxes paid, per capita (state-level data); divided by corresponding U.S. value, † <i>Data Source: Tax Foundation</i>	2012	0.140	0.174
<b>Dependency ratio</b>	Population (<18 and 65+) divided by population 18-64, † <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.069	0.076
<b>Small business growth</b>	Indexed growth of number of businesses (50 employees), divided by corresponding U.S. value, ‡ <i>Data sources: Census Bureau, Moody's Analytics</i>	2009; 2014	0.208	0.163
<b>Older adults below poverty line</b>	Percent of 65+ population living below poverty line, † <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.077	0.075
<b>Capital gains</b>	Net capital gains divided by adjusted gross income (state-level data), † <i>Data source: Internal Revenue Service</i>	2013	0.147	0.105
<b>Income growth</b>	Indexed income growth (2005-2010), divided corresponding U.S. value, † <i>Data sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Moody's Analytics</i>	2009; 2014	0.118	0.144
<b>Reverse mortgages</b>	Initial principal limits/population 65+, divided by corresponding U.S. value. 3-month averages (January-March), † <i>Data sources: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Milken Institute</i>	2015	0.122	0.150

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.



## EDUCATION

The 2017 “Best Cities” index contains a new education category that had been a subset variable in the Employment/Education section of our 2014 report. As technology changes the working landscape, access to education can help older adults stay current, whether to remain in their careers, pursue encore careers, or learn for pleasure. Distance learning is increasingly accessible, but nearby universities and community colleges can provide a wider variety of classes while fostering a sense of community and interaction with people of diverse ages and backgrounds. Attitudes toward education can affect a community’s investment in this service, as well as an individual’s likelihood to utilize this resource. The “Best Cities” index uses educational attainment of older adults as well as college enrollment per capita to quantify these attitudes.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Educational attainment</b>	Percent 65+ with high school degree, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.261	0.550
<b>College enrollment</b>	Per capita, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.254	0.450
<b>Number of community colleges</b>	Per capita, ‡ <i>Data sources: Census Bureau, city websites</i>	2014	0.284	--
<b>Number of universities</b>	Per capita, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.201	--

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.





## TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENCE

Transportation and convenience are key factors in the livability of a community, and barriers to transportation are barriers to needed goods and services, from food to health care. To maintain lifestyles, independence, and social interactions, older adults must be mobile.

Access to amenities such as grocery stores, schools, and recreation can improve health and wellness. The USDA no longer publishes data on percent of older adults near a grocery store to assess the existence of food deserts. We have updated the BCSA index to look at grocery stores per capita, excluding convenience stores because they are not associated with livability and community health.<sup>5</sup> The transportation and convenience category also includes a new variable, the Walk Score,<sup>6</sup> a popular metric of walkability. We also capture the average commute time for pedestrians as another way to assess the transit infrastructure and urban design of a community.

A well-designed community that facilitates mobility enables aging adults to live independently longer. To identify metros with effective public transportation, we include indicators on mean fares for public transport, investment in public transport for older adults, special needs transportation, and number of passenger trips.

5 Morland, K. et al., "Supermarkets, Other Food Stores, and Obesity: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 30(4) (2006):333-339.

6 Data provided by Redfin Real Estate, [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com).

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Walk Score®</b>	Average Walk Score for principal cities, ‡ <i>Data source: www.walkscore.com, data provided by Redfin Real Estate</i>	2016	0.232	0.215
<b>Commute times</b>	Average commute time to work, † <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.125	0.154
<b>Commuters who walk to work</b>	Percent of commuters who walk to work, † <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.124	0.125
<b>Number of passenger trips</b>	Composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, ‡ <i>Data sources: American Public Transportation Association, Milken Institute</i>	2014	0.213	0.182
<b>Public transport fare*</b>	Mean discounted fare for older adults or disabled, † <i>Data sources: American Public Transportation Association, city websites</i>	2015	0.055	--
<b>Investment in public transportation for older adults</b>	Section 5310 spending per 65+ population, divided by corresponding U.S. value, ‡ <i>Data sources: Federal Transit Administration, Census Bureau</i>	2016	0.054	0.104
<b>Grocery stores</b>	<i>Per capita, NAICS codes: 4451</i> <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.136	0.221
<b>Special needs transportation</b>	<i>Composite score from average per capita and per population 65+ calculations, NAICS code: 485991, ‡</i> <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.061	--

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.



## EMPLOYMENT

Older adults increasingly postpone or forego a traditional retirement, some embarking on encore careers. Such decisions could arise from financial necessity or a desire for purpose in life. In addition to financial benefits, work can have positive impacts on health, wellness, and community engagement. We separated the employment and education categories that were combined in the 2014 report to emphasize the importance of these factors on wellness and quality of life, and to expand on the opportunities such activities provide communities.

Older adults can provide wisdom and institutional knowledge to a workplace. The benefits of intergenerational relationships are widely accepted and are facilitated in locales that provide significant opportunity and employment for older adults. Additionally, regions that have high employment growth can accommodate a growing workforce of all ages. We measured specific industries for growth—health, education, leisure, and hospitality—due to their relevance to the lives of older adults.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Percent of 65+ employed</b>	Divided by corresponding U.S. value, ‡ <i>Data sources: Census Bureau, Moody's Analytics, Milken Institute</i>	2014	0.273	0.299
<b>65+ unemployment rate</b>	† <i>Data sources: Census Bureau, Moody's Analytics, Milken Institute</i>	2014	0.217	0.237
<b>Employment growth</b>	Indexed growth of health, education, leisure, and hospitality, 2007-2012, divided by corresponding U.S. value, NAICS codes: 61, 62, 71, ‡ <i>Data sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Moody's Analytics</i>	2009; 2014	0.225	0.217
<b>Output of service sector/manufacturing</b>	Divided by corresponding U.S. value, ‡ <i>Data sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Moody's Analytics</i>	2015	0.285	0.247

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.



## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Most older adults want to “age in place,” maintaining their home-community social support systems and avoiding unnecessary use of nursing homes. As part of this category, we include indicators that quantify the percent of households with older adults and the percentage of older adults aging in place. With cost also playing a large role in determining where to live, we measure availability of affordable housing as a crucial element of a city’s livability.

As individuals age, some require more support with activities of daily living, such as eating or bathing. While many rely on family caregivers, some require assistance by home health-care service providers or adult day services to continue living in their own homes. Some need nursing-home care or other around-the-clock support. While an increasing number of people require some sort of support with activities of daily living, this care is unaffordable to many. For those who do not qualify for Medicaid, such care is not covered by insurance and must be paid out of pocket.

Access to a range of affordable long-term supports and services can improve quality of life for older adults, family, and caregivers. Our 2017 BCSA report uses the same indicators as the 2014 report, but the sources for some of these indicators have changed, which may alter scores and ranks. Number of nursing beds is now calculated using data from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services instead of the Kaiser Family Foundation. Previous data on cost of semiprivate nursing rooms, assisted living, and adult day services is from the Metlife Mature Market Institute, while the new data is obtained from a similar survey by Genworth.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Median house price</b>	Divided by corresponding U.S. value, † <i>Data sources: National Association of Realtors, Moody's Analytics</i>	2013	0.131	0.141
<b>Median rental price</b>	Divided by corresponding U.S. value, † <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.162	0.168
<b>Households with older adults</b>	Percent of households with residents 65+, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.060	0.053
<b>Older adults in family homes</b>	Percent of population 65+ living in family households, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.078	0.040
<b>Nursing beds</b>	Per population 65+, ‡ <i>Data source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</i>	2016	0.044	0.082
<b>Cost of semiprivate nursing room</b>	Average daily cost divided by corresponding U.S. value (state-level data), † <i>Data source: Genworth</i>	2015	0.159	0.141
<b>Home health-care service providers</b>	Per population 65+, NAICS code: 6216, ‡ <i>Data sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Moody's Analytics</i>	2014	0.095	0.098
<b>Cost of adult day services</b>	Average daily cost, divided by corresponding U.S. value (state-level data), † <i>Data source: Genworth</i>	2015	0.052	0.069
<b>Continuing-care facilities</b>	Number of facilities per population 65+, NAICS code: 62331 <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.060	0.070
<b>Cost of assisted living</b>	Average monthly cost divided by corresponding U.S. value (state-level data), † <i>Data source: Genworth</i>	2015	0.087	0.078
<b>Nursing home rating</b>	Percent with 5-star rating, ‡ <i>Data source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</i>	2016	0.073	0.060

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The “Best Cities” index looks at community engagement as a potential avenue for purpose in life, which is associated with positive health and longevity.<sup>7, 8</sup> We recognize the value of intergenerational relationships, and showcase a selection of Programs With Purpose that promote these interactions. We include percentage of population that is 65+ as an indicator in the community engagement category to recognize the positive impact of shared experiences and bonding among older adults on quality of life.

This category also looks at recreation, volunteering, and libraries as avenues to increase community engagement, using the same indicators as the 2014 report minus the number of YMCAs. We now capture a variable assessing civic and religious organizations that includes YMCAs, to recognize the diversity of groups and organizations an older adult can join to feel a sense of purpose and the warmth of community.

7 Boyle, P., et al., “Effect of Purpose in Life on the Relation between Alzheimer Disease Pathologic Changes on Cognitive Function in Advanced Age,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 69(5) (2012): 499–504.

8 Levy, B. R. et al., “Longevity Increased by Positive Self-perceptions of Aging,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83(2) (2002): 261–70.

INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	YEAR	WEIGHTS*	
			100 LARGE	281 SMALL
<b>Percent of population 65+</b>	‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.166	0.131
<b>Arts, entertainment, and recreational facilities</b>	Museums, movie theaters, dance companies, gambling halls, amusement parks, etc. per capita, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.162	0.203
<b>Volunteer rates for older adults</b>	Number of 65+ volunteers divided by population 65+, ‡ <i>Data sources: Corporation for National &amp; Community Service, Milken Institute</i>	2014	0.193	0.192
<b>Number of public libraries</b>	Per capita, ‡ <i>Data source: Institute of Museum and Library Services</i>	2013	0.236	0.161
<b>Number of civic and religious organizations</b>	Per capita, NAICS codes: 8134 and 8131, ‡ <i>Data source: Census Bureau</i>	2014	0.079	0.121
<b>Funding for older adults</b>	State funding (Title III) for older adults per population 65+, ‡ <i>Data source: Administration on Aging</i>	2014	0.164	0.192

\* Figures may not add up to 1 due to rounding. | † The lowest value is ranked highest. | ‡ The highest value is ranked highest.

# RANKINGS FOR ALL METROS

## 100 LARGE METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Akron, OH	51	51	45
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	21	23	37
Albuquerque, NM	87	89	85
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	73	77	69
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	62	61	59
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	53	63	63
Austin-Round Rock, TX	6	6	5
Bakersfield, CA	98	98	98
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	67	69	64
Baton Rouge, LA	66	67	59
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	81	85	74
Boise City, ID	34	31	41
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	9	10	9
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	18	19	26
Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	71	73	73
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	93	87	96

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Charleston-North Charleston, SC	39	46	32
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	72	74	75
Chattanooga, TN-GA	85	86	80
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	48	47	30
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	50	53	39
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	36	42	22
Colorado Springs, CO	46	35	70
Columbia, SC	54	54	62
Columbus, OH	49	45	48
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	25	25	15
Dayton, OH	29	30	27
Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	96	96	95
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	12	12	13
Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	5	5	6
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	75	78	62
Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	3	4	3

## 100 LARGE METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
El Paso, TX	80	80	58
Fresno, CA	90	91	87
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	23	24	23
Greensboro-High Point, NC	92	94	91
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	83	84	84
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	31	32	30
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	37	39	53
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	35	36	19
Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	44	50	36
Jackson, MS	8	8	8
Jacksonville, FL	63	60	67
Kansas City, MO-KS	26	27	25
Knoxville, TN	89	92	89
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	99	99	99
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	77	71	85
Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	47	48	35
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	56	51	66

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	79	81	72
Madison, WI	2	2	2
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	59	61	18
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	76	78	71
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	73	70	83
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	33	39	21
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	14	16	14
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	30	34	42
New Haven-Milford, CT	78	76	81
New Orleans-Metairie, LA	55	58	44
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	11	11	11
North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	91	90	94
Ogden-Clearfield, UT	38	27	46
Oklahoma City, OK	28	26	24
Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	7	7	7
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	69	66	78
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	86	81	92

## 100 LARGE METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	94	93	93
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	52	49	46
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	88	88	88
Pittsburgh, PA	44	44	49
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	40	36	40
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	70	72	76
Provo-Orem, UT	1	1	1
Raleigh, NC	42	38	43
Richmond, VA	32	33	38
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	100	100	100
Rochester, NY	17	22	17
Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	82	75	79
Salt Lake City, UT	4	3	4
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	64	63	50
San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	22	20	28
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	10	9	10
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	16	18	16

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA	64	65	65
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	43	43	54
Springfield, MA	15	14	54
St. Louis, MO-IL	27	29	19
Stockton-Lodi, CA	97	97	97
Syracuse, NY	20	21	29
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	84	83	82
Toledo, OH	13	13	12
Tucson, AZ	60	56	56
Tulsa, OK	57	55	57
Urban Honolulu, HI	24	17	52
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	61	59	68
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	19	15	34
Wichita, KS	41	41	51
Winston-Salem, NC	95	95	90
Worcester, MA-CT	68	68	77
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	58	56	61

## 281 SMALL METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Abilene, TX	33	30	28
Albany, GA	107	117	72
Albany, OR	275	275	275
Alexandria, LA	139	147	113
Altoona, PA	172	183	157
Amarillo, TX	64	66	55
Ames, IA	3	2	5
Anchorage, AK	52	44	131
Ann Arbor, MI	6	13	6
Anniston-Oxford-Jacksonville, AL	144	150	120
Appleton, WI	74	78	75
Asheville, NC	200	205	180
Athens-Clarke County, GA	62	59	71
Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ	269	266	264
Auburn-Opelika, AL	127	125	148
Bangor, ME	130	128	140
Barnstable Town, MA	165	156	216
Battle Creek, MI	157	173	144
Bay City, MI	142	130	143
Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX	208	203	179
Beckley, WV	167	161	182
Bellingham, WA	120	114	153
Bend-Redmond, OR	196	198	198
Billings, MT	40	41	49

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Binghamton, NY	193	185	200
Bismarck, ND	21	20	32
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford, VA	168	155	212
Bloomington, IL	70	62	106
Bloomington, IN	54	43	97
Bloomsburg-Berwick, PA	58	75	44
Boulder, CO	11	11	14
Bowling Green, KY	90	94	102
Bremerton-Silverdale, WA	225	221	239
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX	154	170	80
Brunswick, GA	158	144	190
Burlington, NC	204	202	186
Burlington-South Burlington, VT	20	21	41
California-Lexington Park, MD	243	218	269
Canton-Massillon, OH	212	213	187
Cape Girardeau, MO-IL	86	96	70
Carbondale-Marion, IL	49	49	35
Carson City, NV	126	123	146
Casper, WY	25	26	48
Cedar Rapids, IA	82	80	99
Chambersburg-Waynesboro, PA	251	253	243
Champaign-Urbana, IL	12	12	11
Charleston, WV	223	237	211
Charlottesville, VA	65	71	66



## 281 SMALL METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Cheyenne, WY	17	17	19
Chico, CA	264	261	271
Clarksville, TN-KY	185	187	175
Cleveland, TN	250	249	248
Coeur d'Alene, ID	205	210	205
College Station-Bryan, TX	28	24	29
Columbia, MO	4	4	2
Columbus, GA-AL	146	149	138
Columbus, IN	215	197	240
Corpus Christi, TX	146	143	119
Corvallis, OR	75	63	132
Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, FL	203	190	224
Cumberland, MD-WV	150	159	136
Dalton, GA	226	229	188
Danville, IL	71	81	46
Daphne-Fairhope-Foley, AL	246	239	255
Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL	153	153	158
Decatur, AL	198	208	163
Decatur, IL	79	90	58
Dothan, AL	132	138	98
Dover, DE	254	252	265
Dubuque, IA	31	35	21
Duluth, MN-WI	125	127	122
East Stroudsburg, PA	281	281	281

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Eau Claire, WI	38	40	26
El Centro, CA	262	262	236
Elizabethtown-Fort Knox, KY	145	144	165
Elkhart-Goshen, IN	136	132	134
Elmira, NY	190	193	181
Erie, PA	143	151	115
Eugene, OR	235	227	254
Evansville, IN-KY	113	118	100
Fairbanks, AK	10	9	67
Fargo, ND-MN	14	15	22
Farmington, NM	237	236	240
Fayetteville, NC	165	179	167
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO	105	100	93
Flagstaff, AZ	26	19	42
Flint, MI	195	204	155
Florence, SC	97	103	73
Florence-Muscle Shoals, AL	234	241	215
Fond du Lac, WI	94	91	95
Fort Collins, CO	88	83	125
Fort Smith, AR-OK	172	186	135
Fort Wayne, IN	115	121	104
Gadsden, AL	163	172	154
Gainesville, FL	13	16	7
Gainesville, GA	155	164	150

## 281 SMALL METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Gettysburg, PA	268	267	272
Glens Falls, NY	216	224	227
Goldsboro, NC	210	214	201
Grand Forks, ND-MN	29	33	38
Grand Island, NE	98	88	114
Grand Junction, CO	177	181	177
Grants Pass, OR	277	276	280
Great Falls, MT	41	39	53
Greeley, CO	170	159	199
Green Bay, WI	162	167	174
Greenville, NC	44	47	34
Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula, MS	158	175	161
Hagerstown-Martinsburg, MD-WV	257	259	256
Hammond, LA	172	169	170
Hanford-Corcoran, CA	131	116	129
Harrisonburg, VA	53	51	62
Hattiesburg, MS	45	45	39
Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC	247	251	226
Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort, SC	177	152	213
Hinesville, GA	110	130	77
Homosassa Springs, FL	276	277	276
Hot Springs, AR	263	268	249
Houma-Thibodaux, LA	172	175	160
Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH	238	248	230

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Huntsville, AL	207	209	194
Idaho Falls, ID	96	79	128
Iowa City, IA	1	1	1
Ithaca, NY	7	6	20
Jackson, MI	213	206	219
Jackson, TN	47	49	37
Jacksonville, NC	183	171	195
Janesville-Beloit, WI	198	201	192
Jefferson City, MO	66	73	51
Johnson City, TN	116	129	92
Johnstown, PA	128	122	118
Jonesboro, AR	75	65	75
Joplin, MO	176	174	164
Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina, HI	182	146	234
Kalamazoo-Portage, MI	104	110	103
Kankakee, IL	89	86	90
Kennewick-Richland, WA	192	189	204
Killeen-Temple, TX	48	52	25
Kingsport-Bristol-Bristol, TN-VA	221	225	202
Kingston, NY	210	206	225
Kokomo, IN	141	141	149
La Crosse-Onalaska, WI-MN	23	25	23
Lafayette, LA	85	82	79
Lafayette-West Lafayette, IN	32	28	56

## 281 SMALL METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Lake Charles, LA	118	119	107
Lake Havasu City-Kingman, AZ	278	279	274
Lancaster, PA	164	163	172
Lansing-East Lansing, MI	108	105	124
Laredo, TX	39	32	17
Las Cruces, NM	227	219	231
Lawrence, KS	8	8	16
Lawton, OK	83	107	59
Lebanon, PA	110	102	108
Lewiston, ID-WA	109	106	116
Lewiston-Auburn, ME	189	192	185
Lexington-Fayette, KY	60	68	57
Lima, OH	43	54	18
Lincoln, NE	35	34	44
Logan, UT-ID	9	7	15
Longview, TX	103	92	91
Longview, WA	279	278	277
Lubbock, TX	19	18	9
Lynchburg, VA	187	188	178
Macon-Bibb County, GA	137	148	94
Madera, CA	256	255	242
Manchester-Nashua, NH	181	180	193
Manhattan, KS	2	3	3
Mankato-North Mankato, MN	57	61	74

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Mansfield, OH	232	242	214
Medford, OR	254	254	260
Merced, CA	230	230	218
Michigan City-La Porte, IN	253	256	245
Midland, MI	67	66	62
Midland, TX	15	14	13
Missoula, MT	22	23	36
Mobile, AL	206	212	176
Modesto, CA	266	272	251
Monroe, LA	78	85	64
Monroe, MI	219	219	221
Montgomery, AL	151	164	147
Morgantown, WV	18	21	12
Morristown, TN	236	237	235
Mount Vernon-Anacortes, WA	239	244	250
Muncie, IN	112	107	121
Muskegon, MI	202	199	196
Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC-NC	271	265	273
Napa, CA	84	95	84
Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island, FL	184	168	209
New Bern, NC	240	245	229
Niles-Benton Harbor, MI	229	226	237
Norwich-New London, CT	245	239	259
Ocala, FL	272	273	263

## 281 SMALL METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Ocean City, NJ	274	271	279
Odessa, TX	69	70	52
Olympia-Tumwater, WA	179	166	220
Oshkosh-Neenah, WI	119	126	110
Owensboro, KY	91	84	100
Panama City, FL	218	216	222
Parkersburg-Vienna, WV	121	112	137
Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL	224	223	228
Peoria, IL	134	134	122
Pine Bluff, AR	191	200	145
Pittsfield, MA	102	97	117
Pocatello, ID	46	45	47
Port St. Lucie, FL	242	243	244
Portland-South Portland, ME	133	123	169
Prescott, AZ	265	264	270
Pueblo, CO	188	196	152
Punta Gorda, FL	241	233	252
Racine, WI	209	215	197
Rapid City, SD	30	31	60
Reading, PA	214	211	208
Redding, CA	266	270	261
Reno, NV	101	109	105
Roanoke, VA	137	135	139

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Rochester, MN	24	36	10
Rockford, IL	186	195	151
Rocky Mount, NC	244	247	232
Rome, GA	124	142	68
Saginaw, MI	51	57	33
Salem, OR	252	250	258
Salinas, CA	149	140	166
Salisbury, MD-DE	259	258	267
San Angelo, TX	34	29	27
San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles-Arroyo Grande, CA	56	56	65
Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	114	98	159
Santa Fe, NM	81	69	125
Santa Maria-Santa Barbara, CA	63	60	81
Santa Rosa, CA	148	135	171
Savannah, GA	99	111	88
Sebastian-Vero Beach, FL	197	181	209
Sebring, FL	273	274	268
Sheboygan, WI	80	77	85
Sherman-Denison, TX	68	64	50
Shreveport-Bossier City, LA	169	184	161
Sierra Vista-Douglas, AZ	231	222	246
Sioux City, IA-NE-SD	61	58	78
Sioux Falls, SD	5	5	4

## 281 SMALL METROS

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
South Bend-Mishawaka, IN-MI	160	157	168
Spartanburg, SC	200	194	203
Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	220	217	233
Springfield, IL	92	104	85
Springfield, MO	100	98	82
Springfield, OH	232	233	223
St. Cloud, MN	36	38	40
St. George, UT	95	72	142
St. Joseph, MO-KS	140	139	130
State College, PA	16	10	30
Staunton-Waynesboro, VA	179	178	188
Sumter, SC	228	235	205
Tallahassee, FL	123	114	156
Terre Haute, IN	87	93	96
Texarkana, TX-AR	122	113	109
The Villages, FL	249	232	265
Topeka, KS	134	137	127
Trenton, NJ	93	101	83
Tuscaloosa, AL	129	133	112
Tyler, TX	50	53	30
Utica-Rome, NY	193	190	184
Valdosta, GA	117	120	111

UPDATED CENSUS NAMES	OVERALL RANK	65-79 RANK	80+ RANK
Vallejo-Fairfield, CA	261	260	262
Victoria, TX	37	37	24
Vineland-Bridgeton, NJ	280	280	278
Visalia-Porterville, CA	260	263	238
Waco, TX	72	74	53
Walla Walla, WA	59	55	89
Warner Robins, GA	171	177	173
Waterloo-Cedar Falls, IA	42	42	42
Watertown-Fort Drum, NY	156	153	191
Wausau, WI	77	87	61
Weirton-Steubenville, WV-OH	105	89	133
Wenatchee, WA	55	48	87
Wheeling, WV-OH	73	76	69
Wichita Falls, TX	27	27	8
Williamsport, PA	151	161	141
Wilmington, NC	160	157	182
Winchester, VA-WV	217	230	207
Yakima, WA	222	228	217
York-Hanover, PA	248	246	247
Yuba City, CA	258	257	253
Yuma, AZ	269	269	256



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**Sindhu Kubendran** is a senior consultant at Cedars-Sinai Health System, where she evaluates and improves health-care processes. She previously worked at the Milken Institute as a senior research analyst specializing in health economics. Kubendran is co-author of the Institute report "The Price Women Pay for Dementia," which examines gender disparities in dementia and caregiving. She also authored research identifying feasible strategies to reduce obesity and quantifying medical expenditures and labor market outcomes related to chronic disease. Prior to joining the Institute, Kubendran worked in systems improvement and disease prevention at community health centers and social services agencies. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master of public health degree from Dartmouth College.

**Liana Soll** is an associate director of the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging. Her interests include aging, culture, and media; entrepreneurship and innovation to improve aging lives; the future of work; prevention, wellness and healthy aging; and the translation of research into policy and practice. Soll has a diverse background in law and public health, with over a decade of experience in health information technology, infrastructure and project finance, regulatory matters, international public health, and treaty negotiations. Before joining the Institute, Soll worked as a lawyer and public health professional for commercial, multilateral, and nonprofit entities. She has lived, worked, and studied in Egypt, England, Romania, and Switzerland. Soll studied modern culture, media, and political science at Brown University. She received a master of laws degree from the University of London and a master of public health as well as a juris doctor degree from the University of California.

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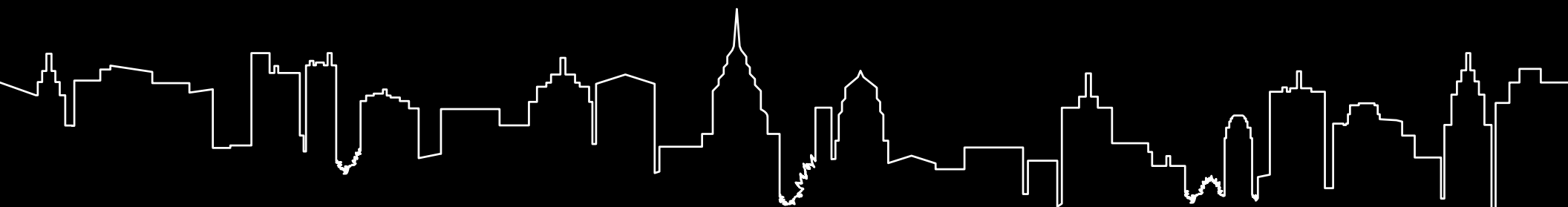


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