

NO. 1-100

AMERICA'S BEST SMALL CITIES

On the hunt for more great places, we found 100 that scored well in the attributes most families care about (including the five highlighted here). For each city, 1 marks the attribute where it scored highest; 2, second highest.



FINDING THE BEST PLACES

Using statistics from data provider OnBoard and consultant Bert Sperling of BestPlaces.net, we crunched the numbers in order to zero in on America's best small cities for families. Here's how:

716

Start with all U.S. cities that have populations of 50,000 to 300,000.

544

Exclude retirement communities, places where income is less than 85% or more than 201% of the state median, and those that are more than 95% white.

332

Screen out cities with high crime, big population declines, significant unemployment or job shrinkage, and long commutes.

261

Rank remaining places based on job growth, income increases, cost of living, housing affordability, school quality, arts and leisure options, safety, medical care, diversity and several ease-of-living criteria.

100

Factor in more data on the economy, jobs, housing prices, schools and taxes.

22

Visit and interview residents, assessing intangibles like sense of community.

Select Plymouth, Minn. based on the data and our findings.

	JOBS/ ECONOMY	SAFETY	EDUCATION	HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	LEISURE/ ARTS		JOBS/ ECONOMY	SAFETY	EDUCATION	HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	LEISURE/ ARTS
1 Plymouth, Minn. (70,100)	2		1			51 Hamilton, N.J. (91,700)	2				1
2 Fort Collins, Colo. (129,500)		2	1			52 Edmond, Okla. (76,600)		2	1		
3 Naperville, Ill. (142,900)	2	1				53 Ames, Iowa (51,600)			1	2	
4 Irvine, Calif. (194,000)		1	2			54 Wheaton, Ill. (54,600)	2	1			
5 Franklin Township, N.J. (59,200)		1			2	55 Peoria, Ariz. (142,000)	1	2			
6 Norman, Okla. (102,800)		1		2		56 Missouri City, Texas (73,700)		1		2	
7 Round Rock, Texas (92,400)	1	2				57 Denton, Texas (109,600)	2	1			
8 Columbia/Elicott City, Md. (158,800)		1	2			58 Washington, N.J. (52,600)		2	1		
9 Overland Park, Kans. (166,700)	2	1				59 Clay, N.Y. (58,900)		1		2	
10 Fishers, Ind. (61,800)	1	2				60 St. Peters, Mo. (54,800)	1	2			
11 Olathe, Kans. (114,700)	2	1				61 Sterling Heights, Mich. (128,000)		1		2	
12 Highlands Ranch, Colo. (102,700)	1	2				62 Shelby, Mich. (72,300)		2	1		
13 Parsippany/Troy Hills, N.J. (52,900)		1			2	63 Orem, Utah (90,900)		1	2		
14 McKinney, Texas (107,500)		1	2			64 Sugar Land, Texas (79,900)	2	1			
15 Carrollton, Texas (121,600)		1		2		65 Chapel Hill, N.C. (49,900)		1		2	
16 Cary, N.C. (112,400)		1			2	66 Rockville, Md. (59,100)			2		1
17 Eagan, Minn. (63,700)		2	1			67 Garland, Texas (218,000)		2		1	
18 Richardson, Texas (99,800)	1	2				68 O'Fallon, Mo. (72,500)		1	2		
19 Hunter Mill, Va. (124,100)	2	1				69 Lewisville, Texas (94,600)		1		2	
20 Allen, Texas (73,300)		2	1			70 Rochester, Minn. (97,000)	2			1	
21 Abington, Pa. (57,400)		1	2			71 Clarkstown, N.Y. (82,600)		2			1
22 Troy, Mich. (81,100)	2	1				72 Waltham, Mass. (59,400)		1			2
23 Piscataway, N.J. (53,900)		1			2	73 Weston, Fla. (69,700)	2		1		
24 Apple Valley, Minn. (50,100)		1	2			74 Aurora, Ill. (170,600)	1				2
25 Sully, Va. (158,600)	2	1				75 Union, N.J. (56,100)			2		1
26 Lakeville, Minn. (53,100)		2	1			76 West Hartford, Conn. (65,100)		1			2
27 Ann Arbor, Mich. (113,200)		1	2			77 Howell, N.J. (52,100)		1		2	
28 Gilbert, Ariz. (191,500)		1		2		78 Coral Springs, Fla. (129,800)	2	1			
29 Gaithersburg, Md. (57,900)		2	1			79 Lee's Summit, Mo. (81,900)	2		1		
30 Chandler, Ariz. (240,600)		1		2		80 Greenburgh, N.Y. (89,000)		2			1
31 Burke, Va. (58,200)		1	2			81 Germantown, Md. (59,600)			1		2
32 Bolingbrook, Ill. (69,900)		1	2			82 St. Charles, Mo. (63,000)		1		2	
33 Loveland, Colo. (61,100)	2		1			83 Sandy, Utah (94,200)		2	1		
34 Euless, Texas (52,000)		1		2		84 Henderson, Nev. (240,600)		2	1		
35 Edison, N.J. (101,400)		2			1	85 Chesapeake, Va. (220,600)	2	1			
36 West Bloomfield Twp, Mich. (66,000)		1	2			86 Middletown, N.J. (67,700)		1			2
37 Reston, Va. (63,600)		1	2			87 Brookline, Mass. (59,600)		2			1
38 Frisco, Texas (80,500)		1		2		88 Fargo, N.D. (90,100)	2			1	
39 Shawnee, Kans. (59,300)		1	2			89 Madison, Wis. (223,400)		1			2
40 Eden Prairie, Minn. (61,000)		2	1			90 Roseville, Calif. (107,200)		1	2		
41 Maple Grove, Minn. (60,600)	2		1			91 Fountain Valley, Calif. (55,900)		1		2	
42 Bellevue, Wash. (118,200)		2			1	92 Orland Park, Ill. (55,500)			2		1
43 Burnsville, Minn. (59,300)		2	1			93 Blaine, Minn. (55,100)		2		1	
44 Westminster, Colo. (105,800)		1	2			94 Sunnyvale, Calif. (130,500)			1		2
45 Franklin, Tenn. (55,900)		1	2			95 Spring Valley, Nev. (176,800)	2	1			
46 North Hempstead, N.Y. (222,600)		2			1	96 Grand Prairie, Texas (153,800)		1	2		
47 Scottsdale, Ariz. (231,100)	2		1			97 Bismarck, N.D. (58,300)		1			2
48 Novi, Mich. (54,100)	2	1				98 Miramar, Fla. (108,100)		1	2		
49 Newton, Mass. (82,800)		2			1	99 Midlothian, Va. (54,600)		1	2		
50 Longmont, Colo. (82,600)		1		2		100 Wayne, N.J. (55,700)		2			1

NOTES: Unless otherwise indicated, all data are as of 2007. Jobs/Economy based on income growth, purchasing power and projected job growth. Safety based on FBI crime reports. Education based on test-score performance, percentage of children in public schools and education level of a place's adult population. Housing Affordability based on median price-to-income ratio and average property taxes. Leisure/Arts based on official green space and number of activities within the city and nearby areas, including museums, restaurants, hiking and camping spots, golf courses, pro sports teams, theaters and libraries, plus per capita state arts spending. SOURCES: OnBoard (onboardllc.com); Sperling's Best Places (bestplaces.net).