



**rh** Robert Half®  
CAREER CITY INDEX

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# INDEX OVERVIEW

What cities make the best destinations for career-oriented professionals? How do locations stack up against each other? As a specialized staffing firm, Robert Half frequently receives these queries from job seekers. Similarly, companies often look to us for information they can pass along to help inform job candidates who are considering relocating to their area. To shed light on how cities stack up in the eyes of professionals, Robert Half commissioned a study with The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). The result is the Robert Half Career City Index, a benchmarking tool that ranks and compares 25 U.S. cities using 25 diverse indicators that measure and influence career choices, quality of life and work-life balance. The indicators are separated into four categories:



The Index categorizes and quantifies different aspects that make a city unique and factors individuals consider when deciding where to move. Two of the categories (Career Prospects and Cost of Living) were given **higher weighting** because of the role they play in professional mobility.

Individuals planning to move to a new city or looking to make a career or life change can use this Index as a guide and platform for comparison. The Index provides users with timely data to help them choose a location to start or develop their career. It also offers a unique perspective on what makes a city desirable.

## ABOUT THE DATA

Robert Half, in consultation with the EIU, selected the 25 cities based on a variety of factors, including the scope of commercial presence and job market dynamics for professionals in each city, in addition to data availability, geographic and regional balance, and market-size variation. A research team from the EIU created the indicator framework, gathered internal and external data, and scored, weighted and constructed the Index. The EIU also wrote this report. The data were derived from a variety of sources and reflect the most recent figures available for each city. Information from Robert Half’s annual Salary Guides was included in the data set that makes up the Index. A full explanation of the methodology can be found beginning on [Page 32](#).

The resulting findings were developed by the EIU to shed light on what makes certain cities stand out in the Index and to highlight top-ranking career cities.

We hope you find this information useful and invite you to visit [roberthalf.com](http://roberthalf.com) for more information and insight, including Salary Calculators and a career and management advice blog.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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For the first time in human history, more than half of the world's population lives in cities and metropolitan areas. The current worldwide urbanization trend is the largest ever recorded and poses unique challenges and opportunities for cities around the globe. In the United States, more than 80.7 percent of the population lived in urban areas in 2010, an increase of 12.1 percent from 2000.<sup>1</sup> After decades of suburbanization and decentralization, cities today are brimming with economic opportunities, distinctive communities and diverse connections to the globalized world, acting as central hubs for employment, government, culture, commerce and artistic opportunities. Industrial warehouses are increasingly appropriated for more modern uses; transportation is being redesigned for 21st-century planning; and infrastructure changes enhance density, functionality and convenience. With all of these evolutionary changes, major cities have re-emerged as hubs for information, innovation and commerce. But what makes certain cities more attractive than others? And what characterizes the people moving into and out of cities? The Robert Half Career City Index offers insight into these questions, summarized in the key findings as follows:

**A strong employment base is crucial to a city's success.** One of the main reasons people move is to take advantage of an attractive career opportunity, which can offer professional advancement, change, new challenges and possibilities.<sup>2</sup> Across the Robert Half Career City Index, the highest overall scores

are strongly related to the indicators that measure a city's employment strength, largely determined by factors such as unemployment, gross domestic product (GDP) and human capital. Salaries, benefits and specific job opportunities will continue to attract talent from all over the world, spurring economic growth and making a city a more interconnected player in the global economy.

**A city's educational attainment — measured as the share of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher — is strongly linked to its overall performance in the Index.**

The cities with the largest share of highly educated individuals — Seattle, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. — rank in the top five overall. They are also the top three cities in the Career Prospects category and perform well on indicators such as GDP per Capita, Median Income and Park Space as a Share of Total City Acreage. These cities also score high on Internet Connectivity, measured by the percentage of households with a broadband Internet subscription — a sign of the benefits of connectivity in a digital economy. While many of the relationships between career and education are linked through income, another relationship exists between education and diversity — measured as the share of a city's population that is foreign-born. Research suggests that cities can benefit from investing in a strong educational system, as higher-income workers generate more tax revenue over the course of their lifetime. In addition, a strong educational system attracts young, ambitious people from a wide array of backgrounds and countries around the world.<sup>3</sup>



# ROBERT HALF

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**Youth is a prominent theme in the Index.** In the United States, mobility peaks in an individual's mid-20s, when many people are finishing their education, starting a family or beginning a career. Today's young adults are more likely to live in cities — more than two-thirds of all 25- to 34-year-olds with a bachelor's degree live in the largest 51 metro areas, and these people are more than twice as likely as the entire population to live in dense, city-center neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup> In the Index, overall scores are negatively related to age. Cities with a younger population, such as Boston (ranked second), Raleigh (ranked fifth) and Salt Lake City (ranked seventh), tend to rank higher in the Index on average than cities with a more established population, such as Miami (ranked 17th) and Cleveland (ranked 24th). Seattle and San Francisco are the two major exceptions to this trend, as they rank first and third in the Index overall. San Francisco has the second-highest median age (38.6), while Seattle has the third-highest (36.4). With the continued influx of young

technology entrepreneurs to both cities, the median age is likely to decrease over the next two to three years. In several cities with a net population decline, such as Cleveland and Detroit, more young adults with bachelor's degrees are moving closer to downtown, which is a positive sign for long-term economic growth.<sup>5</sup>

**In a strong reversal of suburbanization trends, a growing number of businesses are relocating to city centers to be more accessible to their workforce and future talent.** In a technology- and service-driven economy, proximity to clients, transportation and highly educated workers can create competitive advantages for businesses. Throughout the economic downturn and recovery, job growth was stronger in central city areas than in suburban areas: Between 2007 and 2011, job growth in 41 cities averaged 0.5 percent in the core business districts, compared with a 0.1 percent average decline in periphery and suburban areas.<sup>6</sup> A few examples of businesses

IN A TECHNOLOGY- AND SERVICE-DRIVEN ECONOMY, **PROXIMITY** TO CLIENTS, **TRANSPORTATION** AND **HIGHLY EDUCATED** WORKERS **CAN CREATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES** FOR BUSINESSES.

**#1**  
**SEATTLE**

Amazon  
Microsoft  
Starbucks  
Tableau

**#3**  
**SAN FRANCISCO**

Pinterest  
Salesforce  
Twitter  
Yelp

**#13**  
**NEW YORK**

Kickstarter  
Tumblr

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relocating or expanding closer to city centers include Expedia's and Amazon's significant developments adjacent to downtown Seattle (ranked first overall in the Index), as well as the urban Seattle locations of Tableau, Weyerhaeuser and Microsoft; Pinterest, Twitter, Yelp and Salesforce moving to downtown San Francisco (ranked third); Kickstarter, Tumblr and hundreds of other startups moving to downtown New York City (ranked 13th); and Motorola Solutions, GE Healthcare, Kraft Heinz and ConAgra Foods either relocating or considering relocating to the central business area of Chicago (ranked 18th).<sup>7</sup>

**In an increasingly competitive and globalized world, growth is key to a city's success.** The cities that bounced back from the last economic recession, experiencing population and employment growth, perform strongly in the Career City Index. Cities that registered strong population growth in 2010-13, such as Seattle (ranked first), Washington, D.C. (ranked fourth), Raleigh (ranked fifth) and Denver (ranked eighth), generally received higher overall scores than cities with lower population growth rates.

These trends are not expected to abate anytime soon.

While employment growth over a 10-year time frame is very strongly linked to the overall scores in the Index, one-year employment growth has a stronger relationship to the overall scores than three-year employment growth, the latter of which would be skewed downward by the most recent recession. This is meaningful for future growth prospects: Although the recession officially ended in 2009,<sup>8</sup> many cities have only recently begun to see their economies and populations grow after significant investments during the downturn.

**A city's housing and infrastructure can either fuel its growth or constrain it.** Several of the top-performing larger cities in the Index do not perform well on indicators relating to housing and infrastructure, whereas the top-performing smaller cities do relatively well. In many of the larger cities — Seattle (ranked first), Boston (ranked second), San Francisco (ranked third) and Washington, D.C. (ranked fourth) — the existing housing and transport infrastructure might not have enough capacity to handle the expected population growth. These constraints

can be seen in the incredibly low rental vacancy rates, long commute times and rising costs of living in these larger cities. However, in the smaller cities that performed well overall — Raleigh (ranked fifth), Salt Lake City (ranked seventh) and Des Moines (ranked 10th) — the infrastructure is more nimble to increase capacity, build housing and design better transportation to avoid many of the constraints facing larger cities. In many of these smaller cities, the cost of living remains low, and housing remains available and affordable even while the economy booms.

**There is no one-size-fits-all justification for the overall results.** Very little relationship exists between

a city's overall score, density, total population or total land area. Across each of the four categories, performance is mixed geographically between the largest and the smallest cities, and between the densely populated coastal cities and the sprawling Midwestern and Southern cities. While there is a strong relationship between income and overall score, the top cities in the Index have diverse characteristics and unique environments. The most successful cities have strong employment, are attracting well-educated residents and are growing their total population overall.



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## RANKINGS

These rankings cover four individual categories: Career Prospects, Quality of Life, Cost of Living and Cultural Diversity.

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## OVERALL

### SEATTLE



Seattle takes the top overall spot in the Robert Half Career City Index, driven by a strong performance in the Career Prospects and Cost of Living categories, which have the highest weights in the Index. Seattle's robust

economic and employment growth have been spurred by a surging information technology industry, as well as its strong biotechnology, aerospace, healthcare and manufacturing sectors. Global giants such as Microsoft, Amazon, Starbucks, Costco and Boeing, among others, have been attracting top talent to the greater Seattle area. Additionally, compared with the East Coast and other West Coast cities (San Francisco and Los Angeles), the Seattle metro area has traditionally had a lower cost of living, although this has been changing. A large share of individuals with college degrees (ranked first for Educational Attainment) and high incomes (ranked third for Median Income), combined with Seattle's relatively lower costs of living (ranked first in the category), make the city a prime target for young entrepreneurs, technology developers and families. Much of Seattle's technology growth has come from expansion by Amazon, Microsoft and Expedia, as well as the development of satellite offices for Facebook, Google and Salesforce, within and around the surrounding area. Once Amazon's new global headquarters is complete, its employment capacity will approach 30,000 in a city of around 635,000 people.<sup>9</sup> The city ranks 25th in the Quality of Life category, driven by last place rankings in Number of Sunny Days and Rental Vacancy Rate — surely a consequence of the Pacific Northwest's cloudy weather coupled with the city's lack of preparedness for the rapid influx of new residents. Surprisingly, these do not affect the city's overall score enough to knock it from the top spot.

## OVERALL RANKINGS

Rank	City	Score
1	Seattle	56.7
2	Boston	53.4
3	San Francisco Bay Area	51.6
4	Washington, D.C.	51.2
5	Raleigh	50.9
6	Dallas	50.2
7	Salt Lake City	49.8
8	Denver	49.2
9	Houston	49.0
10	Des Moines	48.1
11	San Diego	46.0
12	Phoenix	45.7
13	New York	45.1
14	Minneapolis	44.4
15	Atlanta	43.8
16	Charlotte	43.7
17	Miami	43.3
18	Chicago	42.6
19	Indianapolis	40.7
20	Cincinnati	40.3
21	Sacramento	39.8
22	Los Angeles	39.1
23	Philadelphia	38.3
24	Cleveland	32.4
25	Detroit	31.6

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## BOSTON



Coming in second in the Index is Boston, which scores well in the Career Prospects, Quality of Life and Cultural Diversity categories. Massachusetts' state capital and largest city is recognized for its strong financial, insurance and healthcare industries, in addition to its education and research infrastructure. World-renowned universities, including Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Wellesley College, Boston College and Boston University, call the Boston area home, churning out one of the most highly educated populations in the country (46.5 percent of the population over age 25 has a bachelor's degree or higher). The Boston metro area has the third-highest GDP per capita and the fifth-highest median household income. Boston is not a cheap place to live, ranking 15th in the Cost of Living category, and lags behind only Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco as the most expensive place in the Index to rent. However, it does have the lowest average cost for groceries — a likely result of the strong competition among supermarket chains in the area.

Few may be surprised to find that the San Francisco Bay Area,<sup>10</sup> a cultural melting pot, global financial center and hotbed of innovation, ranks third overall in the Index. Silicon Valley has emerged as a key cog in the American economic machine, and some of the world's largest and most recognizable firms call the San Francisco Bay Area home: Google, Apple and Oracle are just three headliners of a massive and constantly changing corporate landscape. Newer players like Facebook, Twitter and Uber are attracting more and more talent to the area, and startups are rising and falling with stunning speed. It is hard to imagine that of the aforementioned firms, only one has reached 40 years old (Apple, founded in 1976). San Francisco's labor force is the wealthiest (\$80,643 per capita) and second-most educated — 54.2 percent have at least a bachelor's degree. It is also a diverse and entertaining city. Ranking third in the Cultural Diversity category, the Bay Area is in the top five for entertainment venues, food and drink establishments, Internet connectivity and foreign-born population. While San Francisco is an enticing place to start a career, it is also an expensive place to live, ranking 23rd in the Cost of Living category.

## SAN FRANCISCO



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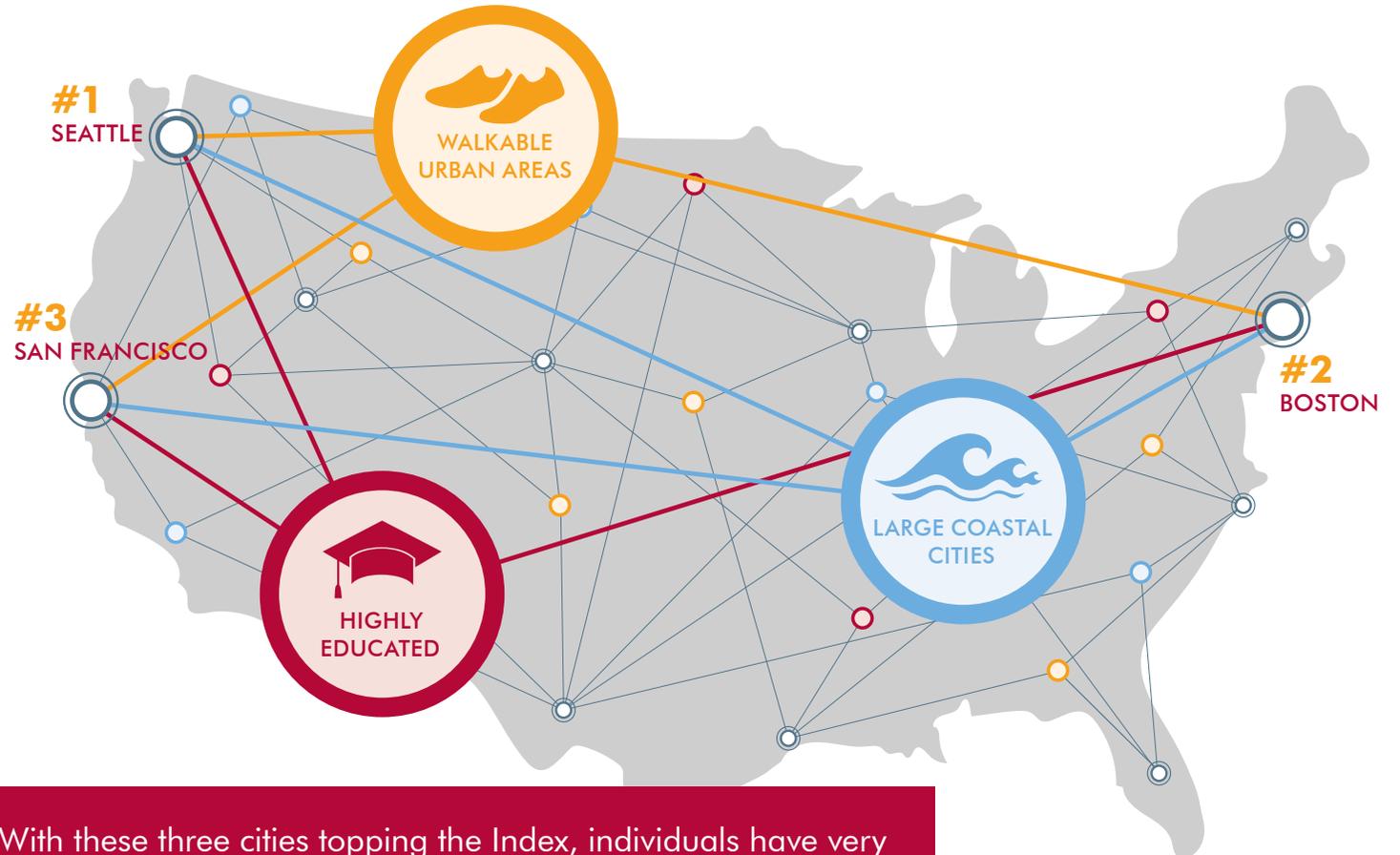
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Despite their lack of geographic proximity, the top three cities in the Robert Half Career City Index have quite a bit in common. All three are large, coastal cities with dense, walkable urban areas. They each have a large share of highly educated individuals — all three rank in the top 10 for Education Attainment of Workforce [Seattle (first), San Francisco (second) and Boston (seventh)] — and strong research and technology sectors. Nonetheless, their major industries differ, from technology and manufacturing in Seattle, to education and healthcare in Boston, to information and communication technology and financial services in San Francisco.



With these three cities topping the Index, individuals have very different and unique options when looking for the right career city for their next professional move.

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## CAREER PROSPECTS

Because of the higher weight placed on Career Prospects in the Index (30 percent), the top five cities in this category — San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C., Boston and Salt Lake City — all rank in the top seven across the overall Index. Educational Attainment, GDP per Capita and the Unemployment Rate drive the category score.

Several smaller cities perform very well in this category. Salt Lake City, Denver and Des Moines are ranked fifth, sixth and 11th, respectively, while Raleigh ranks 14th. Salt Lake City and Des Moines take the second and third spots for the Gini Index, which measures income inequality, and Raleigh, Denver and Salt Lake City each have a very high share of their population with at least a bachelor's degree.

Smaller cities also perform well on the Projected Employment Outlook indicator, a one-year forecast based on historical employment data. Denver ranks fifth in this indicator, followed by Salt Lake City (sixth) and Raleigh (eighth), while Sacramento ranks ninth. With the exception of Sacramento, each of these cities also has a lower-than-average unemployment rate.

### CAREER PROSPECTS RANKINGS

Rank	City	Score
1	San Francisco Bay Area	74.4
2	Seattle	71.9
3	Washington, D.C.	63.2
4	Boston	60.8
5	Salt Lake City	57.3
6	Denver	55.9
7	New York	54.6
8	Dallas	54.3
9	Minneapolis	53.6
10	San Diego	50.4
11	Des Moines	50.3
12	Houston	49.7
13	Atlanta	48.0
14	Raleigh	47.8
15	Los Angeles	41.1
16	Chicago	39.7
17	Charlotte	39.4
18	Indianapolis	37.7
19	Miami	35.5
20	Phoenix	35.2
21	Cincinnati	32.5
22	Sacramento	30.5
23	Philadelphia	29.2
24	Detroit	22.0
25	Cleveland	17.5



# QUALITY OF LIFE

The Quality of Life category measures different aspects of city livability, aside from career and job opportunities. From sunshine and total park space in a city to education, healthcare, transportation and crime, this category considers what life is like in each of these cities after the workday ends. The Index looks at the quality of three sectors that are critical to a city’s infrastructure and well-being — education, healthcare and transportation. To assess quality, these indicators are each made up of three separate measures that are important to their outcomes: Quality of Education includes a city’s average student-teacher ratio, the share of the population with a high school degree and average per-pupil spending on public education; Quality of Healthcare includes the number of physicians as a share of total employment in each city, the number of hospitals per 100,000 people and the average single-payer insurance premium for private-sector employees; and Quality of Transportation includes the share of a city’s population commuting by public transit, on foot or by bicycle, the total number of public transit facilities, and the average annual number of breakdowns per transit vehicle in operation. While imperfect, these composite indicators look at the structure and outcomes of education, healthcare and transportation in each city. Interestingly, many of the indicators in this category require significant, long-term investments before things change. Steps could include improvements in education or the healthcare system, investing in transportation or building additional housing.

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## QUALITY OF LIFE RANKINGS

Rank	City	Score
1	Phoenix	62.0
2	Boston	54.9
3	Cincinnati	54.2
4	New York	54.1
5	Raleigh	53.1
6	Washington, D.C.	52.6
7	Des Moines	52.4
8	Sacramento	50.8
9	Cleveland	49.6
10	Salt Lake City	49.5
11*	Minneapolis	47.4
11*	San Diego	47.4
13	Philadelphia	46.3
14	Dallas	46.1
15	Denver	45.9
16	Chicago	44.9
17	Miami	42.4
18	San Francisco Bay Area	41.3
19	Houston	39.8
20	Los Angeles	39.7
21	Charlotte	37.9
22	Detroit	31.9
23**	Atlanta	30.2
23**	Indianapolis	30.2
25	Seattle	30.0

\*Tied for 11th place with exactly the same score

\*\*Tied for 23rd place with exactly the same score

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## PHOENIX



Phoenix is ranked first in this category, scoring well on Quality of Education (ranked second), Number of Sunny Days (ranked first) and Park Space as a Share of Total City Acreage (ranked seventh). With its sprawling land area, frequent sunshine and Southwestern influence, Phoenix offers residents a different lifestyle than its similarly ranked peers on the East Coast and is the only Western city in the top five in this category. Phoenix is one of the largest cities in this Southwestern corner of the United States, and its large number of parks, proximity to nature and strong education system draw people from across the region. Newcomers to the Phoenix area will find strong job growth in the information technology and energy sectors from companies such as auto manufacturer General Motors, Internet domain registrant GoDaddy, technology service provider Asurion and energy company Direct Energy.<sup>11</sup>

Boston ranks second in this category, driven by its high performance in Quality of Education (ranked third), Park Space as a Share of Total City Acreage (ranked fifth), Quality of Healthcare (ranked fifth) and good Quality of Public Transit (ranked fourth). With a smaller geographic footprint, the city of Boston is the northernmost part of the Boston–New York–Washington corridor and is the largest city in New England. Boston boasts a high-quality education system that includes a number of world-class research universities. It also has a strong healthcare sector (Massachusetts state healthcare reform was influential in the national healthcare reform design) and a great public transportation system known as the “T,” which is used by more than one-third of commuters. With its diehard sports fans, proximity to the ocean and deep historical significance, Boston offers its residents a unique East Coast experience in the heart of New England.

## BOSTON



## CINCINNATI



Cincinnati comes in third in this category, supported by a strong healthcare system (ranked third in Quality of Healthcare), short commute times (ranked third in Average Commute Time), low crime rates (ranked fourth in Prevalence of Violent Crime), and extensive park space (ranked sixth in Park Space as a Share of Total City Acreage). Situated along the banks of the Ohio River, the city has made tremendous strides over the past 10 years to revitalize its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Crime rates have declined, and locals and tourists are returning to the city center to enjoy the flourishing downtown culinary, beer and art scene. Cincinnati’s higher education system is relatively strong; its primary and secondary education system, however, is not as strong, as the city ranks 21st in Quality of Education.

 **COST OF LIVING**

Across the Cost of Living category, which has been given a 30 percent weighting, scores are largely driven by average monthly rents, state income taxes and median incomes. Residents of four cities — Dallas, Houston, Miami and Seattle — do not have to pay state income taxes. Regionally, cities in the East have a higher cost of living. No Northeastern city placed in the top half of the category. Of the top five cities, two — Seattle (ranked first) and Salt Lake City (ranked fifth) — are in the West; two — Houston (ranked third) and Dallas (ranked fourth) — are in the South; and one — Indianapolis (ranked second) — is in the Midwest.

**SEATTLE**



Seattle takes first place in this category, scoring well on average Supermarket Grocery Costs (ranked second) and Median Income (ranked third) and getting a boost from having no income tax. Although Seat-

tle might not come to mind when considering low-cost cities, compared with other larger cities, Seattleites have traditionally enjoyed lower costs of living. However, the city’s economic growth and expanding population are pushing costs up — average rents across the city grew by 6.4 percent between 2014 and 2015, while housing prices grew at an even higher rate.<sup>12</sup>

**COST OF LIVING RANKINGS**

Rank	City	Score
1	Seattle	72.4
2	Indianapolis	67.5
3	Houston	67.4
4	Dallas	64.3
5	Salt Lake City	61.3
6*	Phoenix	61.0
6*	Des Moines	61.0
8	Raleigh	59.0
9	Denver	58.6
10	Atlanta	58.0
11	Charlotte	57.5
12	Cincinnati	57.3
13	Miami	55.5
14	Detroit	55.3
15	Boston	55.1
16	Chicago	54.6
17	Philadelphia	51.6
18	Cleveland	50.1
19	Sacramento	47.4
20	Minneapolis	45.1
21	San Diego	43.6
22	Washington, D.C.	43.5
23	San Francisco Bay Area	34.5
24	New York	21.5
25	Los Angeles	20.2

\*Tied for 6th place with exactly the same score

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## INDIANAPOLIS



Indianapolis ranks second in the Cost of Living category. The city performs well on Average Meal Costs (tied for second), Median Monthly Rent (ranked third) and Average Supermarket Grocery Costs (ranked eighth). According to research previously gathered from Trulia, more than 78 percent of surveyed homes on the market in November 2014 were considered affordable for a family with the median income in Indianapolis, which is just over \$42,000 per year. Median home values in Indianapolis were about \$118,000 in 2013, and the median monthly rent in 2014 was only \$1,087.

Houston comes in third in the Cost of Living category, reflecting the lack of a state income tax (tied for first) and the city's low cost for groceries (ranked third). In addition to the zero state income tax, the city offers its own local tax incentives to attract businesses to the area, meaning more jobs for residents. A three-course meal for four people isn't cheap (\$124) but it is still more affordable than in almost half of the cities in the Index — Houston ranks 14th for Average Meal Cost. Median monthly rent is relatively high (\$1,597) — the city ranks 15th in that category.

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## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Cultural Diversity category measures the artistic, culinary and cultural opportunities in a given city, as well as its foreign-born population. A city's culture, identity and overall environment can strongly influence the desire to move or relocate there. In addition to physical spaces like theaters and museums, the category also measures Internet connectivity, which enables greater exposure among users to a world of educational, informational and cultural opportunities. A city's Cultural Diversity score is closely related to the number of international flights (included in the Career Prospects category) it offers, demonstrating that a city's ethnic makeup and cultural diversity can strongly influence international travel and vice versa. Regionally, the coastal cities perform better in this category; no Midwestern city makes it into the top 10.

### LOS ANGELES



Los Angeles is the leader in cultural diversity. Despite having a large geographical footprint encompassing 4,850 square miles, the Los Angeles metro area ranks first with the most entertainment venues per square mile. With world-famous Hollywood entertainment and an extravagant dining scene, the

Los Angeles metro area is home to more than 13,600 arts, theater, performance and recreational venues and has almost 26,000 food and beverage establishments. L.A.'s breadth of cultural and dining options mirrors its cultural and ethnic diversity; it ranks second for having the largest number of foreign-born residents (approximately 33.7 percent) in the metro area.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY RANKINGS

Rank	City	Score
1	Los Angeles	63.9
2	New York	57.0
3	San Francisco Bay Area	53.3
4	Washington, D.C.	43.5
5	San Diego	41.6
6	Raleigh	41.2
7	Boston	38.4
8	Miami	37.7
9	Seattle	36.9
10	Charlotte	35.1
11	Sacramento	31.2
12	Atlanta	30.0
13	Houston	29.7
14	Denver	28.5
15	Dallas	27.2
16	Chicago	26.7
17	Minneapolis	26.5
18	Philadelphia	24.0
19	Phoenix	22.1
20	Salt Lake City	21.8
21	Des Moines	21.0
22	Indianapolis	15.6
23	Cincinnati	12.3
24	Cleveland	11.0
25	Detroit	10.1

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## NEW YORK



New York City ranks second in Cultural Diversity, leading the category for the largest number of food and beverage venues per square mile; there are more than 46,400 options to choose from across the metro area. In addition, New York's vast array of museums, art galleries, Broadway shows and concerts, television and movie production, and cultural festivals places it second in the Arts and Entertainment indicator. With deep historical significance as the home of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, New York City has a history of cultural and ethnic diversity, as well. It scores high in the Diversity category, where it is ranked fourth.

The San Francisco Bay Area comes in third in Cultural Diversity, offering its residents a unique West Coast experience. San Francisco is known for its diverse population that is progressive on many civic issues. The metro area scores third in Availability of Entertainment, Availability of Food and Drink, and Diversity, and fourth in Internet Connectivity. The city lags behind in Projected Population Growth, ranking 23rd. In the Cultural Diversity category, the San Francisco Bay Area benefits greatly from its smaller geographical footprint. The area has 11,300 restaurants and bars, which are densely packed into the metro region, and more than 1,800 entertainment venues. The city also has a large percentage of foreign-born residents — approximately 30.4 percent as of 2014.

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## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS



Four of the top 10 cities in the overall Index are in the West: Seattle, San Francisco, Salt Lake City and Denver. Three of the top 10 cities are in the South: Raleigh, Dallas and Houston, and two top 10 cities are in the East: Boston and Washington, D.C. Only one Midwestern city, Des Moines, is ranked in the top 10 overall.

Even though Los Angeles is not in the top of the overall rankings (22nd), it maintains its position as the entertainment capital of the United States. The city ranks first in the Cultural Diversity category and first in Availability of Entertainment, and comes in second behind New York City on Availability of Food and Drink.



With world-renowned hospitals and research centers, Indianapolis, Cleveland and Cincinnati occupy the top three spots in the Quality of Healthcare indicator, creating a regional medical hub. Despite having less economic power overall, a city can still cultivate a very strong healthcare sector.

Despite having the highest share of foreign-born residents, at approximately 39.2 percent, Miami ranked eighth in the Cultural Diversity category. Lower rankings in Internet Connectivity (22nd) and Population Growth (14th) helped to push Miami out of the top five for Cultural Diversity.



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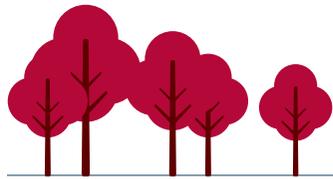
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The Gini Index, which measures the income distribution of a city's residents, is strongly related to a city's density and total population. In the Index, the scores of the larger and denser cities are lower on the Gini indicator, meaning they have higher income inequality.

As the largest city in the Midwest, Chicago acts as a gateway for the huge numbers of travelers coming to the region on international business or for conventions and tourism. O'Hare International Airport in Chicago is one of the busiest in the country and, combined with Chicago Midway International Airport, places the city fourth in the Index for the number of international flights (888) per week.



San Diego can be considered the "greenest" city in the Index, with 23.5 percent of its total city area covered with public parks. Some of these parks and outdoor attractions include the famous Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo and SeaWorld San Diego.

The Index shows no correlation between the number of sunny days recorded in a city and the percentage of its land dedicated to park space. While San Diego ranks near the top and Indianapolis ranks near the bottom for both indicators, Denver scores well for sunny days but not park space.



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Chicago's improvement in reducing crime is reflected in the Prevalence of Violent Crime indicator, where the city ranks fifth, scoring better than Seattle, Boston and Salt Lake City in the number of crimes per 100,000 people.

As the Internet continues to replace newspapers, libraries and other traditional forms of information, its role in educational outcomes is becoming more dominant. In the Index, a city's educational attainment is strongly related to its rates of Internet connectivity.



Although Minneapolis fails to reach the top five in any of the categories, it scores well on several important indicators, including fifth place in the Gini Index (which measures income inequality). It also comes in sixth for Average Commute Time and is ranked fifth in the Educational Attainment of Workforce category.

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## CITY PORTRAITS

This section offers a wider look at some of the top performers in the Index. Featuring geographically diverse cities with different populations, these portraits offer insight into the various performance drivers in the Career City Index.

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## WASHINGTON, D.C.

The nation's capital is home to more than 633,000 people and has a total metro area population of nearly 6 million. Washington, D.C., offers a unique living experience, which includes dynamic, globally minded residents and prestigious government and private-sector job opportunities. Compared with other major cities, it weathered the last economic recession relatively well, largely owing to permanent federal government workforce insulation from market-mandated cost cutting and layoffs during the downturn. The city has an abundance of world-renowned universities, including The George Washington University and Georgetown University, which tend to act as safe havens for permanent employees during downturns. The D.C. metro area also has a strong and growing technology sector, driven in part by federal contracting, increases in military technology investment spending and burgeoning entrepreneurship. The city comes in fourth in the overall rankings and performs well in the Career Prospects (ranked third), Quality of Life (ranked sixth) and Cultural Diversity (ranked fourth) categories. With its walkable neighborhoods and extensive underground transportation system known as Metro (ranked seventh in Quality of Public Transport), Washington, D.C., (ranked third for Educational Attainment) has seen a large influx of young, highly educated individuals looking for an urban playground. With its first-rate museums, historic architecture and global cultural opportunities, Washington, D.C., has long outgrown its reputation as a buttoned-down government city to rival other major global cities.

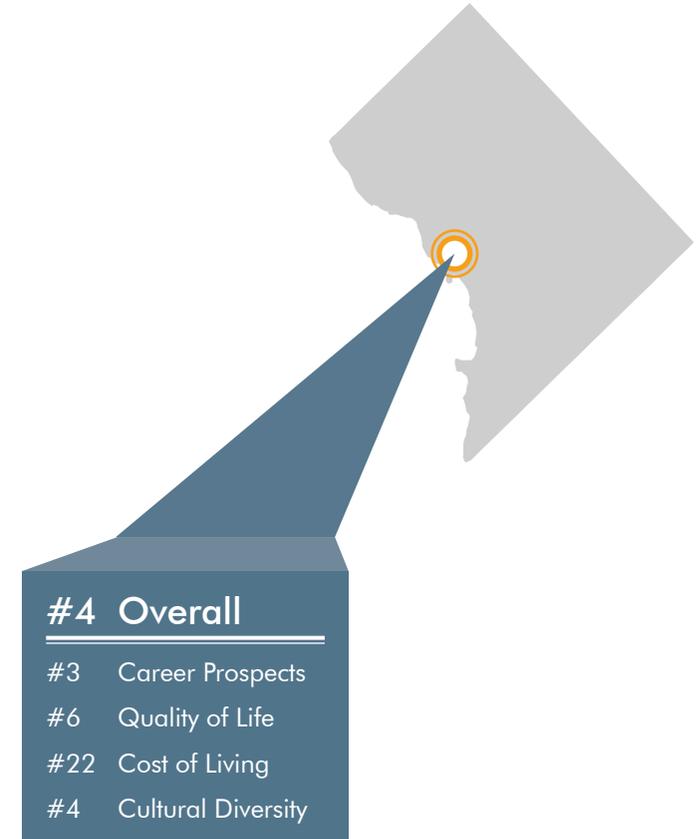


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## RALEIGH

Raleigh, the state capital of North Carolina and home to just over 423,000 people, is one of the fastest-growing cities in the country, having nearly doubled in size since 1990. The city's inclusion in the "Research Triangle" region — appropriately named after the three research institutions in the area: Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University — serves as a conduit for attracting businesses across sectors, which equates to a growing number of job opportunities. Companies are taking advantage of the city's educated workforce (47.8 percent of the population over age 25 holds a bachelor's degree or higher) and pool of new university graduates. Like many of the leading cities in the Index, Raleigh is emerging as a high-technology hub, with IBM, Cisco Systems, Credit Suisse, Red Hat and EMC Corporation all operating there. It also has well-developed financial services and insurance markets. Although it ranks first in only two indicators (high Rental Vacancy Rates and low Prevalence of Violent Crime) and second in another (Population Growth [Projected]), it ranks in the middle of the pack across most other indicators and does not fall below 14th in any of the four major category rankings. Whereas some cities are inconsistent across indicators, Raleigh's consistency in rankings boosts its overall score to a fifth-place ranking. It does, however, rank low in Quality of Healthcare (25th) and International Flights per Week (22nd).

### #5 Overall

#14 Career Prospects

#5 Quality of Life

#8 Cost of Living

#6 Cultural Diversity

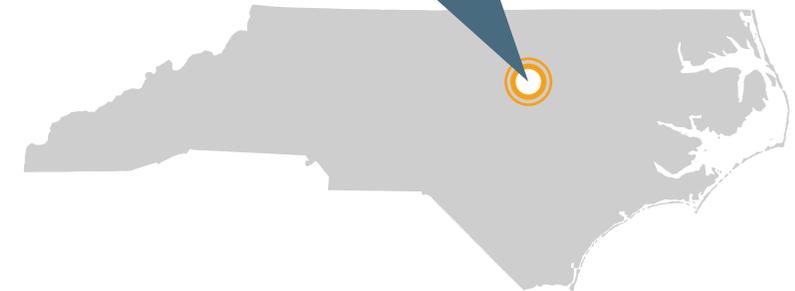


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## SALT LAKE CITY

Salt Lake City is the capital of and largest city in Utah, and its metropolitan area is the second-largest by land area in the Index. However, in terms of population, it is the smallest city in the Index, with about 190,000 inhabitants in the city proper. It ranks first in the Index for unemployment (only 3.5 percent) and fifth in the Career Prospects category. In the overall Index, Salt Lake City ranks seventh, with top 10 rankings in the Career Prospects, Quality of Life and Cost of Living categories. The city's median household income, at \$46,711 in 2014, falls below the national median of \$53,657, but it scores second-best on the Gini Index, which measures income inequality. The city ranks at the lower end of the Cultural Diversity category (20th) and has the lowest score among all cities for both Availability of Entertainment and Availability of Food and Drink, owing to its large land area. Although the city proper is limited in park space (25th in Park Space as a Share of Total City Acreage), it maintains a strong outdoor recreation and tourism industry. The surrounding mountains and nearby Great Salt Lake provide myriad options for outdoor enthusiasts, including skiing, hiking, biking, hunting and fishing.

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## DENVER

Situated in the middle of the Rocky Mountains, Denver — the Mile-High City — is the capital of Colorado and the state's largest city (an estimated 633,000 residents as of 2014). The city is ranked eighth in the Robert Half Career City Index, boosted by a strong performance in the Career Prospects category (ranked sixth) and the Cost of Living category (ranked ninth), both of which have the highest weighting in the Index. With a low unemployment rate (just 4.2 percent, ranked sixth), strong employment outlook (ranked fifth), relatively low cost of living (ranked ninth in the category) and a favorable work-life balance with a high number of sunny days (ranked fifth) and proximity to the great outdoors, Denver is uniquely positioned to attract new graduates or others just starting their careers. And businesses and startups are taking note of this growth, benefitting from Denver's highly educated workforce (ranked ninth, as 44.3 percent of the population over age 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher). Strategically located Denver International Airport — it is nearly equidistant from Midwest cities like Chicago and St. Louis and West Coast cities like Los Angeles and San Diego — offers many flights to the rest of the country and the world. Some of the largest companies calling the Denver area home are Molson Coors Brewing, Western Union, DaVita and the Newmont Mining Company.

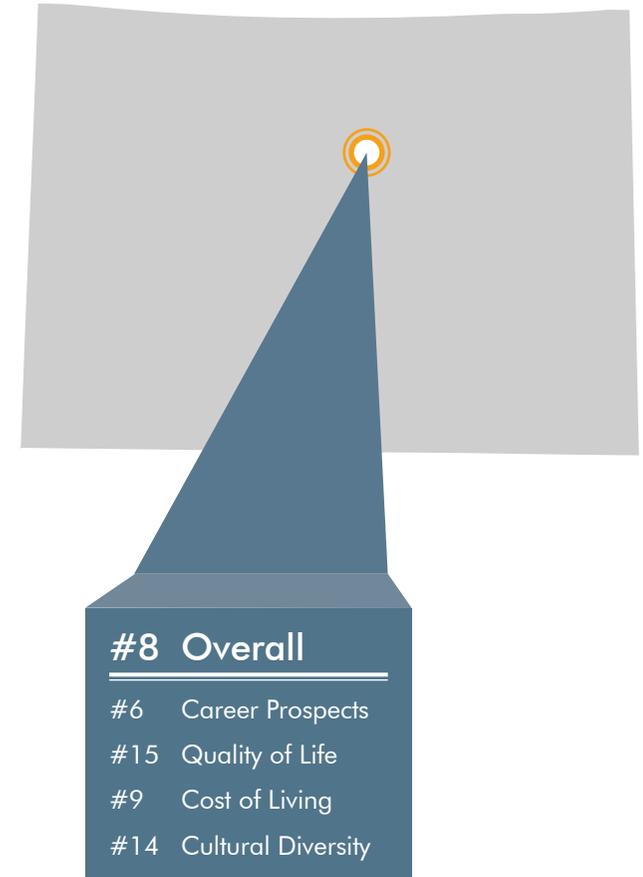


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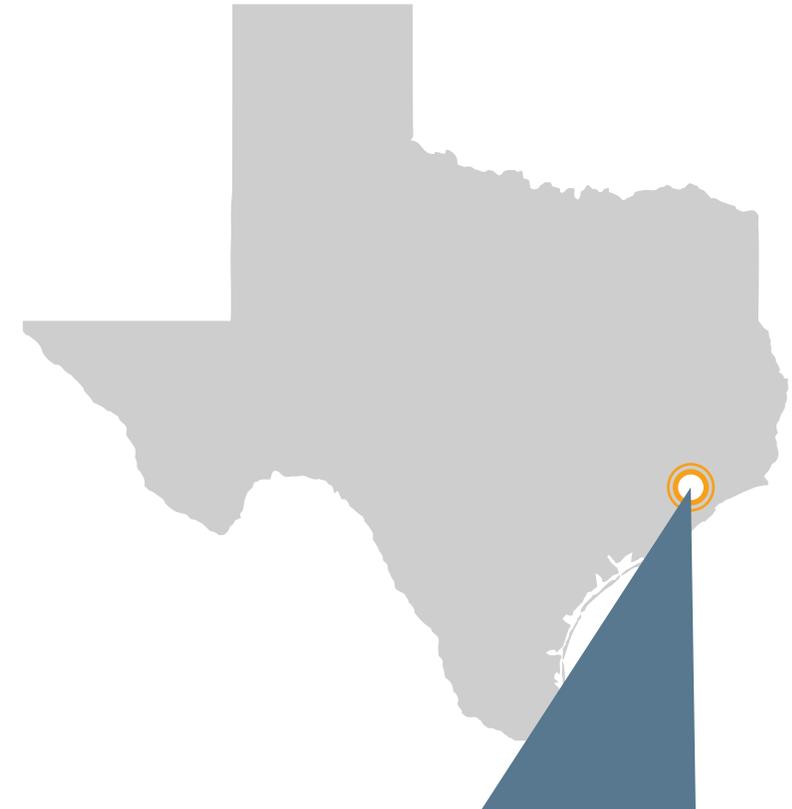
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# HOUSTON

Situated on the Gulf Coast of Texas, Houston is the fourth-largest city in the United States, with a population exceeding 2.1 million people. The city is well known for its energy industry, with strong oil and natural gas sectors, and has other well-established industrial bases (manufacturing, aeronautics and transportation) and an expanding healthcare industry. Helped by its diversification away from energy, Houston's economic recovery was faster than in most other U.S. cities in the wake of the last economic recession. In 2014 the metro area grew by 3.5 percent, ranking first on the Forbes 2015 list of America's Fastest Growing Cities, and is home to the second-largest number of Fortune 500 companies in the country, including ConocoPhillips, Halliburton, Sysco, Group 1 Automotive and Waste Management, Inc. Aside from the energy supply chain and its access to the Port of Houston, one of the country's busiest ports, the city's low cost of doing business and a range of state and local tax incentives also attract companies. Lacking a state corporate or individual income tax, Houston ties for first place in the State Income Tax indicator, supporting its Cost of Living category ranking (third). Strong Cost of Living and Career Prospect rankings, the two categories with higher weights in the Index, lead Houston to a ninth-place ranking overall. Although the city's GDP per capita is high (\$70,097) thanks to its energy and oil wealth, it is relegated to 21st place on income inequality. This may be attributed to Houston's large immigrant population (sixth in the Diversity indicator), which is dominated by migrants from Mexico and Central America.



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## DES MOINES

With a population estimated at more than 206,000, Des Moines is the second-smallest city and is situated in the smallest metropolitan area (590,741 residents) in the Index. Despite its size, this Midwestern city plays a large role in business — with the nation’s third-largest insurance center — and in U.S. politics, with the Iowa caucus being the first step in the process that determines the presidential nominees of the nation’s two major parties. Des Moines is also a hub for publishing, manufacturing, agribusiness, finance and government and is home to the headquarters of the Principal Financial Group, the Meredith Corporation, EMC Insurance Companies and Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. The technology sector is also growing, with large companies like Facebook taking advantage of the city’s low business costs, favorable tax climate and educated workforce. Des Moines ranks 10th overall in the Index, led by strong rankings for Cost of Living (tied for sixth) and Quality of Life (seventh). Low crime rates (second) and fast commute times (first) boost the latter, while cheaper meals and rents (first in Average Meal Cost and fourth in Median Monthly Rent) support the former. The city has no direct international flights, and its resultant low score affects its Career Prospects ranking (11th). The median household income in Des Moines (\$47,888) is below the national average, but the city ranks third in the Gini Index, which measures income inequality. It falls behind most other cities in Cultural Diversity (ranked 21st), with fewer entertainment, restaurant and nightlife options than most larger metro areas.

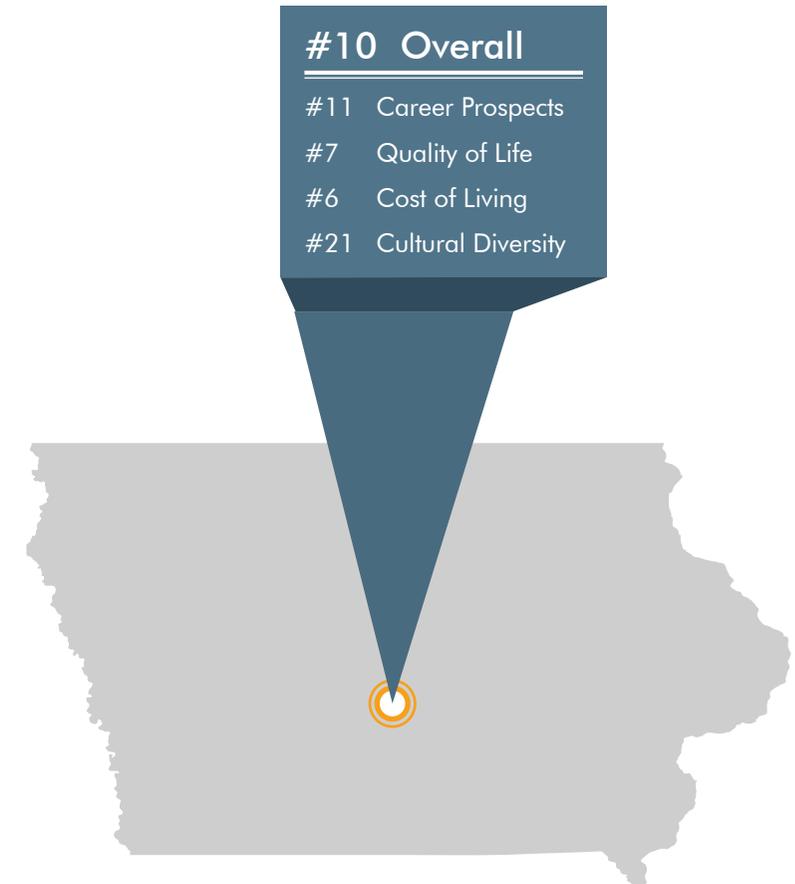


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## NEW YORK

“The Big Apple,” the largest city in the United States (over 8 million people live in the city proper and around 20 million live in the greater metropolitan area), has long been considered the financial capital of the world. It is home to many of the world’s largest banks, including JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, as well as the world’s two largest stock exchanges, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and NASDAQ. New York City is one of the most expensive places to live in the Index. The high average cost of groceries (\$66.90 for 10 staples) and dining out (\$184), as well as high rents, place the city near the bottom of the Cost of Living category. New York City also boasts more billionaires than any other city in the world.<sup>13</sup> Despite its high costs, the city still manages to attract approximately 55 million tourists every year. They come for the wide range of world-class cultural opportunities, entertainment and food options. The city ranks second in the Cultural Diversity category, led by its availability of food and drink (ranked first) and entertainment establishments (ranked second), and large foreign-born population (28.8 percent; ranked fourth in Diversity). The city also scores well in the Quality of Life category (ranked fourth), boosted by its strong primary and secondary education (ranked first in Quality of Education) and public transportation (ranked first in Quality of Public Transport) systems.

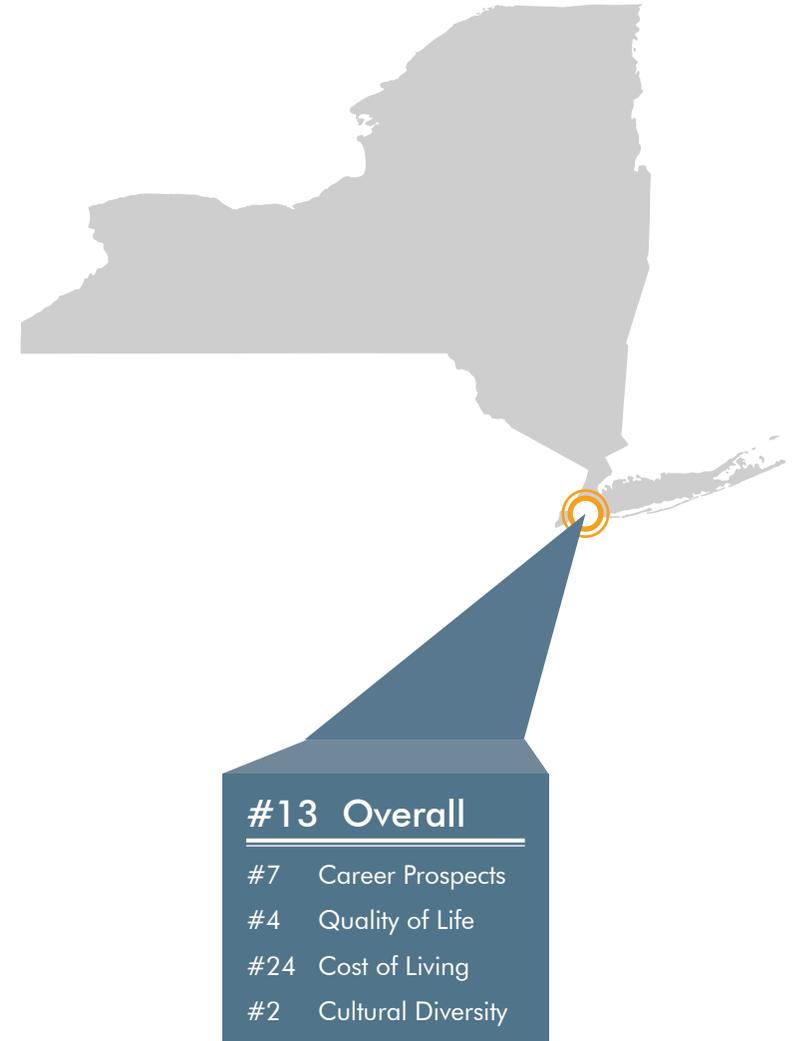


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## MIAMI

Situated on the white beaches of the southern Atlantic coast, Miami is the largest city in Florida. While only about 416,000 people live in the city proper, almost 6 million people call the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach metropolitan area home. Miami has a majority Spanish-speaking population, including the largest Cuban-American plurality in the United States. It is a major international trade and commerce hub and maintains one of the busiest shipping and cruise ports in the world. Major companies with headquarters in the Miami area include fuel distributor World Fuel Services Corp., construction company Lennar Corporation, and transportation and supply chain management company Ryder. Many other companies use the Miami area as their regional headquarters for Latin America, including American Airlines, Caterpillar and Hewlett-Packard. With an average of about 256 days of sun per year (fourth in the category), Miami remains an attractive tourist destination — around 14 million tourists pass through Miami International Airport every year (second only to New York City in international flights). The city ranks in the middle of the pack in the Career Prospects (19th), Quality of Life (17th) and Cost of Living (13th) categories but fares better in Cultural Diversity (eighth). It has the highest percentage of foreign-born population in the Index, at 39.2 percent, and ranks within the top 10 cities for food and drink and entertainment options.



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## CHICAGO

Chicago is the third-largest city in the United States, with around 2.7 million residents. The Windy City is known for its financial and consulting services, manufacturing, health services, and transportation and distribution industries. In 2015 the Chicago area was home to 31 Fortune 500 companies, including food-processing and commodities-trading corporation Archer Daniels Midland, aerospace manufacturer Boeing, United Airlines and energy firm Exelon. Chicago is ranked 18th overall in the Robert Half Career City Index with strong scores in Quality of Public Transport (ranked third), Prevalence of Violent Crime (ranked fifth) and Rental Vacancy Rate (ranked seventh). In addition, the city is well known for its arts and culture, including its architectural diversity, wide array of museums, and vibrant culinary and recreational scene, which is reflected in its rankings for Availability of Entertainment (seventh) and Food and Drink (sixth). Chicago is a melting pot of different cultures and nationalities, which makes it attractive owing to its diversity (ranked 10th for Diversity). The metro area's GDP per capita (\$58,375) and median household income (\$48,734) are below the Index average. Despite some economic setbacks, Chicago still offers competitive salaries (tied for sixth for Salary Premium), and career opportunities, as has been recently demonstrated by the relocation of several major corporate headquarters, including GE Healthcare, to the downtown area.



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## LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles is the second-largest city in the United States. About 4 million people reside in the city proper, and more than 13 million people live in the metropolitan area. L.A. is well known for its world-famous entertainment industry — Hollywood is the unofficial headquarters of the U.S. film industry — but the city also maintains strong manufacturing, tourism, banking and finance, and healthcare industries. Key Fortune 500 companies with headquarters in L.A. and the surrounding area include engineering firm AECOM, media conglomerate Walt Disney Studios, satellite broadcaster DIRECTV (now a subsidiary of AT&T) and CBRE Group, Inc., the world’s largest commercial real estate services and investment firm. L.A.’s cultural mix — it is home to people from more than 140 countries, speaking more than 224 languages — is a linchpin for its creative side. It is not surprising, then, that the city ranks first in the Index in Cultural Diversity, led by strong scores in Availability of Entertainment (first), Availability of Food and Drink (second) and Diversity (second). About 33.7 percent of the population is foreign-born. Despite the city’s high ranking in the Cultural Diversity category, its overall ranking (22nd) is low. The city’s high cost of living (ranked last in the Cost of Living category) and low score in the Quality of Life category (ranked 20th) drag down its overall score.



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### OVERVIEW

The Robert Half Career City Index ranks and compares 25 U.S. cities across 25 indicators selected to measure different aspects of career development opportunities, quality and cost of living, and cultural environment. The indicators are organized into four distinct categories: Career Prospects, Quality of Life, Cost of Living and Cultural Diversity.

Guided by Robert Half, an Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) research team selected the indicators, created the Index framework, selected the final set of indicators, gathered internal and external data, analyzed and scored the data, and built the Index. Between indicator selection, data validation and allocation of category weights, the research team aimed for objectivity and robustness, relying on existing city-level research and data to construct the Index.

### INDICATOR SELECTION

The 25 indicators were selected to provide a well-rounded overview of different factors that impact career, quality of life and relocation choices in a certain city. Each category has between five and eight indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, intended to reflect the multifaceted nature of each of the four categories. Ranging from employment outlook to quality of transportation to the average cost of a meal out and the number of sunny days, the indicator selection was based on input from Robert Half, as well as category balance, data availability and user-friendliness.

The tables on the following pages outline the 25 indicators across the four categories, detailing the source, data year and data geography. MSA stands for Metropolitan Statistical Area, a geographical entity delineated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for use in collecting, tabulating and publishing federal statistics. MSAs generally refer to a city or cluster of cities in one geographical area.

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## CAREER PROSPECTS INDEX INDICATORS

Indicator	Source	Year	Geography
International flights per week	U.S. Dept. of Transportation	2014	MSA
Gini Index	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	MSA
Education attainment of workforce	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	City
GDP per capita	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	2014	MSA
Employment outlook (projected)	Bureau of Labor Statistics; EIU calculation	2016	MSA
Unemployment rate	Bureau of Labor Statistics	2015	MSA
Salary premium	Robert Half	2016	City

## QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX INDICATORS

Indicator	Source	Year	Geography
Quality of education	EIU City Livability Index	2014	MSA
Number of sunny days	National Climatic Data Center	2012	City
Park space as a share of total city acreage	Trust for Public Land	2014	City
Quality of healthcare	EIU City Livability Index	2014	MSA
Rental vacancy rates	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	City
Quality of public transport	EIU City Livability Index	2014	MSA
Average commute time	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	City
Prevalence of violent crime	Federal Bureau of Investigation	2014	MSA

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## COST OF LIVING INDEX INDICATORS

Indicator	Source	Year	Geography
Average meal cost	Numbeo Cost of Living	2015	MSA
Average grocery cost, basket	EIU Worldwide Cost of Living Survey	2015	MSA
Median monthly rent	Zillow Real Estate	2015	MSA
State income tax	The Tax Policy Center	2015	State
Median income	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	City

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY INDEX INDICATORS

Indicator	Source	Year	Geography
Availability of entertainment	U.S. Census Bureau	2012	MSA
Availability of food and drink	U.S. Census Bureau	2012	MSA
Internet connectivity	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	MSA
Population growth (projected)	United Nations Population Division	2014	City
Diversity	U.S. Census Bureau	2014	MSA

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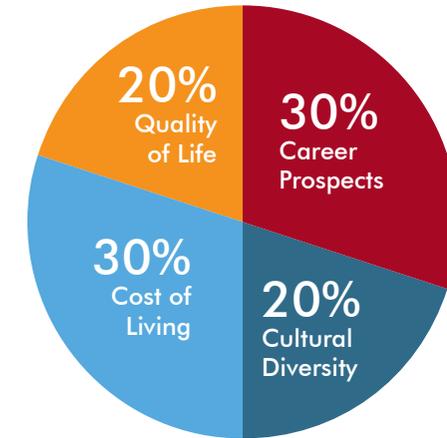
The EIU research team gathered the raw data from internal EIU sources, external resources, country and city government websites, and census and population databases. Every effort was taken to ensure that the data are accurate, as recent as possible over the research period and from reliable sources.

For the Index and U.S. cities, source consistency across an indicator was paramount to ensure direct comparison for ranking purposes. The research team used one source for all U.S. cities across an individual indicator, including the same geographical footprint (MSA or city proper), the same year, and the same definition to the extent possible. Where a source lacked data for a certain city, the research team deliberated potential methodologies to estimate the data point, using a proxy or another reputable source. Years, geographies and sources vary across indicators, but this does not affect the comparison across cities for a given indicator.

As raw data for each indicator came in various units, dates and ranges, they were normalized so that they lay in a range of 0-100, where 100 represented the most favorable outcome. Normalization rebased indicator data to a common scale so that multiple indicators could be aggregated. The scores were then aggregated and ranked to form the Index.

## WEIGHTING

The final Index used weights to place more emphasis on the Career Prospects and Cost of Living categories, as these financial measures often have a larger influence on an individual's decision to move to certain cities over others. In the final Index, the categories were weighted as follows:



## CITY SELECTION

The 25 cities in the Index were selected by Robert Half, in consultation with the EIU, to provide a well-rounded sample of some of the major economic centers located across the United States. An emphasis was placed on cities where Robert Half has a presence due to the high demand for professionals in the fields and occupations it serves. Both large global cities and up-and-coming midsize cities were taken into account for regional balance, as well as variation in population and market size.

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As a specialized staffing firm, Robert Half is frequently asked about livability factors and job prospects in cities across the nation. The Career City Index serves as an in-depth resource to companies and job seekers — in addition to the Robert Half [Salary Guides](#) — to help them make more informed hiring and career decisions.

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## ABOUT THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT

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10 The term "San Francisco Bay Area" generally refers to a nine-county region. However, for the purposes of the Robert Half Career City Index, it refers to the five counties more directly economically influenced by the city of San Francisco (San Francisco, Alameda, Marin, Contra Costa and San Mateo Counties). The metropolitan statistical area (MSA) data used in the Index represent the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward MSA.

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