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Best Cities for Gen Ys

By Aili McConnon, Business Week
Jun 10th, 2009

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Where you live is among the most important decisions you'll ever make argues Richard Florida, author of *Who's Your City?* Young singles between the ages of 20 and 29 are looking for a few key ingredients: cities with diverse job opportunities, an abundance of potential life partners, and many universities.

The following rankings were developed by Richard Florida and Kevin Stolarick at the Martin Prosperity Institute and are based on more than thirty weighted variables in five categories: the share of a population at the young and single life stage, economic strength; education levels and safety; economic growth; and local amenities. All 363 metropolitan areas in the U.S. were ranked.

All population figures are from the latest U.S. Census Bureau data. Small regions have a population of 250,000- 499,000; medium regions: 500,000-999,000; large regions: 1 million plus.

1. Boulder, Colo.

Population: 90,507

Key Attributes: Natural scenery, outdoor recreation, best city for singles in a small region.

2. San Francisco, Calif.

Population: 757,604

Key Attributes: Outdoor recreation, big city, and among the cities with the highest percentages of young people with a bachelor's degree or more, according to research by consultants Joe Cortright and Carol Coletta.

3. Washington, D.C.

Population: 585,267

Key Attributes: Nearly every other person in [Washington, D.C.](#) has a college degree and it is the best city in a large region for recent college graduates to buy real estate.

4. Madison, Wisc.

Population: 219,843

Key Attributes: College town with ample outdoor recreation. It is the best city in a mid-size region for singles and gays and lesbians in their early life-stages.

5. Boston, Mass.

Population: 600,980

Key Attributes: Big city with many universities. It is among the cities with the largest percentages of young people with a bachelor's degree or more (43%), according to a study by consultants Joe Cortright and Carol Coletta.

6. Los Angeles, Calif.

Population: 3,770,590

Key Attributes: Big city where single men outnumber single women by 40,000 (in the greater Los Angeles area). [L.A.](#) attracts entertainment moguls, actors, directors, and film companies.

7. New York, N.Y.

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Population: 8,246,310

Key Attributes: Big city with many universities. Despite the downturn, [New York](#) is still a magnet for investment bankers, fashion designers, writers, and many others in the creative sector.

8. [Santa Barbara, Calif.](#)

Population: 88,978

Key Attributes: Among the best cities in a small region for singles. [Santa Barbara](#) has a high amount of diversity as measured by percent of the population born elsewhere.

9. [Worcester, Mass.](#)

Population: 165,965

Key Attributes: Among the best mid-size cities for singles. High concentration of gays and lesbians, high percentage of workers with bachelor degrees.

10(Tie). [Bridgeport, Conn.](#)

Population: 130,748

Key Attributes: High amount of nightlife establishments and high amount of diversity as measured by percent of the population born elsewhere.

10(Tie). [Trenton, N.J.](#)

Population: 80,144

Key Attributes: Among the best small cities for singles, gays, and lesbians. [Trenton](#) has a high number of physicians per capita and high percentage of workers with a bachelor degree or above.

12. [Ann Arbor, Mich.](#)

Population: 113,100

Key Attributes: Multicultural college town that is among the best cities in a small region for singles.

13. [Austin, Tex.](#)

Population: 725,306

Key Attributes: Among the best buys in large region for recent college graduates.

14. [Santa Rosa, Calif.](#)

Population: 148,063

Key Attributes: Among the best cities in a small region for singles. [Santa Rosa](#) has a high number of creative professionals.

15. [New Haven, Conn.](#)

Population: 123,507

Key Attributes: College town that is among the best midsize cities for singles.

16. [San Jose, Calif.](#)

Population: 898,901

Key Attributes: San Jose has among the highest median household incomes in the country. It is among the best places in a large region to buy real estate for gay and lesbian singles.

17. [San Diego, Calif.](#)

Population: 1,264,263

Key Attributes: The top city in a large region for gay and lesbian singles. [San Diego](#) has a high percentage of creative workers and high employment in arts and culture.

18. [Raleigh, N.C.](#)

Population: 341,891

Key Attributes: Among the best midsize cities for singles, with the largest percentage of young people with a bachelor's degree or more (45%), according to a research by consultants Joe Cortright and Carol Coletta.

19. [Honolulu, H.I.](#)

Population: 359,694

Key Attributes: Among the best midsize cities for gay and lesbian singles. High percentage of residents employed in arts and culture, high number of food establishments.

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[20. Albany, N.Y.](#)**Population:** 90,382**Key Attributes:** High percentage of creative workers, high income growth.[21. Seattle, Wash.](#)**Population:** 565,809**Key Attributes:** A magnet city for young graduates, [Seattle](#) also boasts stunning natural scenery.[22. Portland, Me.](#)**Population:** 62,986**Key Attributes:** Among the top midsize cities for young singles. [Portland](#) has a low crime rate and a high percentage of creative workers.[23. Colorado Springs, Col.](#)**Population:** 390,397**Key Attributes:** relatively low cost of living, high percentage employed in Bohemian occupations.[24. Providence, R.I.](#)**Population:** 170,220**Key Attributes:** High amount of food establishments (3,799), high concentration of 25-29-year-olds.[25. Minneapolis, Minn.](#)**Population:** 362,513**Key Attributes:** Among the best cities in large regions to buy real estate.

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