

# HERE'S OUR PROOF

## Bluegrass Rankings



Economic  
Development

### #1 CHAMBER OF THE YEAR

Commerce Lexington was named Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, recognizing the dual role chambers have in leading business and communities, honoring excellence in operations, member services, and community leadership.

*ACCE, 2016*

### #9 THE 10 MOST DIVERSIFIED METRO ECONOMIES IN THE US

An important vital sign to check is the diversity of industries within a metro economy. WalletHub ranks Lexington the No. 9 metro economy with the range of industries, depth and nimbleness needed to overcome turbulent times and come out the other side even stronger.

*WalletHub, 2020*

### #8 BEST CITY TO START A BUSINESS

HeroPay.com evaluated 358 communities using over 10,000 data points and 17 metrics including business activity, quality of life, labor costs, and taxes. Lexington ranked No. 8 largely due to the city's abundance of talented labor.

*HeroPay, 2017*

### #6 LOWEST STARTUP COSTS

Lexington is a great place for entrepreneurs! SmartAsset.com ranked Lexington No. 6 for lowest startup costs, based on utility costs, office space, filling fees, legal and accounting costs, and typical first year payroll.

*Smart Asset, 2019*

### #8 BEST CITY TO LIVE IN AMERICA

Living in Lexington includes access to numerous attractions such as the Kentucky Horse Park, bourbon distilleries, and the University of Kentucky Wildcats. Additionally, Lexington has very low tax rates, with a 6% sales tax and average property taxes close to \$1,921.

*Money, 2018*

### #9 CITY WITH THE MOST DIVERSE INDUSTRIES

Research shows that greater industry diversity reduces the impact of recessions, as measured by the unemployment rate. Additionally, industry diversification aids in recession recovery.

*Business Facilities, 2018*

GOOD FOR BUSINESS

#### Mac Conway Award for Excellence in Economic Development

*Site Selection, 2018, 2020, & 2021*

"Site Selection's Mac Conway Awards for Excellence in Economic Development recognize the top local and regional economic development agencies in the U.S. for their roles in helping to deliver prosperity to their communities. While not a ranking, objective criteria are used to identify the top performers..."

#### Unity Award

*Alpha Beta Lambda Chapter Education Foundation  
2022*

Each year, Alpha Beta Lambda Chapter Education Foundation of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., recognizes individuals and organizations that have carried out the legacy of Dr. King. Recipients of this award have gone beyond the call of duty, have made a difference, and have worked toward unifying our community. With the 2022 theme of "Unity: A Necessity for Life's Challenges," the group chose COMMERCE LEXINGTON with this year's Unity Award.

Updated: January 2022

# 10 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH AN ADVANCED DEGREE

Among cities of 300,000 people or more, Lexington holds the No. 8 position with 20.3% of its population over age 25 attaining a master's, professional, or doctorate degree.

US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS

# 11 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

Among cities of 300,000 people or more, Lexington holds the No. 13 position with 44.8% of its population over age 25 attaining a bachelor's degree or higher.

US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS

# 6 BEST LARGE COLLEGE CITY

In addition to providing top-ranked sports teams, educational opportunities, and a population with disposable income, the University of Kentucky plays a large role in helping the community. This ranking was based on criteria such as the quality of higher education, earning potential of college graduates, and job growth rate.

Wallet Hub, 2015

# 14 TOP U.S. BUSINESS CLIMATE

For Lexington, the last few years have been among the city's best in terms of economic development activity even in the face of the national economic challenges. The recent success is a testament to the effectiveness of the Bluegrass Business Development Partnership which includes the City of Lexington, Commerce Lexington Inc. and the University of Kentucky

Site Selection Magazine, 2019

# 5 ECONOMIC GROWTH POTENTIAL OF MID-SIZED CITIES

Business Facilities ranks Lexington the No. 5 mid-sized city for economic growth potential. Lexington's assets and employers create the potential for a bright future.

Business Facilities, 2019

67,000

STUDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN 40 MILES OF LEXINGTON

10 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Within 40 miles of Lexington, ten colleges and universities call the Bluegrass home. Three public universities, including the state's flagship, the University of Kentucky, join the region's largest community and technical college and six liberal arts colleges to maintain Lexington's reputation in early America as the "Athens of the West."

18,500

ANNUAL GRADUATES IN THE BLUEGRASS

Top 10 Best Cities for Entrepreneurs  
The Penny Hoarder, 2018

Thoroughbreds aren't the only things winning blue ribbons in this Kentucky city. Lexington makes the cut as one of the best cities for entrepreneurs due to a high percentage of new businesses and the second-highest average earnings for self-employed workers on our list. Aspiring entrepreneurs can check out the Kentucky Small Business Development Center for information and resources. Who knows? You could be the next Colonel Sanders.

## #3 BEST CITIES FOR NEW COLLEGE GRADS

Lexington was rated as the 7th best city for new college grads based on its affordability, monthly rent costs, low unemployment rate, young, adult population, and large concentration of entertainment and dining establishments.

*SmartAsset, 2021*

## #3 BEST CITY WITH THE HIGHEST SALARIES AND LOWEST COSTS OF LIVING

Lexington ranked No. 3 amongst top cities for high salaries and low costs of living. The cost of a person's total necessities is \$20,535 in Lexington, while the average household income in the city is \$77,827.

*GoBankingRates, 2018*

## #10 BEST CITY FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Millennials and Gen Z members currently make up over a third of the workforce. This number will increase to 58% in the next decade, with younger generations dominating the working class. And they are flocking to cities where jobs are in abundance and wages are high.

*GOBankingRates, 2020*

## #9 BEST CITY FOR REMOTE WORKERS

MoveBuddha.com evaluated cities based on the location's cost of living, available workspace, and community amenities. Lexington ranked No. 9 on the list due to the large percentage of residents age 20—30 and the abundance of local coffee shops and bars.

*moveBuddha, 2018*

## #3 BEST CITIES TO RAISE A FAMILY

Lexington ranked as the No. 3 best city to raise a family and No. 1 in the South, according to Zumper. The city scored very well on indicators like child care, housing costs, high school dropouts, and violent crime rates.

*Zumper, 2018*

## #2 BEST MIDSIZED CITY FOR NEW GRADS

Lexington's various amenities and plentiful cultural festivals make the city a desirable place to live. Economically, the state's high projected job growth and median earnings for those with a bachelor's degree make Lexington an appealing place to work.

*OnlineDegrees, 2018*

### #10 City with the Best Work-Life Balance

*SmartAsset, 2021*

"For a city to have a great work-life balance, workers need to find a balance between working and doing the things they love. But for them to do that, they need to have some extra money in their bank accounts to fund their hobbies. On average Lexington residents should have a lot of income left after paying for housing... According to our data, Lexington has the 12th highest concentration of establishments dedicated to arts, entertainment or recreation."

### #7 City of the Future For FDI Strategy

*fDi Intelligence, 2017/18*

The 'American Cities of the Future 2017/18' focuses on a mixture of hard data and expert opinion to rank cities which have the best prospects and strategies for attracting foreign direct investment.

# #5 MOST AFFORDABLE CITIES FOR AN EARLY RETIREMENT

Lexington took the top spot for where it's possible to retire early because of its low cost of living, health care costs, housing costs as a percent of income, and fairly low violent crime rate. Lexington is also top 20 for their unemployment rate.

*SmartAsset, 2020*

# #6 BEST CITIES TO BE A GAME DEVELOPER

Lexington ranks No. 6 on Value Gamers' list of the best cities to be a game developer. Lexington boasts a very low cost of living and a high annual mean salary for software developers, making it a comfortable place to live for those with software development careers.

*Value Gamers, 2018*

# #5 BEST-RUN CITY IN AMERICA

WalletHub compared 150 of the most populated cities across six key categories: financial stability, education, health, safety, economy and infrastructure and pollution. Lexington ranks No. 5 overall and No.6 in total budget per capita.

*WalletHub, 2021*

# #3 SAFEST CITIES IN AMERICA

"Nestled in Kentucky's renowned Bluegrass Region, Lexington is known for thoroughbreds and the University of Kentucky. We think it should also be known for proactive safety initiatives, like its involvement in the US Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods."

*SafeWise, 2019*

# #1 TOP FOODIE TOWNS IN AMERICA BY STATE

Lexington is undoubtedly known for its equine culture and bourbon, but this Kentucky town is also garnering attention for its expansive culinary scene — so much so that "Top Chef" Season 16 will take place in Kentucky, with a significant portion filmed in Lexington. *The Daily Meal, 2019*

# #26 MOST EXCITING FOOD CITY IN AMERICA

Lexington's food scene is rapidly growing and is fueled by new establishments like The Barn, a food hall featuring all local and independent vendors.

*Zagat, 2017*

## Top U.S. Destination to Visit

*Vogue, 2018*

"Lexington is already well known by equine and spirits enthusiasts. But with a number of new restaurants and the newly announced craft beer Brewgrass Trail, there's plenty of reason for gourmands to visit the Bluegrass State's leading city."

## The Best Places to Travel

*Top 50 Places to Travel, Travel + Leisure 2021*

A handful of pilgrimage-worthy culinary and cultural developments will draw travelers to the Bluegrass State's second-largest city in 2021. It's not just *The Queen's Gambit* that has drummed up excitement around Lexington. After sitting empty for 20 years, Greyline Station has been newly reimagined as a 70-stall open market populated by dozens of local small businesses like North Lime Coffee and Donuts and Old North Bar, which will have a "sip and stroll" license so visitors can enjoy a beverage while they browse.

For a full list of all the great things people have said about Lexington and the Bluegrass, please visit us at [locateinlexington.com/bluegrassrankings](http://locateinlexington.com/bluegrassrankings). To find out how to make the Bluegrass your new home, please contact us at (859) 254-4447 or [ggreathouse@commercelexington.com](mailto:ggreathouse@commercelexington.com).