

# HERE'S OUR PROOF



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**9**  
**NEW GEN-Z HOTSPOTS: BEST MID-SIZED U.S. CITIES FOR STARTING OUT**

Lexington ranks in the top 10 for 2025's best mid-sized U.S. cities for starting out and holding on to Gen-Z talent, according to CommercialCafe. This is linked to Lexington's college-town identity and the presence of growing industries like ag biotech, health, manufacturing, and engineering technology.

CommercialCafe, 2025

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**9**  
**MID-SIZED METROS FOR ATTRACTING PROJECTS**

Lexington is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> per capita and 9<sup>th</sup> overall among mid-sized metros (200K-1M population) for attracting projects.

Site Selection Magazine, 2024

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**7**  
**CITY WITH MOST SUSTAINABLE COMFORTABLE LIVING SALARY**

For sustainable living based on the 50/30/20 budgeting rule, Lexington ranks 7<sup>th</sup> for single adults.

SmartAsset, 2024

**GOOD FOR BUSINESS**

## 2025 Official Gold Winner IEDC Excellence Awards

Advancing the Bluegrass Region

### 2025 IEDC Excellence in Economic Development Awards

The Greater LEX Regional Competitiveness Plan unites nine Central Kentucky counties to drive economic growth and long-term prosperity. Led by Commerce Lexington, it focuses on regional branding, talent attraction, infrastructure, and policy advocacy—all to strengthen the region's competitive edge.

## 2025 Official Silver Winner IEDC Excellence Awards

Look at Lex Talent Website

### 2025 IEDC Excellence in Economic Development Awards

LookAtLex.com, created by Commerce Lexington with DCI and regional partners, is elevating the region's talent attraction efforts by showcasing local jobs, neighborhoods, and quality of life. By connecting skilled workers with employers and highlighting what makes Lexington unique, it's helping position the region as a top place to live, work, and thrive.

# #16 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH AN ADVANCED DEGREE

Among cities of 300,000 people or more, Lexington holds the No. 16 position with 22.2% of its population with an educational attainment of Master's, Professional, and Doctorate degrees.

US Census Bureau, 2024 ACS

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

Among cities of 300,000 people or more, Lexington holds the No. 15 position with 51.1% of its population with an educational attainment of a Bachelor's degree or higher.

US Census Bureau, 2024 ACS

# #24 MOST EDUCATED CITY

Lexington continues to stand out nationally as a hub of educational excellence, earning the #24 spot on Wallethubs ranking of the Most Educated cities in America.

Wallethub, 2025

# 75,000+

STUDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN 40 MILES OF LEXINGTON, 2024

# 20,000+

ANNUAL GRADUATES IN THE BLUEGRASS, 2025

A SMART  
BET

## LEXINGTON FOLLOWS THE NATION WITH LARGE GAINS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

U.S. metro areas saw bachelor's degree or higher attainment rise from 34.2% (2015–2019) to 37.8% (2020–2024). The Lexington MSA outpaced this trend, increasing from 37.3% to 42.0% over the same periods.

Source U.S. Census Bureau.

Updated: January 2026

# #15 BEST PLACES TO LIVE

Praised for its high quality of life, affordable cost of living, and strong, diverse economy, driven by the University of Kentucky and horse racing industry, Lexington ranks #15 in U.S. News & World Report Top 150 Places to Live in the U.S..

U.S. News & World Report, 2024

# #6 BEST CITY FOR RENTERS

When looking for rental, Lexington ranks high among the nation in rental units with onsite parking average monthly rent per square foot.

Forbes, 2024

# #9 BEST CITY FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

With its blend of affordability, short commutes and solid health coverage, Lexington secures 9th place in Coworking Cafe's Best City for Work-Life Balance.

Coworking Cafe, 2025

# #23 TOP U.S. CITY WITH BEST QUALITY OF LIFE

Everyone's looking for a place to live, work, and play—and Lexington delivers. From farm-to-table dining and equine culture to sports, bourbon distilleries, and its role as the anchor of the nine-county Greater LEX region, Lexington sits just over an hour from Cincinnati and Louisville.

Forbes, 2024

## LEXINGTON IS AMONG THE TOP 25 OF BEST PLACES TO RETIRE.

Lexington has graced the top 25 Best Places to Retire, ranking #10 for 2025 according to U.S. News & World Report. Lexington has it all for retirees, from housing costs, taxes, and overall quality of life, offering residents many of the perks of a bustling city with the sights and feels of a smaller Midwestern town.

For a full list of all the great things people have said about Lexington and the Bluegrass, please visit us at [locateinlexington.com/bluegrassrankings](https://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).

# **1** MOST TOURIST-FRIENDLY CITY IN AMERICA

Lexington saw record-breaking tourism in 2024, generating \$1.7 billion in economic impact and reinforcing its rise as a premier travel destination.

Condé Nast Traveler, 2025

# **6** BEST FOOD CITY IN U.S.

Lexington offers innovative farm-to-table dining, perfect for locals and weekend travelers alike.

Condé Nast Traveler, 2025

# **8** BEST SMALL CITY IN U.S.

Consistently earning top Best Small City rankings, Lexington celebrates its rich history and vibrant, modern atmosphere.

Condé Nast Traveler, 2025

# **10** THE SOUTH'S BEST CITIES 2025

Southern charm, hospitality, a walkable downtown, and horse country make Lexington one of the South's best cities.

Southern Living, 2025

# **23** BEST RUN CITIES IN AMERICA

Measured by financial stability, education, health, safety, economy, and infrastructure and pollution, Lexington continues to rank as a top best-run cities, taking the number #23 spot in 2024.

WalletHub, 2025

**Lexington Receives "Triple Crown"  
Condé Nast Traveler  
Readers' Choice Awards 2025**

Lexington has been recognized as a top hospitality destination in the 2025 Readers' Choice Awards, earning the title of the #1 Most Tourist-Friendly City in the U.S. Known for its historic equine industry, vibrant food scene, and signature southern charm, the city continues to captivate travelers from around the world.