

Money BEST PLACES TO LIVE

2006

Americans are flocking to places that offer big-city opportunities and amenities -- with a lot more green space and a lot less stress. See the top 10 Great American Towns:

And the winners are...

1. Fort Collins, CO
2. Naperville, IL
3. Sugar Land, TX
4. Columbia/Ellicot City, MD
5. Cary, NC
6. Overland Park, KS
- 7. Scottsdale, AZ**
8. Boise, ID
9. Fairfield, CT
10. Eden Prairie, MN

WINNER

Scottsdale, AZ

Top 100 rank: 7

Population: 226,000

[Compare Scottsdale to Top 10 Best Places](#)

Financial

	City stats	Best places average
Median family income (per year)	\$84,747	\$76,893
Family purchasing power (annual, cost-of-living adjusted)	\$59,639	\$68,109
Sales tax	7.95%	6.55%
State income tax rate (highest bracket)	5.04%*	6.46%
State income tax rate (lowest bracket)	2.87%*	2.74%
Auto insurance premiums (Average for the state)	\$2,588	\$2,207
Job growth % (2000-2005)	8.75%	10.97%

Housing

	City stats	Best places average
Median home price	\$370,000	\$259,566
Home price gain (2004-2005)	25.40%	9.26%

Education

	City stats	Best places average
Colleges, universities and professional schools	15	8
Junior colleges and technical institutes	1	0
Test scores reading (% +/- state average)	34.6%	13.3%
Test scores math (% +/- state average)	37.5%	16.9%
% students attending public/private schools	90.0/10.00	88.4/11.59

Quality of life

	City stats	Best places average
Air quality index (% of days AQI ranked as good)	22.2%	71.9%
Personal crime risk (100 is nat'l average; lower is better)	52	45
Property crime risk (100 is nat'l average; lower is better)	120	74
Personal crime incidents (per 100,000)	209	228
Property crime incidents (per 100,000)	4,011	3,105
Median commute time (in minutes)	21.5	20.8
% population with commute 45 mins. or longer	11.3%	13.4%

Leisure and culture

	City stats	Best places average
Movie theaters (within 15 miles)	34	22
Restaurants (within 15 miles)	3,822	2,268
Bars (within 15 miles)	241	127
Public golf courses (within 30 miles)	134	74
Libraries (within 15 miles)	45	43
Museums (accredited by AAM within 30 miles)	5	7
Ski resorts (within 100 miles)	0	10

Weather

	City stats	Best places average
Annual precipitation (inches)	11.97	36.00
Clear days	211	107
High temp in July ° F	105.2°	87.7°
Low temp in Jan ° F	39.9°	23.5°

Health*

	City stats	Best places average
Has health plan (% of residents)	84.9%	88.2%
Body mass index (avg. for residents)	26	27
Cancer mortality (per 100,000, age-adjusted)	182.6	191.3
Cardiac mortality (per 100,000)	187.3	202.0

Meet the neighbors

	City stats	Best places average
Median age	39.9	34.5
Completed at least some college (% of residents)	73.8%	63.9%
Married	53.7%	54.3%
Divorced	12.5%	9.3%
Amount spent on vacations (domestic and foreign, household avg. per year)	\$8,272	\$7,549

*County data

Income tax notes:

For joint returns, the taxes are twice the tax imposed on half the income.

Source:

