

# BLUEGRASS Rankings

## #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*

## #14 CITY WITH THE FASTEST GROWING RATE OF NEW STARTUPS

FiveThirtyEight ranks Lexington the No. 14 metro area with the fastest growth rate of new startups. In 2014, startups accounted for 7.5% of all businesses in the community and saw a 1.1% increase over 5 years.

*FiveThirtyEight, 2016*

## #2 RAPID RECOVERY LEADER

Business Facilities evaluated U.S. metros that had the most impressive surge in job creation, wages, and salaries between 2013 and 2014, ranking Lexington No. 2. The analysis noted Lexington's high-tech economy and local partnerships between the city, university, and Commerce Lexington as key contributing factors.

*Business Facilities, 2014*

## #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*

## #8 LOWEST STARTUP COSTS

Lexington is a great place for entrepreneurs! SmartAsset.com ranked Lexington No. 8 for lowest startup costs, based on utility costs, office space, filling fees, legal and accounting costs, and typical first year payroll.

*Smart Asset, 2017*

### Mac Conway Award for Excellence in Economic Development *Site Selection, 2018*

The Mac Conway Award recognized "the nations and national/regional economic development offices that were the most successful in attracting capital investment projects in 2017."

### A Top 5 Best Buy for Recent College Grads and Young Professionals *Who's Your City by Richard Florida*

Choosing a spouse and choosing a career are important life decisions - but perhaps even more predictive of our all-around personal happiness is our choice of living location, argues Florida. As globalization makes the world effectively smaller, economic growth concentrates in certain mega-regions of large superstar cities, leaving other regions in the proverbial dust. The areas where we live are also affected by our increasingly mobile culture, housing priorities that change as we age and the global economy.

# 11 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH AN ADVANCED DEGREE

Among cities of 300,000 people or more, Lexington holds the No. 11 position with 18% of its population over age 25 attaining a master's, professional, or doctorate degree.

*US Census Bureau, 2017 ACS*

# 14 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Among cities of 300,000 people or more, Lexington holds the No. 14 position with 41.8% of its population over age 25 attaining a bachelor's degree or higher.

*US Census Bureau, 2017 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*

# 4 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, 2017*

# 6 ECONOMIC GROWTH POTENTIAL OF MID-SIZED CITIES

Business Facilities ranks Lexington the No. 3 mid-sized city for economic growth potential and No. 9 for industry diversification. Lexington's assets and employers create the potential for a bright future.

*Business Facilities, 2018*

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."

70,000

STUDENTS ENROLLED WITHIN 40 MILES OF LEXINGTON

16,000

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.

# #18 BEST PLACES FOR RECENT GRADS TO FIND JOBS

Lexington was rated as the 18th best place for recent grads to find jobs, based on population and education data, median earnings, rent as a percentage of income, and jobs in management, business, science, and arts.

*NerdWallet, 2015*

# #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*

# #6 MOST INSPIRING CITIES FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

Lexington's art culture supports local artists. This ranking was based on education data, art dealers, performing arts companies, museums, fine arts schools and creative industries businesses per 100,000 people.

*World Wide Learn, 2015*

# #8 BEST CITY FOR WORKING PARENTS

According to NerdWallet.com, Lexington, KY is one of the best cities in the nation for working parents, coming in at No. 8 on the Top 25 list. NerdWallet said, "In Lexington, working parents enjoy the lowest child care costs in our top 10 as well as quality schools."

*NerdWallet, 2014*

# #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*

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

*SmartAsset, 2018*

"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, 2015/16*

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.

# #1 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, 2018*

# #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*

# #4 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. 4 overall and No.4 in total budget per capita.

*WalletHub, 2018*

# #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, 2018*

# #24 WORLD'S SMART CITIES

National Geographic says, "Smart cities are well connected locally and internationally, have a sustainable lifestyle, and are places where people come first."

*National Geographic, 2014*

# #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*

## Google eCity Award *Google, 2013*

Google recognized Lexington as the strongest online business community in the state of Kentucky: "The businesses in Lexington are digitally savvy and represent the community across the web to locals, students, and racehorse fans alike. This Thoroughbred city sets the pace for the state."

## A Place of A Lifetime

*50 Places of a Lifetime, America; National Geographic Traveler, 2001*

"Bordered by sharp hills and steep, dark ravines and giving way to lowlands, floodplains, and corn fields to the west, the Bluegrass is Kentucky's beating heart. Its geographical and spiritual center is Lexington, home of the University of Kentucky, a city encircled by burley, bourbon, and thoroughbreds, but grown nearly independent of them."

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) 225-5005 or [ggreathouse@commercelexington.com](mailto:ggreathouse@commercelexington.com).