AIER | AMERICAN INSTITUTE *for* ECONOMIC RESEARCH

2012–2013

College Destinations Index

Economics
for **Everyone**

"An objective, comprehensive list."
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College isn't just about classroom learning. The people students meet, the places they go, and the jobs they may hold are essential supplements to formal education. AIER's 2012 College Destinations Index measures the informal learning environment. And it does so objectively by looking at statistics covering 12 key criteria. These criteria fall into one of three larger categories that powerfully impact the student experience: Academic Environment, Quality of Life, and Professional Opportunity.

To create the CDI, researchers at the American Institute for Economic Research gather data for all 527 Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Areas in the U.S. They exclude localities with fewer than 15,000 students and any location missing data for more than two key criteria. The resulting Index is further broken down into four classes based on area size.

This brochure lists the top 75 College Destinations for 2012-2013. These include the top 15 among the Major Metros and the top 20 locations among Mid-size Metros, Small Cities, and College Towns. To see more great research from AIER visit...

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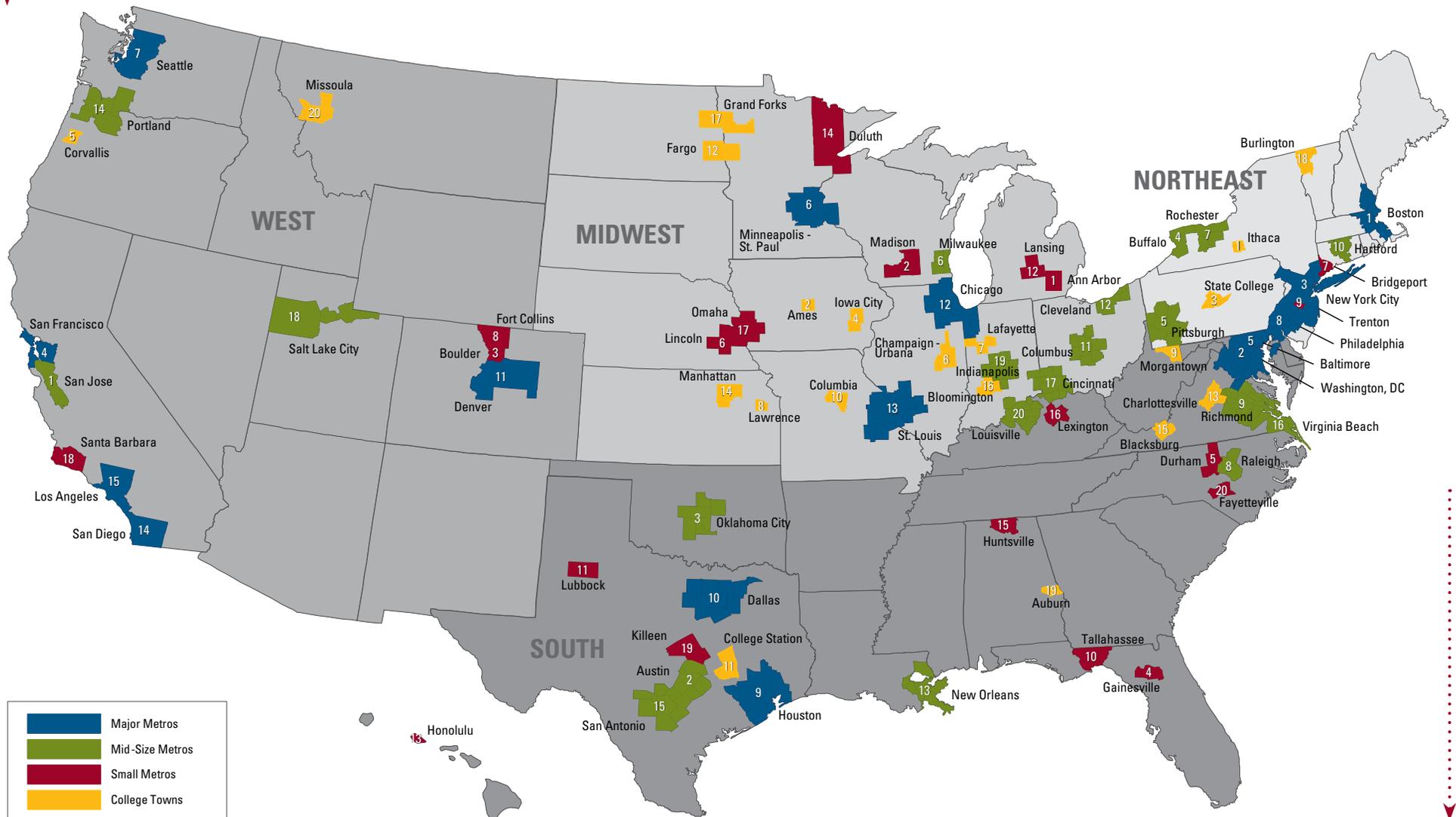
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75 Best Cities for College Students

AIER | College Destinations Index 2012

WEST

MIDWEST

SOUTH

NORTHEAST

7 Seattle

20 Missoula

14 Portland

5 Corvallis

18 Salt Lake City

8 Fort Collins
3 Boulder
11 Denver

4 San Francisco
1 San Jose

18 Santa Barbara
15 Los Angeles
14 San Diego

11 Lubbock

3 Oklahoma City

10 Dallas

11 College Station
19 Killeen
2
15 San Antonio
Austin
9 Houston

13 New Orleans

13 Honolulu

17 Grand Forks
12 Fargo
14 Duluth

6 Minneapolis - St. Paul

2 Madison
6 Milwaukee
12 Lansing
1 Ann Arbor

2 Ames
4 Iowa City

17 Omaha
6 Lincoln
14 Manhattan
10 Columbia
8 Lawrence

12 Chicago
Lafayette
6 Champaign - Urbana
7 Indianapolis
19
16 Columbus
11 Cincinnati
Cleveland 12
13 St. Louis
Bloomington
17
20 Louisville
16 Lexington

15 Huntsville

19 Auburn

10 Tallahassee
4 Gainesville

18 Burlington

1 Boston
10 Hartford
7 Bridgeport

4 Rochester
7
Buffalo
1 Ithaca
3 State College
3 New York City
9 Trenton
8 Philadelphia
2 Baltimore
Washington, DC

5 Pittsburgh
9 Morgantown
13 Charlottesville
9 Richmond
16 Virginia Beach
15 Blacksburg
Durham 5
8 Raleigh
20 Fayetteville

Legend

- Major Metros
- Mid-Size Metros
- Small Metros
- College Towns

AIER | College Destinations Index 2012

Major Metros — populations greater than 2.5 million

Rank	Major Metros	Population	Student Concentration	Student Diversity	Research Capacity	Degree Attainment	Arts & Leisure	City Accessibility	Creative Class	Cost of Living	Earning Potential	Entrepreneurial Activity	Unemployment Rate	Brain Gain or Drain
1	Boston	4,560,689	92.3	8.1%	$485	43.0%	96.0	18.7%	46.3%	$1,349	$53,713	-55.3	5.3%	1.006
2	Washington, DC	5,610,082	84.8	4.3%	$179	46.8%	45.1	19.0%	50.7%	$1,461	$56,442	-21.1	5.1%	1.022
3	New York City	18,919,983	73.0	6.1%	$179	36.0%	27.2	38.7%	40.0%	$1,403	$52,375	-43.8	8.4%	0.992
4	San Francisco	4,345,320	86.0	5.6%	$399	43.4%	28.7	21.7%	45.3%	$1,833	$59,696	-48.8	8.1%	0.995
5	Baltimore	2,714,183	86.2	4.4%	$936	35.1%	69.0	9.8%	43.7%	$1,263	$47,962	-65.4	6.9%	1.014
6	Minneapolis-St. Paul	3,286,195	77.8	3.4%	$242	37.9%	46.2	8.8%	42.0%	$924	$45,750	-60.5	5.1%	1.006
7	Seattle	3,449,059	71.8	5.2%	$298	37.0%	57.1	13.8%	42.7%	$1,176	$48,976	-82.6	6.9%	0.995
8	Philadelphia	5,971,483	80.4	3.8%	$232	33.1%	31.9	14.4%	41.4%	$1,077	$45,565	-46.9	7.8%	1.017
9	Houston	5,977,092	63.3	5.0%	$287	28.4%	37.0	5.7%	35.6%	$931	$43,568	1.4	6.5%	1.051
10	Dallas	6,402,922	68.0	3.9%	$105	31.1%	46.4	4.1%	37.0%	$891	$39,514	-13.7	6.5%	1.026
11	Denver	2,560,529	67.3	2.6%	$176	38.2%	37.6	7.9%	40.7%	$1,007	$45,982	-57.8	7.9%	1.017
12	Chicago	9,474,211	74.3	3.1%	$172	34.0%	34.6	16.0%	37.4%	$1,016	$43,727	-63.3	8.9%	1.004
13	St. Louis	2,815,168	75.5	2.8%	$280	29.9%	35.9	5.5%	37.0%	$794	$40,342	-50.0	7.4%	1.008
14	San Diego	3,105,989	98.1	2.4%	$338	33.7%	14.5	7.9%	39.7%	$1,406	$45,630	-56.4	8.7%	0.989
15	Los Angeles	12,849,383	87.9	3.8%	$184	31.0%	24.3	10.8%	36.2%	$1,465	$42,818	-59.9	10.1%	1.019

Mid-size Metros — 1.0 to 2.5 million residents

Rank	Mid-size Metros	Population	Student Concentration	Student Diversity	Research Capacity	Degree Attainment	Arts & Leisure	City Accessibility	Creative Class	Cost of Living	Earning Potential	Entrepreneurial Activity	Unemployment Rate	Brain Gain or Drain
1	San Jose, CA	1,843,255	86.3	7.0%	$478	45.3%	23.1	7.1%	49.8%	$1,702	$55,404	-52.5	8.4%	1.053
2	Austin, TX	1,728,307	96.6	4.1%	$359	39.4%	34.4	6.6%	43.2%	$963	$35,522	1.4	5.5%	1.004
3	Oklahoma City	1,257,845	85.5	4.0%	$178	27.6%	21.8	3.3%	35.1%	$701	$37,909	-5.9	4.0%	1.047
4	Buffalo	1,135,198	81.2	8.4%	$312	28.3%	34.6	8.2%	36.0%	$647	$37,511	-25.5	8.3%	0.999
5	Pittsburgh	2,356,381	73.7	4.2%	$451	29.1%	15.3	10.5%	37.3%	$700	$42,216	-31.5	6.3%	1.028
6	Milwaukee	1,557,244	80.7	2.0%	$181	31.7%	86.4	7.2%	37.5%	$866	$41,696	-50.9	7.4%	1.009
7	Rochester	1,054,445	87.8	4.7%	$433	33.0%	27.0	6.8%	39.6%	$804	$39,192	-32.2	7.7%	1.049
8	Raleigh, NC	1,137,552	84.2	5.0%	$320	41.0%	31.8	3.4%	46.0%	$867	$37,849	-71.0	7.4%	0.975
9	Richmond, VA	1,261,317	73.3	2.3%	$166	31.7%	52.6	4.2%	39.9%	$958	$41,242	-57.2	6.0%	1.041
10	Hartford	1,212,956	83.2	3.1%	$206	34.6%	18.3	7.4%	41.6%	$1,113	$49,667	-47.3	7.4%	1.013
11	Columbus, OH	1,840,631	82.9	4.4%	$411	32.5%	8.6	5.1%	38.6%	$779	$38,242	-26.5	6.4%	0.969
12	Cleveland	2,075,758	67.4	3.1%	$219	27.7%	37.6	6.9%	36.5%	$720	$39,348	-81.2	6.7%	1.026
13	New Orleans	1,173,327	68.4	3.3%	$237	26.8%	25.0	8.4%	35.0%	$994	$39,849	-9.5	6.4%	0.997
14	Portland, OR	2,232,496	74.2	2.7%	$170	33.0%	37.5	12.7%	39.3%	$905	$38,728	-88.6	7.8%	0.966
15	San Antonio	2,157,897	73.1	1.6%	$123	25.4%	24.7	5.7%	34.4%	$842	$34,500	-7.7	6.2%	1.075
16	Virginia Beach	1,675,343	85.3	1.2%	$132	28.5%	28.2	6.5%	37.1%	$965	$39,674	-52.2	6.1%	1.059
17	Cincinnati	2,133,203	73.4	2.6%	$206	29.3%	40.0	4.6%	37.1%	$752	$38,168	-55.9	7.1%	0.986
18	Salt Lake City	1,128,988	78.4	2.5%	$336	29.0%	51.2	7.0%	34.8%	$826	$36,986	-90.9	5.7%	0.973
19	Indianapolis	1,759,229	63.8	2.1%	$169	30.7%	43.5	3.5%	37.5%	$761	$38,339	-55.8	7.3%	0.983
20	Louisville, KY	1,287,271	58.5	1.0%	$147	25.8%	37.0	4.3%	34.0%	$694	#N/A	-33.9	#N/A	1.049
	Metropolitan Statistical Areas with greater than 15,000 college students	Population (U.S. Cencus - 2010)	Number of college students per 1,000 population (U.S. census - 2010)	Percent of student body that are non-residents (IPEDS - 2010)	Academic R&D expenditure per capita (National Science Foundation - 2010)	Percent of 25-34 population with bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census - 2010)	Establishments per 100,000 population in arts, entertainment and recreation (U.S. Economic Census - 2008)	Percent of workers 16+ who commute via public transportation, bike, or walk (U.S. Census - 2010)	Percent of workforce in the creative class (U.S. Census - 2010)	Average 2-bedroom rent (U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development - 2011)	Income per capita (Bureau of Economic Analysis - 2009)	Net increase in total # of businesses per 100,000 population (U.S. Small Business Administration - 2009)	Unemployment rate (Bureau of Labor Statistics - 2012 average)	Year-overyear ratio of population with B.A. degree living in the area (U.S. Census - 2010)

Small Cities — 250,000 to 1.0 million residents

Rank	Small Metros	Population	Academic Environment				Quality of Life				Professional Opportunity			
			Student Concentration	Student Diversity	Research Capacity	Degree Attainment	Arts & Leisure	City Accessibility	Creative Class	Cost of Living	Earning Potential	Entrepreneurial Activity	Unemployment Rate	Brain Gain or Drain
1	Ann Arbor, MI	345,290	195.5	7.9%	$3,471	50.4%	35.8	12.2%	51.3%	$882	$38,032	-50.4	5.0%	1.054
2	Madison, WI	569,923	109.4	5.2%	$1,806	43.3%	48.3	13.1%	45.4%	$877	$42,946	-39.1	4.7%	1.068
3	Boulder, CO	295,166	133.8	3.9%	$1,184	57.5%	62.2	14.1%	53.7%	$1,102	$47,489	-81.3	5.9%	0.978
4	Gainesville, FL	266,321	221.3	6.2%	$2,559	37.6%	28.7	11.2%	43.2%	$824	$34,122	-40.2	6.3%	1.132
5	Durham, NC	505,933	126.0	6.3%	$3,450	42.9%	39.3	9.4%	48.0%	$841	$40,116	-22.9	7.1%	1.010
6	Lincoln, NE	303,151	127.0	4.0%	$631	33.7%	48.7	5.6%	39.7%	$661	$36,993	-34.3	3.3%	1.024
7	Bridgeport, CT	918,714	63.9	4.7%	$10	44.0%	47.1	11.8%	42.4%	$1,291	$73,720	-87.1	7.0%	1.034
8	Fort Collins, CO	300,637	128.9	3.8%	$1,008	45.8%	36.0	6.5%	45.3%	$849	$37,368	-88.8	6.4%	1.133
9	Trenton, NJ	366,789	88.7	4.9%	$666	38.5%	35.3	14.9%	43.1%	$1,224	$53,523	-60.8	7.5%	1.008
10	Tallahassee, FL	368,117	182.4	2.1%	$791	34.2%	59.7	5.2%	44.4%	$933	$33,268	-41.3	6.7%	1.081
11	Lubbock, TX	288,462	154.2	5.9%	$640	28.0%	32.5	3.4%	32.5%	$728	$32,166	-18.0	5.0%	1.140
12	Lansing, MI	464,076	164.1	7.8%	$930	30.0%	49.4	8.3%	37.5%	$741	$33,666	-59.9	6.4%	0.981
13	Honolulu, HI	955,775	83.1	7.1%	$333	31.9%	23.8	17.6%	34.9%	$1,702	$45,486	-21.8	5.3%	1.052
14	Duluth, MN	280,035	93.1	1.9%	$97	24.9%	103.9	6.2%	34.0%	$639	$34,387	-57.1	6.5%	1.106
15	Huntsville, AL	419,181	84.3	2.0%	$253	34.4%	32.7	2.9%	44.0%	$665	$38,090	-11.7	5.7%	1.051
16	Lexington, KY	473,547	106.9	2.3%	$760	31.2%	85.4	4.6%	39.0%	$707	$35,696	-31.3	6.2%	0.931
17	Omaha, NE	868,238	83.5	2.5%	$201	33.0%	20.4	3.2%	37.4%	$747	$42,412	-14.4	4.1%	1.030
18	Santa Barbara, CA	424,712	125.3	3.7%	$531	29.7%	56.9	14.5%	34.0%	$1,225	$46,619	-61.7	7.7%	1.036
19	Killeen, TX	408,366	81.4	0.3%	#N/A	19.9%	68.2	5.3%	32.8%	$749	$38,757	-13.5	7.1%	1.188
20	Fayetteville, NC	367,733	106.8	0.6%	$32	23.7%	37.5	6.0%	32.0%	$690	$40,917	-4.9	9.3%	1.236

College Towns — under 250,000 residents

Rank	College Towns	Population	Academic Environment				Quality of Life				Professional Opportunity			
			Student Concentration	Student Diversity	Research Capacity	Degree Attainment	Arts & Leisure	City Accessibility	Creative Class	Cost of Living	Earning Potential	Entrepreneurial Activity	Unemployment Rate	Brain Gain or Drain
1	Ithaca, NY	101,620	296.3	12.0%	$7,388	53.4%	50.1	27.6%	56.0%	$950	$33,632	-9.8	5.7%	1.148
2	Ames, IA	89,575	285.4	12.0%	$2,792	48.4%	46.6	15.0%	47.6%	$740	$35,246	-23.4	3.8%	1.171
3	State College, PA	154,127	271.6	9.8%	$4,999	40.9%	55.7	15.7%	44.7%	$847	$33,730	5.2	5.1%	1.128
4	Iowa City, IA	152,918	205.5	9.0%	$2,904	45.6%	10.8	18.1%	42.5%	$746	$37,985	-14.4	3.7%	1.047
5	Corvallis, OR	85,575	224.3	7.0%	$2,531	48.0%	43.8	23.7%	48.5%	$811	$37,030	-44.4	5.7%	1.019
6	Champaign-Urbana, IL	234,445	227.4	14.2%	$2,197	37.7%	27.0	15.0%	42.5%	$713	$34,859	-22.6	7.0%	1.124
7	Lafayette, IN	202,782	210.2	13.2%	$2,707	30.4%	147.0	8.9%	36.7%	$793	$30,268	-47.8	6.4%	1.004
8	Lawrence, KS	111,130	255.5	6.8%	$2,420	49.9%	24.6	11.4%	44.6%	$536	$31,253	-40.5	5.2%	0.995
9	Morgantown, WV	130,288	205.7	4.9%	$1,189	29.6%	50.7	8.1%	37.2%	$586	$34,412	26.9	4.9%	1.223
10	Columbia, MO	172,319	212.1	3.3%	$1,384	49.0%	31.9	6.3%	45.2%	$666	$36,241	-46.4	4.5%	1.176
11	College Station, TX	230,141	253.8	8.9%	$3,356	32.1%	30.3	9.5%	38.3%	$843	$27,818	-15.6	5.3%	1.114
12	Fargo, ND	209,144	134.4	6.5%	$604	35.6%	23.9	6.4%	36.8%	$612	$39,159	-16.7	3.3%	1.131
13	Charlottesville, VA	199,776	146.9	6.7%	$1,383	42.2%	39.7	7.5%	47.5%	$931	$42,857	-67.6	4.4%	1.093
14	Manhattan, KS	127,880	187.4	7.8%	$1,256	34.2%	20.3	8.4%	37.6%	$618	$40,345	#N/A	5.0%	1.093
15	Blacksburg, VA	161,768	253.4	5.7%	$2,466	30.0%	41.7	6.4%	39.2%	$702	$28,197	-37.1	5.5%	1.118
16	Bloomington, IN	192,696	229.9	9.6%	$921	32.7%	38.3	11.6%	38.5%	#N/A	$30,796	-51.9	6.9%	1.117
17	Grand Forks, ND	99,586	153.9	5.8%	$769	28.8%	33.2	9.9%	36.2%	$644	$35,328	-37.2	4.2%	1.090
18	Burlington, VT	211,035	108.9	1.8%	$615	40.2%	36.0	10.7%	41.7%	$1,197	$41,247	-73.4	3.7%	1.112
19	Auburn, AL	140,780	195.7	4.0%	$1,031	31.2%	28.0	6.5%	36.7%	$647	$27,259	-17.0	5.6%	1.089
20	Missoula, MT	109,494	140.6	3.0%	$580	40.7%	35.3	12.1%	36.3%	$775	$34,712	-93.2	6.3%	1.171
	Metropolitan Statistical Areas with greater than 15,000 college students	Population (U.S. Cencus - 2010)	Number of college students per 1,000 population (U.S. census - 2010)	Percent of student body that are non-residents (IPEDS - 2010)	Academic R&D expnditure per capita (National Science Foundation - 2010)	Percent of 25-34 population with bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census - 2010)	Establishments per 100,000 population in arts, entertainment and recreation (U.S. Economic Census - 2008)	Percent of workers 16+ who commute via public transportation, bike, or walk (U.S. Census - 2010)	Percent of workforce in the creative class (U.S. Census - 2010)	Average 2-bedroom rent (U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development - 2011)	Income per capita (Bureau of Economic Analysis - 2009)	Net increase in total # of businesses per 100,000 population (U.S. Small Business Administration - 2009)	Unemployment rate (Bureau of Labor Statistics - 2012 average)	Year-over-year ratio of population with B.A. degree living in the area (U.S. Census - 2010)