

College isn't just about classroom learning.

The **people** students will meet, the **things they will do** outside of class, and the **jobs** they may hold are **all essential complements** to their formal education.

CHOOSE YOUR Destination

AIER's 2013-2014 College Destinations Index measures the informal learning environment. Data for all 529 Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the U.S. is collected and ranked into four categories based on population. The top 75 College Destinations are identified from among 229 census regions with 15,000 students or more across the U.S.

The CDI offers an objective look at measures covering **12 key criteria** in **3 categories** that powerfully impact the student experience:

- Academic Environment
- Quality of Life
- Professional Opportunity

ECONOMICS FOR Everyone

AIER produces unbiased, non-partisan research and critical analysis of important economic issues designed to help ordinary Americans protect their interests, and to help policymakers make better decisions for a strong America.

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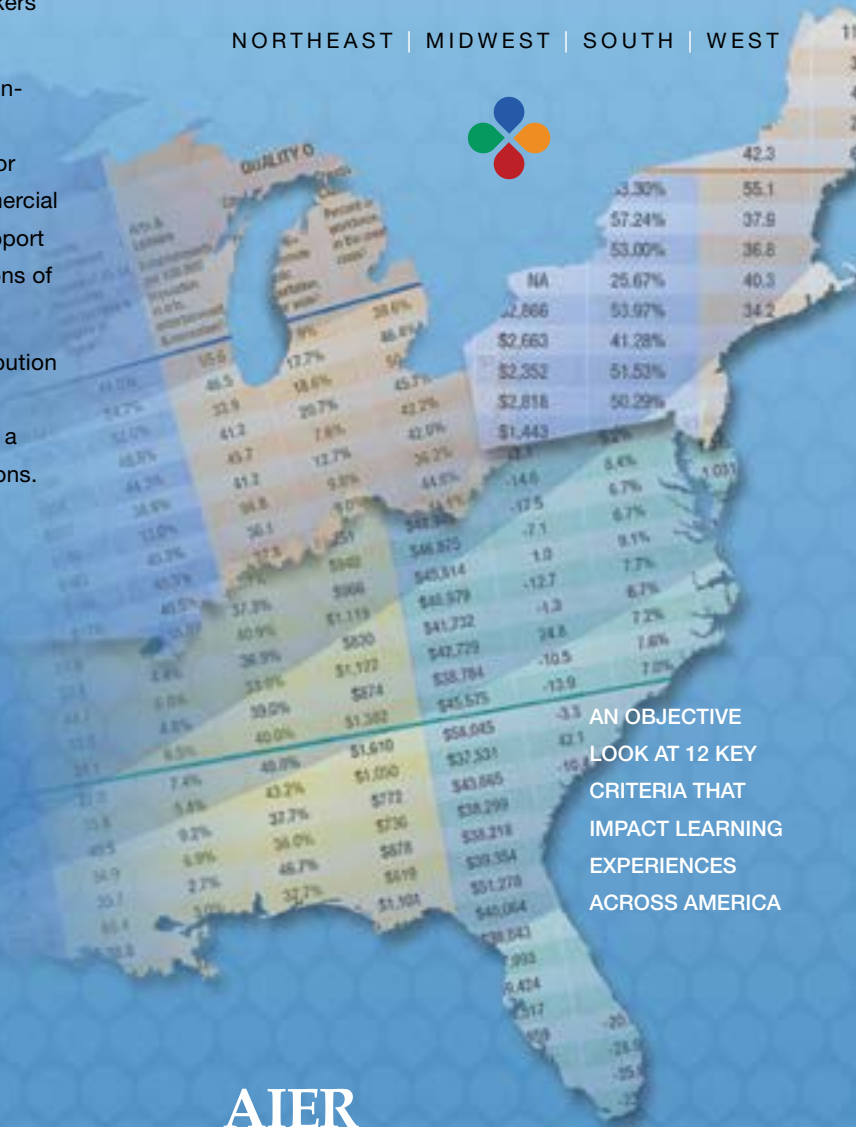
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75 BEST

METRO AREAS + COLLEGE TOWNS FOR STUDENTS

12

KEY CRITERIA THAT HAVE A POWERFUL IMPACT ON A STUDENT'S INFORMAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE



THE top 15 MAJOR METROS

greater than 2.5 million residents

THE top 20 MID-SIZE METROS

1.0 to 2.5 million residents

THE top 20 SMALL METROS

250,000 to 1.0 million residents

THE top 20 COLLEGE TOWNS

Under 250,000 residents

RANK	METRO AREAS & COLLEGE TOWNS		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 Drain or Gain
Overall Rank	Metro Areas & College Towns	Population	Number of college students per 1,000 population ²	Percent of student body that are non-residents ³	Academic R&D expenditure per capita ⁴	Percent of 25-34 year old population with bachelor's degree or higher ³	Establishments per 100,000 population in arts, entertainment & recreation ⁵	Percent of workers 16+ who commute via public transportation, bike, or walk ³	Percent of workforce in the creative class ³	Average 2-bedroom rent ⁶	Income per capita ⁷	Net increase in total # of businesses per 100,000 population ⁸	Unemployment rate ⁹	Year-over year ratio of population with B.A. degree living in the area ³
1	New York, NY	19,015,900	74.1	3.9%	\$196	44.5%	55.6	37.9%	39.6%	\$1,474	\$54,067	12.9	7.5%	1.015
2	Boston, MA	4,591,112	93.2	7.5%	\$517	54.7%	46.5	17.7%	46.4%	\$1,444	\$55,207	-13.3	5.7%	1.009
3	Washington, D.C.	5,703,948	86.3	3.1%	\$190	52.0%	33.9	18.6%	50.7%	\$1,412	\$56,721	4.9	5.0%	1.043
4	San Francisco, CA	4,391,037	88.1	4.3%	\$396	48.5%	41.2	20.7%	45.7%	\$1,795	\$60,571	-9.0	6.2%	1.027
5	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	3,318,486	75.8	3.8%	\$258	44.3%	45.7	7.6%	42.2%	\$920	\$46,551	-18.6	4.9%	1.030
6	Seattle, WA	3,500,026	73.3	3.3%	\$337	38.6%	41.2	12.7%	42.0%	\$1,104	\$50,310	-12.1	5.2%	1.021
7	Los Angeles, CA	12,944,801	86.8	2.7%	\$189	33.0%	98.8	9.8%	36.2%	\$1,421	\$43,675	-14.6	8.4%	1.015
8	Baltimore, MD	2,729,110	88.5	2.6%	\$983	40.3%	36.1	9.0%	44.6%	\$1,251	\$48,949	-17.5	6.7%	1.031
9	Denver, CO	2,600,594	71.1	1.9%	\$186	40.5%	37.8	7.3%	41.1%	\$940	\$46,875	-7.1	6.7%	1.021
10	Chicago, IL	9,504,024	74.7	2.7%	\$178	40.5%	33.3	15.4%	37.3%	\$966	\$45,814	1.0	9.1%	1.016
11	Philadelphia, PA	5,992,414	80.7	2.8%	\$244	38.8%	34.9	13.6%	40.9%	\$1,119	\$46,979	-12.7	7.7%	0.999
12	St. Louis, MO	2,813,680	76.0	2.6%	\$284	35.9%	37.1	4.4%	36.9%	\$830	\$41,732	-1.3	6.7%	1.028
13	Miami, FL	5,670,125	77.2	3.0%	\$90	30.2%	44.7	6.0%	33.0%	\$1,122	\$42,729	24.8	7.2%	1.031
14	Atlanta, GA	5,365,726	78.0	2.1%	\$252	36.1%	32.0	4.8%	39.0%	\$874	\$38,784	-10.5	7.6%	1.024
15	San Diego, CA	3,140,069	91.2	2.0%	\$360	34.6%	34.1	6.5%	40.0%	\$1,382	\$45,575	-13.9	7.0%	1.006
1	San Jose, CA	1,865,450	83.8	5.1%	\$510	48.43%	27.0	7.4%	48.0%	\$1,610	\$58,045	-3.3	6.6%	1.012
2	Austin, TX	1,783,519	94.3	3.1%	\$378	39.88%	35.8	5.4%	43.2%	\$1,050	\$37,531	42.1	5.1%	1.072
3	Pittsburgh, PA	2,359,746	70.0	4.5%	\$492	41.58%	40.5	9.2%	37.7%	\$772	\$43,665	-10.4	6.4%	1.016
4	Buffalo, NY	1,134,039	79.6	8.6%	\$317	38.14%	36.9	6.9%	36.0%	\$736	\$38,299	5.8	7.7%	1.034
5	Raleigh, NC	1,163,515	80.1	3.5%	\$327	44.48%	35.7	2.7%	46.7%	\$878	\$38,218	22.7	6.8%	1.040
6	Nashville, TN	1,620,403	69.2	1.9%	\$382	34.29%	65.4	3.0%	37.7%	\$819	\$39,354	-10.0	6.4%	1.045
7	Hartford, CT	1,213,255	81.7	2.9%	\$221	41.13%	38.8	6.9%	41.3%	\$1,101	\$51,278	-9.8	7.8%	1.020
8	Portland, OR	2,262,702	72.6	1.9%	\$178	35.16%	39.4	12.0%	38.8%	\$912	\$40,064	1.1	7.1%	1.057
9	Salt Lake City, UT	1,145,905	81.5	2.9%	\$362	28.60%	31.6	6.2%	36.3%	\$839	\$38,043	-16.3	4.2%	1.069
10	Columbus, OH	1,858,464	89.0	3.8%	\$448	38.56%	31.2	4.3%	39.1%	\$782	\$37,993	-10.1	5.7%	1.024
11	Rochester, NY	1,055,278	86.5	4.5%	\$445	39.00%	43.9	5.5%	38.8%	\$859	\$39,424	12.0	7.2%	0.966
12	Oklahoma City, OK	1,278,053	81.1	3.8%	\$154	30.18%	28.9	2.6%	34.8%	\$748	\$38,517	6.4	4.1%	1.032
13	Providence, RI	1,600,224	85.7	3.4%	\$304	33.15%	47.1	6.0%	35.6%	\$930	\$41,959	-20.7	9.0%	1.029
14	Milwaukee, WI	1,562,216	76.4	2.0%	\$196	36.96%	38.0	7.3%	36.9%	\$828	\$43,379	-28.9	7.5%	1.001
15	Cincinnati, OH	2,137,735	78.3	2.4%	\$223	34.27%	34.4	4.2%	37.2%	\$740	\$39,580	-25.0	6.5%	1.014
16	Cleveland, OH	2,068,283	72.8	2.2%	\$236	32.23%	34.6	5.7%	36.8%	\$741	\$41,026	-23.9	6.6%	1.010
17	Richmond, VA	1,270,541	76.7	1.9%	\$173	36.08%	35.5	3.4%	39.5%	\$979	\$41,109	-22.2	5.4%	1.006
18	Charlotte, NC	1,795,472	66.7	1.7%	\$19	37.01%	35.9	4.0%	38.0%	\$793	\$38,555	-3.3	8.4%	1.051
19	New Orleans, LA	1,191,089	72.3	2.3%	\$238	31.54%	37.9	6.6%	33.6%	\$935	\$44,064	-0.8	6.2%	0.998
20	Indianapolis, IN	1,777,684	63.1	2.0%	\$182	36.00%	38.4	3.2%	37.3%	\$765	\$38,943	-14.3	7.4%	1.025
1	Boulder, CO	299,378	132.2	4.1%	\$1,305	64.11%	71.5	14.5%	52.1%	\$1,068	\$49,984	31.1	5.1%	1.031
2	Ann Arbor, MI	347,962	190.9	9.5%	\$3,710	55.31%	48.9	14.8%	47.8%	\$901	\$38,786	-3.4	5.1%	0.997
3	Madison, WI	576,467	120.9	6.4%	\$1,928	52.39%	53.3	11.9%	44.9%	\$889	\$43,839	-17.3	5.2%	0.993
4	Durham, NC	512,979	127.9	6.2%	\$3,507	44.68%	41.7	7.5%	48.6%	\$839	\$41,392	9.4	6.3%	0.956
5	Gainesville, FL	265,246	232.3	7.1%	\$2,790	39.51%	32.4	11.0%	44.5%	\$954	\$35,439	4.5	4.9%	0.965
6	Lincoln, NE	307,165	142.6	4.3%	\$770	38.10%	42.0	5.6%	37.3%	\$693	\$37,022	14.7	3.4%	1.070
7	Bridgeport, CT	925,899	60.9	2.5%	\$11	42.53%	59.6	11.0%	43.3%	\$1,230	\$75,479	-25.2	7.3%	1.017
8	Trenton, NJ	367,063	97.4	5.8%	\$723	40.38%	41.1	13.0%	44.5%	\$1,206	\$53,443	-0.8	6.8%	1.011
9	Lexington, KY	479,244	111.6	2.7%	\$778	41.22%	43.8	6.0%	40.4%	\$700	\$35,775	-3.5	6.0%	1.130
10	Fort Collins, CO	305,525	132.2	3.1%	\$1,083	44.71%	48.8	7.3%	43.9%	\$833	\$37,967	2.6	5.5%	0.957
11	Des Moines, IA	578,665	60.6	1.0%	\$2	44.24%	42.9	2.6%	41.1%	\$750	\$41,910	-9.7	4.5%	1.137
12	Albany, NY	871,478	92.9	4.1%	\$587	44.21%	47.0	6.9%	40.7%	\$921	\$42,610	2.0	6.5%	1.046
13	Binghamton, NY	250,074	102.3	8.1%	\$290	33.55%	40.4	5.1%	37.4%	\$713	\$34,158	22.0	7.8%	1.112
14	Portland, ME	515,807	64.1	0.5%	\$47	41.78%	69.6	4.8%	40.1%	\$1,008	\$42,537	7.9	5.7%	1.077
15	Lansing, MI	465,138	154.8	8.5%	\$977	38.47%	28.4	7.2%	37.5%	\$797	\$34,463	-14.4	7.0%	1.032
16	Santa Barbara, CA	426,878	133.7	1.9%	\$540	27.74%	54.6	11.3%	35.4%	\$1,426	\$45,123	-5.9	6.0%	1.074
17	Tallahassee, FL	370,292	198.0	2.3%	\$766	39.23%	30.2	3.7%	40.4%	\$920	\$33,668	-17.8	5.6%	1.066
18	Lynchburg, VA	253,713	104.1	7.1%	\$1	29.05%	34.7	4.8%	34.3%	\$726	\$33,313	-23.3	5.6%	1.143
19	Omaha, NE	875,074	77.9	1.9%	\$199	35.80%	41.7	2.9%	36.1%	\$828	\$42,282	11.8	4.0%	0.983
20	Syracuse, NY	662,553	99.7	5.2%	\$234	35.16%	42.3	6.4%	38.9%	\$784	\$36,904	0.3	7.7%	1.004
1	Ithaca, NY	101,723	279.7	14.1%	\$7,694	63.30%	55.1	21.3%	49.5%	\$1,001	\$34,643	12.8	4.8%	0.954
2	Ames, IA	89,663	302.8	12.6%	\$2,985	57.24%	37.9	16.2%	42.5%	\$720	\$35,053	20.1	3.2%	0.920
3	State College, PA	154,722	272.8	12.0%	\$5,137	53.00%	36.8	17.4%	39.7%	\$964	\$33,473	7.8	5.4%	0.993
4	Iowa City, IA	154,893	200.6	9.4%	\$2,866	53.97%	34.2	15.2%	40.1%	\$853	\$38,556	16.1	3.1%	1.002
5	Corvallis, OR	85,928	249.3	8.6%	\$2,663	41.28%	41.9	18.8%	48.4%	\$757	\$37,171	-16.3	5.5%	1.044
6	Champaign-Urbana, IL	232,050	232.3	15.2%	\$2,352	51.53%	30.6	17.3%	41.7%	\$785	\$34,406	7.3	6.6%	1.032
7	Blacksburg, VA	160,866	247.5	6.1%	\$2,818	50.29%	30.5	NA	39.7%	\$765	\$28,788	-4.4	5.2%	1.185
8	Charlottesville, VA	202,406	145.6	6.8%	\$1,443	49.11%	50.4	10.5%	49.5%	\$1,099	\$42,558	-9.4	4.1%	1.048
9	Lawrence, KS	112,211	270.6	7.5%	\$2,707	56.45%	39.2	9.3%	43.7%	\$860	\$33,793	-36.5	5.0%	0.991
10	Lafayette, IN	206,322	211.3	18.2%	\$2,803	40.25%	27.1	8.1%	35.6%	\$749	\$30,002	9.2	6.8%	1.071
11	Columbia, MO	175,065	205.5	6.1%	\$1,319	53.38%	36.0	6.7%	43.0%	\$704	\$35,947	15.4	4.4%	0.979
12	Morgantown, WV	132,251	183.5	6.1%	\$1,258	47.84%	40.8	NA	39.0%	\$742	\$33,452	7.6	4.6%	1.066
13	College Station, TX	227,997	261.9	7.5%	\$3,424	37.76%	22.8	8.4%	38.9%	\$837	\$28,943	10.1	5.0%	0.997
14	Fargo, ND	211,729	148.8	5.7%	\$638	39.87%	56.2	6.2%	37.1%	\$639	\$39,470	14.6	3.9%	0.952
15	Burlington, VT	213,624	118.8	1.8%	\$620	48.96%	57.6	10.5%	42.8%	\$1,280	\$41,770	-4.2	3.5%	1.021
16	Manhattan, KS	129,369	194.2	7.5%	\$1,308	40.59%	30.1	6.6%	36.6%	\$830	\$41,208	NA	4.8%	1.034
17	Logan, UT	124,813	145.0	4.6%	\$1,395	37.21%	40.1	7.6%	34.7%	\$631	\$26,872	12.8	3.6%	1.048
18	Bloomington, IN	194,566	237.8	11.9%	\$946	42.34%	27.8	14.0%	38.9%	\$747	\$30,252	-15.4	7.3%	0.935
19	Waterloo, IA	167,818	118.4	3.1%	\$25	35.72%	44.7	5.8%	32.3%	\$635	\$36,605	27.4	4.4%	1.076
20	Bloomington, IL	170,556	157.6	1.8%	\$111	46.94%	30.5	7.5%	41.2%	\$726	\$39,055	-4.1	5.8%	1.015

*Average of non-weighted rankings

¹AIER, 2011
²U.S. Census, 2011
³PEDS, 2011

⁴National Science Foundation, 2011
⁵U.S. Economic Census, 2010

⁶U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, 2013
⁷Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2010

⁸U.S. Small Business Administration, 2010
⁹Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013 average