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## Where Are the Best Places to Raise A Family?

It depends on what's important to you

By Alan Marcus

Families move for a variety of reasons--a new job, a change in family status, an unsatisfied wanderlust. Whatever the reason, the decision to move to another city can be an overwhelming proposition.



Location is of paramount importance for most people when choosing a new home and community. That's why it's crucial to have accurate facts and specifics about new communities so you can make an informed decision. Fortunately, there are several valuable sources you can use to gather information about the cities you're considering. Tourist bureaus, Chambers of Commerce and Internet resources are all excellent starting places to research possible new homes.

Where you choose to live is a highly subjective decision, based on many individual variables. So, what important factors should you take into consideration before you decide to pack all your worldly belongings into a moving van and head for new digs? Well, parents list a low crime rate, low drug and alcohol problems, good public schools, quality health care and a clean environment along with an affordable cost of living and strong economic growth among their top criteria for a good place to live.

Here are some important elements to consider as you begin your search.

### Schools

Having vital information about local schools in your new community is a primary concern among parents. The Internet has a wealth of resources to find out detailed information about the country's myriad of school districts. Check out valuable regional school data at [The National Center for Education Statistics](#) and [Homefair](#).

### Crime

Feeling safe and secure in your new home is a primary consideration when choosing where to live. For more information, visit the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), the [Bureau of Justice](#) and Homestore's [Relocation Crime Lab](#). These sites break down crime statistics by city, state and type of crime.

### Health Care

Quick access to quality health care and corresponding coverage areas are top-of-mind concerns when deciding where to relocate. You'll want to know beforehand how close your new home is to the nearest hospital or urgent care facility, especially if a member of your family has an existing chronic medical condition. Web sites for your specific health insurance carrier provide a comprehensive, up-to-date source for this information.

### Cost of Living Factors

You've been offered a 25 percent raise in your new job in a city 1000 miles away.

That's great news--or is it? Before you decide to upgrade your kitchen to get a better selling price and break out the packing boxes, it's a good idea to see just how far your increased salary will go in that new location. Fortunately, the Internet is an excellent resource to instantly compare cost of living between cities. Try Homestore's [Salary Calculator](#) and [Homefair](#) to get you started.

**Homeownership Rates**

High homeownership rates point to a population that has a vested interest in maintaining the living standards of an area.

**College-Educated Residents**

The number of college-educated residents is indicative that the residents value the importance of higher education. This translates into educated parents who are inclined to be active participants in promoting good local schooling.

**Climate**

Can you tolerate two months of cloudy days and pounding rain? Or do you prefer to soak up 30 straight days of 100-plus degree heat like a gecko? Weather patterns are an important consideration, since they can profoundly effect your physical and mental health. Look at climate averages at [Weather.com](#).

**So Where Are the Best Places?**

Choosing a great place where to live requires in-depth, up-to-date information which analyzes a variety of quality of life issues. While different sources may produce different results, it's a good idea to check them all out and get a comprehensive overview of what's considered to be a 'Best Place To Live'.

TCB Solutions, a New York-based resume writing firm, researched and gathered information from their clients, travel resources, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Census, crime statistics, divorce statistics and other sources based on economic growth, diversity, crime and cost of living, and has come up with its top 20 choices of America's best places to live, play and work.

The Triangle Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	Cambridge, MA
Madison, WI	Louisville, KY
Austin, TX	Columbus, OH
Minneapolis, St-Paul, MN	Huntsville, AL
Tampa, FL	Omaha, NE
Tucson, AZ	Charlottesville, VA
Nashville, TN	Boulder, CO
San Diego, CA	Boston, MA
Washington, DC	Dallas, TX
Salt Lake City, UT	Atlanta, GA

**Knowledge Is Power**

Gathering research that provides you with detailed knowledge about communities you're thinking of calling 'home' can prevent major problems, unbearable living situations, and all-around unpleasant surprises before you make the leap of faith and move to a new city. Make sure you use all of the resources you have at your disposal. Forewarned is forearmed.

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