

Greater Hartford ranks among top third in best places to live according to U.S. News. Region gets high marks for quality of life.

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FULL TEXT

We're not Boulder, Austin or even Boise, but the Hartford area scored higher than dozens of other metro areas in a new ranking of best places to live.

Out of 150 of the most populous metro areas in the United States, Hartford ranked No. 53 with an overall score of 6.7 out of 10, according to a U.S. News ranking of best places to live.

The greater Hartford area's quality of life and job opportunities helped to push the region to among the top third of desirable places to live, U.S. News said.

The Hartford area ranked higher when it comes to quality of life, ranking 12th among cities for the U.S. News Quality of Life Index.

This analysis looked at a number of factors, including crime, health care, education and average commute time. Hartford has a lower crime rate than similarly sized metro areas, according to U.S. News. Hartford averaged around 200.4 violent crimes committed per 100,000 people in 2020, which was less than other areas of a similar size, like San Antonio (469 violent crimes), Portland, Oregon (302.0 violent crimes) and Pittsburgh (226 violent crimes).

Looking at education, Hartford County is home to "10 colleges and/or universities, one of which earned a place on U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges rankings." In its public school system, it ranked 8.1 out of 10 for college readiness.

The average commute time is 2.7 minutes less than the national average at 24.2 minutes.

U.S. News gave Hartford high marks for job opportunities and pay.

With an average salary is \$62,900, the Hartford area is nearly \$10,000 more than the country's average at \$53,490.

The unemployment rate is also 7.7%, 0.4% lower than the United States' average.

The average home in Hartford costs \$327,006, which is a bit higher than other homes around the United States which average around \$315,743. Meanwhile, the typical renter pays around \$1,116 monthly.

"Hartford offers a lower value than similarly sized metro areas when you compare housing costs to median household income," U.S. News reported. "Daily expenses, such as groceries and transportation, are higher than the national average."

Using data from the Census Bureau, FBI and Department of Labor, U.S. News created five indexes to create their list. U.S. News looked at data on the country's 150 most populous metro areas, including the cost of living, job market, crime rates, quality of education and more. The data is weighted based on responses from a survey of more than 3,600 people throughout the U.S. to determine what matters most to them when picking their next places to live.

One asset U.S. News pointed out was the region's growing diversity.

"Hartford is also seeing slow but steady growth in its immigrant population, with new residents bringing their cultures and traditions to the area," US News reported. "The Frog Hollow neighborhood is home to a thriving Hispanic community, while the suburban town of New Britain has been celebrating its Polish heritage for decades."

Over 51.3% of the capital city's population is under the age of 24 and "just about half of Hartford's residents are religious, and Hartford's diverse population means that people of myriad faiths can find a community." Hartford's ranking at No. 53 puts it near the top 35% among all major metropolitan areas. Some cities that ranked below Hartford include Atlanta, San Diego, and Providence. The New Haven area came in at No. 111 and Springfield was No. 109. Boulder, Colorado ranked No. 1 with an overall score of 7.6 and quality of life score topping 8.6. Other cities that ranked above Hartford include Austin, Charlotte, and Boston. *Jessika Harkay can be reached at jharkay@courant.com.*

DETAILS

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