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Wheeling Ranks 22nd for Best Small Cities in America
NerdWallet Releases New Study of 1,300 Cities

Wheeling, WV – A new study from consumer advocacy site NerdWallet has identified the best small cities in America, and out of more than 1,300 places, Wheeling ranks 22nd.

Wheeling City Council members are proud of this ranking but not surprised.

> "This recognition, I'm sure, is not surprising to our residents," Vice Mayor Gene Fahey commented. "Our cost of living, award-winning school systems, parks, waterfront, trails, and our wonderful neighborhoods are being recognized, and others are seeing Wheeling as a safe, clean, wonderful place to live and raise a family."
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> "I believe they are off by about 21 cities," offered Councilman Don Atkinson, Ward 5. "With all we currently have to offer and our great history, Wheeling is a wonderful place to live, work, and play; always has been and will be number one, in my opinion."
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> Councilman Ken Imer, Ward 2, shares Atkinson's optimism about the ranking. "Wheeling has always been a great place to raise a family. This study shows that. I'm looking forward to Wheeling being number one on this list in the future."

NerdWallet staff crunched U.S. Census data from the American Community Survey to find the best small cities in America — places that hit the mark in three key areas: economic health, affordability and quality of life. More than 1,300 cities were reviewed, all with less than 75,000 residents. The study did not include cities where the percentage of residents living below the poverty line was 30 percent or higher.

Earlier in 2015, Wheeling was on NerdWallet's radar as the best city in West Virginia for young families (http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/cities/economics/best-cities-young-families-west-virginia-2/).

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The following text was taken from the full report on Best Small Cities in America, available online (www.nerdwallet.com/blog/cities/best-small-cities-america-2015/):

Methodology

We assessed over 1,300 cities with fewer than 75,000 residents to determine the best small cities across the U.S. Using data from the 2007 and 2013 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, we looked at the following three categories:

Affordability. To determine a city's affordability, we looked at the median value of owner-occupied units, the median rent price and the median monthly homeowner's cost. This category was one-third of a city's final score; each subcategory was given equal weight.

Economic health. To determine a city's economic health, we looked at the percentage of residents who are unemployed, median household income and percent of families and people whose income is below the poverty line. This category was one-third of a city's final score; each subcategory was given equal weight.

Quality of life. To determine the quality of life in each city, we looked at the average hours worked in each city, the average commute time to work and the percent of commuters who walk to work. This category was one-third of a city's final score; each subcategory was given equal weight

About NerdWallet: NerdWallet is focused on helping people lead better lives through financial education and empowerment. When it comes to credit cards, insurance, loans or expenses like hospital costs, consumers make almost all their decisions in the dark. NerdWallet is changing that by building accessible online tools and providing research and experts that can't be found anywhere else, all to help consumers take back control of their choices in a marketing-driven, trillion-dollar industry. *(Source: Nerdwallet.com)*

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