

# 10 Best Places to Live in the U.S. for Families, According to Experts

These communities offer excellent education, top-notch medical care, a high level of safety, and plenty of parks and outdoor recreation.

By [Dobrina Zhekova](#) | Published on January 10, 2024



PHOTO: DAVEL5957/GETTY IMAGES

For many, starting a family means a change of lifestyle and priorities. That often results in moving to a different city or community with family-friendly amenities such as larger homes, more playgrounds, better schools, and child care facilities.

Last year, [WalletHub](#) compared public data for more than 180 places across the U.S., including the country's most populous cities, and ranked them based on 45 metrics such as quality of education, crime rates, housing costs, economic opportunities, and recreation to compile a list of the best

area, benefit from great employment opportunities and access to quality health care, and offer a more laid-back feel with many natural attractions and museums. Read on for a list of the best places to live for families.

## 01 | Fremont, California

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PHOTO: WENLI LI/GETTY IMAGES

Less than an hour southeast of San Francisco, this Silicon Valley city is a haven for families thanks to its top-rated school system, excellent health care facilities, and plenty of outdoor recreation opportunities.

"Fremont's commitment to family-friendly amenities, including parks, recreation areas, and community events, adds to its allure. Cultural diversity thrives in Fremont, fostering a vibrant community with various cultural experiences and events," said Kaajal Shahani, a broker with [Intero Real Estate Services](#). However, the city's real estate market is highly competitive, with median home prices reaching more than \$1.4 million, [according to Zillow](#).

Shahani explained that areas such as the historic Mission San Jose, Irvington, and Ardenwood attract buyers for their top-notch schools,

## 02 | Overland Park, Kansas

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PHOTO: BERNARD P. FRIEL/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Rated as one of the best places to live in the U.S. overall by [Livability.com](https://www.livability.com), this Midwestern city located just south of Kansas City has plenty in store for families. It's home to the best-rated school district in Kansas, Blue Valley, and offers all the amenities families seek: great parks, excellent health care, and ample job opportunities. And unlike many similar communities, homes here come at relatively affordable rates. At the time of publishing, the [median home value](#) in Overland Park was about \$413,000. Just keep in mind that for-sale homes only stay on the market for four days on average.

"For many families, Wilshire Farms, Nottingham Forest, and Lionsgate are very desirable [neighborhoods]. St. Andrews Highlands is also highly sought after and offers single-family homes, villas, and town houses. It's in close proximity to dining, shopping, and even home to a beautiful golf course," Paula Rieckman, VP of relocation services at [ReeceNichols](https://www.reecenichols.com), told *Travel + Leisure*.



PHOTO: DAVEL5957/GETTY IMAGES

Often touted as one of the [best suburbs of Los Angeles](#), Irvine is at the heart of Orange County and boasts more than 16,000 acres of green space, from community parks and playgrounds to athletic fields to trails. While the city itself is not on the Pacific coast, Irvine residents are about 10 miles from beautiful Crystal Cove State Beach, 15 miles from Laguna Beach, and 10 miles from Newport Beach. WalletHub ranked Irvine first in the health and safety category, as the city has the [lowest violent crime rate](#) — for the 18th consecutive year — in the country per capita.

According to realtor Nancy Aynehchi of [First Team Real Estate](#), Woodbridge and University Park (Irvine is home to the University of California) are among the most sought-after neighborhoods as homeowners there don't have to pay the Mello-Roos tax and benefit from lower HOA fees. However, prices have been on the rise. [Zillow](#) estimates the median home value in Irvine to be \$1.35 million, up 10 percent since last year.



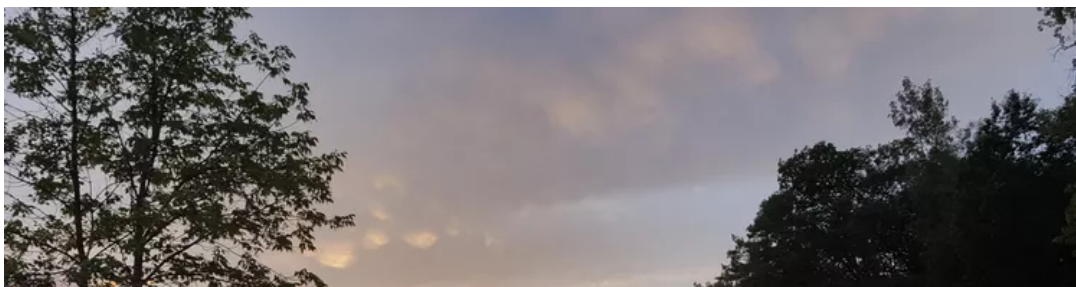
PHOTO: GARY FINK/GETTY IMAGES

Located north of Dallas, Plano offers the perfect blend of city amenities, quaint neighborhoods, top-notch [public schools](#), and excellent [economic prospects](#). Another upside of moving to Plano? The [median home price](#) is slightly over \$506,000, with single-family homes and town houses being some of the most popular property types, according to Paulette Greene of the Paulette Greene Group at [Ebby Halliday Realtors](#).

"A few fan-favorite neighborhoods that tend to draw in families in Plano are Willow Bend, Lakeside, Windhaven Farms, Shoal Creek, and any of the golf course communities," Greene said.

## 05 | South Burlington, Vermont

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Courtesy of ThinkVermont.com.

Surrounded by beautiful mountain views and providing easy access to Lake Champlain, it's no wonder South Burlington in Vermont is a popular choice with families seeking outdoor recreation. An 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, athletic fields, and many parks comprise some of the town's sports and leisure facilities. South Burlington is home to about 20,000 residents, resulting in a quiet, laid-back vibe ideal for raising a family. Access to quality education is another reason to settle here. South Burlington has five schools — three elementary, one middle, and one high school where the student-to-teacher ratio is just 12 to one.

Affordable housing is also part of the town's appeal. The median home value is about \$460,000, [according to Zillow](#), about \$40,000 less than neighboring Burlington.

## 06 | San Diego, California

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PHOTO: CHELSEA LOREN/TRAVEL + LEISURE

San Diego's sunny weather, family-friendly amenities (theme parks, museums, and beaches, to name a few), and access to good education are some of the draws for families moving to this beautiful Southern California city. [San Diego](#) was also named the greenest city in the nation for the second year in a row by [WalletHub](#), in categories such as water quality, green spaces, bicycle lanes, and community gardens.

However, the city's notoriously high cost of living is a major downside. Home prices have increased six percent since last year, to almost [\\$1 million](#), and properties get snatched off the market in less than two weeks.

## 07 | San Jose, California

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PHOTO: MASAOTAIRA/GETTY IMAGES

WalletHub's data, about 45 percent of San Jose households are families with young children. The city's school system ranks 34th on a list of more than 180 surveyed cities.

San Jose's location at the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains and a quick ride from the Pacific Ocean makes it a perfect home base for families looking to enjoy the outdoors. On the flip side, though, the cost of living is well above the nation's average, and as [U.S. News & World Report](#) noted, its residents pay more for groceries, gas, and utilities.

## 08 | Scottsdale, Arizona

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PHOTO: JACKSON VANCE/TRAVEL + LEISURE

"Many families are looking for a city that can provide a balance between our desert environment, education, activities, and modern-day luxuries — Scottsdale hits high marks on all these fronts" said April Mauch, owner and broker at [Long Realty Old Town](#). "Scottsdale has the charm of a smaller community backed by the amenities you would expect from a larger community."



[entertainment](#) and [parks](#), including museums, shops, playgrounds, [hiking trails](#), and parks.

Because the city is so spread out — about 31 miles from south to north — each neighborhood offers something different in terms of properties and amenities, and houses often come with plenty of space.

"South and Central Scottsdale are closer to entertainment activities, and North Scottsdale is a great location for those who love to be around nature, but don't mind a small commute to get to the other entertainment," Mauch added.

The median home price in the city is about \$790,000, [according to Zillow](#).

## 09 | Gilbert, Arizona

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PHOTO: DENISTANGNEYJR/GETTY IMAGES

More than half of all families in Gilbert have small children, according to WalletHub. This city, southeast of Phoenix, was once known as the Hay Shipping Capital of the World, and it now has highly graded public schools, low unemployment, many parks, and a distinct small town vibe despite its

second on Travel+Leisure's survey.

However, the overall cost of living is 19 percent higher than the national average, with housing accounting for most of that. The [median home price here is about \\$566,000](#), about \$150,000 more than that of Phoenix.

## 10 | San Francisco, California

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PHOTO: DON EIM/TRAVEL + LEISURE

Lake Tahoe, Yosemite National Park, the Pacific Coast, Napa, and Sonoma — San Francisco is the perfect home base to explore many of California's most stunning natural landmarks. But the Golden Gate City is also a wonderful place to raise a family thanks to its walkability, excellent educational institutions (the city has one of the highest high school graduation rates), abundant attractions, and low unemployment rate.

And there are so many neighborhoods that offer family-friendly amenities, including Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, Richmond, Sunset, and Noe Valley, according to Frank Nolan, president of [Vanguard Properties](#). Nolan added that now is the time to invest in real estate in San Francisco as prices