DATA INSIGHT: POINTS OF PRIDE

The greater Wichita region is a region on the rise, regularly appearing at the top of national rankings across a wide range of industry and quality of life indicators. The following are a few of the region's accolades and areas of recognition.

Business and Industry Success

#1 U.S. Metro for Aerospace & Defense Investment
The Air Capital of the World has a competitive advantage built on manufacturing speed, supplier strength, workforce talent and production readiness. (Global Location Strategies 2026)

Top 100 Metros for STEM Jobs
Based on professional opportunities, STEM-friendliness and quality of place. (WalletHub 2026)

Top 10 Tier 2 Metros by Total Projects
Organizations and businesses are investing in their cities to position them for success. (Site Selection 2024)

Named One of the Best-Ran Cities in the U.S.
Based on financial stability, education, health, safety, economy, infrastructure and pollution. (WalletHub 2023)

#4 in Manufacturing Jobs as Percent of all Jobs
of the 100 largest U.S. metro areas (based on Lightcast data, 2021)

#1 in Percentage of "Very High-Tech" Manufacturing Jobs
of the 100 largest U.S. metro areas (based on Lightcast data, 2021)

#12 U.S. Advance Industry Hotspot
for R&D and STEM-worker intensive industries powering regional and national economic success. (based on Lightcast data, 2021)

#1 for Growth of Jobs
Over the last 10 years; 2009-2019 (Brookings, 2020)

Download the List of Accolades

High Quality of Life

Top 20 Best Large U.S. Cities for Gen Z
Based on data from across nine metrics, scoring out of 100. Categories include: community, economic, affordability, education, fun and green. (CommercialCafe 2026)

Top 10 Least Stressed Cities in the U.S.
Metrics included unemployment, commute times, income, housing affordability, childcare costs, separation and divorce rates, healthcare access, and crime rates. (Elevate Data 2026)

Top 100 Best Places to Live in the U.S. — Two Years Running
Based on more than 100 data points across eight categories measuring a city's economy, housing, amenities, transportation, environment, safety, education and health. (Livability 2025 & 2026)

#6 Hotspot for Gen Z Homeowners
Out of 97 metro areas, Wichita is in the top 10 metros where more than one-quarter of Gen Zers own a home. (RentCafe 2026)

Top 10 Best Zoos in the U.S.
The Sedgwick County Zoo ranks among the best zoos in the country. (USA Today 2026)

#17 U.S. Cities for Work-Life Balance
Out of 100. Metrics included walk and bike index, housing cost as percentage of income, hours worked per week, labor force participation index, and commute and travel times. (Elevate Data 2026)

Top 10 U.S. Cities Where Your Salary Goes the Furthest
Ranked among cities that offer the highest adjusted post-tax salary, effectively making a $100,000 income feel like over $80,000 at national-average prices. (Consumer Affairs 2026)

#5 Cities for Pet Owners
Based on data across 13 key metrics, to include dog veterinary cost, cat veterinary cost, veterinary access and pet-friendly spaces, Wichita ranks 5th in Forbes' top 10 cities in America for pet owners. (Forbes 2025)

#4 Best City to Move To
Based on housing costs, employment rate, monthly family income, average sunny days per year, crime rate, and more, Wichita ranked among the top 5 cities in the U.S. to move to. (Forbes 2024)

Top 3 Most Affordable U.S. Cities for Working Adults
Using data from the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau, Wichita ranks in the top three of the most affordable housing markets for workers in the U.S. (Site Selection 2024)

State of Kansas Rankings

#3 for Business Friendliness
Based on each state's lawsuit and liability climates, regulatory regimes, overall bureaucracy, and length and efficiency of each states' permitting processes. (CNBC 2026)

#4 for Unemployment Insurance Tax Competitiveness
Based on a competitive unemployment insurance tax system that helps support a favorable cost environment for employers. (Tax Foundation 2026)

#6 Lowest Cost of Living in the U.S.
Based on the cost of everyday expenses and overall affordability. (CNBC 2026)

#1 Lowest Occupational Licensing Burden
Kansas reduces barriers to workforce participation and entrepreneurship. (Archbridge Institute 2025)

#3 Most Affordable State for Housing
Based on home prices, housing costs relative to income and housing availability. (ConsumerAffairs, 2025)

#1 for Rental Affordability
Based on the share of household income renters spend on housing. (ConsumerAffairs, 2025)

Constitutional Right-to-Work State

Kansas' right-to-work protections are established in the state constitution. (Kansas Constitution, Article 15, Section 12)

#1 for Regulatory Freedom
Based on data from the Freedom in 50 States study. (Cato Institute July 2023)

#3 Best Place to Move to for Work
Based on job openings, available workers, advertised salaries and cost of living. (OnlineU 2022)

Insights

Key information for site selectors and businesses:

- Wichita State University **ranks first in private industry-financed aero R&D** expenditures with more than $25 million. Learn more about the groundbreaking research and development investments and progress in the region.
- Kansas ranks **5th for Lowest Housing Costs in the U.S.** (WalletHub 2026). To discover more about what life is like in the Greater Wichita region, read more here.
- Dive deep into helpful regional data and resources on this site with downloadable demographics and detailed employment and operational costs.

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The Greater Wichita Partnership is ready to work to meet your growth goals and find the tools best suited to your situation.

Contact Andrew