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Raleigh/Wake County Rankings (as of 5.21.26)

WAKE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2026

- #5 Top City for Recent College Grads in America (Raleigh, NC) ADP Research | May 2026

- #6 & #7 Best Cities to Start a Business (Durham, NC & Raleigh, NC) WalletHub | April 2026

- #4 Top Metro for Growth in New Home Listings (Raleigh, NC) Re/Max | April 2026

- #9 Top County for Net Gain of Tax Returns Generated from Out-of-State Inbound Migration (Wake County, NC) | Tax Foundation | April 2026

- #4 Top Region Becoming a Tech Hotspot (Research Triangle Region, NC) Livability | April 2026

- #5 Best State Capital for Quality of Education & Health (Raleigh, NC) WalletHub | March 2026

- #2 Top Millennial Wealth Hotspots (Raleigh, NC) Trust & Will | March 2026

- #12 Top County in America for Economic Development (Wake County, NC) Site Selection Magazine | July 2025

- #2 Best City for NHL Team Performance (Raleigh, NC) WalletHub | May 2025

- #10 Best City for NHL Hockey Fans (Raleigh, NC) WalletHub | May 2025

- #1 Best City for Young Couples in 2026 (Raleigh, NC) | StorageCafé | February 2026

- 39th Best Accredited Emergency Fire Dispatch Center (Raleigh-Wake Emergency) | IAED | February 2026

- #7 Best U.S. City for Skilled Trades Workforce Overall (Raleigh, NC) | SupplyHouse | January 2026

- #3 Best Southern Metro for Tech Workers (Raleigh, NC) | Commercial Cafe | February 2026

- #2 Best State Capitals to Live In (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub |February 2026

- #5 Best Performing City (Raleigh-Cary, NC) | Milken Institute | January 2026

- #7 Safest City in North Carolina for 2026 (Fuquay-Varina, NC) | safewise | January 2026

- #1 Safest City in North Carolina for 2026 (Rolesville, NC) | safewise | January 2026

- #5 Best-Performing Large City in the U.S. (Raleigh-Cary, NC) | U.S. News & World Report | January 2026

- #22 Best Metro for STEM Professionals (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub | January 2026

- #3 Top U.S. Market for Year over Year Growth in Life Sciences Degrees (Raleigh-Durham, NC) CBRE Research | June 2025

- #6 Top U.S. Market for Life Sciences PhD Degrees Granted (Raleigh-Durham, NC) CBRE Research | June 2025

- #8 Top U.S. Market for Life Sciences Degrees & Certificates (Raleigh-Durham, NC) CBRE Research | June 2025

- #9 Top U.S. Market for Number of Core Life Sciences R&D Occupations (Raleigh-Durham, NC) CBRE Research | June 2025

- #6 Top U.S. Market for Life Sciences R&D Talent (Raleigh-Durham, NC) CBRE Research | June 2025

2025

- #2 Most Popular City to Move to in 2025 (Wake Forest, NC) | MoveBuddha | August 2025

- #1 Metro Where Millenials are Buying Homes (Raleigh-Cary, NC) | SmartAsset | July 2025

- #10 Top Metro for New Construction in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Realtor.com | August 2025

- #2 Best Real Estate Market (Cary, NC) | WalletHub | August 2025

- #1 Top City for Recent College Grads in America (Raleigh, NC) ADP Research | July 2025

- #1 Best Public High School in America (North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics) Niche | August 2025

- #7 Top City Where Retirees are Moving (Durham, NC) SmartAsset | July 2025

- #4 Top Mid-Size City for Quality of Life (Cary, NC) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #2 Top Metro for Broadband Speed (Raleigh, NC MSA) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #9 Top Metro for Medtech, Medical Devices (Raleigh-Durham, NC) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #5 Top Life Sciences Hub (Raleigh-Durham, NC) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #6 Top Metro for AgriTech (Raleigh, NC MSA) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #9 Top Metro for Tech Talent (Labor Pool 50K-100K) (Raleigh-Durham, NC) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #1 Top Metro for Best Business Climate (Raleigh, NC MSA) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #1 Best City for Employment Opportunities and Earning Potentials in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | checkr | July 2025

- #8 Best City to Start a Business (Raleigh, NC) | Shopify | July 2025

- #1 City Where College Grads are Landing Jobs (Raleigh, NC) | Wall Street Journal | July 2025

- #8 Fastest Growing City in the US for Jobs in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Jargan Josh | July 2025

- #9 Best City for Renters to Live in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Rent Café | July 2025

- #4 Best City in the U.S. for Work-Life Balance in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | CoworkingCafe | July 2025

- #5 Top Metro by Tech Economic Impact as a % of Local Economy (Raleigh, NC) | CompTIA | March 2025

- #6 Most Educated City in the U.S. (Raleigh-Cary, NC) | WalletHub | June 2025

- #9 Best Metro for Professionals Working in Science (Raleigh, NC) | Coworking Café | June 2025

- #5 Best City for New Grads in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Zumper | June 2025

- #3 City for International Business (Raleigh, NC) | Financial Times | June 2025

- #3 Best Metro for Millenials (Raleigh, NC) | Commercial Café | June 2025

- #1 Best Place to Live in North Carolina (Raleigh, NC) | Travel + Leisure | June 2025

- #3 City with the Highest Number of Move-Ins (Raleigh, NC) | PODS | May 2025

- #7 Safest Town for Senior Living in North Carolina (Rolesville, NC) | World Atlas | May 2025

Wake County Economic Development

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WAKE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- #11 Best City for Hockey Fans in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub | May 2025

- #2 Best City Where New Graduates Can Afford Rent (Raleigh, NC) | Realtor.com | May 2025

- #2 Top Innovation Hub in the South (Raleigh, NC) | Commercial Café | May 2025

- #1 Best City for Families and Young Adults in North Carolina (Raleigh, NC) | Tuko News | May 2025

- #9 Best City for BBQ in the U.S. (Raleigh-Durham) | Yelp | May 2025

- #1 U.S. City for Housing Stability (Raleigh, NC) | MSN | May 2025

- #3 Top U.S. City for Relaxation (Raleigh, NC) | Mattress Next Day | May 2025

- #5 & #7 Best Places to Live (Cary, NC & Apex, NC) | US World News Report | May 2025

#5 Best City to Move to for Construction Jobs & Lifestyle in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Constructionreviewonline | May 2025

- #6 Top Life Science Talent Cluster in the U.S. (Raleigh-Durham, NC) JLL | September 2024

- #3 Top Biomanufacturing Market in the U.S. (Raleigh-Durham, NC) JLL | September 2024

- #5 Top Life Sciences Cluster in the U.S. (Raleigh-Durham, NC) JLL | September 2024

- #9 Best City for Single People in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Rocket Moving | April 2025

- #9 Best Large City to Start a Business in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub | April 2025

- #1 Best Public Playground in the U.S. (The Nest - Downtown Cary Park) | USATODAY | April 2025

- #3 Happiest City in America (Raleigh, NC) SmartAsset | April 2025

- #3 Fastest Growing Economy in America (Annual Nominal GDP Growth Rate 2023) (Raleigh, NC) US Census, Costar | December 2024

- #4 Very Large Metro for Racial Inclusion 2013-2023 (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #7 Very Large Metro for Change in Productivity 2013-2023 (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #5 Very Large Metro for Change in Jobs at Young Firms 2013-2023 (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #3 Very Large Metro for Change in Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP) (%) 2013-2023 (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #4 Very Large Metro in the U.S. for Job Growth 2013-2023 (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #3 Very Large Metro in the U.S. for Growth 2013-2023 (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #8 Very Large Metro in the U.S. for Overall Prosperity Index 10YR (Raleigh, NC) Brookings Institute | March 2025

- #2 North Carolina County with the Highest GDP (Wake County, NC) | SmartAsset | March 2025

- #15th Largest Public School System in the Nation in 2025 (WCPSS) NCES | January 2025

- #4, #8 Best College Basketball Cities (Durham, NC/Chapel-Hill, NC) | WalletHub | March 2025

- #4 Metro with the Highest Number of Tech Jobs (Raleigh, NC) | Coworking Café | March 2025

- #5 Best Large Metro for Women in Tech (Raleigh, NC) | Coworking Café | March 2025

- #4 City to Move to Before it Becomes too Crowded (Raleigh, NC) | The Manual | February 2025

- #6 Best Children's Museum in the U.S. (Marbles Kids Museum) | USA Today | February 2025

- #3, #8 Best Free Museum in the U.S. (North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, North Carolina Museum of Art) | February 2025 | USA Today

- #5 Best Metro for Families (Raleigh, NC) | LendingTree | February 2025

- #3 Best State Capital to Live In (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub | February 2025

- #2 Top Public Golf Courses in America (Pinehurst No.2, Pinehurst, NC) | Golf Magazine | January 2025

- #2 City for Cybersecurity Jobs (Raleigh, NC) | Upwind | December 2024

- #9 Best Place to Live in the U.S. for Young Adults (Raleigh-Durham, NC) | Travel + Leisure | January 2025

- #7 Best Big City for High-Tech Jobs (Raleigh, NC) | U.S. News & World Report | January 2025

- #20 Best Online Master's in Education Program (NC State College of Education) | U.S. News & World Report | January 2025

- #1 Cheapest Place to Travel to in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | Travel + Leisure | January 2025

- #3 Fastest Growing City in the U.S. (Raleigh, NC) | CoreLogic | January 2025

- #1 Best Performing City (Raleigh, NC) | Milken Institute | January 2025

- #1 Best U.S. City for Renters (Raleigh, NC) | U.S. News & World Report | January 2025

- #5 Best City for Headquarters (Raleigh, NC) | Site Selection | January 2025

- #7 Top U-Haul Growth Metro (Raleigh, NC) | U-Haul International | January 2025

2024

- #6 Safest City in the U.S. (Cary, NC) | Money Geek | December 2024

#7 Largest Public Research University in the U.S. (UNC-Chapel Hill) | National Science Foundation |December 2024

- #9 Largest Overall Research University in the U.S. (UNC-Chapel Hill) | National Science Foundation| December 2024

- #5 City for STEM Job Growth Index (Raleigh, NC) | RCLCO | December 2024

- #3 Top Work from Home City in the U.S. (Raleigh, NC) | Axios | December 2024

- #6 Best Place to Live in the U.S in 2025-2026 (Raleigh, NC) | U.S. News & World Report | December 2024

- #9 Top Job-Magnet Suburb in 2024 (Wake Forest, NC) | movebuddha | November 2024

- #7 Top Job-Magnet Suburb in 2024 (Cary, NC) | movebuddha | November 2024

- #6 Best Place to Retire in 2025 (Raleigh, NC) | U.S. News & World Report | November 2024

- #1 'Boomtown' in North Carolina (Apex, NC) | GoBankingRates | October 2024

- #5 Top Market in High-Tech Software/Services Job & Office Rent Growth (Raleigh, NC) | CBRE | November 2024

- #8 Top U.S. Biopharma Hub of 2024 (RTP, Raleigh/Durham) | R&D World | November 2024

- #3 Best City for Veterans to Live (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub | November 2024

- #1 (Duke University Hospital), #2 (UNC Hospital), #3 (UNC-REX Hospital), #8 (WakeMed) Best Hospitals in the State for 2025 (Newsweek) | November 2024

- #5 Best College City (Raleigh, NC) | WalletHub | October 2024

- #15 (Duke University), #41 (UNC-Chapel Hill), #81 (North Carolina State University) Best College in the U.S. in 2025 (Durham, Chapel-Hill, Raleigh) | WalletHub | October 2024

- #3 Best City to Start a Career (Raleigh, NC) | Elevate Leadership | September 2024

- #7 Best City for Job Hunters (Raleigh, NC) | EBN | October 2024

For additional rankings, please call 919.664.7066.

Wake County Economic Development

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WAKE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

North Carolina Rankings (as of 5.21.26)

2026

- #3 Top State Where Retirees are Moving To for Quality of Life (North Carolina) The Motley Fool | May 2026

- #4 Top State for Business (North Carolina) Chief Executive | April 2026

- #4 Top State for Net Population Change (North Carolina) Tax Foundation | April 2026

- #3 Top State for Interstate Migration (North Carolina) Tax Foundation | April 2026

- #4 Top State for Economic Outlook (North Carolina) ALEC | April 2026

- #15 Most Innovative State (North Carolina) WalletHub | March 2026

- #7 Top State for Most Competitive Unemployment Insurance Tax (North Carolina) Tax Foundation | October 2025

- #3 Top State for Lowest Corporate Income Tax (North Carolina) Tax Foundation | October 2025

- #13 Top State for Most Competitive Tax Climate (North Carolina) Tax Foundation | October 2025

- #1 Top State for State-to-State Migration (North Carolina) | US Census Bureau | January 2026

- #4 Most Sought-After State to Move to (North Carolina) | U.S. News & World Report | January 2026

- #3 Top State for Population Growth (North Carolina) | US Census Bureau | January 2026

- #15 Best State to Start a Business (North Carolina) | Wallet Hub | January 2026

- #3 Top State for Migration in 2025 (North Carolina) | U-Haul | January 2026

2025

- #3 Top State for Black-Owned Businesses (North Carolina) B2B Reviews | August 2025

- #7 Landlord-Friendly State (North Carolina) | Realtors.org | August 2025

- #2 Top State Where Retirees are Moving (North Carolina) SmartAsset | July 2025

- #4 Top State for Solar Power (Installed MW) (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #6 Top State with the Fastest Growing Population (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #6 Top State for Nuclear Power Generation (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #3 Top State for Corporate Tax Climate (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #6 Top State for GDP Growth (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #9 Top State for Foreign Direct Investment Competitiveness (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #9 Top State for Foreign Direct Investment Projects (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #10 Top State for Cybersecurity Talent (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #7 Top State for Tech Talent Pipeline AI Growth Hubs (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #4 Top State for Life Sciences Leaders (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #5 Top State for Food Processing (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #9 Top State for Agribusiness (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #8 Top State for Aerospace Manufacturing (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #7 Top State for Manufacturing Jobs (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #8 Top State for Tech Talent Pipeline (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #7 Top State for Customized Workforce Training (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #3 Top State for Best Business Climate (North Carolina) Business Facilities | August 2025

- #10 Best State for Recreational Fishing (North Carolina) | List Wire | August 2025

- #2 Top State by Net Tech Employment Job Gains (North Carolina) | CompTIA | March 2025

- #8 Top State by Net Tech Employment (North Carolina) | CompTIA | March 2025

- #1 Top State for Business in America in 2025 (North Carolina) | CNBC | July 2025

- #2 State with the Lowest AI Energy Use Per Business (North Carolina) | DesignRush | June 2025

- #6 Best State Economy in 2025 (North Carolina) | WalletHub | June 2025

- #1 Most Favorable State (North Carolina) | YouGov | June 2025

- #3 Best State for Budget-Friendly Road Trips in 2025 (North Carolina) | Dunhill Travel | May 2025

- #9 Best State for House Flippers (North Carolina) | Yahoo Finance | May 2025

- #13 Best State for Military Retirees (North Carolina) | WalletHub | May 2025

- #5 State for Solar Power in the U.S. (North Carolina) | Clean Technica | May 2025

- #5 Best Economy Growth in the Nation (North Carolina) | US News & World Report | May 2025

- #7 Best State Economy (North Carolina) | US News & World Report | May 2025

- #5 Best State for Homebuilding & Affordability (North Carolina) | realtor.com | April 2025

- #12 Best State for Brunch in the U.S. (North Carolina) | Hard Rock | April 2025

- #3 Best State in America for Car Enthusiasts (North Carolina) | QUARTZ | April 2025

- #9 Best State for House Flipping Profitability (North Carolina) | QUARTZ | April 2025

- #8 Fastest Growing State by Population (North Carolina) | Voronoi | April 2025

- #3 State for Gen Z Migration (North Carolina) | StorageCafe | March 2025

- #4 Fastest-Growing Low-Tax State (North Carolina) | Investopedia | March 2025

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