

# Contents

**About the Authors .....viii**

**Introduction.....ix**

**PART I: FINDING YOUR BEST PLACE TO LIVE .....1**

**Chapter 1: The Places .....3**

    U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).....3

    Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) .....10

    What's Included in *Cities Ranked & Rated*, 2nd Edition? .....10

**Chapter 2: The Rankings .....35**

    About the *Cities Ranked & Rated* Model .....35

    Reading the Ranking Report.....37

    Ranking Changes since 2004 .....37

**Chapter 3: The Categories .....53**

    Reading the Facts.....53

    Use of Data for Ranking & Scoring .....54

    Population.....55

    Economy & Jobs.....61

    Cost of Living.....68

    Climate.....77

    Education .....86

    Health & Healthcare .....92

    Crime.....98

    Transportation .....101

    Leisure.....108

    Arts & Culture.....112

    Quality of Life .....117

**Chapter 4: The States.....119**

    How *Cities Ranked & Rated* Compares States .....119

    Overall Rankings.....119

    Population.....120

    Physical Environment.....121

    Economy.....122

Taxation.....	125
Education.....	130
Politics.....	138
Safety & Safety Consciousness.....	138

## **PART II: EVALUATING THE CITIES.....141**

### **Chapter 5: U.S. Metropolitan Areas.....143**

Area Profiles.....	143
--------------------	-----

### **Chapter 6: Canada Metropolitan Areas.....813**

Ranking & Rating Canadian Cities.....	814
Data Sources.....	815

## **INDEX.....847**

### **Tables**

Table 0.1: U.S. States & Postal Codes.....	xiv
Table 1.1: Metro Areas Gained from Splits.....	10
Table 1.2: Metro Areas Lost through Merger or Change.....	10
Table 1.3: Principal U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas.....	11
Table 1.4: Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas.....	33
Table 2.1: The Top 30 U.S. Metropolitan Areas.....	36
Table 2.2: The Bottom 30 U.S. Metropolitan Areas.....	36
Table 2.3: Ranking Report Sample.....	37
Table 2.4: U.S. Metropolitan Areas by Rank.....	39
Table 2.5: U.S. Metropolitan Areas by Alphabetical Sequence with Rank.....	46
Table 3.1: Net Gain or Loss in Population by Region.....	54
Table 3.2: Sample Population Data from Gainesville, FL.....	55
Table 3.3: Largest & Smallest Metropolitan Areas.....	57
Table 3.4: Fastest Growing Metropolitan Areas.....	58
Table 3.5: Declining & Slowest Growing Metropolitan Areas.....	58
Table 3.6: Population Density.....	58
Table 3.7: Democrats & Republicans.....	59
Table 3.8: Percent Religiously Observant.....	59
Table 3.9: Diversity Measure.....	60
Table 3.10: Families with Children.....	60
Table 3.11: Sample Economy & Jobs Data from Bellingham, WA.....	61
Table 3.12: Median Household Income.....	63
Table 3.13: Household Income Growth.....	64
Table 3.14: Unemployment Rates.....	65
Table 3.15: Recent Job Growth.....	65
Table 3.16: Projected Future Job Growth.....	66
Table 3.17: Manufacturing Employment.....	66
Table 3.18: Public Sector Employment.....	67
Table 3.19: Construction Employment.....	67
Table 3.20: Sample Cost of Living Table from Portland–Vancouver–Beaverton, OR-WA.....	68
Table 3.21: Cost of Living Index Ranges.....	69
Table 3.22: Cost of Living Index.....	74

Table 3.23:	Buying Power Index (BPI).....	75
Table 3.24:	Median Home Prices.....	75
Table 3.25:	Home Price Ratio.....	76
Table 3.26:	Home Price Appreciation.....	76
Table 3.27:	Sample Climate Table from Colorado Springs, CO.....	79
Table 3.28:	Desirable Ranges for Climate Attributes.....	81
Table 3.29:	Winter Temperatures.....	82
Table 3.30:	Summer Temperatures.....	82
Table 3.31:	Temperature Extremes.....	83
Table 3.32:	Annual Inches Precipitation.....	83
Table 3.33:	Snowiest Metropolitan Areas.....	84
Table 3.34:	Annual Days of Precipitation.....	84
Table 3.35:	Summer Humidity.....	85
Table 3.36:	Sunshine.....	85
Table 3.37:	Sample Education Table from Ann Arbor, MI.....	87
Table 3.38:	High School Graduation Rate.....	89
Table 3.39:	Combined College & Graduate Degree Attainment.....	90
Table 3.40:	Public School Investment.....	90
Table 3.41:	Student/Teacher Ratio.....	91
Table 3.42:	Public School Utilization.....	91
Table 3.43:	Sample Health & Healthcare Table from Ogden–Clearfield, UT.....	92
Table 3.44:	Air Quality.....	94
Table 3.45:	Water Quality.....	95
Table 3.46:	Cancer Mortality Rates.....	95
Table 3.47:	Physicians Per Capita.....	96
Table 3.48:	Hospital Beds Per Capita.....	96
Table 3.49:	Healthcare Cost Index.....	97
Table 3.50:	Doctor Fees.....	97
Table 3.51:	Sample Crime Table from Asheville, NC.....	98
Table 3.52:	Violent Crime Rates.....	99
Table 3.53:	Property Crime Rates.....	99
Table 3.54:	Change in Violent Crime Rates.....	100
Table 3.55:	Change in Property Crime Rates.....	100
Table 3.56:	Sample Transportation Table from Fort Collins–Loveland, CO.....	104
Table 3.57:	Commute Times.....	106
Table 3.58:	Commutes by Auto.....	106
Table 3.59:	Auto Insurance Premiums.....	107
Table 3.60:	Driving Miles.....	107
Table 3.61:	Sample Leisure Table from San Luis Obispo–Paso Robles, CA.....	110
Table 3.62:	Metropolitan Areas with Highly Rated Recreational Facilities.....	112
Table 3.63:	Sample Arts & Culture Table from Boise City–Nampa, ID.....	114
Table 3.64:	Metropolitan Areas with Highly Rated Museums.....	116
Table 4.1:	Average Metro Area Score & Rank by State.....	120
Table 4.2:	2004 State Populations.....	120
Table 4.3:	2004 State Population Density.....	121
Table 4.4:	2004 State Population Growth.....	121
Table 4.5:	Major U.S. Climate Zones.....	122
Table 4.6:	2004 Per Capita Income by State.....	123
Table 4.7:	2004 State Government Expenditures.....	123
Table 4.8:	2004 Per Capita State Expenditures.....	124

Table 4.9:	State Employment Mix .....	124
Table 4.10:	State Dependence on Tourism .....	125
Table 4.11:	2005 State Income Taxes .....	127
Table 4.12:	State Sales Taxes.....	128
Table 4.13:	State & Local General Sales Tax Rates by State, 2004 .....	129
Table 4.14:	Residential Property Tax Rates, 2004.....	129
Table 4.15:	Property Tax Exemptions & Rate Reductions.....	130
Table 4.16:	Estimated Tax Burden, \$50,000 Total Household Income, 2004 .....	131
Table 4.17:	Estimated Tax Burden, \$100,000 Total Household Income, 2004.....	132
Table 4.18:	Estimated Tax Burden, \$150,000 Total Household Income, 2004.....	133
Table 4.19:	SAT Scores by State .....	135
Table 4.20:	Math & Reading Achievement by State.....	136
Table 4.21:	Math & Reading Achievement by Grade 8 Math Proficiency.....	136
Table 4.22:	No Child Left Behind Implementation Status, 2005 .....	137
Table 4.23:	No Child Left Behind Implementation Compliance, 2005 .....	137
Table 4.24:	State Party Lines.....	139
Table 4.25:	Traffic Deaths & Alcohol Involvement & Alcohol Laws .....	140
Table 5.1:	U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Data Descriptions & Sources.....	146
Table 6.1:	Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas: Rankings & Selected Statistics by CMA.....	814
Table 6.2:	Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas: Rankings & Selected Statistics by Rank.....	815
Table 6.3:	Canadian CMA Unemployment Rates, 2001 & 2005.....	817
Table 6.4:	Canadian CMA Home Prices, 2001 & 2006 .....	817

## Maps

Principal U.S. Metropolitan Areas in the West, Alaska & Hawaii .....	5
Principal U.S. Metropolitan Areas in the Central Region.....	6
Principal U.S. Metropolitan Areas in the Northeast .....	7
Principal U.S. Metropolitan Areas in the Southeast.....	8
Canada Metropolitan Areas.....	9
Future Job Growth.....	70
Cheapest & Most Expensive Cities .....	72
Big City Bargains .....	73
Prosperity in a Favorable Climate .....	78
Climate Bargains.....	81
Big Cities, Small Commutes.....	104
Leisure Bargains .....	109
Small Cultural Centers .....	113
Cultural Bargains.....	115