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The Best Places to Start a Business

By - 2/18/2009

Rank	Metropolitan area	Small-business vitality score	Small businesses (2006)	Small businesses per 1,000 residents (2006)	Change in private-sector employment (2003-08)	Change in population (2002-07)	Population (2007)
1	Raleigh	58.20	27,596	27.6	23.0%	21.2%	1,047,629
2	Charlotte	43.09	42,905	27.1	15.4%	17.4%	1,651,568
3	Seattle	39.40	96,040	29.4	15.1%	5.9%	3,309,347
4	Austin	37.26	36,559	23.9	21.0%	17.9%	1,598,161
5	Boise, Idaho	37.18	17,451	30.7	16.7%	17.7%	587,689
6	Salt Lake City	36.18	31,189	28.9	17.7%	9.6%	1,099,973
7	Orlando	35.33	56,459	28.3	18.2%	15.6%	2,032,496
8	Oklahoma City	28.95	31,418	26.7	10.4%	6.4%	1,192,989
9	Denver	27.03	72,867	30.2	9.2%	8.1%	2,464,866
10	Portland, Maine	23.14	17,582	34.4	3.5%	2.4%	513,102
11	Portland, Ore.	20.77	61,244	28.7	11.7%	8.0%	2,175,113
12	Miami-Fort Lauderdale	20.25	174,580	32.2	9.0%	4.2%	5,413,212
13	Bridgeport-Stamford, Conn.	19.22	27,965	31.3	4.1%	0.3%	895,015
14	McAllen-Edinburg, Texas	18.87	9,779	14.2	26.7%	16.6%	710,514
15	Las Vegas	18.52	39,016	22.0	20.0%	21.1%	1,836,333
16	Washington	17.44	137,721	26.2	8.5%	5.8%	5,306,565
17	Houston	16.65	114,262	20.8	16.7%	12.8%	5,628,101
18	Charleston, S.C.	16.58	16,202	26.3	14.6%	11.1%	630,100
19	Virginia Beach-Norfolk	16.36	38,012	22.9	7.8%	3.3%	1,658,754
20	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Fla.	15.52	16,628	29.2	13.1%	24.4%	590,564
21	Dallas-Fort Worth	15.37	133,438	22.3	13.3%	12.3%	6,145,037
22	Des Moines, Iowa	14.98	14,447	27.0	10.3%	9.9%	546,599
23	Colorado Springs	14.20	16,477	27.4	5.5%	7.6%	609,096
24	San Antonio	13.28	38,778	20.0	14.8%	11.9%	1,990,675
25	Jacksonville	12.25	34,302	26.8	11.1%	10.9%	1,300,823
26	Omaha	11.94	21,325	26.0	5.2%	6.0%	829,890
27	Richmond	10.22	31,065	26.0	8.8%	7.8%	1,212,977
28	Greenville, S.C.	9.66	14,912	24.8	10.3%	7.2%	613,828
29	Greensboro	8.87	18,034	26.3	6.9%	6.3%	698,497
30	Little Rock, Ark.	8.85	17,172	26.1	7.6%	7.0%	666,401
31	Atlanta	8.75	130,550	25.5	8.7%	15.8%	5,278,904
32	Madison, Wis.	8.34	15,153	27.7	7.0%	6.9%	555,626
33	Nashville	8.21	36,237	24.4	10.4%	11.5%	1,521,437
34	Indianapolis	7.31	42,137	25.2	6.4%	7.4%	1,695,037
35	New York City	6.77	527,475	28.1	4.9%	1.3%	18,815,988

36	Boston	6.52	122,042	27.3	4.7%	0.6%	4,482,857
37	Ogden, Utah	6.43	11,116	22.1	15.0%	12.2%	518,349
38	New Orleans	6.31	28,061	28.3	-11.5%	-21.4%	1,030,363
39	Tulsa	6.16	23,851	26.7	10.0%	3.5%	905,755
40	Minneapolis-St. Paul	5.24	90,905	28.7	4.5%	5.0%	3,208,212
41	Baltimore	5.12	65,972	24.8	7.5%	2.8%	2,668,056
42	Hartford	4.58	29,453	24.9	6.5%	1.9%	1,189,113
43	Palm Bay-Melbourne, Fla.	2.00	13,687	25.7	6.3%	8.4%	536,161
44	Bradenton-Sarasota, Fla.	1.36	20,930	30.8	7.9%	11.1%	687,181
45	Baton Rouge, La.	1.21	16,876	22.1	11.7%	7.9%	770,037
46	Phoenix	1.00	87,818	21.7	16.0%	19.5%	4,179,427
47	San Diego	0.86	76,417	25.9	5.6%	2.3%	2,974,859
48	San Francisco-Oakland	0.66	118,049	28.4	3.0%	0.9%	4,203,898
49	Albuquerque	0.58	18,957	23.2	8.5%	10.8%	835,120
50	San Jose	-0.90	44,928	25.3	5.9%	3.9%	1,803,643
51	Daytona Beach, Fla.	-1.27	12,997	26.2	6.4%	9.1%	500,413
52	Harrisburg, Pa.	-2.22	13,138	25.0	4.8%	3.0%	528,892
53	Tampa-St. Petersburg	-2.25	71,088	26.4	8.0%	9.6%	2,723,949
54	Knoxville, Tenn.	-3.00	16,116	24.0	7.8%	7.7%	681,525
55	Bakersfield, Calif.	-3.53	11,976	15.5	18.1%	14.5%	790,710
56	Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	-3.71	16,454	24.7	3.1%	4.3%	669,915
57	Birmingham	-3.90	26,141	23.8	5.2%	4.1%	1,108,210
58	Columbus	-4.18	39,480	22.8	4.9%	5.7%	1,754,337
59	Columbia, S.C.	-4.31	16,933	24.1	9.8%	7.9%	716,030
60	Chicago	-4.42	234,989	24.8	3.8%	2.8%	9,524,673
61	Albany	-6.25	20,564	24.2	2.7%	2.4%	853,358
62	Honolulu	-6.39	21,616	23.8	9.1%	2.5%	905,601
63	Philadelphia	-6.82	145,341	25.0	3.5%	1.7%	5,827,962
64	Los Angeles	-6.87	331,140	25.7	3.6%	1.5%	12,875,587
65	Kansas City	-7.25	51,055	26.0	5.6%	5.2%	1,985,429
66	Pittsburgh	-7.60	59,633	25.2	2.3%	-2.3%	2,355,712
67	Jackson, Miss.	-8.53	12,580	23.7	4.6%	5.8%	534,047
68	Allentown-Bethlehem, Pa.	-8.69	18,388	23.1	5.4%	6.3%	803,844
69	Louisville	-8.79	29,548	24.2	4.9%	4.5%	1,233,735
70	Wichita, Kans.	-9.77	14,430	24.5	8.4%	3.0%	596,452
71	El Paso, Texas	-10.62	12,554	17.3	8.5%	6.4%	734,669
72	New Haven, Conn.	-12.22	20,258	24.0	4.0%	1.5%	845,494
73	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, Pa.	-12.88	13,392	24.4	3.6%	-0.6%	549,430
74	Chattanooga, Tenn.	-13.30	11,210	22.0	6.3%	5.5%	514,568
75	Syracuse, N.Y.	-13.68	15,247	23.6	2.5%	-0.7%	645,293
76	St. Louis	-13.93	70,200	25.1	2.3%	2.5%	2,803,707
77	Milwaukee	-14.36	39,157	25.4	3.0%	1.6%	1,544,398
78	Sacramento	-14.71	45,696	22.2	5.9%	8.6%	2,091,120
79	Akron, Ohio	-15.03	17,027	24.3	4.3%	-0.1%	699,356
80	Grand Rapids	-15.11	18,541	24.0	2.0%	2.7%	776,742
81	Lakeland, Fla.	-16.50	11,388	20.4	12.0%	15.3%	574,746
82	Cincinnati	-18.68	46,880	22.1	3.2%	4.1%	2,133,678
83	Cleveland	-18.78	54,463	25.9	-1.0%	-2.1%	2,096,471
84	Buffalo	-19.26	26,470	23.4	0.6%	-2.6%	1,128,183

85	Stockton, Calif.	-19.80	11,150	16.8	8.1%	10.1%	670,990
86	Youngstown, Ohio	-19.87	13,493	23.4	-0.6%	-3.9%	570,704
87	Augusta, Ga.	-21.18	10,525	20.1	2.4%	4.3%	528,519
88	Fresno, Calif.	-22.27	15,987	18.1	8.9%	8.2%	899,348
89	Providence	-22.38	42,772	26.7	-1.0%	-0.5%	1,600,856
90	Tucson	-23.70	20,568	21.7	8.6%	10.2%	967,089
91	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks, Calif.	-24.08	19,179	24.2	2.6%	2.6%	798,364
92	Memphis	-24.29	25,934	20.4	4.3%	4.6%	1,280,533
93	Worcester, Mass.	-25.25	18,024	23.1	1.0%	1.8%	781,352
94	Springfield, Mass.	-25.57	15,160	22.2	0.9%	-0.0%	682,657
95	Riverside-San Bernardino, Calif.	-27.07	64,678	16.2	14.3%	16.9%	4,081,371
96	Rochester, N.Y.	-27.97	22,970	22.3	0.1%	-0.8%	1,030,495
97	Dayton	-32.57	18,238	21.8	-4.2%	-1.0%	835,537
98	Modesto, Calif.	-34.41	8,923	17.6	2.5%	6.9%	511,263
99	Toledo, Ohio	-38.09	15,229	23.3	-2.5%	-1.2%	650,955
100	Detroit	-49.73	102,035	22.7	-7.5%	-0.5%	4,467,592

SOURCE: bizjournals- February 2, 2009

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