

New Retirement Mindscape **2011 City Pulse index**

Rankings and key findings by metropolitan area

The *New Retirement Mindscape*® 2011 City Pulse index examines the 30 largest U.S. metropolitan areas to determine where consumers are the most prepared for and confident about retirement. Now in its second year, the index also measures retirement trends over time on both a national and local level.

Metropolitan areas are scored based on responses to a national online survey which measured consumers' likelihood to have determined the amount of money they need to save for retirement and their actual saving habits. The index also takes into account if people have planned for a variety of activities during retirement and expressed confidence about achieving their retirement goals.

1. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose

Preparation ranking: 9

Confidence ranking: 1

2010 ranking (composite): 12

- San Francisco residents have a relatively bright outlook on the years ahead – a factor that helped propel the metro into the top spot on this year's index. The number of people who say they feel “happy” (51%), “optimistic” (42%) and “empowered” (19%) when they think about retirement are all significantly higher than the national average. Likewise, one-third (33%) of locals say they're very confident their retirement will work out the way they planned, compared to approximately two in ten retirees (22%) nationwide.
- While the number of local residents who say they have set aside money for retirement (70%) is on par with the national average, they're significantly more likely to have determined the amount of income needed in retirement. Nearly one-third (31%) of locals report taking this important step, compared to only one-quarter (25%) of people surveyed nationwide.
- Locals also seem to be keeping another important factor in mind – their health. More than six out of 10 (62%) San Francisco residents have made plans for staying healthy in retirement, compared to slightly over half (51%) of people nationwide. They also rank access to healthcare options and facilities as the most important factor (43%) when considering where they want to spend their retirement years. It's a good thing that just as many (44%) also rank the local area as excellent on this factor.
- What could people in their working years be doing to better prepare for retirement? They may benefit from talking to current retirees. While nearly half (45%) of local pre-retirees say they expect loss of income from their primary career to be the worst thing about retirement, less than a quarter (24%) of current retirees report that this is the case. Retirees actually struggle more with loss of social connections at work (32%), a concern cited by a dramatically lower number (6%) of those still in the workforce.
- While a majority (61%) of those surveyed plan to reside in the San Francisco area both before and during retirement, those who don't may be deterred by the metro's high cost of living. More than four out of 10 (42%) local residents cite an area's overall cost of living as a very important factor in determining where they'll reside during retirement, but only 3% ranked their current home as “excellent” in this category.

2. Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto

Preparation ranking: 3

Confidence ranking: 4

2010 ranking (composite): 4

- Sacramento residents aren't overlooking the fact that the best retirement plans also take into account how you'll spend your free time. In fact, 81% say they've thought a lot about the activities they'll pursue during their retirement years – far more than the national average (72%). Among the most popular activities are ensuring they remain healthy (62%), spending time with family (42%) and traveling (30%).
- How else are people in California's capital city preparing? Nearly three-quarters (71%) report that they have set aside money for retirement. Unfortunately, they may not know if they're on track as less than one-quarter (24%) say they have taken time to determine how much they need to save and even fewer (8%) have put their retirement plan in writing.
- Maybe all the thinking they've done about retirement has helped locals be somewhat realistic. Nearly half (48%) of those in their working years expect the best part of retirement to be having more control over their time, which was also the top choice (49%) of current retirees. The worst part? Both groups responded loss of income from their primary career, although the number of concerned pre-retirees (60%) greatly outnumbers those who are already retired (40%).
- More than six in 10 (63%) of area residents plan to reside in the Sacramento metro both before and during retirement, despite the fact that the number who rate the area as "excellent" with regard to healthcare options and facilities (29%), entertainment options (17%) and state and local tax rates (2%) are all below the national average.

3. San Diego

Preparation ranking: 4

Confidence ranking: 3

2010 ranking (composite): 6

- While San Diego residents are as likely as people in other parts of the country to be taking steps to prepare financially for retirement, locals outpace the residents of other major metropolitans in several important areas. The number who say they've determined the amount of income needed in retirement (35%) or the amount they need to save for retirement (26%) are both higher than the national average (25% and 19%, respectively).
- Three-quarters (75%) have also planned for at least one activity in retirement. Ensuring they remain healthy (53%), spending more time with family (32%) and traveling (27%) were cited most often. San Diegans are also a philanthropic bunch, with 22% saying they've made plans to volunteer during retirement, compared to only 13% of those surveyed nationwide.
- While the number of locals who express positive feelings about retirement (70%) is significantly higher than the national average (63%), things aren't completely sunny in San Diego. The number of residents expressing negative feelings has increased in the past year (from 27% to 36%) with 10% saying they feel "depressed" – compared to only 4% who reported this sentiment in 2010.
- A lackluster job market and higher than average unemployment rate may be taking its toll. The number of San Diego residents who reported a career setback or layoff in the past 18 months increased to 27% in 2011 – significantly higher than the number who reported similar occurrence in 2010 (17%) and the current national average (19%).
- The good news for San Diego? Two-thirds (66%) of its residents plan to call the metro area home both before and during retirement. It's no wonder. The number who rate the metro as "excellent" with regard to weather (75%), availability of healthcare options and facilities (51%), entertainment options (41%) and home values (12%) are all significantly higher than the national averages.

4. St. Louis

Preparation ranking: 7

Confidence ranking: 14

2010 ranking (composite): 17

- St. Louis residents appear to be more likely than their peers across the U.S. to seek professional financial advice when planning for retirement. Nearly one-third (30%) said they've consulted with a financial advisor, significantly more than the national average (23%). This number has increased since 2010, which may help explain why more report taking steps to prepare financially for retirement (78%) than did last year (73%).
- Locals are also being more proactive about planning for the activities they'll pursue during their retirement years. Nearly six out of 10 (59%) report planning for at least two activities during retirement, compared to only 46% in 2010. What are the top things on their minds? Spending more time with family (49%), ensuring they remain healthy (48%) and traveling (24%).
- This additional planning may help explain why residents of the Gateway City are significantly more likely to say they feel on track for retirement (45%) and prepared financially for retirement (21%) than the national average (37% and 15%, respectively).
- What's an additional step St. Louis residents could take to prepare for retirement? For those who are still working, talking to current retirees might be a good option. While both groups agree that the best thing about retirement is having more control over your time, they have significantly different views on the difficulties. More than half (55%) of those who haven't retired anticipate that the hardest thing about retirement will be loss of income from their primary career, a belief that is held by only 29% of retirees. Retirees are equally concerned about healthcare (29%), which was cited by only 19% of those who are working.
- While only 18% of locals say they've given a lot of thought to where they want to live once they retire, three-quarters (75%) say they plan to remain in the metro area both during and after their working years. They also cited overall cost of living (38%), proximity to family (36%) and availability of healthcare options (31%) as the most important features of the city they'll call home. While nearly four out of 10 said St. Louis offers excellent availability to healthcare (38%) and proximity to family (39%), a mere 2% felt the same about the area's state and local tax rates.

5. Portland

Preparation ranking: 20

Confidence ranking: 2

2010 ranking (composite): 24

- While residents of the Portland metro area are as likely as their peers across the country to be preparing financially for retirement (75%), they are more proactive on one front. Three out of 10 (30%) people from the City of Roses say they've consulted a professional financial advisor, significantly more than the national average (23%).
- Perhaps this outside advice has helped them take a more realistic look at their retirement perspectives. The number of Portland residents who say they feel "on track" for retirement (45%), confident about their financial future (25%) and very prepared for retirement (21%) is significantly higher than the national averages (37%, 19%, 15% respectively).
- Seven out of 10 Portlanders express positive feelings about retirement, with significantly more local residents saying they feel "optimistic" (46%) and "empowered" (22%) than the national average (34%, 14%). The bad news? More than one out of five (21%) said they feel "anxious" about retirement, a substantial increase since 2010 (11%).
- Concerns about health insurance could be causing some of this stress. A third (33%) of those who are working believe this will be the worst thing about retirement, a significantly higher number than the national average (21%). What are even more concerned about? Loss of income from their primary career (41%), a sentiment shared by nearly a quarter (24%) of current retirees in the metro area.

6. Hartford-New Haven

Preparation ranking: 2

Confidence ranking: 6

2010 ranking: 7

- Residents of the Hartford-New Haven area are more proactive than their peers in other major metropolitans when it comes to preparing financially for retirement. The number of locals who say they have consulted with a professional financial advisor (29%), determined the amount of money needed for retirement (26%), and developed a written financial plan for retirement goals (16%) are all significantly higher than the national average.
- But despite all their preparation, only a little over half (53%) of those surveyed say they are setting aside money into their own savings or investments – which is on par with the current national average but significantly lower than locals reported just one year ago (64%). Still, 45% of Hartford area residents report feeling on track for retirement, compared to only 37% nationwide.
- Do those who are still working have a realistic outlook on their retirement years? Yes and no, if current retiree's experience is any indication. Both groups believe having more control over their time and the opportunity to relax is the best thing about retirement. However, those who are working may be underemphasizing the camaraderie they share with their coworkers. Only 5% say they anticipate a loss of social connections to be the worst thing about retirement, while 15% of those who have left the workforce report the same sentiment.
- More than two out of five (41%) local residents say that an area's overall cost of living is a very important factor in determining where they'll live during retirement – more than state and local taxes (38%) and proximity to family (34%). Unfortunately, a mere 1% rated the area's overall cost of living as "excellent," which may help explain why so few people plan to spend both their working and retirement years in the Gateway to New England. Only slightly more than half (55%) said they'll live in the metro during both stages of life – no more or less than last year, but still significantly fewer than the national average (65%).

7. Dallas-Fort Worth

Preparation ranking: 5

Confidence ranking: 9

2010 ranking: 11

- Dallas-Fort Worth residents are taking some very important steps to prepare for retirement. Nearly three-quarters (73%) report having set aside money for their non-working years and more than three out of five (62%) have planned for at least two activities to fill their free time.
- It looks like they'll be busy! The number who say they'll spend more time with family (45%), do more meaningful work (24%), volunteer (18%) or continue their education (14%) are all above the national average – although their top choice is ensuring they remain healthy (55%). With this level of activity, it's hard to believe that 18% of retirees actually cite boredom as the most difficult thing about retirement, following loss of income from their primary career (34%) and concerns about health insurance (21%).
- Taking time to think through their retirement may be helping Metroplex residents feel more confident than the average American. Nearly one-quarter (24%) say they feel very confident in their financial future compared to 19% nationwide. Likewise, 24% believe they will be able to achieve their dreams in retirement – a sentiment shared by only 18% of people across the U.S.
- How do people in Dallas-Fort Worth feel about their current residence? It turns out – pretty good. The number of locals who rate the metro area as "excellent" with regard to entertainment options (30%), state and local tax rates (18%), overall cost of living (14%) and home values (13%) is significantly higher than the number of people across the U.S. who report feeling as positive about their own cities. And this is good news for Dallas-Fort Worth as nearly half (49%) of the metro's residents say overall cost of living is a very important factor in deciding where they'll spend their retirement years, followed by proximity to family (43%) and availability of healthcare options and facilities (34%).

8. Los Angeles

Preparation ranking: 1

Confidence ranking: 12

2010 ranking: 30

- Los Angeles claims the top score for preparation on this year's index – a dramatic change from 2010 when the metro finished last. More than three quarters (78%) of locals say they are preparing financially for retirement – a significant increase from 2010 when only 63% reported doing the same. The number who say they've set aside money in an employer sponsored plan (54% vs. 42%) or in their own investments (59% vs. 39%) has also increased substantially year-over-year, as has the number who report putting their retirement plans in writing (13% vs. 5%).
- LA residents are also making plans to stay active during retirement. Nearly four out of five (79%) locals have planned for at least one activity and more than three in five (64%) say they've planned for two – both above the national average. How do they plan to fill their time? By ensuring they remain healthy (61%), spending more time with family (42%) and traveling (30%).
- It appears this extra preparation has also changed locals' views on retirement – or maybe positive attitudes have made people more willing to focus on the future. Whatever the case, 70% of L.A. residents report positive feelings about retirement, compared to only 60% last year. Locals are also more likely to say they believe they can achieve their dreams in retirement (26%) than they were in 2010 (18%), which is also a significantly higher number than those who reported this sentiment nationwide (18%).
- What else could be driving these changes? The number of locals who say they faced a career setback in the past 18 months dropped to a quarter (25%), down from 36% in 2010, but still above the current national average (19%). LA residents who report that they have a financial advisor also climbed to nearly one-third (30%) – an increase from the number who said the same in 2010 (21%).
- And it seems LA residents have big plans for their future. More than one-quarter (29%) of those in their working years say they anticipate that having the chance to reinvent their lives will be the best part about retirement, second only to having more control over their time (35%).

9. Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne

Preparation ranking: 16

Confidence ranking: 8

2010 ranking: 28

- Positive feelings about retirement – and the area's ranking – have risen dramatically in this sunny Florida metro where nearly three-fourths (72%) of those surveyed report feelings of happiness, optimism, hope or empowerment. This is well above the number of locals who reported the same sentiment last year and the current national average (both 63%). Unfortunately, the warmth hasn't spread across the state. Less than two-thirds (61%) of Miami residents expressed similar positive feelings.
- But despite all of their optimism, locals appear less financially prepared than they were last year. Only 61% of Orlando area residents say they have set aside money for retirement – a significant decrease from 2010 (65%). Even more alarming – one in three (30%) admit they haven't thought about retirement much at all.
- On a more positive note, locals are making plans for how they'll spend their free time in retirement. More than four out of five (81%) say they have planned for at least one activity and more than two-thirds (64%) have prepared for two or more – both above the national average. Their most popular responses include ensuring they remain healthy (59%), spending more time with family (46%) and deciding where they might live (30%).
- When it comes to choosing a retirement location, locals rate an area's overall cost of living (45%), state and local tax rates (35%) and availability of healthcare options and facilities (33%) as the most important factors. This may be good and bad news for the metro. More than a quarter (26%) of those surveyed rate Orlando's tax rates as "excellent" – compared to a mere 6% of people nationwide who gave their hometowns the same rating. But only 23% say the metro offers excellent healthcare options and facilities – compared to an average rating of 36% nationwide. The final decision? Approximately half (54%) of those surveyed plan to live among the palm trees both before and during retirement.
- Home to the Magic Kingdom, some of the area's enchanting qualities may be rubbing off on its residents. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of retired residents say the best part about retirement is the chance to reinvent their lives, second only to having more control over their time (48%). Unfortunately, they may not have the funds needed to do so. Almost half (49%) of local retirees report loss of income from their primary career as the hardest thing about retirement – well above the national average (37%).

10. Philadelphia

Preparation ranking: 6

Confidence ranking: 13

2010 ranking: 22

- Though they've moved up in the ranks, Philadelphians' attitudes about retirement are rather bleak. Just over one-quarter (27%) of those surveyed report feeling "optimistic" about retirement – well below the national average (34%) and significantly less than the 38% of locals who reported a similar sentiment last year.
- The good news? A lack of optimism isn't stopping Philly residents from being more proactive than their neighbors. More than four out of five (82%) locals say they are preparing financially for retirement – significantly more than those who reported taking similar actions in Pittsburgh (72%) and New York (73%). More than three-quarters (78%) also report that they've spent a lot of time planning for at least one activity during retirement, including ensuring they remain healthy (57%), spending time with family (45%), traveling (23%) and deciding where they might live (23%).
- Those in the City of Brotherly Love may be more concerned than the average American about the bite taxes could take out of their retirement savings. Forty percent of Philadelphians claim that state and local tax rates are a very important factor in determining where they'll live during retirement – significantly more than the national average (28%). An area's overall cost of living (47%) and availability of healthcare options and facilities (38%) also made their top three.
- Philly natives who have not yet retired seem to have realistic views on retirement. More than two out of five (43%) believe that having more control over their time will be the best thing about retirement, compared to a similar number of current retirees (48%) who agree. What could they be overlooking? Possibly the loss of social connections at work, which was rated as the worst thing about retirement by 21% of local retirees, but only 7% of those who remain in the workforce.

11. Chicago

Preparation ranking: 10

Confidence ranking: 10

2010 ranking (composite): 13

- Three-quarters (75%) of Chicago residents have set money aside for retirement, a figure on par with the national average. Unfortunately, only 24% of locals have determined how much they need to save and a mere 10% have put their plans in writing. Despite failing to take these important steps, 41% believe they're on track for retirement.
- Nearly three out of 10 (29%) Chicagoans say they anticipate concerns about health insurance to be the worst thing about retirement – significantly more than the national average (21%). And while 38% claim that availability of healthcare options and facilities is a very important factor in determining where they'll reside during retirement, this focus on wellbeing isn't reflected in their planning. Less than half (49%) say they have given a lot of thought to how they'll stay healthy during their leisure years – a significant drop from 2010 when 63% reported making these plans.
- Home sweet home. That seems to be the sentiment of the 71% of locals who plan to reside in the Windy City both before and during retirement. What's influencing people's decision to stay put? It could be the availability of healthcare options, proximity to family, friends and other retirees, and the area's entertainment and transportations options. The number of Chicagoans who rated their city as "excellent" on these factors was significantly higher than the number of people across the U.S. who shared this feeling about their own hometowns.
- A majority of people in this bustling metropolis believe the best thing about retirement will either be having more control over their time (39%) or having the opportunity to just relax (28%). It appears this may be true as 85% of current retirees also cited one of those factors when asked what they're enjoying most. Chicagoans are also more apt than their peers in other cities to have made plans to do more meaningful or satisfying work during retirement (24% vs. 17%).

12. Pittsburgh

Preparation ranking: 29

Confidence ranking: 5

2010 ranking (composite): 18

- Pittsburgh residents are significantly less likely than their peers across the U.S. to report that they've experienced a career setback or layoff in the past 18 months – 13% locally vs. 19% nationwide. This may also explain why the number who say they feel “very confident” about their financial future (25%) is significantly higher than the national average (19%).
- Despite this, significantly fewer locals (58%) express positive emotions toward retirement than did so in 2010 (70%) – with large decreases in the number who say they feel “happy” (39% vs. 51%) and “hopeful” (25% vs. 37%). A quarter (25%) of those surveyed report feeling “worried,” up from 17% last year.
- Are emotions causing Steel City residents to avoid or delay planning for retirement? Maybe. While two-thirds (66%) say they've set aside money for retirement, only 17% report that they've determined how much money they need to save – significantly fewer than last year when 29% claimed they'd taken this action.
- Likewise, fewer locals say they have spent a lot of time planning for activities during retirement. The number who report making plans for at least two activities decreased to 42%, down significantly from 53% in 2010. Those who have thought about it plan to ensure they remain healthy (44%) and spend more time with family (35%).
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of those surveyed plan to remain in Pennsylvania's second largest city both before and during retirement. They say the metro offers excellent availability to healthcare options and facilities (39%) and proximity to family (36%). These were also the features people considered most important when selecting where they'd live in their retirement years, topped only by overall cost of living.

13. Tampa- St. Pete

Preparation ranking: 25

Confidence ranking: 7

2010 ranking (composite): 19

- Is Tampa's temperate climate responsible for local residents' upbeat feelings about retirement? It's hard to say, but the number who report positive feelings about reaching this major milestone (70%) is significantly higher than the national average (63%). More than four out of 10 (41%) say they're “optimistic,” compared to 34% of their peers nationwide.
- Unfortunately, there's also some bad news on the local front. The number of residents who have taken steps to prepare financially for retirement (66%) is significantly below the national average (75%), with only 58% reporting that they've set aside money. Even more shocking – when asked how they're preparing for retirement, a third (34%) of those surveyed admit they “haven't thought much about it.”
- So what is on local residents' minds? Those who are still working expect that having more control over their time (37%) and the chance to reinvent their life (28%) will be the best things about retirement. They cite loss of income from their primary career (44%) and concerns about health insurance (24%) as the worst. One thing they may be overlooking is the loss of social connections at work, which was chosen by 17% of current retirees, but only 5% of those still working.
- Unfortunately, some in the metro area may have to face these realities of retirement earlier than they expected. A quarter (25%) say they've faced a layoff or career set-back in the past 18 months, which is significantly higher than the current national average (19%) and up from the 2010 survey (21%).
- On a more positive note, the number of Tampa residents who plan to remain in the metro both prior to and during retirement (65%) has also increased significantly since 2010 (54%). They may be attracted to the weather, which 38% of locals say is a very important consideration when deciding where to retire. Only an area's cost of living was cited as frequently.

14. Seattle-Tacoma

Preparation ranking: 23

Confidence ranking: 11

2010 ranking (composite): 5

- While the number of Seattle area residents who are taking steps to prepare financially for retirement (74%) is on par with the rest of the country, locals aren't as proactive as they could be. Only 19% say they've determined the amount of money they need to save for retirement – significantly fewer than in 2010 (31%). A similar decline was seen in the number who report putting their plans in writing (8% vs. 19%).
- It's hard to say exactly what's driving these changes, but confidence levels in the Emerald City have also declined. When asked if they believe they will achieve their dreams in retirement (or are living them currently), a mere 17% said yes. This compares to more than a quarter (26%) who shared the same sentiment last year.
- Despite this, nearly two-thirds (64%) express positive feelings about retirement, including those who say they feel "happy" (46%), "optimistic" (37%) and "hopeful" (33%). Among those who are still working, this may be because they're looking forward to having more control over their time (37%) and having the opportunity to just relax (32%) – which they expect to be the best things about retirement. Current retirees agree, with 55% citing "control over time" and 19% selecting "relaxation" as the best thing about their retirement.
- What do people in the metro report as the worst thing about retirement? Both those who are approaching retirement (40%) and those who have reached this milestone (27%) say the loss of their primary income. But those who are still doing the 9-to-5 may be overlooking something else – a loss of social connections at work. Nearly a quarter (23%) of current retirees report that this is what they've found worst, while only 7% of those still working claim to expect the same.

15. Houston

Preparation ranking: 8

Confidence ranking: 21

2010 ranking (composite): 14

- While the number of Houstonians who have made financial preparations for retirement (71%) is on par with the national average (75%), they score higher on another important factor. Nearly eight out of 10 (79%) have planned "a lot" for at least one activity during retirement – compared to 72% of people across the U.S. Ensuring they remain healthy (57%) and spending more time with family (41%) are among the most frequently cited activities.
- Some things have changed in the past year. Locals who report that they've made plans to travel (22%), do more meaningful work (14%) and volunteer (8%) have all declined significantly since 2010. And while confidence levels have remained fairly stable, there are slight decreases in the number who say they believe they can achieve their dreams in retirement (16% vs. 23%) and who express confidence in their ability to reach their retirement goals (20% vs. 26%).
- Residents of the largest city in Texas seem to have a fairly realistic view of retirement. Almost three-quarters (71%) of those in their working years say the best thing about retirement will either be having more control over their time or the opportunity to relax – a sentiment that is shared by the majority of those who have already retired (79%). While both groups also express that the loss of income from their primary career is the worst, working Houstonians are significantly less likely to express concerns about a loss of social connections (5%) than their retired peers (26%).
- Nearly seven out of 10 (68%) locals say they'll reside in Space City both before and during retirement. What's keeping the moving trucks away? It could be the area's overall cost of living, including state and local tax rates, as well as its availability of healthcare and entertainment options. The percentage of Houstonians who give their metro area excellent marks for these features is significantly higher than the percentage of people across the U.S. who rate their own cities the same way. Cost of living (46%) and tax rates (38%) also rank as the two factors local residents rate as the most important when deciding where they'll live during their retirement years.

16. Denver

Preparation ranking: 13

Confidence ranking: 19

2010 ranking: 8

- Denver area residents' expectations for retirement seem to be sliding downhill at a rather brisk pace. While more than six out of 10 (62%) locals report having positive feelings about retirement, this is down from nearly three-quarters (73%) a year ago. Those who say they feel "optimistic" has declined the most dramatically – from more than half (51%) of locals surveyed in 2010, to one third (34%) of those who responded the same this year. Likewise, a mere 15% report feeling confident about their financial future.
- But there is good news. People in the Mile High City aren't letting negative feelings deter them from planning. More than three-quarters (78%) have made financial preparations for retirement. In fact, those who say they've set aside money in an employer-sponsored plan (60%), determined the amount of income needed in retirement (33%) and consulted with a financial advisor (30%) are all significantly higher than the national average.
- What are Denver area residents overlooking? That a job often provides more benefits than just the pay you bring home. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of local retirees say that the loss of social connections at work is the worst thing about retirement – compared to only 6% of those still in the workforce. But a paycheck still takes precedence with a third (33%) of retirees and nearly half (49%) of non-retired respondents agreeing that loss of income from their primary career is the worst thing about leaving the workforce.
- A majority (65%) of those surveyed plan to reside in the metro both before and after retirement. Their decision to stay or go could be impacted by a number of factors, but they don't appear to be as price sensitive as their peers across the U.S. While 42% of Americans surveyed say an area's cost of living is a very important factor in determining where they'll spend their retirement years, only a third (33%) of Denver area residents agree. Locals are equally influenced by proximity to family (31%) and availability of healthcare options and facilities (31%).

17. Phoenix

Preparation ranking: 26

Confidence ranking: 15

2010 ranking: 16

- Phoenix residents are as likely as their peers across the U.S. to be preparing financially for retirement, but they may be overlooking another important step in the planning process. The number of locals who say they've planned "a lot" for at least two activities during retirement has declined dramatically – down from two-thirds (67%) in 2010, to only a little over half (55%) of those who were surveyed in 2011.
- Unfortunately the southwestern sun isn't brightening locals' outlook on retirement. Less than two-thirds (61%) report having positive feelings about retirement compared to more than three-fourths (76%) who shared a similar sentiment last year. Perhaps most stunning, the number who report feeling "happy" dropped from 53% in 2010 to only 40% this year – and those who admit they feel "depressed" rose from 10% to 15%, which is also significantly higher than the national average.
- Could concerns about rising healthcare costs be a factor? Possibly. More than one in four (27%) retired respondents say that concerns about health insurance are the hardest part about retirement. This is significantly more than the national average (16%) and greater than the number of local retirees who report loss of income from their primary career (25%) as the hardest part – a leading response in most other major metropolitans.
- Local residents are also more likely than their peers across the U.S. to say that reconnecting with a spouse or loved one is the best thing about retirement. While this was cited by 14% of those still working and 12% of retirees, both figures are significantly higher than the national average (9% and 8% respectively.) Both groups agree that having more control over their time or the opportunity to relax is the best thing overall.

18. Minneapolis-St. Paul

Preparation ranking: 18

Confidence ranking: 18

2010 ranking: 1

- Minneapolis-St. Paul fell dramatically from the number one ranking in 2010. While it is difficult to cite a specific reason – the area faced rapidly declining home prices, flooding, tornados and a state government shutdown in the past 12 months – perhaps more pressing financial obligations have taken precedence over retirement. Significantly fewer locals report setting aside money in their own savings and investments (51%) than did so last year (65%), and those who say they've determined the amount of income needed in retirement and the amount they need to save for retirement have also declined.
- While the number of Twin Cities residents who say they're preparing for the activities they'll pursue during retirement has remained steady, far fewer report making plans to stay healthy than did so last year (41% vs. 51%). But that doesn't mean locals are completely overlooking the impact health can have on one's retirement and savings. In fact, more than one-quarter (26%) of non-retired locals say they expect concerns about health insurance to be the worst thing about leaving the workforce.
- Local residents may be less prepared and confident than they were last year but their attitudes about retirement remain relatively positive. More than half (51%) of those surveyed report feeling "happy" about retirement – up slightly from last year (47%) and substantially higher than the current national average (43%). Unfortunately, the number of those who say they feel "empowered" (13%) has dropped significantly since 2010 (22%).
- There is some good news for the Twin Cities. Apparently, the cold, dark winters won't be driving many locals away. More than two-thirds (68%) of locals surveyed plan to live in the Twin Cities both prior to and during retirement. And while they don't give the area high marks for weather, 43% rank it as excellent for availability of healthcare options and facilities.

19. Raleigh-Durham

Preparation ranking: 12

Confidence ranking: 26

2010 ranking: 2

- Raleigh-Durham's fall from the number two ranking may be a sign that local residents are struggling with competing financial priorities – possibly a lingering effect of the storms that swept through the area earlier this year. While seven out of 10 (70%) say they're setting aside money for retirement, this is a decline from 2010 when eight in 10 (80%) reported doing so. Even more startling, the number of locals who express confidence in reaching their retirement goals (19%) has dropped significantly since just one year ago (28%). The number of Raleigh-Durham residents who say they feel confident in their financial future has also declined dramatically (17% vs. 26%).
- There is some good news. Despite their skepticism, people in Raleigh-Durham aren't letting their current situation get them down. More than two-thirds (67%) of Triangle residents report positive feelings about leaving the workforce – including those who express emotions ranging from "happy" (46%) to "hopeful" (38%) and "optimistic" (37%). Likewise, significantly fewer locals admit feeling "sad" (4%) than do so nationwide (8%).
- In order to keep this positive vibe, those in their working years may want to prepare emotionally for what's to come. When asked the worst thing about retirement, local retirees report loss of income from their primary career (35%), loss of social connections at work (19%) and boredom (18%) in their top three. The best part about leaving the 9-to-5 behind? More than three quarters say either having more control over their time (45%) or the opportunity to just relax (31%).
- More than half (51%) of Triangle residents say they're making plans to stay healthy during retirement and it appears they live in a good location to do so. Nearly half (46%) of locals rate their area as excellent with regard to its healthcare options and facilities – significantly higher than the number of people nationwide who score their own cities the same way (36%). However some may be taking this for granted; only slightly more than a quarter (28%) say healthcare options are a very important consideration when deciding where to retire.
- So what do locals look for in a place to call home during retirement? An area's overall cost of living (40%) and proximity to family (32%) rate as the most important, which makes sense considering that more than two-thirds (38%) plan to spend more time with their loved ones after they leave the workforce.

20. Detroit

Preparation ranking: 19

Confidence ranking: 20

2010 ranking: 21

- The Motor City's results have remained fairly steady since 2010, but there's both good and bad news. First, the positive. Seven out of 10 (69%) Detroit residents say they've been setting aside money for retirement – a substantial increase since last year (63%). Likewise, significantly more locals report that they've determined the amount of income needed in retirement (29%) than did so a year ago (20%).
- Unfortunately, Detroit residents may need more good news to fuel their attitudes about retirement. Only one in five (20%) says they're confident they'll reach their financial retirement goals, compared to 28% in 2010. Likewise, the number who report feeling “anxious” about retirement has increased substantially over the past 12 months (24% vs. 14%).
- So what will locals do to stay busy during their retirement years? More than half (52%) say they've spent “a lot” of time making plans to ensure they remain healthy, and 36% are preparing to spend more time with family. More than one in five (21%) report giving serious thought to where they'll live – with 65% saying they'll call Detroit home both before and during retirement.
- Current residents say an area's overall cost of living (40%), availability of healthcare options and facilities (33%), proximity to family (31%) and tax rates (28%) are all very important factors to consider when deciding where to live during retirement. An average number of Motor City residents give the Detroit metro excellent marks on the first three factors – but significantly fewer feel this way about the area's state and local tax rates.
- Local workers expect that having more control over their time (45%) and the opportunity to just relax (34%) will be the best things about leaving the workforce – a sentiment shared by a vast majority (83%) of retirees. However, while both groups agree that loss of income from their primary career is the worst part about retirement, 17% of retirees also cite the loss of social connections at work. Those who are still working may want to give this some thought as a mere 4% report a similar expectation.

21. Baltimore

Preparation ranking: 21

Confidence ranking: 22

2010 ranking: 9

- While Baltimore's overall ranking dropped significantly, the news isn't as bad as it may initially appear. The number of locals who are preparing financially for retirement (80%) has remained relatively steady since 2010 (83%), and those who report that they've determined the amount of income needed in retirement (32%) is actually above the national average (25%).
- The metro's lower rank was driven primarily by increased levels of preparation in other cities – but local residents have to take some of the blame. Those who say they've determined how much they need to save for retirement dropped to less than one in five (19%), compared to one-third (33%) of locals surveyed just one year ago. In addition, fewer say they've spent a lot of time planning for at least one activity during retirement (70%) than did so in 2010 (76%).
- This seaport hub is no exception to the national sentiment surrounding retirement – and Baltimore residents are among the least likely to cite positive feelings. Only 37% report feeling “happy” about retirement compared to almost half (49%) of those surveyed last year and 43% of people nationwide. Likewise, feelings of optimism, hope and empowerment have also declined, and anxiety has risen.
- It looks like many respondents are settling in for the long-haul. Almost two-thirds (64%) are planning to call Baltimore home both before and during retirement – up from 54% who had reported the same plans last year. Those who do stay put will likely enjoy the metro's healthcare options and facilities, which are rated as excellent by nearly half (47%) of current residents. What's not to love? Baltimore's overall cost of living, which only 2% of residents rated as excellent. Baltimore residents who haven't reached retirement age may want to chat with those who achieved this milestone already. Only 6% expect the loss of social connections at work to be the worst thing about retirement, compared to nearly one-quarter (22%) of current retirees who report the same. Those who remain in the workforce are also far less likely to cite the changing relationship with their spouse and family (2%) as the worst thing than those who have already retired (13%).

22. Charlotte

Preparation ranking: 14

Confidence ranking: 23

2010 ranking: 27

- Charlotte residents fall close to the middle of the pack with regard to preparation, but their confidence is lagging. Less than one in five (18%) say they're very confident in their financial future or in their ability to reach their retirement goals. Likewise, a mere 16% expect to achieve their dreams in retirement – on par with the national average (18%), but down since last year when 20% of locals said the same.
- The good news is that local residents aren't letting a bit of skepticism deter them from thinking about how they'd like to spend their retirement years. Nearly four out of five (79%) say they are planning "a lot" for specific activities during retirement – a significantly higher number than those who report doing the same nationwide (72%). Among their top three priorities are ensuring they remain healthy (53%), spending time with family (46%) and deciding where they want to live (23%).
- Since selecting a place to call home has been on their minds, it's interesting to note that more than two-thirds of those surveyed say they plan to remain in Charlotte both before and during retirement. While overall cost of living (43%), availability of healthcare options (39%) and proximity to family (38%) are the factors that are most likely to guide their decision, those aren't locals' only considerations. An above average number of metro area residents also say an area's weather (27%) and home values (25%) are very important.
- It seems those who are still in the workforce have realistic expectations about retirement, with one possible exception. While they agree with retirees that loss of income from their primary career will be the worst thing about retirement, only 7% cite loss of social connections at work – a response given by more than one quarter (26%) of current retirees. On a more positive note, the vast majority of both groups agree that having more control over their time and the opportunity to relax are the best parts.

23. Boston

Preparation ranking: 15

Confidence ranking: 24

2010 ranking: 10

- Though Boston's overall rank has slid dramatically since last year, local residents appear to be better prepared for retirement than many of their east coast neighbors. More than four out of five (81%) Bostonians say they have taken steps to prepare financially for retirement – more than those who report doing so in Washington D.C. (77%) and New York (73%).
- What could locals do to improve their situation? While the number who say they're saving money in employer sponsored plans has remained steady (59%), only slightly more than half (52%) of those surveyed report setting aside money in their own saving and investments – significantly less than those who reported doing so in 2010 (63%).
- Unfortunately, locals aren't feeling very positive about their retirement prospects. A mere 15% say they're confident about their financial future, down from more than one-quarter (26%) who shared a similar sentiment last year. Even more startling – the number who report feeling "happy" about retirement dropped to 40%, down from 52% just one year ago. Similarly, those who said that reaching this milestone makes them feel "empowered" fell to a mere 14%, down from nearly a quarter (23%) in 2010.
- Boston residents appear to be re-evaluating how they'll spend their retirement years. Fewer than one in five (19%) say they are spending a lot of time making plans to travel compared to the one in three (33%) who reported doing so last year. Despite this, making plans to ensure they remain healthy (54%) and spend more time with family (36%) remain the activities locals are most focused on.
- Maybe a few trips wouldn't be such a bad idea. Nearly one in five (18%) local retirees said that boredom is the worst thing about retirement – significantly higher than the number of retirees across the U.S. (11%) who reported the same experience. However, getting out of Boston may not be the answer. Locals tend to rate their city relatively well, especially with regard to its availability of healthcare options and facilities, which 44% rate as excellent. Likewise, nearly two-thirds (64%) of those surveyed plan to call Boston "home-sweet-home" both before and during retirement.

24. Miami-Fort Lauderdale

Preparation ranking: 28

Confidence ranking: 16

2010 ranking: 20

- Miami-Fort Lauderdale residents may be surrounded by warm, sandy beaches, but their feelings about retirement have cooled significantly since last year. The number who report feeling “happy” about reaching this milestone dropped to 37% – down from half (50%) of all locals surveyed in 2010. Likewise, a mere 11% say they feel “empowered” about retirement, compared to 20% only a year ago.
- But it’s not all bad news for the Miami area. The number of residents taking steps to prepare financially for retirement (71%) is on par with the national average, and it isn’t only their financial well-being locals are focused on. Sixty percent say they’ve made plans to ensure they remain healthy after they leave the workforce – a significantly higher number than those who report taking this important action nationwide (51%).
- More than one-quarter (28%) of locals report spending “a lot” of time considering where they want to live in retirement. Staying put might be a good option. The percentage of Miami-Fort Lauderdale residents who say their metro offers excellent weather (41%), entertainment options (29%) and state and local tax rates (19%) is significantly higher than the percentage of people across the U.S. who would rate their own cities the same way.
- Maybe locals are just beginning to realize how good they have it. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those surveyed this year say they’ll live in the Miami area both before and during retirement – compared to 2010 when slightly over half (54%) reported similar plans.
- It appears that local residents are looking forward to spending some time on the metro area’s sandy beaches. When asked what they expect to be the best thing about retirement, those who are still in their working years were most apt to say having more control over their time (36%) or the opportunity to just relax (35%). A large majority of local retirees agree. More than three-quarters (77%) say that more time and relaxation have proven to be the best things about leaving the workforce. The worst? Loss of income from their primary career, a stress cited by 42% of Miami-based retirees.

25. Washington D.C.

Preparation ranking: 11

Confidence ranking: 27

2010 ranking: 23

- As the U.S. struggles to balance its budget, residents of our nation’s capital are apt to question their own financial security – but perhaps no more than the rest of the American public. While only 19% of Washington D.C. locals express confidence in their financial future, this figure is identical to the national average.
- But being in the heart of the debate seems to be taking its toll, or at least causing locals to focus more on their immediate goals than their long-term ones. Slightly more than two-thirds (69%) of D.C. residents say they’re setting aside money for retirement – a dramatic decline from 2010 when 80% reported doing so. The silver lining? Pinched wallets haven’t stopped D.C. residents from thinking about how they want to spend their retirement years – and their loved ones appear to be taking priority. Nearly half (46%) say they’re making plans to spend more time with family, second only to the number making plans to ensure they remain healthy (55%). D.C. dwellers are also significantly more likely than people across the U.S. to say they’re planning to do more meaningful work (23% vs. 17%) and volunteer (21% vs. 13%).
- Perhaps this isn’t surprising since local workers expect that having more control over their time (45%) and the opportunity to just relax (27%) will be the best things about retirement. Their most significant concern – loss of income from their primary career – is understandable, but locals may face other challenges after leaving the workforce. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of D.C. retirees say a loss of social connections at work is the worst thing about retirement. But a mere 8% of those who haven’t reached this milestone expect to experience the same.
- And while the capital is likely to get even busier as the election approaches, 62% say they plan to call D.C. home both during and after retirement – a significant increase from 2010 when only slightly more than half (51%) shared similar plans. Perhaps locals are beginning to realize the benefits of living in the nation’s capital. The percentage of residents who say D.C. offers excellent healthcare options (45%), transportation (21%), entertainment (34%) and home values (12%) are all significantly higher than the percentage of people across the country who would share the same sentiment about the metros where they live.

26. Nashville

Preparation ranking: 27

Confidence ranking: 17

2010 ranking: 3

- Nashville's rank on the index has slid dramatically since last year, driven down by both a lack of preparation and confidence among Music City residents. Only slightly more than a third (35%) of locals report feeling on track for retirement compared to half (50%) of those surveyed in 2010.
- Nashville area residents' attitudes about retirement also seem to be hitting a sour note. Just over one-third (36%) say they feel "happy" about retirement, down from more than half (54%) of those surveyed in 2010. The number who report feeling "anxious" (24%) and "depressed" (13%) has also risen dramatically in just one year (from 10% and 6% respectively).
- Is there any good news? Yes. The number of locals who are preparing financially for retirement remains on par with the national average across all factors, including setting aside money for retirement (67%) in either an employee sponsored plan (52%) or in their own savings or investment accounts (46%).
- So what specifically has driven down the metro's preparation rank? Locals appear to be delaying making plans for retirement – only 69% say they've planned "a lot" for at least one activity during retirement, down from 79% in 2010. One of their most significant oversights might be a failure to ensure they remain healthy during their retirement years, something only 46% of locals report doing, compared to 62% of those surveyed last year and 51% of people nationwide.
- This lack of attention to staying healthy is surprising, given that nearly a quarter (24%) of metro area retirees cite concerns about health insurance as the worst thing about retirement, a worry shared by 20% of those currently working. On a more positive note, both groups agree on the best things about retirement – having more control over their time and the ability to just relax.

27. Cleveland-Akron

Preparation ranking: 24

Confidence ranking: 25

2010 ranking: 25

- When it comes to retirement, residents of the Cleveland-Akron area are still struggling. Only 11% of locals believe they will achieve their dreams in retirement – significantly fewer than those who express this sentiment nationwide (18%). The number who report feeling "optimistic" about retirement has also dropped dramatically, from nearly half (46%) in 2010 to less than a third (32%) of Cleveland area residents surveyed this year.
- Considering that almost a quarter (23%) of people in the metro area report a career setback or layoff in the last 18 months, a bit of skepticism is understandable. However, it isn't stopping them from taking some positive steps to prepare for retirement. Locals are almost as likely to say they've set aside money for retirement (67%) as their peers across the nation (69%). And nearly three-quarters (73%) report that they've planned for at least one activity to fill their free time, such as ensuring they remain healthy (50%) spending more time with family (40%), traveling (23%) or deciding how they'll rest and relax (23%).
- While more than three-quarters (77%) of residents plan to remain in the metro area both prior to and during retirement – which is significantly higher than the national average (65%) – their views on the local area are mixed. Those who say Cleveland-Akron offers "excellent" entertainment options (14%), transportation (7%) and weather (2%) are all significantly lower than the number of people nationally who rated their own cities the same way.
- The bright side? Cleveland rocks when it comes to cost of living. Ten percent of local respondents rated the metro's overall cost of living as "excellent" – compared to 6% of people who gave the same rating to their own hometowns. Clevelanders also say the area offers excellent availability to healthcare options and facilities (39%) and proximity to family (30%).

28. Atlanta

Preparation ranking: 17

Confidence ranking: 28

2010 ranking: 15

- While Atlanta finds itself in the bottom three, residents are doing some things right. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of those surveyed are taking steps to prepare financially for retirement – which is on par with the national average. Atlanta residents are also more likely than people across the U.S. to have planned for at least two activities during retirement (61% vs. 54%), including ensuring they remain healthy (58%) and spending more time with family (47%).
- Where does the metro area lag behind others? Less than a quarter of locals (22%) report having a financial advisor, compared to the 28% of those surveyed nationwide. The number of Atlanta residents who say they feel on track for retirement (31%) is also significantly below the national average (37%).
- Those in their working years could gain perspective from talking to their elders. While non-retirees and retirees both cite the loss of income from their primary career as the worst thing about retirement, nearly a quarter (24%) of local retirees put concerns about healthcare in their top two – a worry shared by 18% those who are still working. What else are non-retired Atlanta residents overlooking? The eventual loss of social connections at work – rated the worst thing about retirement by 13% of those no longer on the job, but only 4% of those still working. Those in the workforce also express a greater concern about boredom (21%) during their retirement years.
- Is there any good news for Atlanta? Yes – more than six out of 10 (61%) of those surveyed plan to remain in the metro area both before and during retirement. Unfortunately, their impressions of the area are mixed. While 29% give the metro excellent marks for availability of healthcare options and facilities, and 23% rank it the same for proximity to family, people in other areas are likely to rate their hometowns more favorably.
- When asked what they consider the most important factor when determining where they'll spend their retirement years, Atlanta residents also cite proximity to family (38%) and healthcare options (33%) in their top three, preceded only by the area's overall cost of living (41%).

29. New York

Preparation ranking: 22

Confidence ranking: 30

2010 ranking: 26

- New York City ranked well below its northeastern neighbors again this year, with residents' low levels of confidence driving down its overall score. Three out of 10 (30%) locals say they feel "on track" for retirement, down from 38% in 2010 and significantly lower than those across the nation who agree (37%). Low numbers also report feeling very confident about their financial future (17%) or in their ability to reach their retirement goals (20%).
- Some doubt is understandable. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of locals say they've experienced a layoff or career setback in the last 18 months, compared to 19% nationwide. However, New Yorkers are a resilient bunch and they aren't letting this delay their planning. They're as likely as their peers across the U.S. to have set aside money for retirement (70%) and to have determined the amount of income needed in their non-working years (25%).
- One thing NYC locals may want to be more realistic about is the length of their retirement. The average New Yorker says they expect to spend 16 years in this stage of life, while financial planning professionals recommend planning for a 30 year retirement. Those who are still working may be overlooking something else – the camaraderie they share with their co-workers. Nearly one-fifth (19%) of local retirees say the loss of social connections at work is the worst thing about retirement, a concern shared by 5% of those who are still employed.
- People in America's most populous city are significantly more likely than their peers across the country to say they've given "a lot" of thought to where they'll live in retirement (29% vs. 22%). However, some may have re-evaluated their desire to stay in the Big Apple. Over half (58%) of locals say they plan to spend both their working and retirement years in NYC, which is down from 64% who said the same last year.
- Despite this, local residents appear to be very pleased with their current home. When asked to rate their metro area on a variety of factors, New Yorkers gave the area excellent marks for proximity to family (40%), entertainment options (34%), proximity to friends and other retirees (32%), transportation options (28%) and home values (13%). Similar sentiments were expressed by significantly fewer people across the U.S. when they were asked to rate their own cities.

30. Indianapolis

Preparation ranking: 30

Confidence ranking: 29

2010 ranking: 29

- Indianapolis residents aren't winning any races when it comes to preparing for retirement. It's hard to say what's slowing them down, but 65% of locals say they have planned for at least one activity during their leisure years, compared to nearly three-quarters (72%) of their peers across the U.S. An especially startling factor – 44% report that they've made plans to ensure they remain healthy during retirement. With health care costs expected to rise, this could be a significant oversight.
- Unfortunately, their levels of confidence aren't much better. Just over a quarter (27%) report they feel "hopeful" about retirement, compared to one-third (33%) of those surveyed nationwide, with 13% believing they will be able to achieve their dreams in retirement. Some dreams may also be taking a backseat to more pressing needs. For example, the number of locals who say they are planning to continue their education during retirement dropped to 5%, down from 11% in 2010.
- But there is good news for the nearly seven out of 10 (69%) Indiana residents who plan to stick around the state's capital both before and after retirement. One in 10 (10%) locals rated Indianapolis' cost of living as excellent – compared to 4% of people nationwide who gave their hometowns the same rating. Is there a downside to remaining in Indy? Possibly. Less than one out of three (29%) locals rates the metro's availability of healthcare options and facilities favorably.
- While this metro area finished in last place, its residents appear to have a realistic view of retirement. Nearly half (48%) of Indianapolis residents in their working years expect that having more control over their time will be the best thing about retirement – a sentiment shared by a nearly equal number (46%) of retirees. Similarly, 46% of non-retired respondents said they expect the loss of income from their primary career to be the worst thing about retirement, compared with 41% of retired respondents who said the same. The one thing they might be overlooking is the loss of social connections at work, a concern cited by nearly two out of 10 (19%) retirees, but echoed by only 6% of those who remain in the workforce.

About the survey

The *New Retirement Mindscape* 2011 City Pulse index was created by Ameriprise Financial utilizing survey responses from 11,611 U.S. adults ages 40-75. The survey was commissioned by Ameriprise Financial, Inc. and conducted online by Harris Interactive from August 4-12, 2011. The national average sample and the 30 U.S. metropolitan areas were each weighted independently to best represent each area. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' likelihood to be online.

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