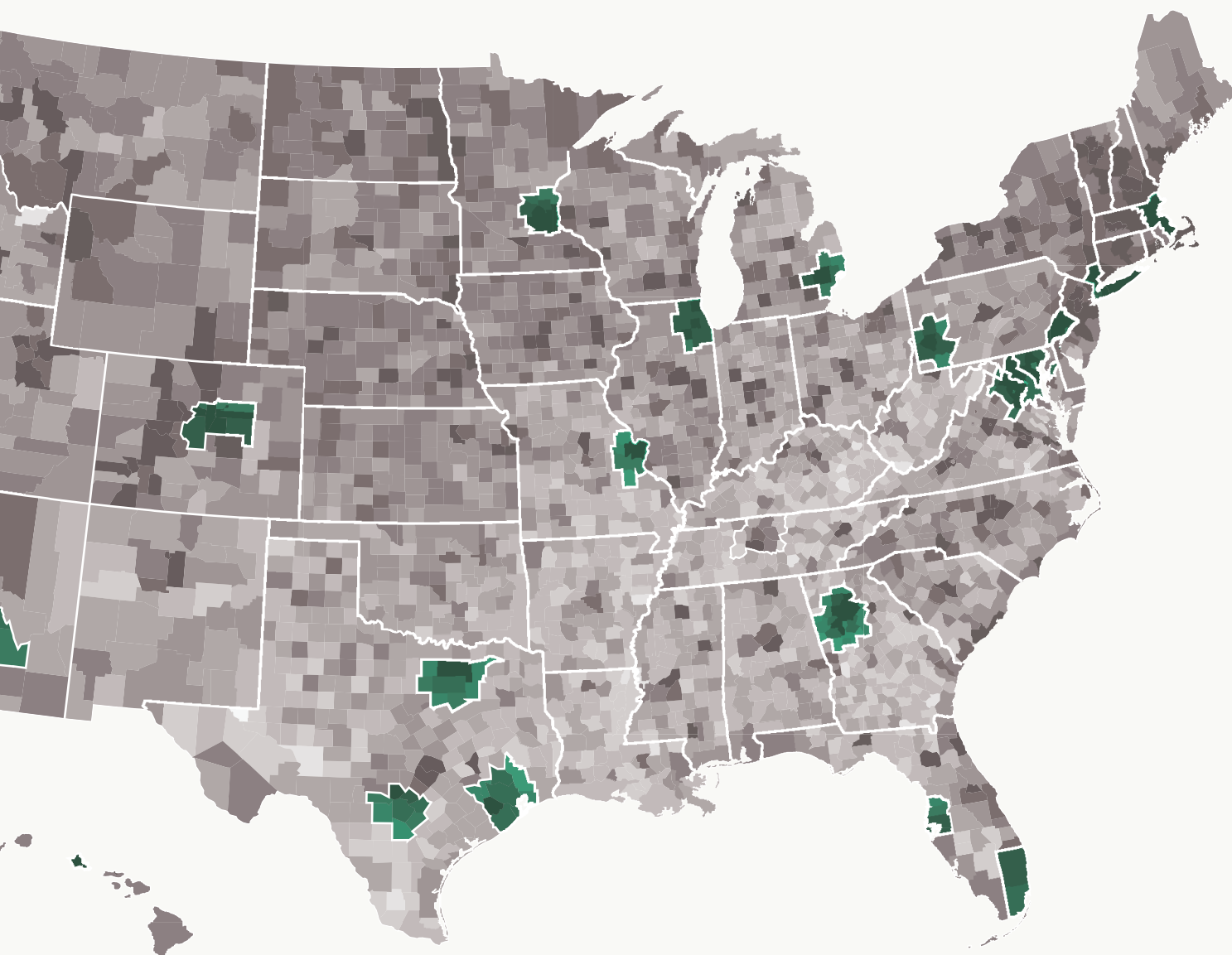# A STRONGER NATION *through* HIGHER EDUCATION
The path to progress in metropolitan regions

Increasing college attainment is key to the success of every American city

Increasing college attainment is an urgent national need — a fact that is being acknowledged by policymakers, economists and labor experts at every level. They agree that, in order for the United States to sustain the economic recovery and assure long-term growth and social stability, the nation's educational attainment rate must improve steadily and significantly in coming years. That's why so many experts and organizations have embraced what Lumina Foundation calls Goal 2025 — that, by the year 2025, 60 percent of Americans have a high-quality degree, certificate or other postsecondary credential.

Lumina regularly tracks progress toward Goal 2025 in its signature report, *A Stronger Nation through Higher Education*. Since the first issue of *Stronger Nation* in 2009, we have included data on educational attainment at the national, state and county levels. Since 2012, we also have provided data on higher education attainment levels in cities and metropolitan regions.

We have found that metro-level analysis and use of this data provides some of the most powerful insights about the need to increase college attainment and the strategies for doing so. This should not be surprising, as metro-level leaders from government, education, business and community organizations have focused for many years on increasing college attainment. They clearly see tremendous value in such strategies as aligning K-12 and higher education, expanding higher education opportunity for underrepresented groups, and linking higher education to workforce development.

In short, metro-level leaders have been some of the most passionate early adopters of the *Stronger Nation* reports. Again this year, the most recent issue of *Stronger Nation* (June 2013) provides data that will help cities and metro regions understand where they stand educationally and develop strategies to drive educational attainment. This policy brief is excerpted from that report, which is available online in several formats, including a mobile application for iPhone and iPad. (Visit www.luminafoundation.org/stronger_nation.)

Clearly, the data show that cities and metro regions *must* be prime locations for action in the drive to increase college attainment. Census figures show that more than 80 percent of Americans live in cities or suburbs. And with demographic trends showing that American society is becoming increasingly urban, it is obvious that the nation must find effective strategies to increase college attainment in metropolitan regions.

What's more, we at Lumina believe these areas are fertile ground for growing the kind of collaborations among political, business, education, philanthropic and community-based leaders that can have significant impact on college attainment. That is why we are focusing much of our attention on large-scale change in metropolitan regions.

We are already supporting such efforts in dozens of metro regions — to help adults return to higher education, to increase college access and success among members of fast-growing Latino populations, and to give all underserved populations the chance to succeed individually and contribute collectively to the success of their cities. We are finding eager partners — organizations and individuals who understand that creating an educated workforce is nothing less than a survival strategy for a city and who recognize that a well-educated person more actively embraces his or her role as a contributing citizen.

In short, a metro-region strategy taps a strong motivation and sense of urgency among its residents for the change that is necessary to achieve Goal 2025 and secure the future of the country as a whole. But it all starts with understanding where you are (knowing your region's data) and setting a goal for where you need to be. We hope these analyses put more cities and metropolitan regions on that strategic path.
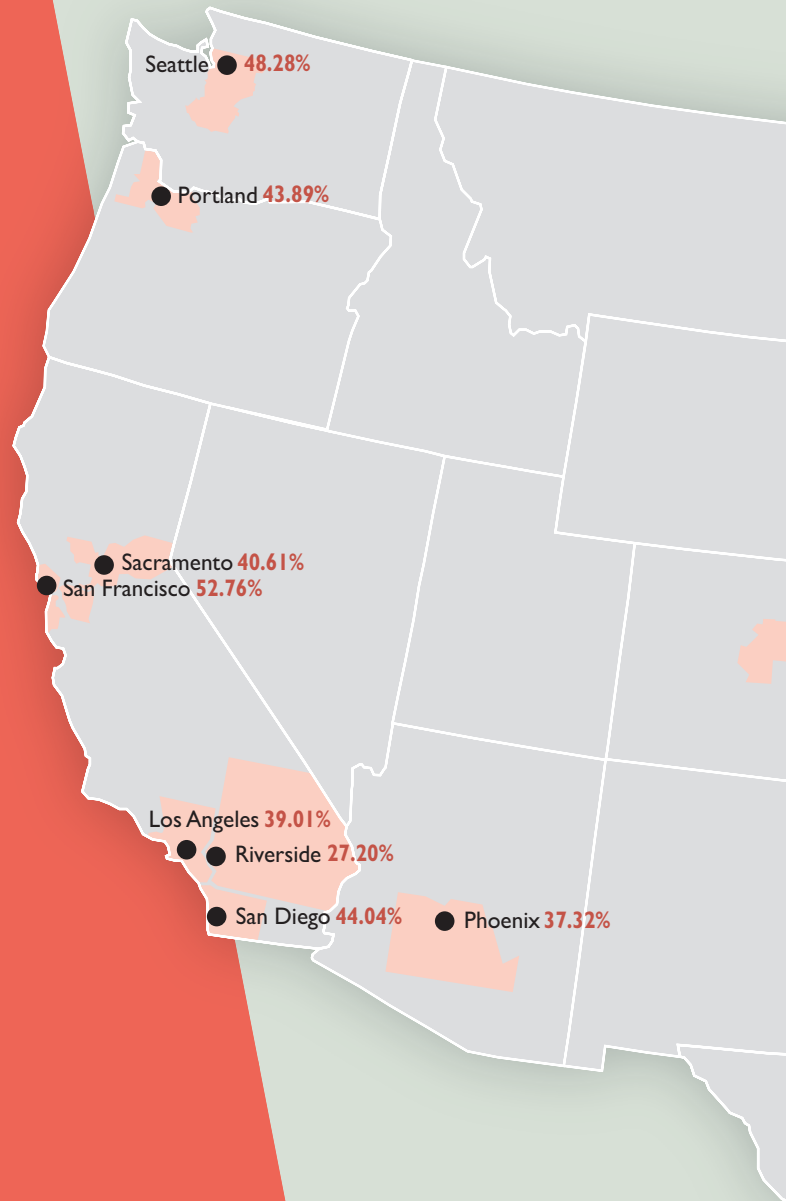
Rank by population

1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.	19.0 million
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, Calif.	12.9 million
3	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, Ill.	9.5 million
4	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas	6.5 million
5	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, Texas	6.1 million
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, Pa.	6.0 million
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.	5.7 million
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, Fla.	5.7 million
9	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, Ga.	5.4 million
10	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Mass.	4.6 million
11	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, Calif.	4.4 million
13	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif.	4.3 million
12	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Mich.	4.3 million
14	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, Ariz.	4.3 million
15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Wash.	3.5 million
16	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, Minn.	3.3 million
17	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, Calif.	3.1 million
18	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Fla.	2.8 million
19	St. Louis, Mo.	2.8 million
20	Baltimore-Towson, Md.	2.7 million
21	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, Colo.	2.6 million
22	Pittsburgh, Pa.	2.4 million
23	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, Ore.	2.3 million
24	San Antonio-New Braunfels, Texas	2.2 million
25	Sacramento/Arden-Arcade/Roseville, Calif.	2.2 million

Rank by degree attainment

1	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.	54.73%
2	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Ga.	54.25%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, Calif.	52.76%
4	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, Minn.	50.65%
5	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Wash.	48.28%
6	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, Colo.	47.69%
7	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.	46.01%
8	Baltimore-Towson, Md.	44.52%
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, Calif.	44.04%
10	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, Ore.	43.89%
11	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, Ill.	43.74%
12	Pittsburgh, Pa.	43.58%
13	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, Ga.	43.32%
14	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, Pa.	42.72%
15	St. Louis, Mo.	41.70%
16	Sacramento/Arden-Arcade/Roseville, Calif.	40.61%
17	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, Fla.	39.27%
18	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, Calif.	39.01%
19	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas	38.86%
20	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Mich.	38.32%
21	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Fla.	37.35%
22	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, Ariz.	37.32%
23	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, Texas	35.55%
24	San Antonio-New Braunfels, Texas	34.50%
25	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif.	27.20%

Seattle 48.28%

Portland 43.89%

Sacramento 40.61%

San Francisco 52.76%

Los Angeles 39.01%

Riverside 27.20%

San Diego 44.04%

Phoenix 37.32%

College attainment in the 25 most populous metropolitan regions in the continental U.S.

Minneapolis ● **50.65%**

Boston ● **54.25%**

Detroit ● **38.32%**

New York ● **46.01%**

Chicago ● **43.74%**

Philadelphia ● **42.72%**

Pittsburgh **43.58%** ●

Baltimore ● **44.52%**

Denver **47.69%**

Washington DC ● **54.73%**

St. Louis ● **41.70%**

Atlanta ● **43.32%**

Dallas ● **38.86%**

Houston ● **35.55%**

San Antonio ● **34.50%**
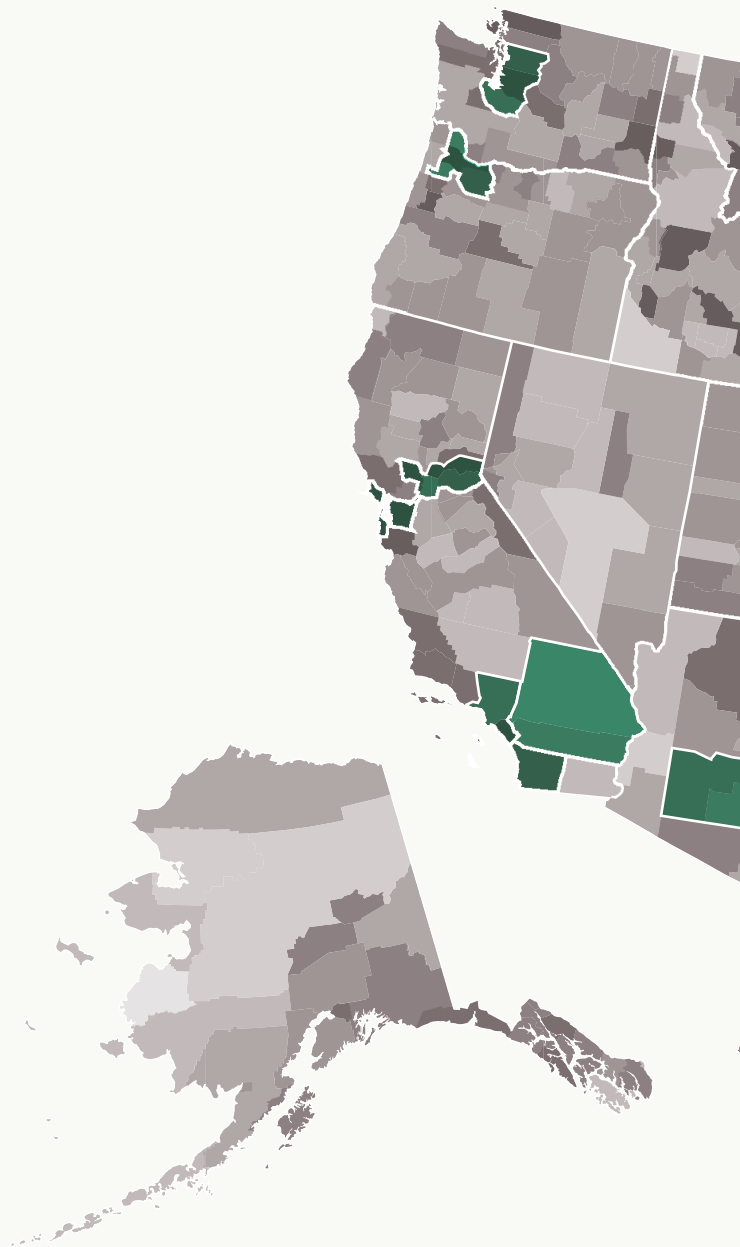
Tampa ● **37.35%**

Miami ● **39.27%**

Note: This map denotes Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The term MSA refers to a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. MSAs comprise one or more entire counties, except in New England, where cities and towns are the basic geographic units. The federal Office of Management and Budget defines MSAs for purposes of collecting, tabulating and publishing federal data. These definitions result from applying published standards to Census Bureau data.

Percentage of adults (25-64) with at least an associate degree, by metropolitan area

	Percent with at least an associate degree	Total Population 2011	2011 Population Rank		Percent with at least an associate degree	Total Population 2011	2011 Population Rank
Akron, OH	39.26	701,456	76	Madison, WI	54.81	576,467	90
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	49.27	871,478	60	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	21.21	797,810	69
Albuquerque, NM	37.89	898,642	58	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	33.52	1,325,605	42
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	38.84	824,916	65	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	39.27	5,670,125	8
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	43.32	5,359,205	9	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	42.48	1,562,216	40
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	33.25	561,858	93	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	50.65	3,318,486	16
Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	47.48	1,783,519	35	Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN	39.42	1,617,142	38
Bakersfield-Delano, CA	21.35	851,710	62	New Haven-Milford, CT	42.71	861,113	61
Baltimore-Towson, MD	44.52	2,729,110	20	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	33.73	1,191,089	47
Baton Rouge, LA	32.73	808,242	67	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	46.01	19,015,900	1
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	37.54	1,132,264	51	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, FL	37.09	709,355	74
Boise City-Nampa, ID	38.79	627,664	86	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	40.13	555,916	94
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	54.25	4,591,112	10	Oklahoma City, OK	35.86	1,278,053	44
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	52.86	925,899	57	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	43.97	877,110	59
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	44.82	1,134,039	50	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	39.75	2,171,360	27
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	32.19	631,330	85	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	40.25	831,771	64
Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC	41.34	682,121	79	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	39.34	543,566	97
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	43.71	1,795,472	34	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	42.72	5,992,414	6
Chattanooga, TN-GA	32.16	533,372	99	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ	37.32	4,263,236	14
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	43.74	9,504,753	3	Pittsburgh, PA	43.58	2,359,746	23
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	39.72	2,138,038	28	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	43.89	2,262,605	24
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	38.71	2,068,283	29	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	42.76	672,871	80
Colorado Springs, CO	46.87	660,319	82	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	40.88	1,600,224	39
Columbia, SC	40.04	777,116	71	Provo-Orem, UT	46.67	540,834	98
Columbus, OH	42.94	1,858,464	33	Raleigh-Cary, NC	52.64	1,163,515	48
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	38.86	6,526,548	4	Richmond, VA	40.49	1,269,380	45
Dayton, OH	36.49	845,388	63	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	27.20	4,304,997	12
Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO	47.69	2,599,504	21	Rochester, NY	47.72	1,055,278	52
Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	48.10	580,255	89	Sacramento--Arden-Arcade--Roseville, CA	40.61	2,176,235	26
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	38.32	4,285,832	13	Salt Lake City, UT	39.76	1,145,905	49
El Paso, TX	28.97	820,790	66	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	34.50	2,194,927	25
Fresno, CA	27.90	942,904	56	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	44.04	3,140,069	17
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	38.32	779,604	70	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	52.76	4,391,037	11
Greensboro-High Point, NC	36.09	730,966	72	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	54.15	1,865,450	32
Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC	37.88	647,401	84	San Juan-Caguas-Guaynabo, PR	38.00	2,468,598	22
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	40.05	552,911	95	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	35.44	563,223	91
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	46.40	1,213,255	46	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	48.28	3,500,026	15
Honolulu, HI	44.45	963,607	54	Springfield, MA	41.00	693,204	78
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	35.55	6,086,538	5	St. Louis, MO-IL	41.70	2,817,355	19
Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	40.98	1,778,568	36	Stockton, CA	26.75	696,214	77
Jackson, MS	38.57	545,394	96	Syracuse, NY	43.91	662,553	81
Jacksonville, FL	37.20	1,360,251	41	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	37.35	2,824,724	18
Kansas City, MO-KS	42.74	2,052,676	30	Toledo, OH	35.14	650,266	83
Knoxville, TN	39.09	704,500	75	Tucson, AZ	37.92	989,569	53
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	27.02	609,492	88	Tulsa, OK	36.03	946,962	55
Lancaster, PA	31.74	523,594	100	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	38.55	1,679,894	37
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	29.59	1,969,975	31	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	54.73	5,703,948	7
Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	35.66	709,901	73	Wichita, KS	36.64	625,526	87
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	39.01	12,944,801	2	Worcester, MA	46.61	801,227	68
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	35.36	1,294,849	43	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	29.38	562,739	92

Note: This chart lists Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The term MSA refers to a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. MSAs comprise one or more entire counties, except in New England, where cities and towns are the basic geographic units. The federal Office of Management and Budget defines MSAs for purposes of collecting, tabulating and publishing federal data. These definitions result from applying published standards to Census Bureau data.

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