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SPECIAL REPORT**Who climbed, fell in MarketWatch city rankings?**


By [Russ Britt](#), MarketWatch
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LOS ANGELES (MarketWatch) - It was a good year to be Columbus or Seattle, and a bad year to be Tampa-St. Petersburg or Birmingham, Ala.

That's just one of the results from MarketWatch's second ranking of the best U.S. metro areas for business. For various reasons, those cities made some of the biggest moves, with some climbing into the top 10 as a results while others fell out of that higher echelon or dropped into the bottom 10.

Top gainers: Thanks to a 26-point gain in its score, Columbus, Ohio jumped seven spots and into the top 10. Three other cities moved that far upward in their rankings: Seattle, to 14th place; Philadelphia, to 29th place; and Louisville, Ky., to 32nd place. Oklahoma City, Okla., and Hartford, Conn., climbed five spots to reach 22nd and 35th place, respectively.


Best & Worst U.S. Cities for Business



Meet Minneapolis

Twin Cities on top
 Minneapolis-St. Paul, far and away, remains where it's at for business. For the second year in a row, the Twin Cities region stayed at the top of MarketWatch's list of best metro areas for business.

- [Slideshow: Views of the Top 10](#)
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- [Methodology: How the ranking works](#)
- [Which cities climbed, which fell](#)
- [What is it about the Twin Cities?](#)

 VIDEO

The city making the biggest point move upward was Seattle, which gained 27 points. Columbus was second with 26, Dallas third at 22 and Washington, D.C., fourth with 21. Boston, Hartford, and Rochester, N.Y., tied for fifth with a 19-point climb.

Biggest losers: Tampa-St. Pete by far experienced the biggest point drop and fell the farthest in the rankings. The Florida Twin Cities dropped 15 spaces after sliding by 55 points.

Others who fell the farthest in the rankings included Providence and Birmingham, Ala., each falling 10 spots. Birmingham slid right out of the top 10 as a result. Fourth was San Diego by falling seven spots. Cleveland and Cincinnati slipped five spots each.

Behind Tampa-St. Pete in total points lost was Buffalo, with 46, then Providence with 31 points. Fourth was Birmingham with 22 points dropped and Virginia Beach was fifth with an 18-point loss.

Flatliners: Top-ranked Minneapolis-St. Paul and bottom-ranked New Orleans retained the same spots they held last year, along with 10th ranked San Francisco, 15th ranked Atlanta, 34th ranked Baltimore and 48th ranked Tucson.

In points, Salt Lake City remained constant with 245 points. Others who didn't budge were Jacksonville, Fla., at 216, Detroit at 129 and

Los Angeles at 137.

Biggest individual movers: Many companies were helped by the large strides they made in individual categories. In concentration of Fortune 1000 companies, Miami gained 6 spots while nearby Tampa-St. Pete fell 12. In the Forbes private company category, Tampa again fell the hardest, by 12 spots, while Rochester gained the most ground, rising 18 spots.

But Rochester fell the hardest in the S&P category, losing 11 spots along with Austin, while moved up by that many places to lead that group. In Russell 2000 firms, Jacksonville gained 14 spots while Kansas City lost 12. And Philadelphia led small-business gainers by climbing 17 spots. Miami fell the farthest in that category, by 20 spaces.

Milwaukee wasn't the fastest-growing city, but it moved the largest number of places in population growth, rising five places. Miami, meanwhile, fell six spots. Raleigh, N.C., made the biggest strides in job growth, rising 17 spots while Buffalo dropped a whopping 37 spaces.

And Oklahoma City made the biggest gains in its unemployment ranking, jumping up 18 spots while Jacksonville dropped by 19 spots.

The 2008 rankings of all 50 cities follow:

1. Minneapolis-St. Paul
2. Boston
3. Denver
4. Washington, D.C.
5. Richmond

6. Charlotte
7. Columbus
8. Nashville
9. Dallas
10. San Francisco
11. New York
12. Houston
13. Salt Lake City
14. Seattle
15. Atlanta
16. Milwaukee
17. St. Louis
18. Raleigh
19. Birmingham
20. Kansas City
21. Jacksonville
22. Oklahoma City
23. Memphis
24. Indianapolis
25. Pittsburgh
26. Cleveland
27. Chicago
28. Austin
29. Philadelphia
30. Portland
31. Phoenix
32. San Diego
33. Louisville
34. Baltimore
35. Hartford
36. Orlando
37. Cincinnati
38. Las Vegas
39. Providence
40. Miami
41. San Antonio
42. Virginia Beach
43. Detroit
44. Tampa-St. Petersburg
45. Los Angeles
46. Rochester
47. Sacramento
48. Tucson
49. Buffalo
50. New Orleans

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