

Here Are 2022's Best Cities for Veterans



Sweetgrass baskets woven by the descendants of slaves along the nation's Southeast coast are offered for sale at the City Market in Charleston, S.C., on April 23, 2015. (Bruce Smith/AP Photo)

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Veterans may want to consider moving to one of the Carolinas, if they lean on a pair of surveys released this week as their guide.

In its annual list of best and worst places for veterans to live, personal finance website WalletHub named Raleigh, N.C., the best city for veterans. Meanwhile, [Navy](#) Federal Credit Union's biennial Best Cities After Service list identified Charleston, S.C., as the top city where veterans should make their home.

For Wallet Hub's list, released Monday, Raleigh moved up from last year's spot at No. 4, supplanting Tampa, Fla., as the place the website considers the best for veterans.

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Charleston is the repeat winner for Navy Federal's list, reclaiming the top spot it first earned in the previous edition of the rankings in 2020.



This year's Navy Federal study for the first time also ranks cities in three subcategories: Best Cities for Families with Children, Best Cities for Retired Vets and Best Cities to Buy a House.

"The expanded version of this year's report emphasizes the diversity of cities across the U.S. that can meet the needs of transitioning service members," Clay Stackhouse, a retired [Marine Corps](#) colonel and regional outreach manager at Navy Federal, said in a news release. "This population of individuals is unique, and with today's economic challenges, it's more important than ever that we support servicemembers and their families as they approach this pivotal, often challenging, moment."

The Navy Federal list, released Tuesday and compiled in partnership with nonprofit veterans group the Mission Continues, evaluated and ranked 400 U.S. cities based on quality-of-life factors such as the cost of living and whether there's a veteran community.

Charleston came in at No. 1, with the report citing its low housing and living costs, cultural activities such as the annual Spoleto arts festival and a large military community with Joint Base Charleston nearby.

"This beautifully preserved, Southern city is known for both its history and hospitality, not to mention access to the Atlantic Ocean from its many barrier islands," the list says.

Rounding out Navy Federal's top 10 are Norristown, Pa.; Cambridge, Mass.; San Diego; Naples, Fla.; Anchorage, Alaska; Derry, N.H.; Virginia Beach, Va.; Hempstead, N.Y.; and Waukegan, Ill.

In the subcategories, Fort Worth, Texas, was named the best for military families because of a strong education system, lots of green space and child-centric entertainment. Tampa was named the best city for retired veterans, because it doesn't have a military pension tax and has a lower cost of living than Florida's average, as well as because of its warm weather.

And Altoona, Pa., took the top spot for best city to buy a house, with Navy Federal citing the central Pennsylvania city's "reasonable property taxes and low housing costs."

In WalletHub's list, the 100 biggest U.S. cities were given scores of 0 to 100 based on four categories: employment, such as how many military skill-related jobs there are; economy, such as housing prices; quality of life, such as the size of the veterans population; and health, such as the quality and number of nearby [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) facilities.

"How good or bad a city is for veterans depends on various factors, from the quality of the city's VA facilities and its retirement-friendliness to the rates of poverty, unemployment and homelessness," WalletHub analyst Jill Gonzalez said in a news release. "All cities should make taking care of veterans' needs a priority, considering how much veterans have sacrificed to serve the country and keep it safe."

Raleigh came in on top with an overall score of 70.76. The city ranked fifth in employment, fourth in economy, 12th in quality of life and 37th in health.

The rest of WalletHub's top 10 cities were Austin and Laredo, Texas; Madison, Wis.; Tampa; Orlando, Fla.; Boise, Idaho; Lincoln, Neb.; Irvine, Calif.; and Colorado Springs, Colo.

WalletHub's worst city of veterans, for at least the third year in a row, was Detroit, coming in with an overall score of 28.82 and coming in last for employment, 90th for economy, 99th for quality of life and 93rd for health.

The rest of the bottom 10 were Indianapolis; Fresno, Calif.; Chicago; Stockton, Calif.; Toledo, Ohio; Baton Rouge, La.; Baltimore; Memphis, Tenn.; and Newark, N.J.

WalletHub's full list can be found [here](#). Navy Federal's full list can be found [here](#).

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