Best Cities for Successful Aging

Sierra Health Foundation
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Caroline Servat
Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging
Mission:
To improve lives and strengthen societies by promoting healthy, productive and purposeful aging.
"NO OTHER FORCE IS LIKELY TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC HEALTH, PUBLIC FINANCES, AND POLICYMAKING AS THE IRREVERSIBLE RATE AT WHICH THE WORLD’S POPULATION IS AGING."

- STANDARD & POOR’S
A Timely Focus

- **Pace of population aging is unprecedented**: 1 in 5 Americans will be 65+ by 2030

- **Older adults want to age in place**: 87% of adults age 65+ want to stay in their current home and community as they age

- **Older adults live in cities**: In the US, 80% of those 65+ lived in metropolitan areas in 2014

- **Longevity is linked to location**
Why Cities?

• We focus our analysis on cities, and metros more generally, as they offer **ground-level opportunities** for **economic growth** and **policy advances**

• At the city-level, **civic and business leaders** have real potential to implement vital **social services** and **livability initiatives**, such as those related to transportation, affordable housing, and education
Best Cities for Successful Aging

- BCSA is a **data-driven index** on successful aging
- Ranks **381** US metropolitan statistical areas
- **9** categories, with a total of **83** indicators, with variables **weighted and aggregated** into a composite index
- Indicators try to capture the **social determinants** of health and longevity, and evaluate how well older adults can **age in place**
What Makes a Best City?
SUCCESSFUL AGING CATEGORIES

cost of living • crime rate • internet access • employment growth • unemployment rate • income distribution • weather • fatal car crashes

access, quality and availability of health-care service providers and facilities (including aging-related)

healthy lifestyle • lifestyle-related health risk factors and outcomes • wellness environment (e.g., fitness centers, fast-food outlets)
SUCCESSFUL AGING CATEGORIES

- banks, financial institutions • bank deposits
- capital gains • tax burden • dependency ratio
- small business growth • income growth • reverse mortgages • older adults < poverty line
- educational attainment • college enrollment
- community colleges • universities

- walkability • commute times • passenger trips • public transport fares • transit infrastructure for older adults/special needs • access to amenities
SUCCESSFUL AGING CATEGORIES

% 65+ employed • 65+ unemployment rate • employment growth • output of service sector/manufacturing

housing arrangements • housing prices • quality, affordable long-term services and supports (e.g., adult day services, home health, nursing care)

% population 65+ • arts/entertainment/recreation opportunities • public libraries • civic and religious organizations • funding for older adults
Ranking Limitations

• We acknowledge that our index is not comprehensive.
• A metro with a low BCSA ranking may be developing an age-friendly neighborhood pilot program.
• Some omitted factors are not easily quantified, such as religious practices and cultural diversity.
• Further characteristics evade our index due to limited data or inconsistent measurement across metros.
Lessons Learned from Best Cities

• In general, top-ranked cities have greater:
  • Access to **higher education** (presence of a college and higher portion of older adults with degrees)
  • **General livability** and well-being indicators
  • **Economic** strength
  • **Employment** and **community engagement** opportunities
How Can Cities Use BCSA?

• Cities can evaluate opportunities for improvement
• Public and private sectors leaders can create policies and innovations that enhance the built environment
• Age-friendly designs do not just benefit older adults, but improve overall well-being within a community
• We also encourage and value feedback from communities on how they use BCSA
Overall, California metros rank below average in all 9 categories. However, the following metros are doing particularly well:

Northern California
- San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward (10)
- San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara (16)

Southern California
- San Diego-Carlsbad (22)
### Pockets of Success - By Category

#### TOP CA CITIES - LARGE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>San Jose</th>
<th>San Diego</th>
<th>Los Angeles</th>
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Map showing the top CA cities: San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, and Los Angeles.
Pockets of Success - By Category

TOP CA CITIES - SMALL

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<tr>
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Place Matters

- There is a growing **longevity gap** – increasingly where you live determines how long you live
- Life expectancy is tied to **societal factors** like education, income, access to health care, food choices, smoking rate, exercise, safety of housing, and pollution
- These **environmental variables** can vary widely within a diverse city, particularly along income levels
Longevity Disparities

Alarming consequences stem from longevity disparities. The injustice even affects how much people receive from federal entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare, which provide support for fewer years to those with shorter lives.

It’s a matter of math.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Existing Areas of Success

**FINANCIAL SECURITY**
- Capital Gains

**WELLNESS**
- Physical Activity
- Alzheimer’s Cases

**GENERAL LIVABILITY**
- Employment Growth
- Weather

Programs with Purpose:
- City of Roseville, California
- TBD, The Bridge District
- Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton
## Mayor’s Pledge

### I PLEDGE...

**Northern California:**
- Berkeley
- Milpitas
- Salinas
- San Francisco
- San Jose
- San Leandro
- Sonoma

**Southern California:**
- Agoura Hills
- Artesia
- Azusa
- Carson
- Hermosa Beach
- Irvine
- Lawndale
- Los Angeles
- Riverside
- Rolling Hills Estates
- Torrance
- Upland
- West Covina
- West Hollywood

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**TO MAKE OUR CITY WORK FOR OLDER ADULTS, I WILL TAKE STEPS TO:**

- Ensure that the well-being of our aging population is addressed by each department, agency and division in our city government.
- Make our city safe, affordable and comfortable for our older residents.
- Provide older adults access to resources promoting health and wellness.
- Support employment, entrepreneurship, education and other services to make our older residents more financially secure.
- Offer housing options that suit the varied needs of our older population.
- Improve access to transportation and mobility options for our older adults.

**TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS TO WORK FOR OUR CITY, I WILL:**

- Promote the engagement of older residents in volunteer and paid roles that serve the needs of our city and its residents.
- Call upon higher education and workforce development programs to help older adults refresh their skills, train, and transition to a new stage of work focused on strengthening our city.
- Recognize older residents as an asset for our city and celebrate their contributions to improving lives for all generations.
ACTION STEPS FOR CITIES

• Convene across sectors and industry

• Address aging along a longevity continuum

• Invest in all determinants and realize interconnectedness

• Sign our Mayor’s Pledge!
Best Cities for Successful Aging:
successfulaging.milkeninstitute.org

Has Your Mayor Signed the Mayor’s Pledge?
http://aging.milkeninstitute.org/cfa-quarterly/article/12

Caroline Servat
cservat@milkeninstitute.org
@MIAging @CarolineAServat
#Cities4Aging #MayorsPledge