

## Midwest markets surge to the top of Zillow's 2025 rankings

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In a region recognized for its affordability, several Midwestern cities — including the No. 1 market — stand out this year in Zillow's list of most popular markets

- Rockford, Illinois, is America's most popular city for home shoppers on Zillow, moving up from No. 2 last year.
- The Midwest dominates the top 10, as shoppers favor affordable markets over costly coastal metros.
- Midsize cities have gained traction nationwide, offering shoppers community and access to expanding job hubs.

SEATTLE, Dec. 16, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Zillow® shoppers made a statement in 2025: Affordability matters, and midsize markets are having a major moment. Rockford, Illinois, is the most popular city in the country for home shoppers, [climbing to No. 1](#) after ranking second [last year](#). The Midwest accounts for a majority of this year's top markets, with notable showings from the Northeast and a single West Coast entry.

Most of the top 10 markets offer prices under \$350,000, growing job access, and communities that provide more breathing room and less financial strain. Many of these cities also sit near major job centers or along key commuter corridors, giving residents big-city opportunities without big-city costs.

Zillow's top 10 most popular markets of 2025:

Rockford, Illinois

Berkeley, California

Albany, New York

Dearborn, Michigan

Toledo, Ohio

Carmel, Indiana  
South Bend, Indiana  
Abilene, Texas  
Springfield, Illinois  
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Zillow search trends show that the appeal of these markets extends well beyond their borders, drawing a high share of page views from shoppers outside the metros. But they aren't just getting clicks, they're getting action. Homes in many of the top markets go pending in days rather than weeks, pointing to competitive market conditions.

"Over the past few years, stretched affordability has defined the housing market, and this year's list shows just how strongly it's shaping where Americans choose to shop," said Zillow Senior Economist Orphe Divounguy. "These cities offer the mix buyers are looking for: attainable home prices, expanding job hubs, and lively neighborhoods with parks, shops and community spaces. With high costs and limited inventory persisting in major coastal metros, these markets stand out as compelling alternatives — places where affordability brought shoppers in, and lifestyle convinced them to stay."

To determine the most popular markets in 2025, Zillow analyzed housing metrics in cities across the U.S. that reflect consumer demand, including page-view traffic, home value growth and how quickly homes sell. Zillow used the same analysis to also create top markets in a variety of categories.

### **Most popular on Zillow overall: Rockford, Illinois**

Rockford claims this year's top overall ranking. Located about 90 minutes northwest of Chicago, Rockford offers access to a major job hub without big-city housing costs. More than three out of five page views came from shoppers outside the area, and homes typically went under contract in just five days, making Rockford one of the fastest-moving markets on the list.

### **Most popular large city: Toledo, Ohio**

Toledo leads large cities again this year. With a typical home value of \$126,000, the city remains accessible for buyers seeking affordability. Its proximity to Lake Erie, walkable neighborhoods and a thriving arts scene further support its appeal.

Lincoln, Nebraska, and Anchorage, Alaska, take the No. 2 and No. 3 spots for cities of more than 250,000 people.

### **Most popular coastal city: Kailua, Hawaii**

Among U.S. coastal destinations, Kailua, Hawaii, takes the lead. Its world-renowned beaches and year-round sunshine draw interest from Zillow shoppers.

Rounding out the top three are South Portland, Maine, and Santa Cruz, California.

### Most popular small town: Lake Forest, Illinois

Situated along Lake Michigan, Lake Forest, Illinois, ranks as Zillow's most popular small town of 2025. Its historic charm continues to draw strong interest from Zillow shoppers.

The small Ohio towns of Springboro and Oregon follow closely behind.

### Most popular vacation town: Portland, Maine

For the second year in a row, Portland, Maine, claims the title of Zillow's most popular vacation town. Nestled on a peninsula extending into Casco Bay, Portland continues to captivate home shoppers with its food, arts scene and historic architecture.

El Dorado Hills, California, and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, complete the top three.

### Most popular college town: Normal, Illinois

Normal, Illinois, home to Illinois State University, ranks as Zillow's most popular college town of 2025. Its revitalized Uptown district — featuring shops, dining and cultural venues — along with ISU's longstanding presence, helps make Normal a standout among college-oriented markets.

Runners-up include State College, Pennsylvania, home to Penn State University; and Lawrence, Kansas, home to the University of Kansas.

### Most popular retirement town: Bullhead City, Arizona

Bullhead City, Arizona, attracts retirees with its warm climate and access to outdoor recreation along the Colorado River. Proximity to Laughlin, Nevada, adds to its appeal, offering nearby entertainment, dining and amenities.

The Villages, Florida, ranks second, followed by Lake Havasu City, Arizona, in third.

### Most popular cities by geographic region

Each region saw its own standout city rise to the top among Zillow shoppers this year:

- Northeast: Albany, New York
- West: Berkeley, California
- Midwest: Rockford, Illinois
- Southwest: Abilene, Texas

- Southeast: High Point, North Carolina
- Mountain region: Nampa, Idaho

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