

# YOU ARE HERE



Want to be more successful and happy? Richard Florida says take a hard look at where you live, and if it's not the right fit, move to a place that is

**BY CHET WESLEY**

## ATLANTIC CANADA: LIFE STAGE RANKINGS

OVERALL RANKING				
Singles	Young professionals	Families	Empty nesters	Retirees
Halifax	Halifax	Fredericton	Charlottetown	Halifax
Fredericton	Fredericton	Halifax	Halifax	Fredericton
Moncton	Moncton	Charlottetown	Fredericton	Charlottetown
Charlottetown	Charlottetown	St. John's	St. John's	Moncton
St. John's	St. John's	Moncton	Moncton	St. John's
Saint John	Saint John	Saint John	Saint John	Saint John

Source: Richard Florida and Patrick Adler, Martin Prosperity Institute

**R**ichard Florida, the business guru who heads the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, is widely known for his study of the creative class: people in high-autonomy jobs who are paid to think. Today more than one-third of all Canadian workers are employed in creative jobs, earning almost half of the country's wages. And where they choose to live can make or break a city's prosperity. So where's the right place to put down roots?

In the new Canadian edition of his book, *Who's Your City?*, Florida says that where you live and work can have a significant impact on happiness and success. As cities and regions around the world specialize in creative industries, such as information and communications



technology in Guelph and aerospace in Montreal, picking a place that has people in your talent area is a good way to go. "When large numbers of entrepreneurs, financiers, engineers, designers, and other smart creative people are constantly bumping into one another inside and outside of work," says Florida, "business ideas are formed, sharpened, executed, and, if successful, expanded."

So where is your special city? If you want to be an engineer in the petroleum industry, Calgary is your best bet; 63% of the country's petroleum engineers live there, along with 40% of geologists. Want to be a graphic designer? Try Montreal, where 40% of the nation's designers live and work. And musicians? Consider Winnipeg. That's right; even though the city has just 2% of the Canadian population, it boasts 12% of the country's musicians. If you don't know which place is right for your particular creative energies, try Canada's most creative city, Ottawa. Fully 43% of the capital's workforce is employed in creative jobs, a higher percentage than in New York,

**ONLY ONE ATLANTIC  
CANADIAN CITY  
MADE THE TOP FIVE  
IN ANY CATEGORY:  
FREDERICTON**

London, or San Francisco.

Florida ranks Canada's regions based on four factors: economic strength, age distribution, amenities demanded by people of varying ages, and the cost factors of people at different ages. Only one Atlantic Canadian city made the top five in any category: Fredericton, placing fourth for families, behind Ottawa, Calgary, and Toronto.

But while placing in the top five was

all but denied, Florida's analysis of Atlantic Canadian cities shows that we're a pretty creative bunch, even by national standards. Of the region's four capital cities, St. John's has the highest number of people working in creative-class jobs, ranking sixth amongst Canada's 144 metro regions. Fredericton ranks 10th in the country, ahead of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Next come Charlottetown and Halifax, ranking 19th and 28th, respectively.

Halifax is the best Atlantic Canadian city to live in for singles, young professionals, and retirees. Fredericton takes the top spot for families and Charlottetown for empty nesters. Nationally, Ottawa won Florida's Canadian-city rankings for young professionals, families, and retirees, while Calgary is tops for young singles.

Some readers will get to the end of *Who's Your City?* knowing they picked the right spot to live and work, while others may feel the need to pack their bags and head somewhere else. Most creative workers live in what Florida



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## communities


calls "mega-regions," such as the one stretching from Montreal and Ottawa down to Toronto, past Waterloo, and around to Buffalo. He calls it "Tor-Buff-Loo-Mon-Tawa," and it has 22 million people, generates \$500 billion (U.S.) a year, and is the fifth-largest mega-region in North America. Or how about the one encompassing Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland? The West Coast's "Cascadia," with nine million people and \$260 billion

**WHAT IF YOU'RE  
AMBITIOUS BUT  
WANT TO REMAIN IN  
A SMALLER PLACE?**

(U.S.) in economic output, is North America's 11th-largest mega-region.

What if you're ambitious yet want to remain in a smaller place, closer to home? "The most important thing is to pick the place that's right for you," says Florida. "The book will give you the information and data you need to decide, but clearly the worst thing you can do is just say, 'Well, I'm kind of content and it's my hometown.' " Exploring other opportunities before settling down, he says, can be crucial to a career.

"Build it and they will come" was the mantra back when manufacturing plants would rise wherever there were raw materials. In today's creative economy it's more like, "come to this creative place and help build it."

"I know many companies that talk about the need to move, not to reduce costs but to become more flexible and recruit new kinds of people," says Florida. "Take the big three automakers in the U.S. What if one of them was to move from Detroit to Chicago? What would that do to its ability to attract younger and more vibrant management talent? We used to think firms would locate where there's low-cost labour or certain kinds of labour. Now the labour skills might not be in the place the company chose to locate." 

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