



Harrisburg region ranks among top-paying spots to work

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By **ERIC VERONIKIS, The Patriot-News**

The city of **Harrisburg might be on the brink of financial collapse**, but workers throughout the metro Harrisburg area are doing better financially than most across the country, according to one recent study.

Realestate.aol.com has ranked the region ninth in the U.S. for cities with the highest-paying jobs. Metro Harrisburg includes the Harrisburg-Carlisle Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is made up of Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry counties.

America Online said it consulted the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine and the job-search website indeed.com to compile its list of "12 Best Cities for High Paying Jobs" published this month.

Manchester, N.H., was ranked No. 1 on the list and Springfield, Mass. was ranked 12th.

The list includes locations with a high number of jobs paying at least \$50,000 per year. It also ensured that there were at least 11 job postings that pay \$50,000-plus per year per every 100 unemployed people.

Many people mistakenly tend to think Harrisburg's fiscal troubles speak for the region as well, said David Black, president and CEO of **the Harrisburg Regional Chamber**.

"There are 103 municipalities [in metro Harrisburg], and 102 of them are doing pretty well," Black said. "[The list] didn't factor in cost of living here. The cost of living obviously is lower here, and if that were factored in, that would raise metro Harrisburg up on the scale."



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Dan Gleiter, The Patriot-News/file

A website has ranked the Harrisburg region ninth in the U.S. for cities with high-paying jobs.

The state and the region's health care sector are the top two employers in the region, according to the list. The metro Harrisburg area also has a large military employment presence and an abundance of education jobs, Black said.

"There are 220 Metropolitan Statistical Areas nationwide. We always rank in the top 10 to top 20 nationwide," Black said.

Health care workers throughout the region make an average of \$66,000 annually and 13 percent of the metro-area workers are in government, where salaries vary but managers can make more than \$100,000 per year, the study showed.

Harrisburg-based PinnacleHealth System owns and operates numerous health care facilities throughout the region and employs more than 5,000 people. Combined with the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Holy Spirit Hospital Health System, WellSpan Health and other health care providers, Pinnacle helped metro Harrisburg make the list.

"This is fresh evidence of the positive impact of the health care sector on our region," said Thomas Kess, vice president of human relations for PinnacleHealth. "Hospitals are often among the most reliable contributors to their communities. They are anchor institutions."

Even with its financial problems, there is an abundance of well-paying jobs in the city of Harrisburg, where most state workers are employed and where many PinnacleHealth employees work. Pinnacle owns and operates Harrisburg Hospital.

Mayor Linda Thompson said she is pleased with the ranking. "We have an excellent, highly skilled workforce in the area and excellent employers who obviously pay well," Thompson said.

Forbes magazine named Harrisburg the second-best place to raise a family in the U.S. in 2010. And The Daily Beast website ranked the metro area seventh among the top 20 recession-proof metropolitan areas in the U.S.

The chamber loves to promote this kind of recognition, Black said.

"When you sit here and live with it every day, you don't always get the best perspective," he said. "But when you have an outside, independent research source rank us based on national criteria, we should feel good about it."

Metro Harrisburg

- Metro Harrisburg includes Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry counties.
- There are 549,475 people in metro Harrisburg.
- The area boasts 3,703 job listings for positions that pay \$50,000 or more.

- There are 18 postings for jobs paying \$50,000 or more per every 100 unemployed people in the region.
- Metro Harrisburg's health care workers average \$66,000 annually.
- The unemployment rate in metro Harrisburg is 7.4 percent, compared with the national rate of 8.5 percent.
- The annual income growth rate in metro Harrisburg is 2.95 percent.

Source: Realestate.aol.com

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