



Worcester Named #14 Most Creative City in America

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Artists, innovators, and diversity have [earned Worcester the #14 spot](#) in best-selling author, [Richard Florida's](#) newest book, [The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited](#). The book explores what it takes to make a city thrive and produce creative, new ideas. Florida, who has studied urban regeneration and economic theory, says that it goes beyond artists and designers, feeding off of a city's network of engineers, researchers, and techies.

"The Creative Class is the core force of economic growth in our future economy. In fact, the Creative Class is expected to add more than 10 million jobs in the next decade," he said. "Economic growth is driven by creativity, so if we want to increase it, we have to tap into the creativity of everyone."



Worcester's Ranking

The ranking, which was publicized by [The Daily Beast](#) shows America's top 20 most creative cities. Worcester is cited for its diversity and is also named the second-best midsize city for young singles in Florida's book, which also lends itself to young creative types.

The Creative Class, according to Florida's theories, accounts for 30 percent of the US workforce.



Artistic Innovation

Although Florida's classification of the creative class doesn't just include professional writers, artists, and musicians, Worcester's arts scene is a healthy outlet for a lot of the creativity in the city and reflects its diverse background.

"Worcester has this incredibly diverse set of nodes and nets and combinations of people. It's not one sector that's making it happen," said Executive Director of [ArtsWorcester](#), Juliet Feibel. "It's like letting a thousand flowers bloom. So many

people are practicing in so many kinds of art. That diverse strength makes Worcester great.” Feibel said that from her view, she can see where these many different styles and backgrounds come into play. Some do very traditional studio work, and other are engaged in performance at the city’s many venues.

“That’s part of what I love about the creative scene in Worcester – they’re happening in unexpected places,” she said. “There’s fine art at the [Hanover](#), performance [at the art museum](#), and combinations and spans of artists working out of ArtsWorcester.”

For many local artists, Worcester’s history and opportunities keep them creating and rethinking.

“Personally, I find the atmosphere of Worcester very inspiring. The history of Worcester, the factories, the trains...there are lots of places to explore and take photos,” said local photographer, [Sarah Bilotta](#). “Plus, the colleges in the area breed creativity through community engagement in events like [StART on the Street](#) or galleries like Arts Worcester.”

Photographer, [Louie Despres](#) also finds the area helpful in pushing his work.

“Worcester is constantly evolving, which for a visual artist makes your surroundings interesting and vibrant,” he said. “Like a snake shedding its skin, come back in six months and there’s always something new you haven’t seen before.”

The Other Side of Creativity

Worcester’s college community has done a lot to foster the type of creative class that Florida believes contributes so much to an area’s economic growth. [Worcester Polytechnic Institute \(WPI\)](#) has continued to make the city a hub of bright, innovative thinking.

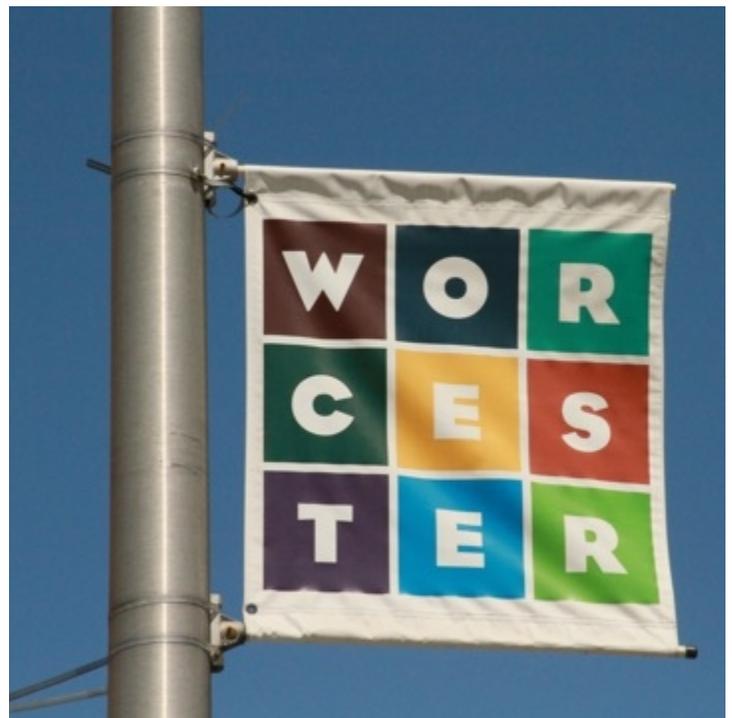
[Kristin Boudreau](#), English professor and head of the [Humanities and Arts Department at WPI](#), knows that Worcester has seen its hardships, but stakeholders like the universities and biotech, manufacturing, and research and development have helped keep it strong and vivid.

“I think what makes Worcester a ‘creative’ city is the way its people join forces to address some of the city’s problems,” Boudreau said. “WPI students, working out of the [Worcester Community Project Center](#) in the Printer’s Building, work with municipal government

offices, community development corporations, various federal agencies, and local nonprofits to address high profile local problems...”

Boudreau cited WPI’s recent partnership with the [YWCA of Central Massachusetts](#) and the [Worcester Public Library](#) to organize a series of “Big Read” events with the goal of reaching out to reluctant readers, encouraging literacy, and educating the community about domestic violence.

“A team of scientists working on The Art of Science Learning has chosen Worcester as one of three ‘incubator cities’ that will work together to develop and test methods of using the arts to teach science,” she said. This example of the blend of science and creativity seeks to merge the two together.



Boudreau said that Worcester has something for everyone, thanks to its rich history.

“Worcester has old-fashioned art and music for people who like tradition, it has folk and digital art for people with different tastes, and it has a collaborative and experimental spirit that might come from the arts but has been used to great effect in the sciences, manufacturing, and urban development,” Boudreau said.

Better With Age

Worcester’s creative nature has only improved over the years and its innovative partnerships have continued to flourish.

“I have seen the arts scene here grow and grow over the years,” said Gallery Director Candace Casey of the Worcester Center for Crafts. “It’s a pretty amazing city. I think the arts used to be more of a subculture and it really isn’t any more. It’s right out there.”

Casey said that the [Worcester Center for Crafts](#) has been around for 155 years and has seen how Worcester’s network of agencies and people have helped it stay creative. The center was brought back from a temporary closing thanks to [Worcester State](#), where the university holds their visual arts.

Feibel agreed, saying that artists they have seen have come from all sorts of training and background. “Some have been trained in industrial design and material sciences,” she said.

Worcester’s spot in Florida’s ranking of creative cities hasn’t come without its share of work, but thanks to the webbed, innovative core of Worumtown, good ideas continue to come out of Central Mass.