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Redfin Reports Affordable, Inland College Towns Buck National Trends, Seeing Double-Digit Home Price Growth and Fast Sales

- *Morgantown, WV, Syracuse, NY and Tuscaloosa, AL, lead U.S. college towns in home-price growth, all posting double-digit year-over-year climbs.*
- *The most expensive college towns—Santa Barbara, CA, Boca Raton, FL and Flagstaff, AZ—are seeing home prices fall.*
- *The least expensive college towns—Dayton, OH, Syracuse, NY and Mount Pleasant, MI— all have a median home sale price of under $185,000, less than the national median of $398,771.*

SEATTLE — July 15, 2026 — Home prices are rising by double digits in a handful of affordable, inland cities anchored by universities, according to a new report from Redfin, the real estate brokerage powered by Rocket. Led by Morgantown, WV, Syracuse, NY and Tuscaloosa, AL, home prices in these college towns are rising more than five times faster than the 2% growth home prices saw nationwide in May.

This is from a Redfin analysis of MLS data from the three months ending in May 2026 for college towns in the U.S. To be considered a college town, a city's population must be at least 10% students at a four-year, accredited university, and it must be at least 30 miles away from a metro area with a population of more than 1 million people.

"Many of the college towns with home prices rising the fastest are also among the most affordable places to buy a home right now. That combination is attracting buyers who have been priced out of larger metros, while universities continue to provide a reliable foundation of demand," Yingqi Xu, Redfin Senior Economist, said. "Meanwhile, many of the most expensive college towns are experiencing price declines as high mortgage rates and elevated home prices make buyers there more cautious."

Conversely, the most expensive college towns are seeing significant declines in home prices. In Santa Barbara, CA, the median home sale price fell 9.4% to $1.9 million. In Boca Raton, FL, prices are down 5.7% to a median $820,000, and they fell 3% to a median $710,000 in Flagstaff, AZ.

The 10 Most Expensive College Towns, By Median Home-Sale Price (2026)				
Rank	**Town**	**Notable college**	**Median home sale price**	**Median home sale price, YoY growth**
1.	Santa Barbara, CA	University of California, Santa Barbara	$1,902,500	-9.4%
2.	Boca Raton, FL	Florida Atlantic University	$820,000	-5.7%
3.	Flagstaff, AZ	Northern Arizona University	$710,000	-3.2%

4.	Corvallis, OR	Oregon State University	$595,000	0.8%
5.	Orem, UT	Utah Valley University	$530,000	1.3%
6.	Eugene, OR	University of Oregon	$499,900	1%
7.	Ann Arbor, MI	University of Michigan	$487,000	5.9%
8.	Provo, UT	Brigham Young University	$484,000	-1.1%
9.	State College, PA	Pennsylvania State University	$459,050	10.6%
10.	Blacksburg, VA	Virginia Tech University	$445,000	-3.3%

For The Least Costly College Town Housing, Look to the Midwest and South

There are three major college towns where the median home sale price is under $200,000. Dayton, OH, home to Wright State University and the University of Dayton, is the least expensive college town in the country, with a median home sale price of just $139,000.

Next comes Syracuse, NY, home to Syracuse University and over 20,000 students, with a median sale price of $180,000. Ranking third is Mount Pleasant, MI, home to Central Michigan University, where the median sale price is $184,000.

Many of the nation's least expensive college towns are located in the Midwest and South, where homebuilding costs are generally lower and land is more abundant than in high-cost coastal markets. Lower home prices may make these college towns especially attractive to first-time buyers, university employees, and investors seeking lower-cost rental markets.

The 10 Least Expensive College Towns, By Median Home-Sale Price (2026)				
Rank	**Town**	**Notable college**	**Median home sale price**	**Median home sale price, YoY growth**
1.	Dayton, OH	University of Dayton	$139,000	-0.7%
2.	Syracuse, NY	Syracuse University	$180,000	12.5%
3.	Mount Pleasant, MI	Central Michigan University	$184,000	-11.3%
4.	Springfield, MO	Missouri State University	$210,000	0.3%
5.	Urbana, IL	University of Illinois Urbana-Champai	$230,000	0.5%

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6.	Lubbock, TX	Texas Tech University	$239,000	0%
7.	Baton Rouge, LA	Louisiana State University	$245,000	4.7%
8.	Stillwater, OK	Oklahoma State University	$249,500	-9.3%
9.	Lynchburg, VA	Liberty University	$258,900	-3.8%
10.	Greenville, NC	East Carolina University	$270,000	2.3%

College Town Highlights
Among the 50 largest U.S. college towns, by student population

Where home prices are rising the fastest (median sale price, YoY change)

1. Morgantown, WV (West Virginia University): 12.9%
2. Syracuse, NY (Syracuse University): 12.5%
3. Tuscaloosa, AL (University of Alabama): 10.6%

Where homes are selling fastest (median days on market)

1. State College, PA (Pennsylvania State University): 5 days
2. Manhattan, KS (Kansas State University): 14 days
3. Ames, IA (Iowa State University): 17 days

Most competitive for homebuyers (share of homes sold above asking price)

1. East Lansing, MI (Michigan State University): 56.6%
2. Manchester, NH (Southern New Hampshire University): 56.3%
3. Syracuse, NY (Syracuse University): 55.3%

To read the full report, including charts and additional metro-level data, please visit: https://www.redfin.com/news/college-town-housing-data-2026

About Redfin
Redfin is a technology-driven real estate company with the country's most-visited real estate brokerage website. As part of Rocket Companies (NYSE: RKT), Redfin is creating an integrated homeownership platform from search to close to make the dream of homeownership more affordable and accessible for everyone. Redfin's clients can see homes first with on-demand tours, easily apply for a home loan with Rocket Mortgage, and save thousands in fees while working with a top local agent.

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