

40* REASONS TO MOVE TO GREATER PEORIA

Greater Peoria is a great place to live, work & play. Why should someone consider moving here? **Here are 40 (or so) reasons... but there are so many more.**

1 Peoria ranks in the **top 100 best places to live in the United States** — as well as one of the nation's best places to retire — recognizing our low cost of living, sense of community, arts and cultural activities, recreation and more. ([Livability, 2026](#))

2 Peoria is **the largest city on the Illinois River** — the only inland waterway linking Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River, all the way to the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. And riverfront living is the best living: a gorgeous platform for nature, business and recreation alike.

3 Also known as the “City of Gratitude,” Peoria is a **4-time winner of the All-America City Award**, recognizing our strong civic engagement, collaboration and innovation. ([National Civic League](#))

4 Your dollar goes further here! Greater Peoria is consistently named the **most affordable, mid-sized community for homebuyers** in the United States, and ranks #21 among U.S. cities with the lowest cost of living. ([ConsumerAffairs, 2026](#); [Niche, 2026](#))

5 With our housing affordability and low cost of living, Peoria ranks **No. 11 among the best housing markets for first-time homebuyers**. ([SmartAsset, 2025](#))

6 Lower utility bills! Electricity costs in Greater Peoria are **19% lower than the national average**, while monthly gas bills are **45% lower than the national average**. ([Greater Peoria Economic Development Council](#))

7 We're diverse, inclusive and welcoming. With our strong Black, Hispanic and Asian-Indian communities, plus one of the nation's largest Lebanese American populations, Peoria ranks No. 66 on the **“2026 Most Diverse Cities in America”** list. ([Niche, 2026](#))

8 Commutes in Greater Peoria **average just 17.5 minutes** (and are often much lower) — so you'll have more time for family, hobbies and other interests. ([BestPlaces](#))

9 Centrally located in the middle of the country, Greater Peoria is **within a day's drive of half of the nation** and most major U.S. markets. ([Greater Peoria Economic Development Council](#))

10 Stay connected to the world! The Peoria International Airport offers direct flights to the **three most connected U.S. airports** — with just eight minutes from car to gate... plus free parking. ([flypia.com](#))

11 Higher education in Greater Peoria comprises world-class private universities, top colleges for nursing and medicine, and the **largest community college in Illinois outside of Chicago**: Illinois Central College. ([icc.edu](#))

12 K-12 education options include award-winning districts in Dunlap, Morton and Washington, top-notch parochial and religious schools, and the prestigious Richwoods International Baccalaureate (IB) program — **the only IB program in Illinois outside of Chicago**. ([richwoodsIB.org](#))

13 Business is booming! Greater Peoria is home to a robust network of major employers across a range of industries — including **more than 350 manufacturing locations and 114 international companies** from 21 countries. ([Greater Peoria Economic Development Council](#))

14 Our workforce is educated and highly skilled, with expertise in advanced manufacturing, engineering, agricultural technologies, medicine and more — including **250+ PhD researchers innovating at institutions around the region**. ([Greater Peoria Economic Development Council](#))

15 Greater Peoria is home to the **largest concentration of Caterpillar workers in the world** — as well as the Caterpillar Visitors Center, Caterpillar Tech Center and multiple manufacturing plants and administrative offices. ([caterpillar.com](#))

16 A smart place to launch a career: Greater Peoria ranks **#7 among the best small U.S. cities for starting a career after college**. ([CoworkingCafe, 2026](#))

17 Our region is also home to Natural Fiber Welding — **ranked No. 1 in Illinois and No. 69 nationally for America's Top Greentech Companies** — plus industry leaders in electric vehicles, autonomy, medtech, robotics and more. ([TIME/Statista, 2026](#))

18 Our companies supply the world! Greater Peoria exported \$5.4 billion in goods in 2024, making us one of Illinois' leading metropolitan areas for exports — top three in the state. ([International Trade Administration](#))

19 Greater Peoria's Heart of Illinois Regional Port District is part of the Corn Belt Ports, the largest inland port in the United States, with more than 13 million tons of cargo passing through locks each year. ([Greater Peoria Economic Development Council](#))

20 Looking to start your own business? Bradley University's Turner Center for Entrepreneurship has been an anchor in our region for over 30 years and supported **more than 500 entrepreneurs and businesses** in 2025 alone — helping create 43 new businesses and 66 new jobs. ([Bradley University](#))

21 Got innovation? Distillery Labs, in downtown Peoria, is a **critical hub of the Illinois Innovation Network**, connecting people, ideas and resources to grow new businesses and drive economic development in Greater Peoria. ([DistilleryLabs.org](#))

22 We're a big name in healthcare — and a great place to build a career! For the eighth consecutive year, Peoria-based OSF HealthCare has been named one of the **Best Employers in Illinois**, ranking #37. ([Forbes, 2026](#))

23 High-quality care is close to home. OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria is recognized as a **Best Hospital in the Region by U.S. News & World Report**, with rankings in 12 types of care. ([U.S. News & World Report, 2025-2026](#))

***If you're looking for even more reasons to consider moving to Greater Peoria, our website is chock-full of them: [CHOOSEGREATERPEORIA.ORG](#)**





40* REASONS TO MOVE TO GREATER PEORIA

- 24 We also have **Carle Health**, a multifaceted, highly integrated healthcare system complete with award-winning hospitals, multi-specialty physician group practices, provider-driven health insurance plans, a renowned College of Medicine and a deep-rooted commitment to adolescent mental and behavioral health — all aimed at providing the best care possible for patients and health plan members. ([Carle Health](#); [Youth Minds Project](#))
- 25 Specialized care for children: OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois was recognized as a **Best Children's Hospital for 2021-22** — among the top three children's hospital in Illinois and top 25 in the Midwest. ([U.S. News & World Report](#))
- 26 OSF Innovation's Jump Simulation is among the **world's largest purpose-built simulation and healthcare engineering centers**, plus OSF Cancer Institute is one of two centers in Illinois (and 40 in North America) to offer **cutting-edge proton beam therapy** for cancer treatment. ([Becker's Hospital Reviews](#), 2026)
- 27 Healthcare + Innovation: Peoria-based VirtuSense Technologies is a **four-time Deloitte Technology Fast 500 winner**, earning recognition among North America's fastest-growing companies for four consecutive years from 2022-2025. ([Deloitte](#), 2025)
- 28 We love the great outdoors! Greater Peoria is proudly home to **the oldest and largest park district in Illinois**: Peoria Park District, a four-time winner of the National Recreation and Park Association's Gold Medal Award. ([nrpa.org](#))
- 29 Walk, run, hike, bike or just enjoy nature... The Peoria Park District hosts **nearly 9,000 acres of green space and more than 50 miles of hiking and biking trails** — with miles upon miles of additional trails throughout the region. ([peoriaparks.org](#))
- 30 From vaudeville to the present day, the performing arts run deep in Peoria! The Peoria Symphony Orchestra is the nation's **14th oldest symphony orchestra**, while Peoria Players Theatre is the **oldest continuously running community theater in Illinois** and fourth oldest in the nation. ([peoriasymphony.org](#); [peoriaplayers.org](#))
- 31 With world-class entertainment venues like the Peoria Civic Center, Greater Peoria is the **#2 concert market in Illinois** and #81 in the United States based on 2025 box office data. ([Pollstar](#), 2025)
- 32 Greater Peoria is also home to the Smithsonian-affiliated Peoria Riverfront Museum — **the only multidisciplinary museum of its kind in the nation** — featuring the Dome Planetarium, interactive galleries and the largest Giant Screen Theater in Illinois. ([peoriariverfrontmuseum.org](#))
- 33 Greater Peoria is full of year-round festivals that celebrate our unique communities — from the **nation's oldest Santa Claus Parade** to East Peoria's nationally recognized Festival of Lights, from cultural events like Passage to India to community highlights like the Morton Pumpkin Festival. ([Discover Peoria](#))
- 34 The Peoria Art Guild's Fine Art Fair is our region's largest arts and cultural event — ranking **#2 among the Top 5 Midwestern Art Fairs** in the U.S., **#88 in the "Top 200"** by Sunshine Artist magazine, and among the **"Top 50" art fairs nationally** by Art Fair Calendar. ([peoriaartguild.org](#))
- 35 We're a hotbed for public art. Greater Peoria features **more than 70 outdoor murals and a host of sculptures** from local, regional and nationally known artists — including a range of works from Peoria's own Preston Jackson, voted #6 on the list of top Illinois artists of all time. ([Greater Peoria Public Mural Map](#); [Enjoy Illinois](#))
- 36 We're also a big sports town. Here in Greater Peoria, you'll find **college, pre-professional and professional sports**, from the Peoria Chiefs and Peoria Rivermen (minor-league baseball and hockey) to Bradley University's NCAA Division 1 basketball program and Peoria City Soccer, part of the nation's top pre-professional league — and much more!
- 37 With a dozen synthetic turf fields and a 126,000-square-foot dome, the Louisville Slugger Sports Complex in Peoria is the **premier sports facility in the Midwest**, welcoming 500,000+ visitors annually and honored by the U.S. Sports Specialty Association as Complex of the Year. ([sluggerpeoria.com](#))
- 38 Our **Eastside Centre Sports Complex** boasts 10 natural grass baseball/softball diamonds, 4 full-length soccer/lacrosse fields, 3 indoor basketball courts, a 20,000 ft² soft gymnasium, a fully equipped fitness center and more. It's also the proud host to the IHSA State Softball Championship and the IESA State Track and Baseball Finals. ([Eastside Centre Sports Complex](#))
- 39 Speaking of sports, Greater Peoria is packed (but rarely overcrowded) **with over 26 golf courses**. So, whether you're looking for a weeknight nine, the full country club experience or planning an outing, we have hidden gems, luscious links and breathtaking greens for golfers of all skill levels. ([Golf Greater Peoria](#))
- 40 We care. And we give generously. Greater Peoria's nonprofit sector is spearheaded by **one of the top United Ways in the country for per capita giving** and includes one of the nation's top Easterseals chapters, with a host of ways to volunteer and make a difference in the community.
- 41 Hungry for a more **diverse food and restaurant scene**? Peoria's got it! From down-home to upscale to a wide range of international flavors—when it comes to eating good, the options are endless. Plus, restaurants like Connected and Saffron Social boast the esteemed designation of **Distinguished Restaurants of North America**. ([dirona.com](#))
- 42 Boasting some of the world's richest farmland, Greater Peoria is **#1 in the nation for pumpkin and popcorn production**, among other specialty crops, plus thousands of acres of corn and soybeans. We're also home to the two largest pumpkin processing plants in the country and the **largest concentration of certified organic farms in Illinois**. ([Greater Peoria Economic Development Council](#))
- 43 The National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research — better known as Peoria's "Ag Lab" — is **one of the nation's largest agricultural research facilities**. The Ag Lab is renowned for its integral role in the development of penicillin and for developing cutting-edge, new products from agricultural commodities.