



Top Bluegrass Opportunities from Data Study

Feedback from Work Sessions (Over 900 Responses)

1. The Bluegrass is an educational hub 20%

- The Bluegrass ranks 3rd per capita/6th overall of 23 regions in the number of colleges and universities, and 1st in the SEC
- The Bluegrass ranks 7th per capita/9th overall of 23 regions in the percentage of residents with a Bachelor's degree or more, and 1st in the SEC and general regions studied

2. The Bluegrass is an innovation center. The Bluegrass benefits from a large per-capita Hi-Tech base. 19%

- The Bluegrass has the 3rd largest Hi-Tech base per capita out of 19 regions studied, including 2nd in the SEC
- The Bluegrass ranked 3rd per capita/5th overall of 23 regions in patent growth between 1990-2004, and 2nd in the SEC and 1st among general regions studied
- The Bluegrass ranked 7th of 23 regions in patents per 10,000 workers in 2004, and 2nd in the SEC and 1st among general regions studied

3. Urban development in the Bluegrass favors 21st century lifestyles and economic development 16%

- The Bluegrass ranks 5th per capita/6th overall of 22 regions in compact urban development form, and 1st in SEC and general regions studied
 - This makes infrastructure less expensive in the Bluegrass, transportation is more efficient for all modes, is less invasive of the environment, bodes well for the long-term future of the region's downtowns, encourages working at home, and offers more chances for mixed use

4. The Bluegrass is a major health care center 14%

- The Bluegrass ranks 5th of 23 regions in physicians per capita
- The Bluegrass ranks 5th of 23 regions in hospital beds per capita

5. The Bluegrass is proof that urban growth and agriculture are not incompatible 14%

- **A national model!**
- Fayette County ranks 1st in average \$ sales per farm of 23 regions studied
- The average \$ sales per farm in Fayette County ranges from 5-11 ***TIMES*** greater than all other regions
- Value per farm in the Bluegrass grew at a rate of 42% from 1997-2002, by far the most increase of regions with significant farming operations, while 14 of 23 regions were stagnant or declining

6. Bluegrass housing is affordable to a broad segment of the population 8%

- In the 4th quarter of 2007, the average home price in the Bluegrass was \$75,000 less than the national average
- The Bluegrass ranks 1st of 23 regions in lowest household mortgage budget stress (30% of income or less)
- The Bluegrass ranks 5th of 23 regions in lowest household rent budget stress (30% of income or less)

7. The Bluegrass is a better place for women to work and for female and minority owned businesses 7%

- The Bluegrass ranks 3rd of 23 regions in relative female to male earnings, and first among SEC and general regions studied
- The Bluegrass ranks 6th per capita of 20 regions in \$ value per Black-owned firms
- The Bluegrass ranks 5th per capita of 23 regions in \$ value per Female-owned firms



Top Bluegrass Challenges from Data Study

Feedback from Work Sessions (Over 900 Responses)

1. Unacceptable high school and higher education graduation rates 17%

- The Bluegrass ranks 10th of 23 regions for high school graduation rates, and tied for last of 9 national regions with a flagship university
- The University of Kentucky ranks 16th of 23 institutions studied in 6 year graduation rates, and lower than all but 3 flagship universities studied

2. Weak Knowledge Economy Quality of Life Attractiveness 15%

- The Bluegrass ranks 17th of 23 regions in percentage of residents born out of state, and lower than all but 3 of 17 regions with a flagship university
- The Bluegrass ranks 11th oldest of 17 regions studied with a flagship university
- The Bluegrass ranks 14th of 23 regions in bars and restaurants per capita
- The Bluegrass ranks 17th of 23 regions in Wifi availability, and lower than all but 3 of 17 regions studied with a flagship university

3. Out of touch with energy and environmental issues 13%

- The Bluegrass ranks 5th highest rate of 23 regions in driving alone to work
- The Bluegrass has the 2nd lowest rate of 23 regions in public transit usage
- The Bluegrass has the 3rd lowest rate of 23 regions in walking/biking to work
- The Bluegrass has 1 LEED certified building, ranking 22nd of 23 regions

4. Unacceptable Childhood Poverty 13%

- The Bluegrass ranks 5th of 23 regions for children under 18 living in poverty
- 22% of all children are in poverty; 44% of children under 18 are in poverty in households headed by a single female, and 50% of children under 5 are in poverty in households headed by a single female

5. Local government over-reliance on single revenue source

12%

- The Bluegrass ranks 1st in dependence on a single revenue source of 23 regions studied

6. Low employment growth/Lagging Gross Metropolitan Product Growth 8 %

- The Bluegrass ranks 17th of 23 regions in job growth 2003-2008
- The Bluegrass ranks 17th of 23 regions in GMP growth 2000-2005

7. Low Personal Income Growth/ High Overall Cost of Living 8%

- The Bluegrass ranked 20th of 23 regions in per capita income growth 2000-2005
- The Bluegrass has the 5th highest overall cost of living of 19 regions studied

8. Economic mismatch – High-tech sector declining / retail sector Increasing 6%

- The Bluegrass ranked 19th of 19 regions for growth in the Information/Technology/Communication sector 2001-05: the Bluegrass recorded a 14% decline
- The Bluegrass ranked 7th of 23 regions studied in retail trade increase 2001-2005: the Bluegrass recorded a 22% increase

9. Lagging personal health and health care coverage 4%

- The Bluegrass ranks 11th of the 23 regions in population with diabetes.
- The Bluegrass ranks 12th of 23 regions in population with hypertension.
- The Bluegrass ranks 18th of 23 regions in health care coverage, and lower than all but 2 of 15 regions studied with a flagship university.