



The Harrisburg Area

The Greater Harrisburg area, located in the south-central region of Pennsylvania, is known as the Lower Susquehanna Valley; it is named for the beautiful Susquehanna River that bisects the state and our service area. We are part of the Harrisburg-Carlisle Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The city of Harrisburg, with a population of just under 50,000, is the capital of Pennsylvania and the county seat of Dauphin County. Dauphin County, population 268,000, is located on the east side of the Susquehanna River in the MSA. Cumberland County, population 241,000, is located on the west side of the Susquehanna River, with rural Perry County, population 46,000, to its north. In the 2010 census, the MSA had a population of about 650,000, making it the 96th largest metropolitan area in the U.S. Per capita personal income in the MSA in 2012 was \$44,523. In August 2014, the MSA was found to have the fourth lowest unemployment rate of the state's 14 MSAs.

The median home value in the city of Harrisburg is \$69,700, and the median rent is \$948/month. The median home value in the Harrisburg Metro Area is \$168,000, with a median rent of \$1200/month. (See [zillow.com](https://www.zillow.com) and [trulia.com](https://www.trulia.com))



Capitol

The racial demographics of the city and surrounding suburban area are relevant to understanding the role UCH is trying to play in developing its two locations. “White flight” in the 1970s from the city of Harrisburg resulted in substantial segregation by

both race and economic status. In recent years a strong effort to revitalize the city has resulted in the development of higher quality housing and new businesses in the downtown and Midtown sections. However, this economic investment has not reached the Allison Hill area where our downtown campus is located. The revitalization of the city has resulted in some of the problems typically associated with gentrification.



Broad Street Market

At the same time, ethnic diversity is gradually increasing in the areas of the Harrisburg-Carlisle MSA outside of the city limits.

We are within comfortable driving distance of Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York City, and the New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland beach areas. Because Harrisburg is the state capital, Pennsylvania lawmakers have ensured the

development of a modern road network in the area, with Interstate highways in many directions that speed travel to other destinations. Many destinations may also be accessed by railway.

The Harrisburg area played an active role in our nation's history, most notably during the western migration and the Civil War. The pivotal battle of Gettysburg, located some 30 miles southwest of Harrisburg, is immortalized at the Gettysburg National Military Park. During the nation's industrialization, the Pennsylvania Canal and later the Pennsylvania Railroad enabled Harrisburg to become one of the most industrialized cities in the country's northeast region. In 1973, people around the world learned of the region when the Three Mile Island nuclear power station in Middletown suffered a near meltdown. Although it has continued to safely operate in the ensuing 40 years, the facility is scheduled to close within the next few years.

Harrisburg presently has a thriving health services, insurance, and education sectors. As the state capital, it benefits from the daily presence of the tens of thousands of people who work for the government and spend money within the city. The area's financial stability is partly due to employment opportunities provided by numerous state and federal agencies.

Tourists are attracted to south central Pennsylvania for a variety of entertainment and cultural opportunities including the Pennsylvania Dutch country, Gettysburg, and Hersheypark. The city of Harrisburg is home to the National Civil War Museum, an effort to provide an accurate, balanced view of that dark time in our nation's history. Also in the city is The Whitaker Center, which houses a science museum, two theaters for live productions, and an IMAX movie theater. The State Museum of Pennsylvania has galleries of historical and artistic items related to the state, as well as a children's discovery museum, and a planetarium.

There are many rural and suburban festivals celebrating apples, strawberries, peaches, ice cream, and many other locally grown or produced food items. City festivals along Riverfront Walk, a picturesque green area with walking/biking path along the banks of the Susquehanna, include the Memorial day weekend juried arts show known as ArtsFest, a July 4th music festival, and Labor Day weekend's Kipona.



FNB Field

The city also boasts City Island, a popular destination featuring a modern stadium for the Harrisburg Senators, our AAA baseball team, soccer team, the City Islanders, and many family-fun

attractions such as a miniature golf course, kiddie railroad, and docks for a paddlewheel boat that plies the Susquehanna with narrated tours. Harrisburg also has a semi-pro football team, and the American Hockey League Hershey Bears play in the Giant Arena in Hershey.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center annually hosts the annual Farm Show, which began in 1917 and is the largest free indoor agricultural exposition in the U.S. The complex also hosts auto and outdoor sports shows, home and garden shows, rodeos, the Pennsylvania Horse Show, and many other activities and sporting events. A farmers market is open on its grounds twice weekly from May through October. There also are summer and year-round farmer markets in many communities on both shores.

The region is home to a number of private and state-owned colleges and universities that all offer di-

verse educational opportunities, as well as many arts and cultural events at a reasonable cost. Several of the campuses have state-of-the-art theaters that host nationally touring plays and acts. Live theater also is available at the classic Hersey Theater, dedicated in 1933 and intended to resemble a grand theater in Italy.



Midtown Scholar Bookstore

The Whitaker Center hosts Theater Harrisburg and several small, regional community theaters. For movie lovers there are several national chain multiplex cinemas and the Midtown Cinema in Harrisburg that screens independent and art films.

Music plays a prominent role in the life of the region. The highly regarded Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra plays its series of Masterworks and Pops concerts at the Forum Building, owned and operated by the state government in downtown Harrisburg. Other regional orchestras include the Hershey Symphony and the Central Pennsylvania Symphony Orchestra. There are several audition-only choral societies that stage concerts annually, as well as many non-audition community choral groups. There are a number of active community concert bands playing summer or year-round concert schedules. Many touring musical artists appear at college venues, the Hershey Theater, and the Whitaker Center. The Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz, Central Pennsylvania Blues Society, and the Susquehanna Folk Music Society each offer full concert schedules of music geared to their supporters' particular interests.

In recent years, the Harrisburg area has become something of a destination for "foodies." There are many fine-dining and specialty ethnic restaurants throughout the region. Second Street in Harrisburg's downtown area has become known as "Restaurant Row", attracting large crowds of people, many from outside the

area, on Friday and Saturday nights. Several farmers markets also flourish.

Primary and secondary education in south central Pennsylvania is offered through municipal school districts, a few consolidated districts, plus private and cyber/charter schools. Public school districts serving the region include Harrisburg, Susquehanna Township, and Central Dauphin school districts, located in or close to the city. Suburban east shore districts include Lower Dauphin and Derry Township (Hershey). On the west shore, districts include Cumberland Valley, Camp Hill, West Shore, and Mechanicsburg. There are many private schools in the area, with both religious and non-religious affiliation. Examples of non-religious private schools are the Harrisburg Academy on the west shore, and The Circle School and Londonderry School on the east shore. Several cyber and charter schools are also in operation, and the area offers many options for pre-school and daycare services. Opportunities for higher education abound including Harrisburg Area Community College, Harrisburg University, Penn State Harrisburg, an upper-division campus of the Pennsylvania State University, as well as several campuses of the PA State System of Higher Education and many other private liberal arts colleges. The region also is home to the Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey, and the Weidner University Commonwealth Law School in Harrisburg.

The healthcare sector has grown considerably in recent years, despite consolidation of healthcare systems. The region is served by the Penn State Hershey Medical Center, an academic and research institution with several centers of excellence, as well as the UPMC Pinnacle Health System, and Geisinger Holy Spirit Hospital. Each operates inpatient, outpatient, and laboratory/imaging facilities and owns or manages physician practices.

Harrisburg is close to several state parks that provide opportunities for hiking, camping, boating, and fishing. The Appalachian Trail runs through central Pennsylvania, and there are many marked and unmarked trails on state forest lands. State game lands provide opportunities for hunting, and the Susquehanna River and the region's many lakes offer a variety of boating venues. The Capital Area Greenbelt circles the city and provides more than 20 miles of hiking and biking. Additionally there are several 'rails to trails' in the area.



Harrisburg River Front



Capital Area Greenbelt

The network of interstate highways and bus, rail, and air service facilitates transportation to and from the area. Capital Area Transit provides bus service throughout the city and region. The Transportation Center in Harrisburg houses Greyhound and Trailways bus lines and Amtrak rail service. Hourly Amtrak service to Philadelphia allows easy connection to New York, Boston and Washington. Harrisburg International Airport, located 10 miles from the city, hosts several major airlines, including Air Canada, Allegiant, American, Delta Air Lines, and United Airlines, which provide daily, non-stop service to 13 destinations and one-stop connections to cities around the world. Air travelers also often use the relatively close Baltimore Washington International, Philadelphia, and Lehigh Valley airports.

All in all, Harrisburg and its surrounding communities provide a very desirable environment for singles, couples and families.