



Name: City of Bellevue, Washington

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### **Description**

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Bellevue is the fifth largest city in Washington, with a population of more than 130,000. It is the high-tech and retail center of the Eastside, with more than 130,000 jobs and a downtown skyline of gleaming high-rises. With beautiful parks, top schools and a vibrant economy, Bellevue is routinely ranked among the best mid-sized cities in the country (Livability.com and 24/7 Wall Street)

While business booms downtown, much of Bellevue retains a small-town feel, with thriving, woodsy neighborhoods and a vast network of trails and nearly 100 parks that keep people calling the place "a city in a park." The city's crime rates are consistently low.



The city's government features an elected city council, who set policy for Bellevue, and an appointed city manager, who oversees all city operations. Bellevue's government has a mission to provide exceptional customer service, uphold the public interest and advance the community vision (mission, vision and core values). The Police, Fire, Parks and Community Services, Utilities

and Transportation departments are all nationally accredited. In annual surveys, residents rate city services highly and approve of the city's direction.

Retail options abound in Bellevue. Artists from around the country enter striking new works in the biennial Bellevue Sculpture Exhibition. Bellevue's agrarian traditions are celebrated in the spring and fall at popular fairs at the Kelsey Creek Farm Park. More than 300,000 people visit the downtown area the last weekend in July each year for arts and crafts fairs. **Visit Bellevue**

The city spans more than 31 square miles between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, and is a short drive from the Cascade Mountains. People can kayak within sight of downtown in the Mercer Slough Nature Park, a 320-acre wetland preserve. The population is growing and becoming more diverse. According to the census, minorities constituted 41 percent of Bellevue's population in 2010, and more than 50 languages are now spoken by children in Bellevue public schools.

### **History**

A densely wooded swath of land between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, the area where Bellevue now stands was sparsely settled before the 1900s. Native American tribes in the region favored the coast to the west and the plains east of the mountains. After coal was discovered in the Coal Creek area in 1867, white settlers began to mine and log the area. In the 1880s, the village on Meydenbauer Bay was named Bellevue ("Beautiful View" in French), either in reference to the view from the new post office's window or to a city in Indiana of the same name from which prominent settlers came.

With the turn of the century, Bellevue prospered as a farming community. The rich soil yielded bountiful harvests, and the residents sold their fruit and vegetables, ferried across Lake Washington to Seattle, then transported even farther after a Northern Pacific rail line came through in 1904. Japanese immigrants established a collective warehouse and soon produced the bulk of the strawberries and vegetables harvested in Bellevue.

The completion of the first bridge across Lake Washington in 1940 was a major event for Bellevue, bringing an influx of new residents. Bellevue Square, one of the first suburban shopping centers in the country, opened in the '40s.

The City of Bellevue incorporated in 1953. The young city proceeded to annex neighboring areas. In the past three decades, the city has grown to skyscraper heights downtown and shed its "suburban" status to become a thriving, diverse metropolis and a high-tech hub

Bellevue's diversity is an enormous asset. Diversity provides our economy with a competitive advantage; it enriches our culture, enhances our arts, broadens our educational experience and provides new leadership to help our community thrive. It contributes to the vitality of our community organizations and is celebrated at our cultural events



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