
**If You Build It, They Will Come:
Methods and Insights into the Attraction and Retention of
Young People to Galesburg, Illinois**

MC's Politics and Government in the Midwest Course Project
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Abstract

While globalization has challenged Galesburg in recent decades, other cities in the Midwest have been successful in navigating these changes. Working with the Knox County Area Partnership for Economic Development, the Politics and Government in the Midwest class at Monmouth College sought to identify examples of specific cities and programs that have promoted the growth of their 18-35 populations between 2000 and 2010. Initially, our research focused on 36 Midwestern cities with characteristics similar to Galesburg. After insufficient results, the investigation was expanded to the entire nation keeping the demographics as similar as possible with Galesburg. The combined result yielded sixteen different categories which have shown promise in attracting the millennial population. The second component of this research consisted of a survey wherein 210 juniors and seniors from Monmouth College were recruited to answer questions regarding demographics, livability in Galesburg, and the importance of different factors when seeking out a city to settle down in. Participants mentioned that they would consider living in Galesburg, if the city offered well-paying job and internship opportunities as well as certain amenities. Additionally, participants mentioned that they are more likely to stay in Galesburg if there were more entertainment activities and student loan assistance programs available. These characteristic traits found from the survey of Monmouth College junior and senior students corresponds with the programs and ideas that other cities are using to draw the millennial population. If Galesburg were to implement similar plans as other cities and states throughout the Midwest and the entire nation, then an economic revolution powered by Millennials may commence.

Midwestern Programs

The first portion of this project required the investigation of 36 cities across the Midwest region in order to find the most efficient programs that are attracting millennials. In this investigation, sixteen ideas that showed similarities throughout different cities and economic development plans were discovered. The main idea is listed along with a brief description of the idea. The cities listed contain hyperlinks to the different websites of the specific programs.

Low Housing/Rent Costs

Money plays a critical factor throughout many facets of life, but is particularly important to new college graduates or people beginning a family, also known as the millennial population that is the target of this research. To accommodate these frugal millennials, allowing them to contribute to the community, cities such as Austin, MN, Adrian, MI, and Oshkosh, WI have ensured the cost of living in these areas has subsided compared to many other cities across the nation. Specifically, Oshkosh, WI, has enabled a team at their University of Wisconsin extension to focus on the retention of millennials across Wisconsin to accommodate them into their community. The aim of these programs would to ensure that the cost of living either downtown, or in the community, is an affordable and reasonable location.

- [Austin, MN](#)
- [Adrian, MI](#)
- [Oshkosh, WI](#)

Phone App and/or Website

Cities that successfully reach millennials utilize technology effectively. The integration of apps and websites is one way cities are attracting millennials. Millennials rely heavily on their phones, using apps and online resources constantly throughout the day; cities are bridging the gap of communication by using this medium to their advantage and creating a brand for their cities. Erie has created an application: *Destination Erie*. Millennials can make judgments of brands, products, and the community based on their online presence; so cities are proactively creating apps and websites to make positive first impressions to potential millennials.

- [Saint Joseph, MO](#)
- [Grand Rapids, MI](#)
- [Erie, PA](#)

Business Talent Attraction/Recruitment

One beneficial program idea which has shown positive results in attracting millennials is the action of businesses instead of the city government. These businesses are trying to bring in the brightest and best newly-graduated millennials, and the cities are thriving by accommodating this. Cities are essentially setting up a concierge service for incoming young professionals. This service helps incoming talent find a place to live, acts as an on call service for local events, and helps young millennials. Waterloo has this type of symbiotic relationship with the businesses in their town and have shown improvements in recent years.

Young Professionals (YP)

Young professionals groups act as an indicator of healthy millennial population in cities such as Wausau, Findlay, Columbus, and Winona. This type of group offers networking and social opportunities specifically targeted to this 18-34 demographic. Some YP groups such as Columbus's even provide volunteer and athletic opportunities. These groups encourage young adults to move away from their hometowns and help them establish roots in a new city. YP members are innovative, educated, and active individuals, and this membership gives them opportunities to work together to build a community—a very attractive commodity for a city to possess.

- [Wausau, WI](#)
- [Findlay, OH](#)
- [Columbus, IN](#)
- [Winona, MN](#)

College to Business Funnel

Colleges have taken steps to connect their students to businesses nearby. These relationships help to bridge the gap of graduation date to the time most graduates find a career-worthy job. The University of Colorado Boulder and University of Michigan have been working with companies like Google and other local businesses with high-paying positions around their campuses to attract college graduates and retain these graduates around their cities. By doing this, the universities are incentivizing millennials to stay around these cities/areas by offering jobs before or upon graduation. The University of Colorado Boulder also has an incubator space, [Spark Boulder](#), in which student entrepreneurs use to get a head start on their ideas and goals.

- [Michigan](#)
- [Portsmouth, OH](#)
- [Boulder, CO](#)

Downtown Revitalization

An attractive downtown has come up on several occasions during our research of Midwestern cities, most notably in Dubuque, Iowa and Muncie, Indiana. Important aspects of a revitalized downtown include a clean environment, buildings that are kept in good condition, restaurants/bars, art installations (street art), shopping, and live entertainment venues. Craft breweries are also increasingly attractive to millennials as a means of supporting the community and entertainment. These changes often require sizeable investments, but a clean and entertaining downtown is often a factor in a young person's decision to move to a city.

- [Dubuque, IA](#)
- [Wooster, OH](#)
- [Muncie, IN](#)

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is a focus of many of the cities that have had success in attracting millennials. Parks are common ways for communities to incorporate more outdoor recreation into their portfolio. Parks, ranging from playgrounds to public beaches and walking/biking trails, are key in attracting not just recent college graduates, but young families as well. Fishing and other aquatic activities like canoeing, kayaking, and waterskiing opportunities occurred frequently in our research. Events sponsored or coordinated by a city's department of parks and recreation like ski shows, summer camps and activities, and community classes are affordable ways for millennials and their families to engage with the community.

- [Janesville, WI](#)
- [Lenawee County, MI](#)
- [Winona, MN](#)

High School to Career Tracks

Producing high school graduates with unique incentives and futures is of particular interest to cities that wish to attract millennials. One example of a program which aims to provide the most promising high school graduates is iGrad, a unique program, used within the Bartholomew County schools, which aims to achieve a high school graduation rate of 100%. iGrad serves all students from 8th to 12th grade by providing “graduation teams” of advisors who coach the students through academic barriers, college searches and applications, and career goals. Moreover, the program has extended its reach to community volunteers who can be a part of the graduation teams. The graduation rates are currently at 95% during iGrad's first three years, showing very promising results. By having towns and cities that support schools and provide these opportunities for children, more millennials are likely to be interested in putting down roots.

- [Columbus, IN](#)

Career-Focused Education

These programs are full of innovative ideas for training and teaching individuals in order to pursue potentially successful career paths. For instance, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a program which Minnesota offers that trains people in the field of their choice. This program also provides the people who qualify with year-round employment. Another program that has seen success is in the city of Owatonna, which offers a program called [Minnesota FastTRAC](#) (Training, Resources, and Credentials). This program teaches and trains primarily older adults, or those going through a career change, to make them certified for their new fields or careers. Moreover, Adrian, MI, provides educational programs to K-12 students through seniors in the community. Adrian's [Lenawee Intermediate School District \(LISD\) Tech Center](#) is a career-focused program which engage students K-12 in “real world” operations within the LISD. The students travel from the twelve local school districts to the TECH Center. There are 27 career technical education programs, and they offer engineering, manufacturing, industrial technology, health sciences and culinary arts programs. Each of these programs has

shown potential in attracting the millennial population by providing opportunities to not only improve themselves but their careers as well.

- [Adrian, MI](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Owatanna, MN](#)

Leadership Development Program

Certain characteristics set individuals on a higher pedestal than others, including leadership. Cities are beginning to see success in attracting millennials by using programs that exist to promote positive change and provide young people with the education necessary to one day become engaged and thoughtful citizens. One example is the Allen Lima Leadership Program in Lima, OH. This program offers education about health and social services, education, criminal justice and public safety, government, cultural and ethnic diversity, etc. Ideally, the program's participants remain in the place where the programs are offered and use the skills they develop to improve their communities.

- [Lima, OH](#)

Arts & Culture

One of the most influential trends of the millennial population has been arts and culture. Expanding on these aspects in certain downtown areas has aided in attracting and retaining millennials. Moreover, arts is an area of the economy which can be expanded upon, such as what has been done in Dubuque, IA. The arts industry throughout Dubuque has developed to generate \$47.2 million in annual economic activity. In Paducah, KY, financial and marketing support for cultural institutions which draw tourists downtown have generated \$39.9 million in local economic activity in 2007 alone and supported 819 full-time jobs.

- [Paducah, KY](#)
- [Dubuque, IA](#)

National Programs

After doing the preliminary search and being unsatisfied with the results, the search was expanded nationwide. The cities that were examined remained mostly in the same demographic cohort as Galesburg and have been positive reinforcers driving the growth of millennial populations. The format follows the Midwest Programs section wherein the title of the main idea is given with a brief summary and the hyperlink to the specific website. Overall, the most attractive nationwide programs that have seen the most promise are student loan reimbursement plans, paid internships with businesses in downtown areas, and the promotion of small business and entrepreneurship.

Student Loan Reimbursement

One of the biggest expenses for the millennial population is repaying college loans. In attempting to attract more millennials, cities have recently begun to offer varying amounts of reimbursement for student loans. This is a very attractive incentive for millennials and towns have seen developments since beginning to offer these programs. Restrictions include applying for the loan reimbursement, requirement to buy or rent a place of residency for a certain amount of time, and possibly getting a job for a certain period of time as well.

- [Niagara Falls, NY](#)

Paid Internships

Internships are a viable option for students and newly graduated millennials. Internships can be on a credit-based format with a college or university that partners with local business owners. Niagara University has been able to develop a strong relationship with businesses in order to provide students with a number of options for internships, particularly ones that pay well. By creating an incentive like a paid internship, which offers both experience and compensation, millennials are likely to be interested.

- [Niagara Falls, NY](#)

Small Business Promotion-JS

Cities that are able to offer incentives such as successful business districts/communities are attracting millennials. They offer different options such as being eligible for façade grants, tax exemptions, and fee waivers, increasing the likelihood of a successful business promotes entrepreneurialism and influx of business start-ups or already-established businesses.

- [Douglas, GA](#)
- [Roanoke, VA](#)

Talent Recruitment and Attraction Programs

Throughout the United States, different cities are using specific millennial-targeted programs. These programs have shown success for these cities in attracting the millennial population, increasing the success of the city itself. These programs include Imagine Pittsburgh, Kansas City Rural Program, Hello West Michigan, and Kossuth, Iowa and MichAGAIN. These programs are in more detail below with hyperlinks attached to the names of each program and were provided to the class for research by KCAPED President Ken Springer.

[Pittsburgh: Imagine Pittsburgh](#)

This program matches college graduates with experienced businesses in order to foster economic growth through new business.

- Top-rate talent emerging from Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Pittsburgh, and 34 other area colleges and universities attract companies like Google, Disney Intel, Apple, and Yahoo to the Pittsburgh area.
- Business incubators and supporters such as Innovation Works, AlphaLab, the Pittsburg Technology Council and Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse help to turn ideas into reality by offering guidance and connections to venture capital. They also contribute to the region's robust startup system.

[Kansas City: Rural Program](#)

This program gives full-time residents of Kansas income tax waivers for up to five years or gives student loan repayments of up to \$15,000.

- The individuals would have to have lived outside Kansas for five or more years before moving to Kansas.
- The resident has to have earned less than \$10,000 in source income in the five years before claiming residency in Kansas.
- The individual has to live in Kansas the whole taxable year that the person joined the program.

[West Michigan: Hello West Michigan](#)

The Hello West Michigan program encourages and guides new residents of West Michigan to fit in with their specific city.

- The program provides resources to assist candidates in making the correct decisions as they progress through the relocation process.
- Recruiting top talent that will eventually increase the rate of success for companies is a goal of this program.
- The program's purpose is to educate new residents about the city and understand the Midwestern culture.

[Kossuth Iowa: Internship Program](#)

Local colleges partner with the county government and area businesses in order to funnel young people into the area through internships and networking.

- Area businesses create internship programs around open jobs for a variety of majors.
- Various networking events are organized to introduce CEOs and managers to college seniors.
- Internships have potential for full-time employment.

Michigan State: MichAGAIN

This program is funded by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in hopes of attracting former University of Michigan graduates back to Michigan by showing them lucrative jobs in Michigan that they are qualified for and could possibly hold. Ann Arbor SPARK, in charge of attracting the graduates back, flew around the country to big cities that had Michigan grads there and would present these jobs back in Michigan to the grads in hopes of getting them to return to the state.

Livability and Amenities Survey

Abstract

The second portion of this research included a survey among junior and senior students on livability issues. In total, 210 juniors and seniors were recruited from Monmouth College for the survey, which consisted of questions regarding demographics, livability issues in Galesburg, and amenity importance when considering a location to reside in. The students that completed the survey showed that there was a significant difference in the importance of different amenities offered in cities. Furthermore, the results confirmed the earlier research regarding the different Midwest, National, and Attraction programs which showed millennial preference for programs assisting in loan reimbursement, affordability and costs of living, as well as opportunities for internships and jobs.

Methods

Participants

Among the survey participants were 104 juniors and 106 seniors of the Monmouth College student body. In respect to gender, there were 108 males and 102 females that participated. In addition, the participants were asked their ethnicity which consisted of the following: 6-Asian, 23-African American, 136-White, 37-Hispanic/Latino, and 8-other. A majority of the participants were originally from the state of Illinois, however, there were participants from other states such as California, Florida, Iowa and Wisconsin (Appendix C). Also a number of participants were foreign exchange students who are planning on extending their stay in the United States after graduation.

Materials

A survey was constructed based on demographics, life in the Midwest, questions involving the livability in Galesburg, and also which amenities are most important to millennial aged individuals. The questions operated on a Likert scale¹ wherein rankings were given on a numerical scale that corresponded with a certain category. The researchers developed a survey with five demographic questions. Lastly, the participants had the opportunity to share their input or insight about Galesburg if any comments were given.

Procedure

The surveys were distributed on the Monmouth College campus, targeting juniors and seniors in particular. This was due to the overall likelihood of these individuals graduating from Monmouth College instead of transferring or moving away. Furthermore, each individual took the survey without time constraints and when finished did not receive any compensation. The results were tabulated and statistically analyzed using a one-way between-groups ANOVA and then a Tukey Pairwise Comparison analysis to determine the specific difference between the importances of the different amenities to the millennial population of participants.

Results

¹ Likert Scale: type of scale which assigns numerical values to categorical variables (i.e. 1=least important, 5=most important)

A one-way between subjects ANOVA² was conducted in order to compare the means for different levels of importance for certain amenities that have been known to attract millennials. The ratings were given on a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1 is the least important progressing up to 5 which is very important. This test showed a significant difference between the importance of the amenity groups at the $p < .05$ level for the five different amenities, $F(4, 1045) = 94.01, p < .0001$.

This one-way between subjects ANOVA (Figure 1) yielded significant results that indicate there is a difference between the importances of the amenities listed. This led to the Tukey Pairwise Comparison³ to be conducted between the groups to find which differ from one another. This Post hoc comparison indicated that the mean scores were significantly different between the Job & Internship category ($M=4.54, SD=.671$) and the other conditions including Cost of Living ($M=4.13, SD=.894$), Recreation ($M=3.97, SD=.818$), Nightlife ($M=3.74, SD=.985$), and Public Transportation ($M=2.83, SD=1.27$). The test indicated that there was not significant differences between the Cost of Living ($M=4.13, SD=.894$) and Recreation ($M=3.97, SD=.818$); as well as the Recreation ($M=3.97, SD=.818$) and Nightlife ($M=3.74, SD=.985$). Overall, it can be seen that the most important contributing factor is the Jobs & Internship amenity.

Figure 1	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	P-value
Between groups	337.6	4	84.4	94.01	.000
Within groups	938.1	1045	0.9		
Total	1275.7	1049			

Figure 1: One-way ANOVA Conducted Between Amenities and Their Relative Importances

It was shown that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean importance value assigned to each. The test yielded significant differences between the groups $F(4,1045)=94.01, p < .0001$. This led to the subsequent Tukey Pairwise Comparison between the groups to determine the specific mean importance difference between amenities.

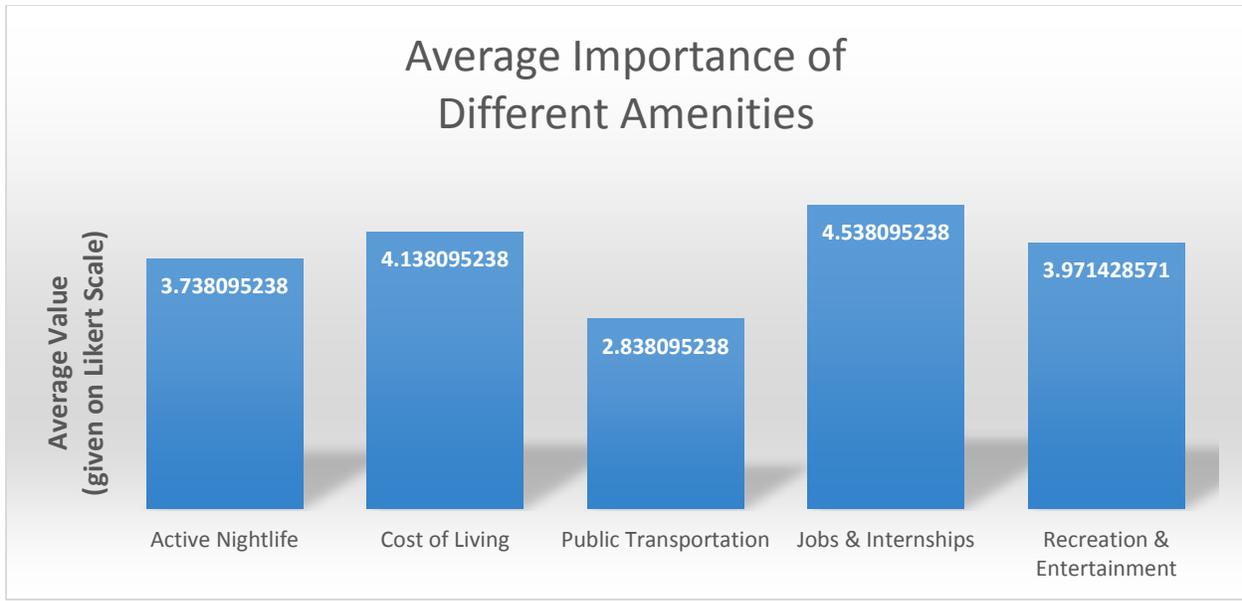
Furthermore, different graphical analyses were conducted in order to permit the visual representation of the trends regarding the participants of this study and the importance of amenities. It was found that on average, people were unlikely to live in Galesburg ($M=1.6$). However, when examining the amenities, there were differences as shown in the ANOVA results above. A visual representation in Figure 2 below shows the different average importance for the different amenities. As shown, the most important amenity again, is the Internship & Jobs amenity.

Figure 2: The Average Importance of Different Amenities

There was a significant difference between the groups of amenities as indicated by the chart and ANOVA statistical test that was conducted, $F(4, 1045) = 94.01, p < .0001$.

² One-way between-groups ANOVA: a statistical test used to determine if there is a difference among the means from different groups. However, this test does not yield results indicating which means differ.

³ Tukey Pairwise Comparison: if a significant difference among the means of groups is observed, as seen by a positive ANOVA test, this test is conducted to determine the actual differences between the specific groups.



Discussion

There was evidence from this study that indicated millennial-aged participants at Monmouth College did not desire to live in Galesburg ($M=1.61$). However, this is something that can be altered by changing the amenities around Galesburg in order to attract these individuals. Through a series of statistical tests (Figure 1), Participants had indicated through the survey that they significantly took internship and job availability as the most important amenity offered. This could be reflected by the diminished job availability in rural communities such as Galesburg. However, in order to combat this, compounding on offering more internships and jobs, Galesburg could also offer a good cost of living expense in order to attract millennials. These results coincide with the results obtained from the Midwestern, National, and Attraction Programs listed earlier in this review. These sections have both indicated that there is a high propensity for millennials to consider internship and job availability, along with cost of living, as some of the most important factors in determining their future destinations.

Conclusion

Throughout this entire project, the cities that were researched and the survey that was conducted, certain trends seemed to appear for what is attracting millennials to cities. There are several different ideas listed which provide different opportunities for retaining and attracting Millennials. Of these programs, amenities including entertainment and nightlife, career opportunities, and student loan reimbursement or assistance programs seemed to show the most success. Beyond just the Galesburg local government taking action, further actions have been taken in other communities by the universities/colleges, local businesses, and community members themselves. In total, these programs have the highest potential for success and have been used in communities just like Galesburg in order to revitalize the area, and they are working.

The survey reinforced these characteristic findings from the Midwest and National program research conducted. The survey indicated positive results that would indicate millennials being more attracted to Galesburg if there were internship and job availabilities and also a great cost of living. To summarize, these findings were consistent with the research conducted previously. Millennials are attracted to suburban areas which tend to provide more opportunities for internships and jobs, as well as providing a low cost of living for millennials looking to settle down. If Galesburg were to implement some type of action plan in order to attract these millennials with incentives like the low cost of living or availability of jobs and internships, then they would be more likely to move into Galesburg and settle down for years to come.

Livability and Amenities Survey and Results

Please circle one:

Gender: Male-108 Female-102 Other-0 **Year at Monmouth:** Junior-104 Senior -106

Ethnicity: Asian-6 African American-23 White-136 Hispanic/Latino-37 Other-8

Religious Affiliation: Protestant-32 Catholic-60 Jewish-4 Islamic-2 Hindu-0 Other-112

In what state are you originally from?

IL-175; International Student-10; IA-5; WI, FL, CA-3; MN-2; VA, AZ, TN, CO, WA, AR-1

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your life satisfaction in the Midwest. (1= not very satisfied, 3= neutral 5= very satisfied)

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 3.5]

Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1-5. (1=less likely, 3=neutral, 5=most likely)

2. How likely are you willing to live in Galesburg?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 1.6]

3. If towns/cities such as a Galesburg, had programs that helped you pay off your student loans, how likely are you to stay in a rural area?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 3.4]

4. If you have a well-paying job opportunity in a rural area, how likely would you be willing to accept it?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 4.0]

5. If Galesburg offered you a good paying job position in your career, how likely are you to move to Galesburg?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 3.5]

6. If Galesburg offered various entertainment activities (concerts, restaurants, bars, shopping centers), how likely are you to live there?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 3.4]

7. If Galesburg offered additional recreational opportunities (ice skating, seasonal sport league events) how likely are you to live there?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg=3.2]
 8. If Galesburg offered affordable living, how likely are you to live there?

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 3.1]

Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1-5 (1=least important, 3=neutral, 5=most important) when considering where you would want to live.

9. The importance of *Active Nightlife*. (i.e. – bars and or restaurants with late night hours)

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 3.7]

10. The importance of *Cost of Living*.

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 4.1]

11. The importance of *Public Transportation*.

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 2.8]

12. The importance of *Job opportunities and Internships*.

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 4.5]

13. The importance of *Recreation and Entertainment*.

1 2 3 4 5 [Avg= 4.0]

14. In what type of community have you spent most of your life?

# of responses	29	57	63	29	32
	Very Rural	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Very Urban

15. In what type of community would you most like to live in after you graduate?

# of responses	10	41	80	63	16
	Very Rural	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Very Urban

Please list any additional comments or information that you would like to share:
