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Best Places To Live Cheaply

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Sandusky, Ohio is a city with million-dollar water views and a whole lot of \$100,000 houses. With a median family income of \$64,000 and median home selling price of \$76,000, this city on Lake Erie, midway between Cleveland and Toledo, could be the most affordable housing market in the country.

Throw in highly rated schools and a low crime rate and Sandusky tops the 2011 Forbes list of America's Best Cheap Cities.

To produce the list, we started with the [NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Affordability Index](#), where Sandusky ranked sixth behind such cities as Kokomo, Ind., Elkhart, Ind. and Springfield, Oh. Then we screened for the things homebuyers want to go along with a cheap house: Low cost of living, from Moody's [Economy.com](#).; low violent crime rate, from the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#); low unemployment rate, from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#); and school quality from [GreatSchools.org](#).

Wheeling, W. Va. landed in the Forbes Top 10 despite ranking 21st on the NAHB survey because of its low crime rate – half the national average – and schools that ranked 8 in the Greatschools.org survey.



No. 9: Wheeling, W.Va.-Ohio

- Median income: \$48,900
 - Median house price: \$75,000
 - Unemployment rate: 8.7%
 - Crime rate: 221
 - GreatSchools rating: 8
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