



Athens, Ohio

Quality of Life & Incentives Package



Why do we think it is important to tell you about the amazing quality of life we have here in Athens? Because we know a strong business is only as good as the happiness of its employees! Athens offers an environment that makes it easy to foster work-life balance – and at a lower cost of living too. In addition to this, it is also important to consider our community’s unique character and the many positive features it offers outside of the business world including holistic healthcare services, comprehensive childcare, quality education, endless outdoor recreation options, a booming local food economy, and a thriving arts and music scene. The list goes on and on.

Athens Cost of Living

At the end of 2015, Athens’ cost of living index was 92, which is 8 points lower than the U.S. cost of living index (100). Home prices in Athens County have also not experienced the volatility seen in other markets. Our numerous area realtors are dedicated to helping you find the right home at the right price. Here are a few recommended real estate companies:

COMPANY	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Andy Sylvia Realty	740-592-1244	www.andysylviarealty.com
Classic Gold Real Estate	740-594-4211	www.athens-oh.com
Dave Hoisington Realty	740-591-4509	www.athensohiohouses.com
Hayes Real Estate	740-593-8867	www.hayesrealestate.com
HER Realtors	740-243-9536	www.jenniferkitchen.com
Hopewell Realty	740-304-0358	www.hopewellrealty.com
LCR Realty	740-592-3015	www.lcrealty.com
Ohio Realty	740-594-6637	www.ohio-realty.com
Ohio Real Estate Auctions LLC	740-592-4310	www.shamrock-auctions.com
Sole & Bloom Realtors	740-592-5236	www.soleandbloom.com
The Athens Real Estate Co., Ltd.	740-589-4600	www.myathenshouse.com



[Welcome to the Neighborhood](#)

Athens County is a patchwork of close-knit communities, each with its own flavor. The City of Athens and City of Nelsonville both offer **rich downtown scenes** with a variety of shops and restaurants, many of which started from “home-grown” talent like [Jackie O's](#) in Athens and [Fullbrooks Café](#) in Nelsonville. Talk to any Athenian and they will tell you we have some of the best local food cantinas around. But if you prefer a quieter place to relax, it's just a short drive to the beautiful **countryside**. Situated perfectly in the rolling foothills of Appalachia, Athens County has some of the most bucolic views and scenery. Athens is also home to Ohio University, which brings with it many cultural opportunities not only for students, but for Athens residents and businesses as well. We have **big city perks** with a small town **sense of community** – a win-win situation!



[Healthcare in Athens](#)

Healthcare in Athens is not what it used to be. In 2014, [O'Bleness Hospital](#), which has served the region for nearly a century, joined the [OhioHealth Network](#). In 2016, Ohio Health also opened a brand new facility in Nelsonville. This partnership has allowed the network to rapidly expand both its facilities and services to better serve the community. In addition to maternity care and emergency room visits, O'Bleness and OhioHealth Nelsonville offer pediatric, medical, surgical and critical care services, and provide comprehensive cancer and diabetes care for patients, families and caregivers in conjunction with the [Athens Cancer Center](#). O'Bleness Medical Park is also home to [Athens Surgery Center](#), [Health Recovery Services](#), the Athens Cancer Center and [Hopewell Athens Behavioral Health Center](#).

The privately-owned [Holzer Clinic](#) also offers specialized care in over 40 areas of expertise including gastroenterology, orthopedics, cardiology, endocrinology, rehabilitation and more. At Holzer, caring for the health needs of the community goes beyond providing exceptional care to our in-patients and out-patients.

Athens provides a well-rounded approach to healthcare and prides itself as a leader in the holistic health movement. It is home to the only osteopathic medicine program in Ohio. Ohio University's [Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine](#) is dedicated to research and services that improve healthcare in rural Appalachia.

[Comprehensive Childcare](#)

One of the most common phrases you'll hear about Athens is that it is, "a great place to raise a family!" We agree. Every family is different, and every child is unique. Even from the youngest age, Athens County places a high value on education. Therefore, we offer a range of childcare options from home-based, to center-based, to faith-based or secular programs. The [Athens County Visitors' Bureau](#) offers a comprehensive list of childcare programs and services on their website including the [Ohio University Early Childhood Development Center](#) and [STAGES Early Learning Center](#).



[Education](#)

Beyond the pre-school stage? Your child will be well equipped to continue their learning at one of Athens' five K-12 public school districts. Did you know Athens High School students consistently score higher on ACTs and SATs than the state's national average? This is in part due to the individual attention teachers give each student. In Athens County, there are only about 16 students per class. Our teachers are dedicated to providing students with the best education possible, and these efforts are enhanced through partnerships with [Ohio University's Patton College of Education](#). Our very own Mayor is particularly supportive of STEAM education in Athens City Schools (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics). [Tri-County Career Center](#) also offers students the opportunity to get a quality education while pursuing a career, preparing them for both college *and* the real world.

Athens County K-12 Public Schools

- [Alexander Local School District](#)
- [Athens City School District](#)
- [Federal Hocking Local School District](#)
- [Trimble Local School District](#)
- [Nelsonville-York City School District](#)
- [Tri-County Career Center](#)

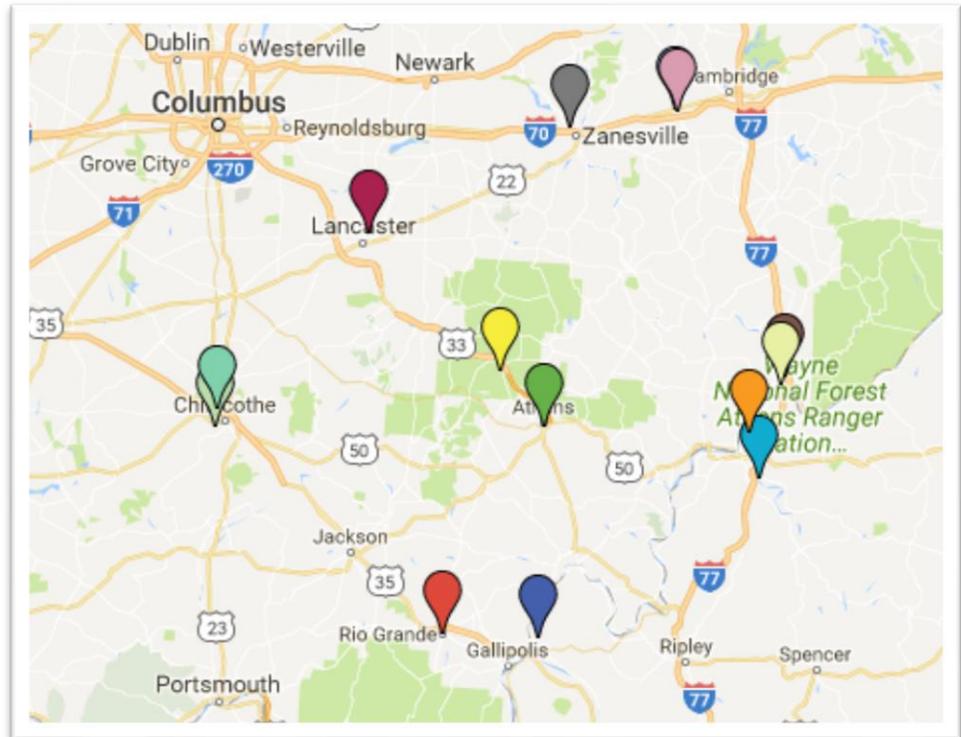
Home Schooling

Prefer home-school for your child? Join the community’s robust network of families who opted in for home-schooling. Stay connected and engage in peer interaction by joining The Athens County Homeschoolers Groups.

Higher Education

Athens is no stranger to higher education. It is home to [Ohio University](#), which offers a number of prestigious undergraduate, graduate, doctorate and medical degree programs, and provides students with a transformative learning experience. There are additionally fifteen two-year and four-year higher education institutions within a 45-minute drive time (shown below).

- Ohio University
- Hocking College
- West Virginia University at Pa...
- Marshall University Mid-Ohio
- Ohio University Lancaster Ca...
- Ohio Valley University
- University of Rio Grande
- Ohio University Zanesville
- Washington State Communit...
- Marietta College
- Ohio University Chillicothe Br...
- Daymar College
- Muskingum University
- Muskingum College Campus ...



Distance from the center of the City of Athens

Ohio University	0 mi	Zane State College	45 mi
Hocking College	13 mi	Washington State CC	47 mi
WVU Parkersburg	36 mi	Marietta College	48 mi
Marshall U. Mid-Ohio	38 mi	Ohio U. Chillicothe	48 mi
Ohio U. Lancaster	39 mi	Daymar College	48 mi
Ohio Valley U.	40 mi	Muskingum U.	50 mi
Rio Grande U.	43 mi	Muskingum College	51 mi

[Commitment to Sustainability](#)



Athens is a bit of an anomaly in that it does not conform to the typical perceptions of Southeast Ohio. The community is very much committed to sustainability. Take for example the [Athens 30-Mile Meal](#) Project (30MM). With deeply embedded ties to agriculture and farming, 30MM challenges the community to purchase and eat foods grown or raised within a 30-mile radius of Athens, whether that means buying produce, dairy or meats from the [Nelsonville](#) or [Athens](#) Farmers markets, or dining at 30MM restaurants such as [Jackie O's](#) or [Casa Nueva](#)!

This not only encourages us to support our local farmers, but is a way to strengthen our community culture and reduce our carbon foot print too.

Our devotion to sustainability runs deeper than just the local food movement. Athens is working toward creating an overall greener economy. The [Upgrade Athens County](#) Program was established as part of Georgetown University's Energy Competition, and takes action to reduce the county's energy consumption through efficiency upgrades, education and a commitment to long-term sustainability.

It's no surprise the [Athens Area Chamber of Commerce's](#) motto is, "Love Athens, Shop Local." Our commitment to all things local shows pride in our community and our desire to see it thrive.

[Abundant Outdoor Recreation Options](#)

In Athens, you don't have to pick road racing or mountain biking – you can have both! Athens is one of very few communities where you can easily get from one side of town to the other all by way of bike trails and bikeways. Extensions to the [HockHocking Adena Bikeway](#) take you all the way from Athens to Nelsonville, with several bike spurs





along the way for pit stops – say to [Little Fish Brewing Company!](#) Our bike-friendly efforts support Athens’ “green” community mission.

Athens is also extremely close to a number of beautiful state parks and national forests, each with its own personality. [Strouds Run State Park](#) offers numerous outdoor activities such as hiking, swimming, paddle boarding or fishing! Not a huge fan of the outdoors? That’s alright. Athens has several community facilities offering indoor activities including the [Athens Community Center](#) and the [Ohio University Aquatic Center](#). An avid golfer? Look no further than the [Athens Country Club](#) or the prestigious [Ohio University Golf Course!](#)

Athens’ Arts & Music Scences

Music

Wander into any restaurant, bar or coffeehouse on Court Street and you’re likely to find music whether jazz, folk, bluegrass, rock, R&B or any combination thereof. But if you need venues devoted to full-time live music, we’ve got those too. [The Ohio University School of Music](#) hosts about 200 concerts in any given year - many of them free.

For a quintessential Athens experience visit [Stuart’s Opera House](#) in Nelsonville. In the late 1800s, Stuarts Opera House was a hot spot on the Vaudeville circuit. Today it attracts musicians who thrive on playing live, from Richie Havens to Arcade Fire. And there’s not a bad seat in the house.

Where do rock legends settle down to build a home and a legacy? Jorma Kaukonen, lead guitarist for Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna chose Southeast Ohio. His [Fur Peace Ranch](#) doesn’t raise livestock; it raises world-class guitarists. If you’re interested in music that embody these legends, be sure to check out a show at [The Union Bar](#) in uptown Athens.



Performing Arts

[The Performing Arts Series](#) brings artists from around the world to Athens' 2,000-seat Memorial Auditorium. Each season is an eclectic mix: Broadway plays, ballets, musical revues, comedians and international children's choirs. [Arts West: Athens Community Gateway to the Arts](#), is an arts center that provides the community with a variety of classes from yoga to square dancing. Last but not least is [The Ohio University School of Theater](#), which offers world-premiere plays by Pulitzer Prize nominees who also happen to be faculty members. Athens County has no fewer than 5 theater groups active throughout the community. In the summer months, students and faculty team up with community members for [Ohio Valley Summer Theater](#), a regional entertainment gem since 1951.



Visual Art

[The Dairy Barn Arts Center](#) and [Kennedy Museum](#) are two museums with revolving exhibits. The Dairy Barn is a historic landmark and art gallery in one. The building itself dates back to 1914; with its slate roof and three cupolas that recall the days when it was a working dairy barn. The Dairy Barn's two staple exhibits are the Quilt National and Bead International shows. The Kennedy Museum on the other hand is tucked inside the former Athens Psychiatric Facility, a gothic edifice overlooking the Hocking River. It features exhibits that bring the world to Southeast Ohio.

If one image captures the spirit of Athens County, it is the Passion Flower, produced only by the [Passion Works Studio](#). Inspiring and liberating the human spirit through the arts, Passion Works is a studio for artists with and without developmental disabilities, and aims to strengthen community through expressions of art.



For more information on events and activities, check out the [Athens County Convention and Visitor's Bureau!](#)



Why Ohio?

[JobsOhio](#) shares a few of the reasons why Ohio is a great choice for your business:

OHIO WON'T TAX YOUR PROFITS.

We've eliminated corporate profit and franchise taxes. Zero tax on corporate profit means reduced operating costs and enhanced profit margins for your business.

NO TAXES ON NEW MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT.

We want your profits to soar, so when you invest in greater productivity, your business will have zero tax liability surrounding that investment.

ZERO TAX BURDEN ON INVENTORY.

Operating costs can drop significantly as a result of Ohio's inventory tax policy. If your business holds inventory in Ohio, it's completely tax free.

DON'T PAY TAX ON OUT-OF-STATE SALES.

Ohio doesn't impose a tax on goods or services sold outside of our state. If you ship 100% of your product outside of Ohio, your Commercial Activities Tax (CAT) is zero.

START A BUSINESS, GET HUGE BENEFITS.

Entrepreneurs will love this: Your first \$1 million in gross receipts can be tax-free in Ohio.

OUR FLAT TAX IS EASIER.

Flat tax paid if your sales are between \$150,000 and \$1 million.

Why Athens County?

All the above information sounds wonderful, but it's even better than that. Athens County is uniquely poised to offer lower costs to start-ups alongside a higher educated workforce. See what all the fuss is about by exploring the resources not just in Ohio, but in Athens County too.

Tax Incentives

The [Ohio Development Services Agency](#) offers a range of tax credits and incentives for businesses that create jobs and strengthen the local economy.

ENTERPRISE ZONE AGREEMENTS

[The Ohio Enterprise Zone Program](#) is an economic development tool that provides tax abatements on a portion of the value of new real and personal property for businesses making investment in Ohio that fall in conjunction with job creation.



NEW MARKETS TAX CREDITS

The Ohio New Market Tax Credit Program provides investors incentives to fund businesses in low-income communities by awarding tax credit allocation authority to the economic or community development entity serving as the project's intermediary (Investors gives 39% of investment claimed over 7 years).

JOB CREATION TAX CREDITS

The Local JCTC is a payroll tax incentive that reduces business tax obligations for companies that commit to job creation *and* a certain payroll threshold in the form of refundable tax credits.

Loans

The Athens County Economic Development Council administers a City, County and Micro revolving loan fund to help meet the needs of our community's businesses whether large or small. Priority is given to those businesses that create jobs for low-moderate income residents, or retain existing jobs.

ATHENS CITY & COUNTY RLFs

The City of Athens and Athens County Revolving Loan Funds provide minimum "gap" financing of the portion of the project required to complement conventional financing resources. These funding sources will provide only the amount necessary, in the form of a loan at favorable rates and fixed terms, to induce other financial institutions to complete the financing package.

SMALL BUSINESS MICRO RLF

The Micro Revolving Loan Fund that provides funding in the form of small loan amounts ranging from \$10,000-\$50,000 at favorable rates and fixed terms to assist rural business development in Athens County.

REGIONAL 166 DIRECT LOAN

The Regional 166 Direct Loan Program promotes economic development, business expansion and job creation by providing financial assistance for allowable costs of eligible in the form of low-interest loans to businesses creating new jobs or preserving existing employment opportunities in the state.

OHIO STATEWIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION 504 LOAN PROGRAM

OSDC is a private, non-profit corporation that offers the 504 loan program, which provides funding for up to 40% of the total cost of commercial real estate and equipment for longer loan terms at fixed, below market interest rates.