



Charleston, West Virginia



Charleston, West Virginia, is located at the confluence of the Elk and Kanawha rivers. Although the state legislature designated Charleston as the state's capital in 1870, it did not become the permanent capital until the citizens of the state chose it as their capital city in an election held in 1877.

The Capitol building and Governor's Mansion are located in the downtown area, as is the West Virginia Cultural Center, which includes the West Virginia State Museum and West Virginia Archives and History Library. The Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences has science galleries and a domed screen for planetarium and other shows; the Avampato Discovery Museum, which is a component of the Clay Center, houses a collection that primarily consists of 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-century American art. Heritage Towers Museum presents the Black Culture & African Heritage Exhibit, which focuses on the preservation and dissemination of information regarding the history and contributions of individuals of African descent. The Craik-Patton House is a historic house museum that was constructed in 1834.

Charleston has many options for cultural activities, including the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra; Kanawha Players, which is a community theater group; Appalachian Children's Chorus; Charleston Ballet-Academy of Ballet; Charleston Chamber Music Society; Charleston Light Opera Guild; Children's Theatre of Charleston; and touring concerts and Broadway shows. Venues for these performances include the Culture Center Theater, Kanawha Players Theatre, Charleston Civic Center, and Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences of West Virginia.

Mountain Stage, a two-hour music radio show featuring diverse music styles that range from traditional to modern, is produced by West Virginia Public Broadcasting and recorded before a live audience, usually in Charleston.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Charleston's downtown area is experiencing residential growth through the conversion of former department stores and office buildings into condominiums, lofts, and apartments. High-rise apartments and condominiums are located along the river in the downtown area. Buildings in the Warehouse District near the Appalachian Power Park also are undergoing conversions to condominiums, although some are being converted to apartments. American Foursquare, Craftsman Bungalow, and Tudor Revival are the dominant styles of single-family homes in the East End and Edgewood designated historic districts and the West Side's Luna Park neighborhood. The Kanawha City neighborhood is the site of two hospitals and many medical offices; houses surrounding the medical district were built in the 1940s and 1950s, usually in the Cape Cod and Ranch styles but with a newer pocket of larger executive homes in the Kanawha City Quarry Creek and FoxChase subdivisions. Kanawha City also features large single-family houses on large lots with river views. South Hills is an eclectic neighborhood with large mansions dating from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, large houses from the 1930s to the 1960s, and newer houses from the 1970s. This neighborhood also has a few pockets of new construction.

South Ridge, which is located near the city's boundaries, has many subdivisions with new construction. This area primarily consists of single-family homes.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Charleston has 10 parks and recreation centers, a golf course, and 5 swimming pools. Cato Park is the largest and most used park, with amenities that include a nine-hole golf course, a swimming pool, two

soccer fields, a playground, an archery practice area, and many walking and hiking trails. Haddad River Front Park hosts special annual events and concerts and has an amphitheatre with views of the river and downtown Charleston. Magic Island features a walking track, sand volleyball courts, and picnic areas. Coonskin Park includes more than 1,000 acres of woodland, hiking and biking trails, an 18-hole golf course accessible to disabled people, a swimming pool, picnic shelters, tennis courts, sand volleyball courts, bike rentals, pedal boat rentals, a playground area, an amphitheater, a soccer stadium, and a wedding garden.

The West Virginia Power is Charleston's professional baseball team.

EDUCATION

Kanawha County Schools educate over 8,100 students in Charleston in 16 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 high schools. High school students can select from among the eight high schools in the county based upon schools' emphasis on a career or academics. In addition, the Virtual High School Program (VHS) of Kanawha County Schools is designed to allow students to earn course credits from home. Through the University Collaborative Program, students can attend West Virginia State University to earn high school and college credits.

Higher education is available at the University of Charleston, which has undergraduate degree programs that include nursing and graduate programs in business and pharmacy. West Virginia Junior College offers associate's degrees in medical and business fields.

West Virginia University Health Sciences Center, Charleston Division, is a clinical campus for West Virginia University's medical, nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry students.

HEALTH CARE

Charleston is served by 4 hospitals with 1,000 acute-care beds. In addition, the city has a facility that specializes in long-term acute care and a hospital that treats patients with psychiatric and substance abuse conditions.

CITY STATS

2008

City Population	50,107
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population	303,331
Per Capita Personal Income, Charleston, West Virginia, MSA	\$37,111