

Relocation Guide

Welcome to the *Coulee Region*

Everything you need to know about moving to La Crosse County, WI — neighborhoods, housing, schools, and the local lifestyle.

170K+

METRO POPULATION

3

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

2

MAJOR HEALTH SYSTEMS



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Why people fall in love with the Coulee Region

Tucked into the bluffs along the Mississippi River, La Crosse County offers a rare mix: small-town warmth, genuine natural beauty, and the amenities of a full-service metro area.

170K+

METRO AREA POPULATION

3

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

2

MAJOR HEALTH SYSTEMS

A river town at heart. The Mississippi River and the surrounding bluffs shape daily life here — from sunrise views off Grandad Bluff to paddling the backwaters at Pettibone Park. Outdoor recreation isn't an occasional treat, it's part of the routine.

Strong, stable employers. Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic Health System — Franciscan Healthcare anchor a deep healthcare and education economy, drawing professionals from across Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College keep the area youthful and connected to a steady stream of new grads and young professionals.

Easy to get around. La Crosse Regional Airport offers daily commercial flights, I-90 and I-94 connect you to Minneapolis–St. Paul in about two hours, and most everyday errands anywhere in the metro are a short drive from home.

02

A look at the communities

Every buyer's "perfect area" looks a little different, and La Crosse County has a lot of ground to cover. Here's a quick overview of the communities I show clients most often — happy to walk you through more once I know what you're looking for.

Onalaska

Family-friendly, lake views, top-rated schools

Just north of La Crosse along Lake Onalaska, "Ona" is a favorite for families and move-up buyers, with its own school district and a walkable downtown.

Downtown & Near-Southside La Crosse

Walkable, historic homes, riverfront

Tree-lined streets and walkable access to Riverside Park, the farmers market, and the downtown restaurant scene. Character and walkability over a big yard.

Holmen

Newer construction, small-town feel, growing fast

North of Onalaska, one of the fastest-growing communities in the county — new construction and larger lots at a quieter pace.

West Salem

Small-town charm, easy commute, room to spread out

West along I-90, a classic small-town feel with larger lots and newer developments, and a short commute into La Crosse.

Bangor & Rockland

Most affordable, rural feel, close-knit communities

Smaller communities in the southeastern part of the county with some of the most affordable homes and a rural, close-knit feel.

Southside & Bluffside La Crosse

Established, bluff views, mature neighborhoods

Mature neighborhoods tucked against the bluffs, with established landscaping and a quieter setting close to Gundersen and Mayo.

Not sure which area fits you yet? That's completely normal — most relocating buyers start here. Send me your must-haves (commute, schools, yard size, walkability) and I'll put together a short list of communities and active listings to tour.

03

Cost of living & the housing market

Housing costs across La Crosse County remain well below many buyers' expectations coming from larger cities, though the market has been competitive and homes are moving quickly.

Area	Typical / Median Home Value
City of La Crosse	~\$240,000–\$275,000
La Crosse County (overall)	~\$280,000–\$320,000
Holmen	Median list price around \$450,000
West Salem	~\$270,000–\$310,000
Bangor	Among the most affordable in the county, ~\$240,000

Homes in the county are typically going pending in under two weeks, and well-priced listings often move faster than that — so buyers relocating from out of state should plan to move quickly once they find the right home. Median rent in the city of La Crosse runs roughly \$1,100–\$1,500/month depending on neighborhood and unit type, which is a useful bridge option for clients who want to rent for a season before buying.

A note on affordability: for many households moving from larger metros, the biggest surprise is how far the budget goes here. It's common to trade a small condo for a full single-family home with a yard at a similar monthly payment. Numbers above are general market snapshots — I'm happy to pull current, neighborhood-specific comps once you have an area in mind.

Climate to expect: Four true seasons. Summers are warm and green (highs near 80–86°F), winters are cold with regular snow (January highs near 29°F), and the Driftless Area's rolling bluffs make spring and fall especially scenic.

04

Schools in the area

Education is one of the top reasons families choose La Crosse County. A quick overview of the main districts:

- **School District of Onalaska** — roughly 2,900 students across six schools, with a strong district-wide reputation and a 13:1 student-teacher ratio. Onalaska High School (grades 9–12) feeds from Onalaska Middle School and several elementary schools including Eagle Bluff.
- **La Crosse School District** — the largest district in the county, serving the city of La Crosse with a full range of elementary, middle, and high schools plus several charter and private options nearby.
- **Holmen School District** — serves the fast-growing Holmen area, popular with families moving into newer construction north of Onalaska.
- **West Salem School District** — a smaller, close-knit district serving West Salem and the surrounding rural areas west of La Crosse.

If schools are a top priority, let me know your child's grade level and I can map current attendance boundaries to specific neighborhoods and listings — boundaries can shift, so it's worth confirming for any specific address before you fall in love with a house.

05

Lifestyle & things to do

Once the boxes are unpacked, here's what a weekend around here tends to look like:

Outdoors

- Sunset views atop Grandad Bluff
- Paddling and camping at Pettibone Park
- Hiking the Driftless Area's bluff trails
- Miles of riverfront and biking trails

Food & drink

- A growing craft brewery and taproom scene
- Downtown restaurant row along 3rd & Pearl
- Weekly farmers markets under the bluffs

Arts & culture

- Pump House Regional Arts Center
- First Friday Artwalks in La Crosse & Onalaska
- Children's Museum of La Crosse
- La Crosse Area Heritage Center

Community

- Riverfest & summer fireworks on the Mississippi
- Free Thursday concerts in Riverside Park
- Oktoberfest and other long-running local festivals

Between the three area colleges, two major hospital systems, and a genuinely active outdoor culture, it's an easy place to build a routine and meet people quickly — something a lot of relocating clients worry about most.

06

Your local guide



Jenny Shefelbine

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I've spent the last several years helping buyers and sellers navigate the La Crosse County market — from first-time buyers to families relocating across the country. I know these communities block by block, and I built this guide to answer the questions I hear most from clients moving to the area.

200+

CLIENTS HELPED

\$60M+

IN SALES

Relocating from out of state? I regularly work with clients buying sight-unseen or on a single house-hunting trip — I can set up video walkthroughs, area tours, and a curated list before you ever book a flight.

Next steps

Let's find your place in the Coulee Region

Moving to a new area is a big decision, and I'd love to help make it an easy one. Reach out and let's put together a plan built around your timeline, budget, and must-haves.



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