

2025 North American Edition

INTRODUCTION

The Plum Durable Skills Index (2025 North American Edition) is an interactive data experience that explores how key human skills shape the future of work across cities in North America. Based on insights from more than 59,000 participants across 82 cities, the index highlights the top “durable skills” that define each region’s workforce. These are enduring capabilities such as communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, innovation, and adaptability that remain relevant as technology and industries evolve.

Each city on the map has its own profile of strengths and working styles, reflecting the social and professional character of its people. Selecting a city reveals its top three durable skills, along with descriptions of what makes them stand out locally and examples of jobs best suited to those traits.

The index is built on Plum’s validated talent model, which draws from behavioral science and psychometric research to measure the enduring skills that drive performance, collaboration, and resilience. This map tells the story of how human potential varies across North America, offering valuable insight into how individuals and organizations can align talent with opportunity for lasting success.

www.plum.io/plum-durable-skills-index-2025-north-american-edition



INDEX FACTS & STATS

82

Cities

59,000+

Participants

2.5M

Assessment answers

27

Industries

All

Experience levels

300

Job categories

Talent Model/Durable Skills Taxonomy

12

Behaviors +
cognitive traits



36

Competencies



10

Durable skills

METHODOLOGY

To uncover the top durable skills across North America, Plum analyzed data from job applicants who completed its 42-question assessment. The assessment measures three core areas proven to predict workplace success: problem-solving ability, behavioral preferences, and work-related social judgment.

Assessment methods

To measure problem-solving ability, Plum uses Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM) questions where participants are asked to deduce the next likely image from a set of images, measuring non-verbal fluid intelligence. For behavioral and situational judgment questions, Plum employs a forced-choice (ipsative) method, where participants select between equally appealing statements, ensuring authentic results that reveal how people naturally prefer to work and spend their energy.

Results are scored against Plum's 10 durable skills model, known as the Plum Talent Model. Each Talent combines a set of underlying competencies (36 in all) that are scored based on how people respond to the assessment's cognitive, behavioral, and situational questions.

City durable skills mapping

To identify the top Talents in each city, Plum averaged scores across participants based on their self-reported home locations, ranking the top three common durable skills in each city.

DURABLE SKILLS FOR TOP 12 DMAs

This table highlights the most prevalent durable skills in 12 major North American cities, revealing how regional workforces compare in their strengths across leadership, collaboration, and communication. It offers a snapshot of which talents define success in each urban market. Cities are sorted by the top durable skills/talents from the 12 listed.

City	Top Talent	Second Talent	Third Talent
New York, NY USA	 Persuasion	 Embracing Diversity	 Conflict Resolution
Dallas, TX USA	 Persuasion	 Managing Others	 Decision Making
Philadelphia, PA USA	 Persuasion	 Conflict Resolution	 Managing Others
Houston, TX USA	 Persuasion	 Managing Others	 Decision Making
Boston, MA USA	 Persuasion	 Managing Others	 Communication
Atlanta, GA USA	 Persuasion	 Managing Others	 Communication
Los Angeles, CA USA	 Conflict Resolution	 Persuasion	 Embracing Diversity
Toronto, ON Canada	 Conflict Resolution	 Persuasion	 Communication
San Francisco, CA USA	 Conflict Resolution	 Communication	 Embracing Diversity
Montreal, QC Canada	 Conflict Resolution	 Persuasion	 Managing Others
Chicago, IL USA	 Communication	 Embracing Diversity	 Conflict Resolution
Washington, DC USA	 Communication	 Managing Others	 Persuasion

Regional breakdowns

Every region across North America shows a unique mix of human strengths shaped by its industries, culture, and community values. From persuasion and leadership in major business hubs to communication and teamwork in collaborative cities, the distribution of durable skills reflects how people think, connect, and work together. These regional patterns reveal more than workforce preferences; they tell the story of how talent evolves alongside local economies, innovation clusters, and shared cultural identity.

The following insights highlight how durable skills cluster by region and drive lasting success.



New England: Communication, Persuasion, and Managing Others

Clarity and credibility are the currency of success in New England. From Portland to Boston and Hartford, communication and persuasion dominate a region defined by world-class universities, hospitals, and technology hubs. Professionals here value articulate thinking, collaborative problem solving, and leadership that pairs intellect with empathy. It is a culture where thoughtful conversation drives innovation.



Mid-Atlantic: Persuasion, Conflict Resolution, and Embracing Diversity

The Mid-Atlantic corridor, stretching from New York to Washington, D.C., runs on dialogue, diplomacy, and diversity. Persuasion stands out in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, while D.C. showcases strong communication and leadership. This is a region powered by policy, media, and multicultural collaboration, where influence and understanding are as vital as expertise.



Southeast: Teamwork, Managing Others, and Persuasion

Across the Southeast, from Atlanta to Charleston and Frankfort, people lead through connection. Teamwork and managing others are defining strengths, highlighting a deep commitment to mentorship, community, and collaboration. The region's leaders blend warmth with persuasion, creating a culture of trust that turns relationships into results.



Midwest: Innovation, Communication, and Conflict Resolution

In the Midwest, innovation meets pragmatism. Cities like Chicago, Indianapolis, and Green Bay balance big ideas with execution, valuing communication and steady collaboration. The region's industries depend on adaptability and teamwork, making conflict resolution as essential as the innovation that keeps the heartland moving forward, reflecting the pioneering mindset that continues to shape the modern West.



Texas and Central South: Persuasion, Managing Others, and Decision Making

In Dallas, Houston, and Austin, durable skills reflect entrepreneurial drive and decisive leadership. Persuasion and decision making rise to the top, showcasing a culture that values initiative, independence, and confidence. These are cities of growth and grit, where influence and action go hand in hand.



West Coast: Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Embracing Diversity

On the West Coast, creativity meets connection. Cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Portland emphasize empathy, collaboration, and cross-cultural understanding. Communication and conflict resolution define professional life, supported by a deep appreciation for diversity that fuels the region's global perspective and innovative spirit.



Canada: Conflict Resolution, Persuasion, and Communication

Across Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, durable skills reflect Canada's hallmark diplomacy and balance. Conflict resolution and persuasion stand out, reinforced by strong communication. Canadians approach collaboration with thoughtfulness and respect, fostering workplaces built on trust, dialogue, and shared success.



Mountain West: Innovation, Communication, and Teamwork

From Denver to Salt Lake City, the Mountain West blends independence with cooperation. Innovation and communication define the region's forward-looking spirit, while teamwork grounds its progress. Professionals here combine self-reliance with a genuine sense of community, reflecting the pioneering mindset that continues to shape the modern West.



Our research reveals that every city has its own signature strengths. Las Vegas leads in conflict resolution, teamwork, and adaptability, while New York excels in persuasion and embracing diversity. By connecting these durable skills to the jobs best suited for them, we're helping people make smarter, data-driven career moves for wherever their next opportunity takes them.

Caitlin MacGregor | Plum CEO

THE HUMAN ADVANTAGE

As industries evolve and technology continues to advance, the most valuable skills are the ones that never go out of date. Durable skills such as adaptability, communication, and decision-making remain the foundation of meaningful work, even as automation and AI reshape what jobs look like.

These abilities enable people to think critically, collaborate effectively, and lead with empathy, ensuring that innovation remains grounded in human insight. The Plum Durable Skills Index shows how these enduring strengths are distributed across North America, revealing where the next generation of resilient, future-ready talent is emerging.

In a world where tools change faster than people, durable skills continue to define lasting success.

ABOUT PLUM

Plum transforms talent strategy through the power of durable skills. Our talent assessment helps organizations improve their quality of hires while building a skills-based workforce by measuring the core competencies that drive performance and potential.

Plum for Hiring delivers science-backed insights that improve speed and accuracy in talent acquisition. Plum for Employees supports internal mobility, engagement, and development with the same data-driven foundation.

Together, these solutions give companies a clearer picture of both new candidates and existing team members, enabling smarter talent decisions across the employee lifecycle.

Contact information

For media inquiries:

kate@devonpr.com

For research inquiries:

research@plum.io

Website URLs:

www.plum.io

www.plum.io/contact

www.plum.io/plum-durable-skills-index-2025-north-american-edition