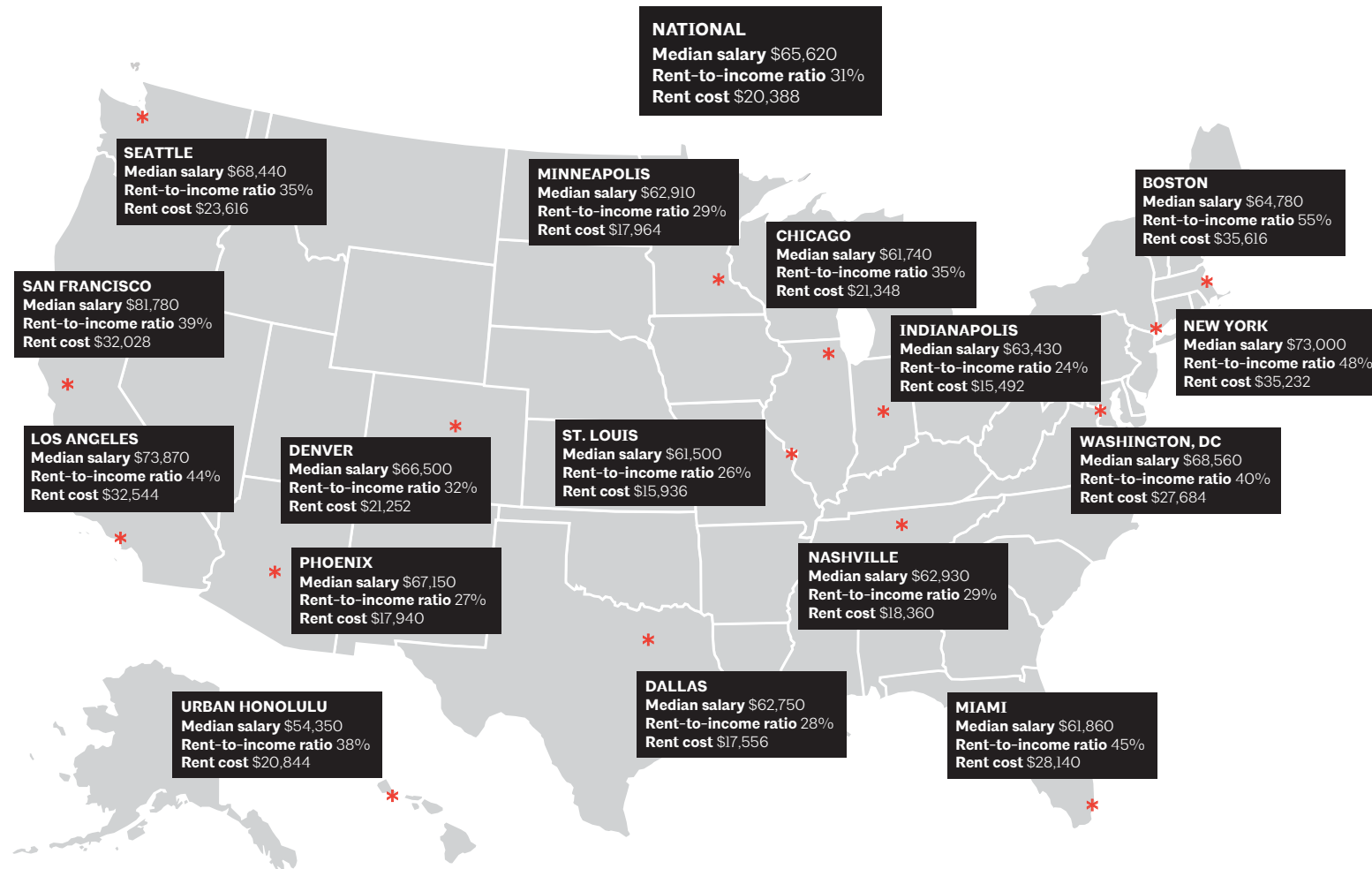


Salary vs. cost of living for new architecture grads

The biggest challenge new architecture grads face when entering the workforce? Rising cost of living. Housing costs are typically the biggest monthly expense, and they vary significantly—with some metro areas topping 50%.



Metropolitan area breakdown

34

total metros areas covered in the 2025 AIA Compensation & Benefits Report.

15

areas had rent-to-income ratios below 30%.

9

had ratios near the national average (between 30–34%).

5

had ratios between 35–40%.

5

had ratios above 40%.



As you weigh your job options, make sure you understand your value in the marketplace. AIA's free salary calculator, which uses data from the AIA Compensation & Benefits Report 2025, provides up-to-date salary ranges for key positions in your area.

Learn more at salarycalculator.aia.org.