

In the fall of 2015, we introduced the [Opportunity Washington Scorecard](#) — a 50-state ranking of performance on three priorities vital to fostering a culture of opportunity and prosperity: Achieve (education quality and outcomes), Connect (transportation reliability and efficiency), and Employ (economic vitality).

To develop the Scorecard, we examine 16 variables across the three categories. The dials are set so the score of the 10th best state is 100, and the median is 75. From there, the analysis produces a weighted average or “Opportunity Score” for each state. Achieve and Employ data each make up 40 percent of the Opportunity Score; Connect makes up 20 percent. (Access the [data sources and FAQ](#) for detail on the methodology).

Changes in the rankings are dynamic. Even with improved performance, Washington can fall behind if other states demonstrate more rapid progress. Our goal is to make Washington a top 10 state overall and in each category.



Washington’s Overall Performance

50-State Ranking: **27** • Opportunity Score: **74**
(Previous Ranking: **28** • Previous Score: **68**)

Washington moves up one spot as compared to the winter of 2016, now ranking 27th among all states with an overall Opportunity Score of 74. Our state improved slightly in the Connect ranking, as bridge conditions worsened in other states. Our goal is to be in the top 10, and significant improvement is needed in every category. Washington continues to hover near the median, offering opportunity to some, but not all.

Top Performer: Utah continues to lead the nation with an Opportunity Score of 149. That state ranks 5th in Achieve, 11th in Connect, and 3rd in Employ. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Virginia, and Indiana round out the top five.

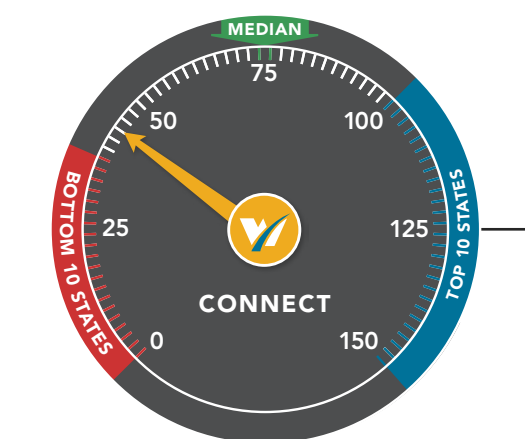


ACHIEVE 50-State Ranking: **21** • Score: **78**

(Previous Ranking: **21** • Previous Score: **80**)

Washington’s Performance: Our state again comes in 21st, although with a slightly lower Achieve score as compared to Winter 2016. In 2014, the state’s postsecondary institutions produced fewer associate’s, bachelor’s and advanced degrees per capita than the previous year. One bright spot: Production of STEM bachelor’s degrees per capita was up year-over-year.

Top Performer: Massachusetts holds on to its 1st place position. The Bay State outperforms Washington on all K-12 measures as well production of bachelor’s and advanced degrees per capita. Washington beats Massachusetts in associate’s degrees awarded per capita, reflecting our state’s emphasis on a network of community and technical colleges. [Data Sources](#)



CONNECT 50-State Ranking: **38** • Score: **42**

(Previous Ranking: **38** • Previous Score: **41**)

Washington’s Performance: Our state remains 38th in Connect, coming in well below the median on the combined transportation and infrastructure measures. According to new data on bridge conditions, Washington is holding steady with 25.8 percent of bridges rated as functionally obsolete or structurally deficient. However, conditions have worsened in other states, giving Washington a bump up in the Connect score.

Top Performer: Kansas takes the top spot with a Connect score of 121. Eighty-two percent of roads in that state are rated good or very good, compared to 50 percent in Washington. Kansas also has a lower percentage of deficient bridges (16.3 percent) compared to Washington. Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, and New Mexico round up the top five in Connect. [Data Sources](#)



EMPLOY 50-State Ranking: **26** • Score: **75**

(Previous Ranking: **26** • Previous Score: **74**)

Washington’s Performance: Washington ranks 26th with an Employ score of 75. Our state continues to be a leader in private sector R&D spending at \$2,131 per capita. However, Washington continues to impose high unemployment insurance costs, and businesses carry a comparatively high tax burden.

Top Performer: Virginia leads the nation with an Employ score of 140. Compared to Washington, Virginia businesses shoulder a much lower percentage of the state and local tax burden (40.6 percent compared to 58 percent in Washington). Virginia’s unemployment insurance tax burden is less than a third that of Washington. Bright spot: Washington brings in four times as much in private sector R&D investment per capita as Virginia. [Data Sources](#)

Opportunity Scores by State

STATE	SCORE	RANK
UT	149	1
MA	137	2
NH	129	3
VA	127	4
IN	113	5
KS	111	6
MN	110	7
NE	106	8
MO	102	9
MD	100	10
DE	100	11
IA	98	12
ND	92	13
CO	91	14
AZ	91	15
WI	90	16
NC	90	17
OH	89	18
CT	87	19
MT	82	20
IL	81	21
TX	81	22
VT	78	23
MI	77	24
PA	76	25
TN	75	26
WA	74	27
SD	73	28
ID	71	29
FL	70	30
WY	67	31
OR	67	32
KY	64	33
AL	63	34
GA	62	35
CA	61	36
ME	61	37
OK	60	38
NJ	59	39
SC	55	40
AR	53	41
RI	52	42
MS	45	43
NY	43	44
NV	39	45
LA	33	46
WV	31	47
NM	30	48
HI	16	49
AK	-20	50