

The **Opportunity Index** scores each state on 16 variables across three categories: **Achieve** (eight measures of education quality and outcomes), **Connect** (three measures of transportation efficiency and reliability) and **Employ** (five measures of economic vitality).

The data sets used to develop the Opportunity Index were selected because they are updated regularly; provide a reliable, 50-state comparison based on independent data; and address the issues that communities across Washington have told us are most important to expanding opportunity and shared prosperity in Washington state.

To normalize scoring across the datasets, the median score is set at 75 for each variable and the score of the 10th best state is set at 100. The analysis then produces a weighted average or “opportunity score” for each state. The three categories receive the following weights: Achieve, 40%; Connect, 20%; and Employ, 40%. **The goal is to make Washington a top 10 state, with an opportunity score of 100 or better.**

ACHIEVE

4th grade reading performance
8th grade math performance
High school graduation rate
Postsecondary degree production
(Associate’s, bachelor’s, STEM bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees awarded per capita)

SOURCE

National Assessment for Educational Progress
National Assessment for Educational Progress
U.S. Department of Education
National Center for Education Statistics

CONNECT

Average statewide commute time
Road conditions
Bridge conditions

American Community Survey
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Highway Administration

EMPLOY

2015 State Business Tax Climate Index
Business taxes as a percent of private sector GSP
Unemployment insurance tax
Private sector R&D investment
Entrepreneurial activity

Tax Foundation
Council on State Taxation
U.S. Department of Labor
National Science Foundation
Kauffman Index