

In early 2015, WashACE launched [Opportunity Washington: Priorities for Shared Prosperity](#), a roadmap for expanding Washington’s culture of opportunity statewide.

To use any map effectively, travelers must know where they are, where they’re headed, and how to measure progress. To that end, we introduce [The Opportunity Index](#), a data-driven analysis of state performance in three categories that communities tell us are most important. **Achieve** measures education quality and outcomes. **Connect** measures transportation reliability and efficiency. **Employ** measures economic vitality.

To develop the Index, we examine 50-state data from 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.

The data tells us where each state ranks and where Washington can improve. **Our goal is to make Washington a top-10 state, scoring 100 or better.**

## Opportunity Scores by State

STATE	SCORE	RANK	
MA	117	1	TOP 10
UT	111	2	
KS	111	3	
NH	105	4	
MT	104	5	
NE	102	6	
DE	101	7	
IN	101	8	
MO	100	9	
VT	100	10	
SD	99	11	MEDIAN
ND	95	12	
CO	92	13	
FL	90	14	
VA	89	15	
CT	88	16	
IA	88	17	
MD	87	18	
MN	86	19	
OH	85	20	
MI	83	21	BOTTOM 10
NC	82	22	
ID	79	23	
<b>WA</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>24</b>	
TX	75	25	
WY	75	26	
ME	74	27	
WI	74	28	
IL	73	29	
AZ	72	30	
KY	72	31	
PA	69	32	
CA	66	33	
OR	64	34	
AR	62	35	
NY	62	36	
TN	60	37	
NJ	60	38	
GA	59	39	
OK	58	40	
NV	55	41	
SC	54	42	
RI	52	43	
MS	52	44	
AL	50	45	
NM	42	46	
LA	41	47	
WV	37	48	
HI	19	49	
AK	3	50	



**Washington's Opportunity Score: 79**  
**50-State Ranking: 24**

**Washington's Performance:** Our state is in a good – though not great – position, ranking 24th among the states based on an opportunity score of 79. Washington comes in just above the median, not in the top 10 overall or the top 10 in any sub-category.

**Top Performer:** Massachusetts leads the nation with a score of 117. This is driven largely by the state’s education system and private sector investment in research and development.

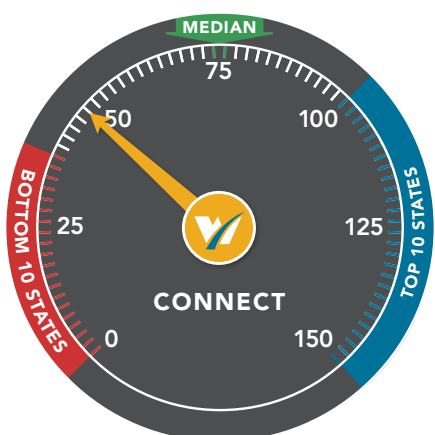


**ACHIEVE Score: 82 • 50-State Ranking: 18**

**Washington's Performance:** Our state ranks 18th based on an Achieve (education) score of 82. The state performs well in 4th grade reading, 8th grade math, and associate’s degrees awarded. However, the high school graduation rate is well below the median (ranking 40th in the nation). The state also ranks among the bottom half of all states in bachelor’s and advanced degree production.

**Top Performer:** Massachusetts leads the nation with an off-the-chart Achieve score of 160.

**The Data:** Measures of education quality include 4th grade reading and 8th grade math proficiency; high school graduation rate; and associate’s, bachelor’s, STEM bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees awarded.



**CONNECT Score: 48 • 50-State Ranking: 38**

**Washington's Performance:** Our state ranks well below the median, coming in 38th among all states, based on a Connect (transportation) score of 48. Lawmakers passed a comprehensive transportation package this year that will lead to a safer, more efficient system and should improve Washington’s ranking over time.

**Top Performer:** Kansas leads the nation with a Connect score of 120.

**The Data:** Measures of transportation system performance include commute time, bridge quality, and road quality.



**EMPLOY Score: 78 • 50-State Ranking: 23**

**Washington's Performance:** Our state ranks 23rd with an Employ (economic vitality) score of 78. This position, just above the median, reflects strong private sector R&D investment and entrepreneurial activity coupled with higher-than-average business costs.

**Top Performer:** Delaware leads the nation with an Employ score of 126.

**The Data:** Indicators of economic vitality include two business tax measures, the unemployment insurance tax, private sector R&D investment, and entrepreneurial activity.

The Opportunity Index is developed by WashACE, a coalition that believes expanded opportunity and shared prosperity depend on smart public policy and strategic investments. It will be updated quarterly with new data and insight into practices and policies that could lead to improved performance.

Learn more at  
[www.opportunitywa.org](http://www.opportunitywa.org)