

In the fall of 2015, we introduced the [Opportunity Washington Scorecard](#) — a 50-state ranking of performance on three priorities that are 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 methodology.)

It’s important to remember changes in rankings are dynamic. Washington can fall behind, even with improved performance, 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: **28** • Opportunity Score: **68**
(Previous Ranking: **24** • Previous Score: **79**)

Washington drops four spots as compared to the fall of 2015, now ranking 28th among the states with an overall Opportunity Score of 68. Our goal is to be in the top 10 and significant improvement is needed in every category.

Top Performer: Utah leads the nation with an Opportunity Score of 127. That state ranks in the top 10 in all three categories coming in 5th for Achieve, 7th for Connect and 8th for Employ. Previous leader, Massachusetts, falls to 2nd overall, but maintains a 1st place ranking in Achieve and Employ.

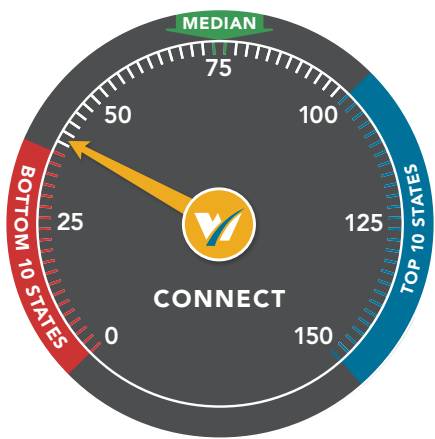


ACHIEVE 50-State Ranking: 21 • Score: **80**
(Previous Ranking: **18** • Previous Score: **82**)

Washington’s Performance: Washington falls to 21st in the updated ranking. Our state improved in 4th grade reading and high school graduation rate, but fell in 8th grade math achievement. This quarter we dig deeper to [spotlight the Achieve data](#).

Top Performer: Massachusetts maintains its 1st place position with an off-the-chart Achieve score of 157. That state experienced incremental improvements in 4th grade reading and high school graduation rate and declined in 8th grade math performance.

The Data: Measures 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.

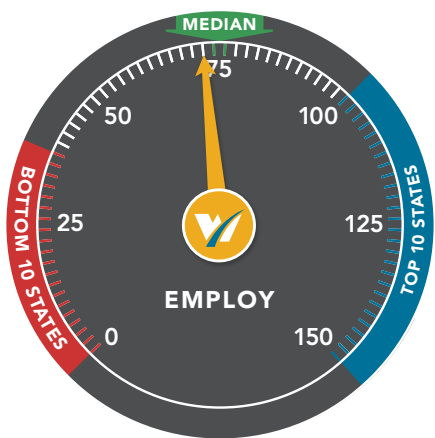


CONNECT 50-State Ranking: 38 • Score: **41**
(Previous Ranking: **38** • Previous Score: **48**)

Washington’s Performance: Washington holds its position in Connect, ranking 38th among the states with a slightly lower Connect score of 41. This reflects an increase in the average statewide commute time to 26.8 minutes.

Top Performer: Montana takes the top spot with a Connect score of 122.

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



EMPLOY 50-State Ranking: 26 • Score: **74**
(Previous Ranking: **23** • Previous Score: **78**)

Washington’s Performance: Washington drops to 26th with an Employ score of 74. Washington businesses shoulder 58 percent of the state and local tax burden, up from 54 percent. However, our state’s average unemployment insurance (UI) rate dropped.

Top Performer: Massachusetts leads the nation with an Employ score of 119. That state reduced its overall business tax burden and average UI tax rate.

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

**Opportunity
Scores by State**

STATE	SCORE	RANK
UT	127	1
MA	122	2
NH	113	3
NE	113	4
MT	111	5
KS	109	6
IN	105	7
MO	102	8
VT	101	9
SD	100	10
DE	97	11
IA	96	12
MN	93	13
ND	90	14
VA	88	15
CT	86	16
CO	85	17
ID	82	18
FL	82	19
MI	80	20
NC	78	21
WI	78	22
MD	78	23
WY	76	24
OH	75	25
AZ	75	26
IL	74	27
WA	68	28
TX	67	29
KY	66	30
OR	65	31
ME	63	32
TN	55	33
CA	55	34
OK	55	35
PA	54	36
AR	53	37
NJ	52	38
GA	46	39
NY	43	40
MS	43	41
SC	42	42
AL	40	43
RI	38	44
NV	38	45
NM	24	46
LA	20	47
WV	18	48
HI	13	49
AK	-6	50