

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 state is set at 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.**

Opportunity Scores by State

| STATE | SCORE | RANK |
|-------|-------|------|
| UT | 153 | 1 |
| NH | 137 | 2 |
| MA | 131 | 3 |
| FL | 126 | 4 |
| MO | 114 | 5 |
| ID | 106 | 6 |
| IN | 105 | 7 |
| VA | 103 | 8 |
| NE | 102 | 9 |
| SD | 100 | 10 |
| NC | 99 | 11 |
| KS | 95 | 12 |
| CO | 92 | 13 |
| AZ | 89 | 14 |
| WI | 87 | 15 |
| WY | 87 | 16 |
| TN | 87 | 17 |
| MN | 86 | 18 |
| DE | 84 | 19 |
| MT | 84 | 20 |
| MI | 80 | 21 |
| KY | 79 | 22 |
| TX | 77 | 23 |
| OH | 76 | 24 |
| GA | 76 | 25 |
| WA | 75 | 26 |
| IA | 69 | 27 |
| MD | 67 | 28 |
| AL | 64 | 29 |
| VT | 63 | 30 |
| CA | 61 | 31 |
| IL | 59 | 32 |
| CT | 58 | 33 |
| MS | 57 | 34 |
| AR | 56 | 35 |
| SC | 55 | 36 |
| OR | 54 | 37 |
| OK | 52 | 38 |
| ND | 51 | 39 |
| ME | 50 | 40 |
| PA | 49 | 41 |
| NJ | 43 | 42 |
| NV | 39 | 43 |
| NY | 30 | 44 |
| WV | 26 | 45 |
| RI | 19 | 46 |
| LA | 11 | 47 |
| NM | 10 | 48 |
| HI | -5 | 49 |
| AK | -25 | 50 |



Washington’s Overall Performance
50-State Ranking: 26 • Opportunity Score: 75
 (Previous Ranking: 23 • Previous Score: 79)

Washington falls three spots and now ranks 26th among all states with an overall Opportunity Score of 75. As compared with the update in November 2019, Washington dropped three spots in the Achieve category to No. 28, while remaining unchanged at 35th and 20th in the Connect and Employ categories, respectively.

Top Performers: Utah again leads the nation with an impressive Opportunity Score of 153. Utah ranks in the top 5 for all three categories: 2nd in Achieve, 4th in Connect, and 3rd in Employ. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Florida, and Missouri round out the top five.



ACHIEVE 50-State Ranking: 28 • Score: 72
 (Previous Ranking: 25 • Previous Score: 76)

Washington’s Performance: Our state drops three spots in the Achieve ranking. Washington improved in several categories: the high school graduation rate increased from 79.3 in 2017 to 80.9 in 2018. Associate’s, Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral degrees per capita all increased slightly, but larger improvements in other states pushed our degree scores down a bit.

Top Performer: Massachusetts remains the top state for Achieve. The Bay State outperforms Washington on all education measures, except for associate’s degrees awarded per capita.

[Data Sources](#)



CONNECT 50-State Ranking: 35 • Score: 61
 (Previous Ranking: 35 • Previous Score: 63)

Washington’s Performance: Washington remains at 35th in the Connect ranking. In 2019, the average commute time increased slightly from 28.4 minutes to 28.8 minutes, but the percent of highways not rated good or very good decreased slightly, falling from 47.0 to 46.9 percent. This positive movement is both welcome and expected, as the state continued to further implement new projects and overdue maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges included in the 2015 Connecting Washington transportation package.

Top Performer: Nevada moves into the top spot with a Connect score of 122. Less than 14 percent of roads in that state are not rated in good or very good, and less than 2 percent of its bridges are structurally deficient.

[Data Sources](#)



EMPLOY 50-State Ranking: 20 • Score: 81
 (Previous Ranking: 20 • Previous Score: 80)

Washington’s Performance: Washington remains at 20th in the Employ ranking with a score of 80. Business taxes per employee increased from \$7,800 to \$8,000 per year in Washington, and our state’s Tax Climate Index increased slightly from 5.28 to 5.33. However, the unemployment insurance tax per employee dropped from \$496 to \$490 in 2019.

Top Performer: Florida moves into the top spot with an Employ score of 125, followed by Missouri and Utah. Unemployment insurance taxes (\$46) and business taxes per employee (\$5,700) are significantly less in Florida than in Washington.

[Data Sources](#)