



ALABAMA

STATE SUMMARY
2025

Alabama at a glance

THE STATE OPPORTUNITY INDEX combines research-backed strategies for improving education-to-career outcomes with benchmarking measures to track progress for all 50 states, giving policymakers and institutions a framework for strengthening the link between education and opportunity.

For each state, the Index reports the percentage of students who experience a positive return on investment and summarizes progress in five key areas for improving success beyond completion: Clear Outcomes, Quality Coaching, Affordability, Work-Based Learning, and Employer Alignment. States are grouped into four categories: Leading (at the forefront, demonstrating strong progress); Advanced (substantial progress); Developing (early stages of improvement); and Foundational (just beginning their journey).

Positive ROI

67%



**State
Opportunity
Index**

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References for "unavailable" refer to states in which there was insufficient data to assign a rating at this time.
In cases where the margin of error crosses a category threshold, states are given a combined category.

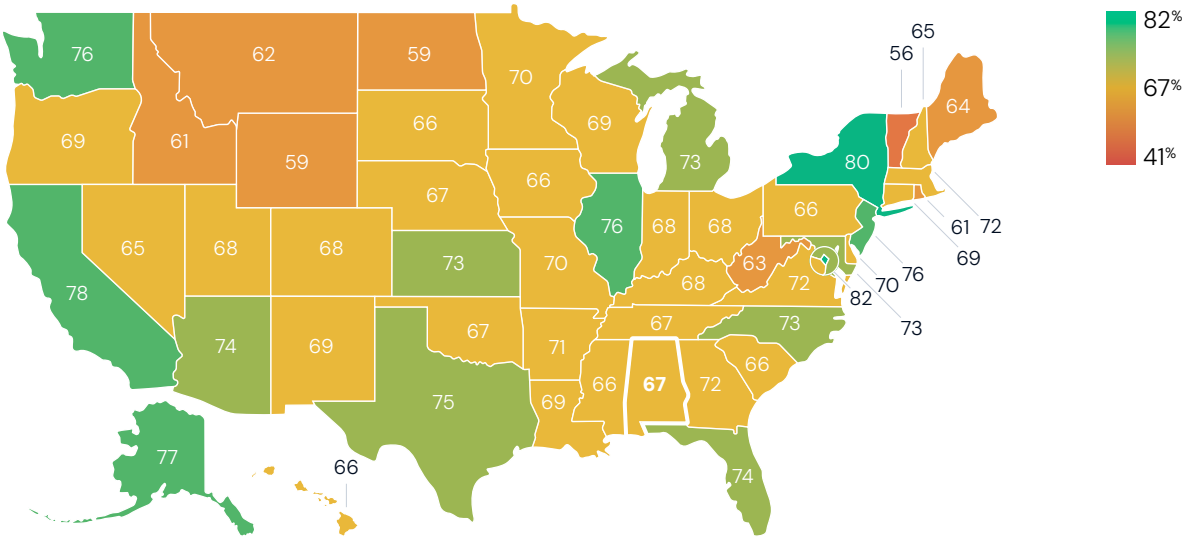
Positive ROI

Alabama

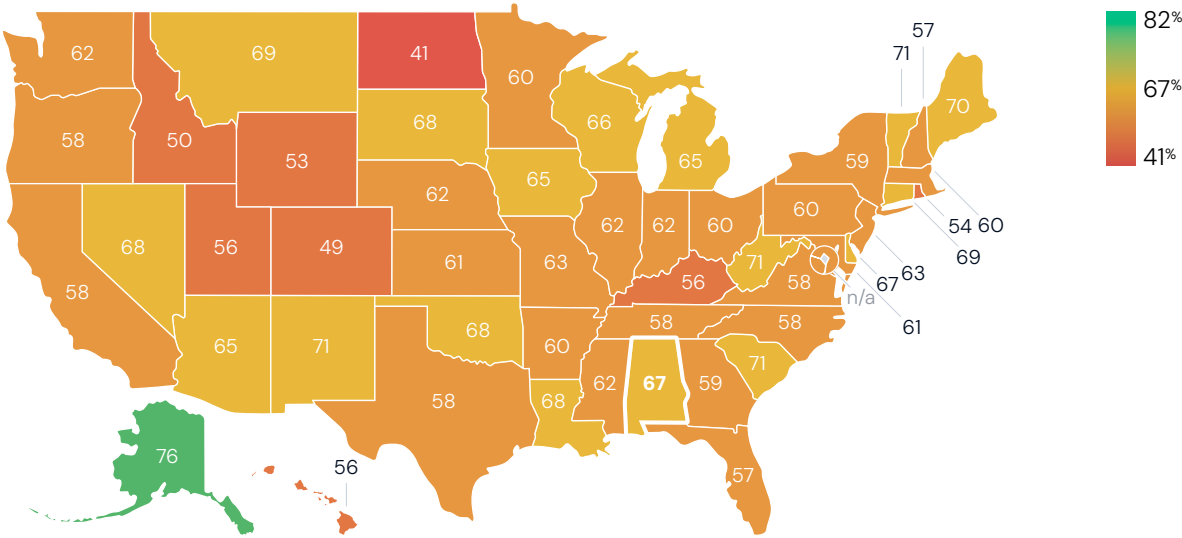
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	Alabama	U.S.
Overall	67%	70%
Bachelor's	67%	73%
Associate	67%	60%

Percentage of graduates with positive 10-year ROI by state – bachelor's degrees



Percentage of graduates with positive 10-year ROI by state – associate degrees





Everyone should have access to accurate information on employment outcomes that can help them make informed decisions about education after high school. The Clear Outcomes measure is based on 10 critical elements that contribute to the capacity of state education-to-employment data systems to strengthen the connection between education and opportunity.

COLLECT

State data system elements	State description	Rating
1 Includes learner-level and program characteristic data for nondegree and noncredit postsecondary education and training programs	Alabama has robust collection of enrollment and credential outcome data for nondegree and noncredit postsecondary education and training programs. The state's nondegree and noncredit collections include: (i) college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials; (ii) college-issued, noncredit nondegree credentials through occupational training; (iii) WIOA-eligible training providers; and (iv) other third-party credentials, namely apprenticeships. Alabama currently links college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials to employment outcomes through the Alabama Commission on Higher Education's annual Employment Outcomes Report and the Student Horizon Database . Alabama's SLDS, Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics on Career Pathways or ATLAS on Career Pathways, may link additional nondegree and noncredit data to employment outcomes in the future.	ADVANCED
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	Alabama does not collect any of the three enhanced elements, and Strada's research did not demonstrate any emerging collection policy.	FOUNDATIONAL

INTEGRATE

State data system elements	State description	Rating
3 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after postsecondary education and training completion, and over time	Alabama has extensive integration and publication of postsecondary education and training and employment data, including: (i) public four-year institutions to employment, (ii) private four-year institutions to employment, and (iii) community colleges to employment. Integrated data for public four-year institutions, private four-year institutions, and community colleges to employment are all available as a public interactive reporting tool through Alabama Commission on Higher Education's Student Horizon Database . These integrated data include college-issued, nondegree credentials. The data are not disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and family income or economically disadvantaged status. Alabama does not integrate and publish data on WIOA-eligible training providers to employment. Alabama's SLDS, the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics on Career Pathways or ATLAS on Career Pathways, will offer interactive dashboards and static reports including more integrated postsecondary and employment data.	ADVANCED
4 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after high school completion and over time	No evidence was identified through the state's response or in Strada's research of the state demonstrating this element.	FOUNDATIONAL
5 Partners with national and multi-state initiatives to assess education-to-opportunity outcomes for graduates and non-graduates of postsecondary education and training programs who relocate or work outside the state	Alabama partners with PSEO (<25% graduate coverage), Multi-State Data Collaborative, and State Wage Interchange System. Alabama is in the process of expanding graduate coverage through PSEO.	LEADING

CATEGORY KEY

Extent to which elements are present in state data infrastructure.

- **Leading**
Fully present
- **Advanced**
Partially present
- **Developing**
In development
- **Foundational**
Not in development



PROVIDE

State data system elements	State description	Rating
6 Provides comprehensive and timely open data files containing anonymized education-to-opportunity statistics that anyone can access, download, and otherwise use	No evidence was identified through the state's response or in Strada's research of the state demonstrating this element.	FOUNDATIONAL
7 Publishes robust, timely, and easily understandable interactive resources informing education-to-opportunity decision-making by learners, families, and institutions	Alabama has dashboards containing education-to-employment outcomes for (i) public four-year institutions; (ii) private four-year institutions; (iii) community colleges; and (iv) nondegree credentials.	LEADING
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	Alabama has individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets but access is limited to higher education institutions.	ADVANCED

(...) IMPACT

State data system elements	State description	Rating
9 Enables learners and earners to access and utilize their own verified data, unlocking opportunities for college and career advancement	The Alabama Committee on Credentials and Career Pathways (ACCCP) is a legislatively enacted and funded governance committee for the Alabama Talent Triad. The ACCCP is tasked with a two-fold mission: (i) identifying Alabama's regional and statewide in-demand occupations and (ii) developing competency models, career pathways, and credentials of value linked to those in-demand occupations. These competency models, credentials, and pathways are then used within the Talent Triad by citizens through a digital wallet that stores each individual's verified skills. The skills can then be used to match to job opportunities and further education. Key partners in the initiative include EBSCOed and Competency-Based Education Network, which provide direct support to the ACCCP to fulfill its mission. In addition, several partners such as American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), Digital Promise, National Governors Association, T3 Innovation Network, and Upskill America have played roles in the adoption and implementation within the state. As of February 2025, Alabamans had created 67,423 LERs with validated credentials. The Talent Triad has facilitated interoperable credentials to move from outside the state by partnering with SOLID and Map MyFutures to support military-connected individuals to search for education and careers. Additionally, the Alabama Community College System, in collaboration with AACRAO, is developing a CLR/LER infrastructure as part of the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool initiative. This work is focused on transfer credit for traditional-age students (16–24 year-olds) and will also have significant benefits for working adults who are also enrolled in Alabama's community colleges.	LEADING
10 Designates a unit with responsibility and dedicated, full-time capacity for generating education-to-employment insights to inform state policymaking and resource allocation decision-making	The Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics on Career Pathways (ATLAS), Alabama's SLDS, has easy access to integrated education-to-employment data for analysis. The system is in the process of developing publicly available resources that report on supply/demand labor market attributes and postsecondary employment outcomes, though not formally designated by the state as responsible for generating these education-to-employment insights. ATLAS is governed by Alabama's P20W Council and has strong partnerships with higher education, workforce development, and economic development agencies.	ADVANCED

CATEGORY KEY

Extent to which elements are present in state data infrastructure.

- **Leading**
Fully present
- **Advanced**
Partially present
- **Developing**
In development
- **Foundational**
Not in development



Quality Coaching

Alabama

FOUR-YEAR

DEVELOPING

TWO-YEAR

UNAVAILABLE

Everyone should have access to coaching that helps them reflect on their talents and interests, choose a career goal, chart a path, and navigate challenges. Graduates who receive such guidance are more likely to land a job that requires a degree and feel satisfied with their career trajectory. The Quality Coaching measure is based on the percentage of two-year students and four-year senior students who reported receiving personalized guidance, timely labor market information, and support to create a plan and overcome barriers.

Personalized guidance		Four-year	Two-year
Percentage of students at public institutions who report receiving personalized coaching or guidance to help select the education that will help prepare them for a successful career.		38% DEVELOPING	UNAVAILABLE
Timely labor market information		Four-year	Two-year
The average share of students at public institutions who receive timely labor market information, across the various types below, before enrolling or during their first year.		21% FOUNDATIONAL	UNAVAILABLE
Education-to-career paths that might be a good fit for student's strengths and interests		24%	
Job opportunities that a particular education program could lead to		24%	
Potential earnings in different careers related to student's education program		17%	
Career outcomes of students from their own institution		17%	
Support		Four-year	Two-year
The average share of students at public institutions who receive at least some support in setting goals and in overcoming obstacles.		74% ADV./LEAD.	UNAVAILABLE
Setting education and career goals and developing a plan to achieve these goals		74%	
Identifying and overcoming barriers		74%	
CATEGORY KEY			
When the margin of error crosses a category threshold, states are given a combined category.			
Leading ≥75%		Advanced 50% to <75%	Developing 25% to <50%
			Foundational <25%
National results		Four-year	Two-year
Personalized guidance		34%	45%
Timely labor market information		21%	33%
Support		71%	74%



Affordability

Alabama

FOUR-YEAR

FOUNDATIONAL

TWO-YEAR

LEADING

Quality post-high school programs should be within everyone's financial reach, allowing for equitable opportunities for success. The Affordability measure is based on how many hours a week the average student would need to work to cover the in-state net price (total cost of attendance minus any grants and scholarships), how many hours a student from a low-income family would need to work to cover their typical in-state net price, and the percentage of students that complete their degree on time – a critical factor in the cost of a degree.

Student hours of work needed	Four-year	Two-year		
Average student hours of work needed	FOUNDATIONAL 53 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$17,554	LEADING 9 hours per week Average annual net price, two-year institutions: \$5,987		
Low-income student hours of work needed	FOUNDATIONAL 42 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$14,570	LEADING 6 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, two-year institutions: \$5,257		
CATEGORY KEY	● Leading <10 hrs	● Advanced 10 to <20 hrs	● Developing 20 to <30 hrs	● Foundational ≥30 hrs

On-time completion rate		Four-year		
On-time completion rate	DEVELOPING			
	41%			
CATEGORY KEY	Leading ≥65%	Advanced 50% to <65%	Developing 35% to <50%	Foundational <35%



Work-Based Learning

Alabama

FOUR-YEAR

DEVELOPING

TWO-YEAR

UNAVAILABLE

All students should have access to quality work-based learning experiences, such as paid internships and apprenticeships, that are linked to higher earnings, greater job satisfaction, and lower underemployment. The Work-Based Learning measure is based on the percentage of two-year students and four-year senior students who reported participating in at least one of the following types of paid experiences: paid internship, paid apprenticeship, paid co-op, paid practicum, or paid undergraduate research experience.

Quality Work-Based Learning	Four-year	Two-year
Percentage of students at public institutions who participated in at least one of five types of quality paid work-based learning experiences	38% DEVELOPING Paid internship participation: 33% Percentage of students who participated in at least one of the five types of experiences (paid or unpaid): 71%	UNAVAILABLE

CATEGORY KEY

When the margin of error crosses a category threshold, states are given a combined category.

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
50% to <75%

● **Developing**
25% to <50%

● **Foundational**
<25%

National results	Four-year	Two-year
Any quality paid work-based learning experience	43%	17%
Paid internship	37%	14%
Any work-based learning experience (paid or unpaid)	72%	33%



In addition to student self-reporting of apprenticeship participation, states have other sources of information on participation in registered apprenticeships via the U.S. Department of Labor. In Alabama, **0.18 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **4,339 apprentices**. Across the country, this number ranges from 0.9 percent (Hawaii) to 0.12 percent (Oklahoma). In countries with leading apprenticeship systems, such as Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and England, apprentices constitute about 2.5–3.0 percent of the labor force, so all states in the U.S. have substantial room for improvement.



Employer Alignment

DEVELOPING

Alabama

Students should have access to programs that lead to quality jobs and mobility, and employers should assess and advance individuals based on skills and experiences, not just degrees. The Employer Alignment measure is based on the percentage of terminal bachelor's degree holders aged 25–34 employed in a college-level job as well as the supply/demand ratio for a variety of high-demand, high-wage jobs in each state.

College-level employment

The percentage of bachelor's degree graduates who are employed in college-level positions

DEVELOPING

Supply/demand ratio

The overall ratio: the average of the entry-level supply/demand ratios for these nine opportunity occupational groups

FOUNDATIONAL

Information technology and business

Data analytics

LEADING

Finance and accounting professionals

ADVANCED

Finance and accounting support

FOUNDATIONAL

Information and cybersecurity

LEADING

Software development and engineering

LEADING

Health care

Health care technicians and technologists

FOUNDATIONAL

Nursing

FOUNDATIONAL

Manufacturing and engineering

Engineering

ADVANCED

Manufacturing/Trades technicians and technologists

FOUNDATIONAL

CATEGORY KEY

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
60% to <75%

● **Developing**
50% to <60%

● **Foundational**
<50%