



MASSACHUSETTS

STATE SUMMARY
2025

Massachusetts 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

71%



State
Opportunity
Index

strada

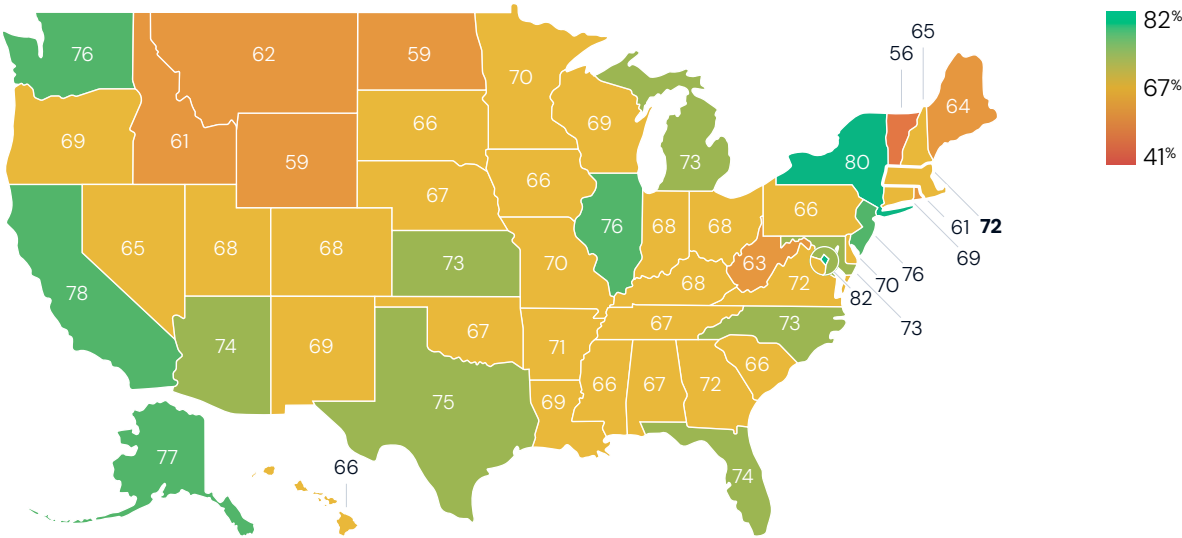
Positive ROI

Massachusetts

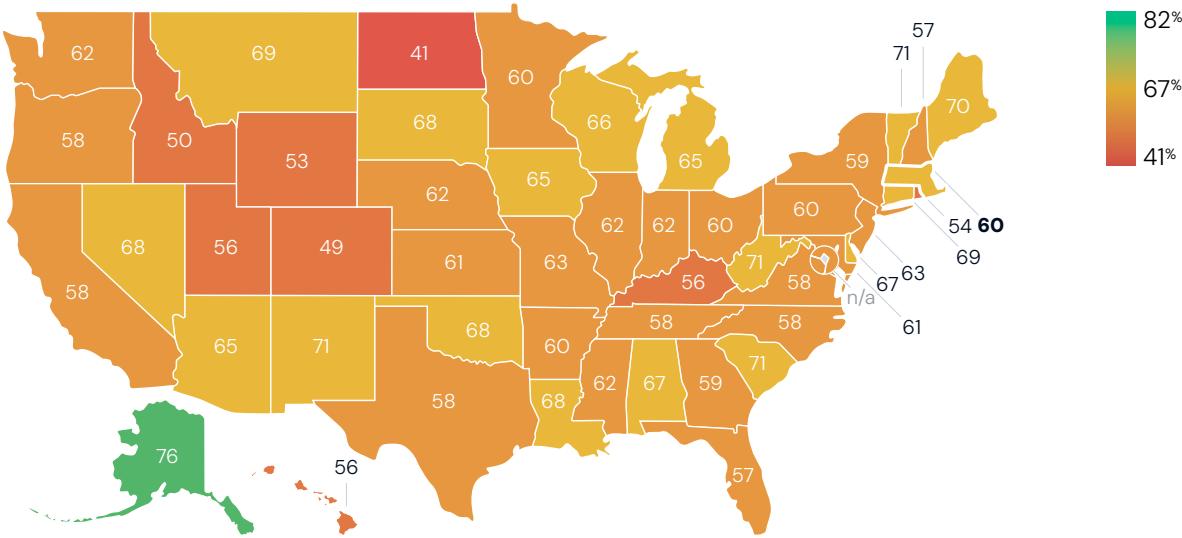
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	Massachusetts	U.S.
Overall	71%	70%
Bachelor's	72%	73%
Associate	60%	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	Massachusetts collects enrollment and credential outcome data for (i) college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials; and (ii) college-issued, noncredit nondegree credentials. Additionally, the state collects course data from noncredit, nondegree programs at community colleges. Massachusetts links college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials to employment outcomes.	ADVANCED
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	Massachusetts collects pay rate (hours worked) and work location but does not collect occupation.	ADVANCED

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	Massachusetts integrates two key postsecondary education and employment datasets, including: (i) public four-year institutions to employment, and (ii) community colleges to employment. These employment outcomes are not publicly available as interactive reporting tools or open data files but are made available to authorized institution and agency staff. In addition, employment and earnings for public college graduates will be made publicly available by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in the future.	DEVELOPING
4 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after high school completion and over time	Massachusetts, through its Employment and Earnings of High School Graduates , has a public interactive reporting tool for high school-to-employment outcomes, with disaggregation by race/ethnicity, gender, family income or economically disadvantaged status, and other characteristics.	LEADING
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	Massachusetts partners with PSEO (25–49% graduate coverage) and State Wage Interchange System.	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



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	Massachusetts has open data files containing education-to-employment outcomes for high school graduates. While not addressing the criteria of the element, Massachusetts has open data files containing metrics such as typical education attainment and wages by occupation. The data are available at the state level and by workforce region.	FOUNDATIONAL
7 Publishes robust, timely, and easily understandable interactive resources informing education-to-opportunity decision-making by learners, families, and institutions	Massachusetts has a public interactive dashboard containing various education-to-opportunity statistics such as completion, number employed, and wages by district and industry for high school graduates, with disaggregation by gender, race/ethnicity, family income/economically disadvantaged status, and other characteristics.	FOUNDATIONAL
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	Massachusetts provides researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets upon execution of a memorandum of understanding. Each agency of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education as well as the Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub have identified and published their research priorities . Massachusetts encourages research proposals to align with agency research agendas.	LEADING

(...) 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	While not a statewide effort, Bristol Community College is laying the foundation for implementing a scalable approach to interoperable systems that empowers individuals to use their own verified education and employment achievements to navigate lifelong learning pathways. Through an LER Accelerator grant award , Bristol Community College will integrate technology components and systems to ensure student achievements are accurately categorized in digital resumes, enhancing employability and creating a replicable model for credential interoperability.	FOUNDATIONAL
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 Department of Higher Education , the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education , and the Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub all produce education-to-employment resources, reports, and tools.	DEVELOPING

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



FOUR-YEAR

FOUNDATIONAL

TWO-YEAR

ADVANCED

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.		24% 	49% 
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.		22% 	30% 
Education-to-career paths that might be a good fit for student's strengths and interests		29%	43%
Job opportunities that a particular education program could lead to		26%	30%
Potential earnings in different careers related to student's education program		18%	21%
Career outcomes of students from their own institution		15%	25%
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.		66% 	68% 
Setting education and career goals and developing a plan to achieve these goals		66%	70%
Identifying and overcoming barriers		67%	66%
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

Massachusetts

FOUR-YEAR

DEVELOPING

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 31 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$19,087	LEADING 6 hours per week Average annual net price, two-year institutions: \$8,206		
Low-income student hours of work needed	ADVANCED 14 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$11,987	LEADING 2 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, two-year institutions: \$6,607		
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	ADVANCED			
	52%			
CATEGORY KEY	Leading ≥65%	Advanced 50% to <65%	Developing 35% to <50%	Foundational <35%



Work-Based Learning

Massachusetts

FOUR-YEAR

DEV./ADV.

TWO-YEAR

FND./DEV.

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	50% DEV./ADV. Paid internship participation: 44% Percentage of students who participated in at least one of the five types of experiences (paid or unpaid): 78%	18% FND./DEV. Paid internship participation: 11% Percentage of students who participated in at least one of the five types of experiences (paid or unpaid): 32%

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 Massachusetts, **0.26 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **9,978 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

Massachusetts

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

ADVANCED

Supply/demand ratio

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

DEVELOPING

Information technology and business

Data analytics

LEADING

Finance and accounting professionals

DEVELOPING

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

LEADING

Manufacturing/Trades technicians and technologists

DEVELOPING

CATEGORY KEY

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
60% to <75%

● **Developing**
50% to <60%

● **Foundational**
<50%