

State Opportunity Index



MISSISSIPPI

STATE SUMMARY
2025

Mississippi 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

64%



**State
Opportunity
Index**

strada

Learn more at strada.org/state-opportunity-index

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.

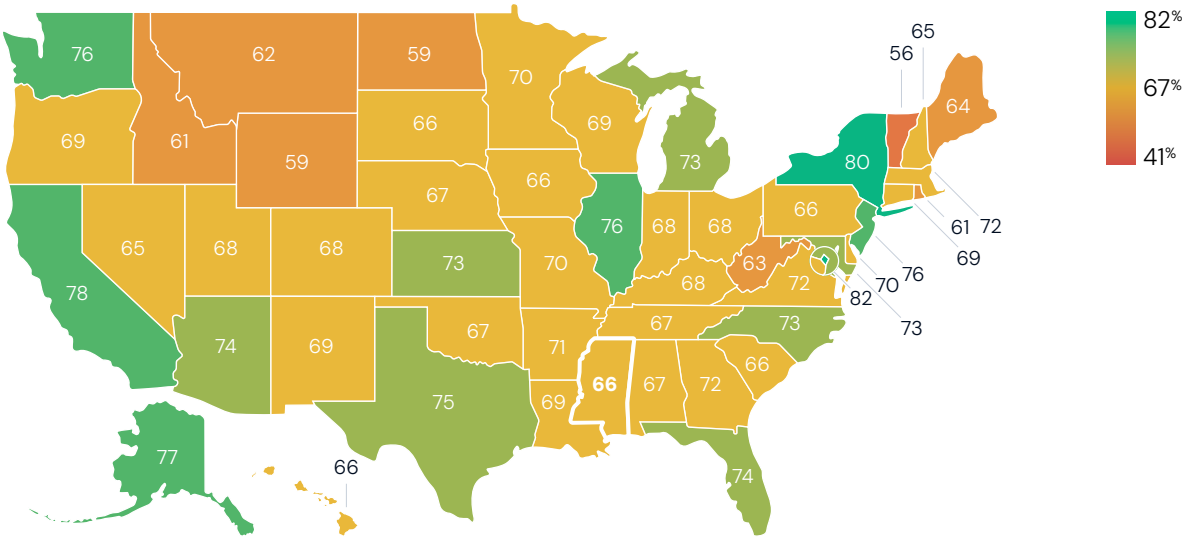
Positive ROI

Mississippi

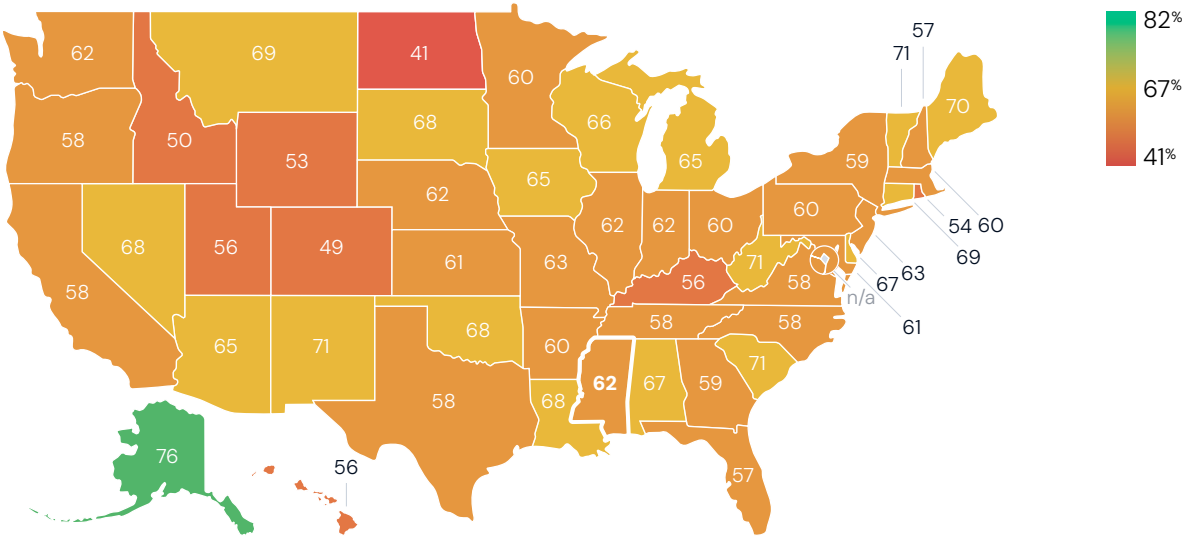
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	Mississippi	U.S.
Overall	64%	70%
Bachelor's	66%	73%
Associate	62%	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	Mississippi collects student- and program-level data across nondegree and noncredit postsecondary education and training programs, including: (i) college-issued, for-credit, nondegree credentials; (ii) college-issued, noncredit nondegree credentials; (iii) WIOA-eligible training providers; (iv) occupational licensure; and (v) other third-party credentials, including industry certifications and registered apprenticeships. The state links employment outcomes to all these nondegree and noncredit credentials.	LEADING
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	Mississippi collects occupation (job title and SOC), pay rate (hours worked and hourly wage), work location, and worker type (full-time/part-time status, hourly, salaried, or commissioned) on a voluntary basis.	LEADING

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	Mississippi has robust integration and publication of public postsecondary education and training and employment data, including: (i) public four-year institutions to employment, (ii) community colleges to employment, and (iii) WIOA-eligible training providers to employment. Integrated data are published as a report with disaggregation by race/ethnicity and gender. Employment outcomes for public four-year institutions and community colleges , including college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials, are also available as a downloadable dataset and public interactive reporting tool. WIOA-eligible training providers-to-employment data are published through the Mississippi Department of Employment Services' Eligible Training Provider System . Mississippi does not integrate and publish data on private four-year institutions to employment.	ADVANCED
4 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after high school completion and over time	Mississippi's SLDS integrates information on all K-12 learners' earnings and employment outcomes after graduation, including those who do not immediately enter postsecondary education. Employment outcomes are available as reports and a public interactive reporting tool through the Mississippi Department of Education's Mississippi Report Card . While available in the underlying data, employment outcomes are not published with disaggregation with race/ethnicity, gender, or family income or economically disadvantaged status.	ADVANCED
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	Mississippi partners with Multi-State Data Collaborative 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	Mississippi has downloadable datasets from public interactive reporting tools containing education-to-employment outcomes for (i) public four-year institutions ; and (ii) community colleges . While not meeting the criteria for the element, Mississippi's SLDS can provide customized aggregate data files containing information on postsecondary education and training completers, related occupations, jobs advertised, and advertised job skills.	ADVANCED
7 Publishes robust, timely, and easily understandable interactive resources informing education-to-opportunity decision-making by learners, families, and institutions	Mississippi has interactive resources containing employment outcomes for (i) public four-year institutions ; and (ii) community colleges .	ADVANCED
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	Mississippi State University's National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center is contracted with Mississippi's SLDS Governing Board to provide research and analysis services to fulfill approved requests. The request and review process is not clearly documented online.	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	Mississippi funds and maintains the Mississippi Works portal where users can document their educational achievements, industry credentials, and employment experiences. This system provides real-time job-matching services and individual referrals to public education programs and other social resources.	DEVELOPING
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 National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC) at Mississippi State University is the state's longitudinal data system and statutorily responsible for generating education-to-employment insights. It integrates individual-level education and employment data, produces reports on labor market supply/demand , and maintains interactive dashboards on postsecondary employment outcomes . Thanks to the SLDS Governing Board, NSPARC maintains partnerships with higher education, workforce development, and economic development agencies and/or stakeholders.	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



Quality Coaching

Mississippi

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.		39% 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		26%	
Job opportunities that a particular education program could lead to		27%	
Potential earnings in different careers related to student's education program		16%	
Career outcomes of students from their own institution		15%	
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		71%	
Identifying and overcoming barriers		76%	
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

Mississippi

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 40 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$14,413	LEADING 7 hours per week Average annual net price, two-year institutions: \$5,412		
Low-income student hours of work needed	FOUNDATIONAL 32 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$12,194	LEADING 4 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, two-year institutions: \$4,616		
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

Mississippi

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	36% DEVELOPING Paid internship participation: 30% Percentage of students who participated in at least one of the five types of experiences (paid or unpaid): 69%	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 Mississippi, **0.28 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **3,612 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

Mississippi

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

ADVANCED

Information technology and business

Data analytics

LEADING

Finance and accounting professionals

LEADING

Finance and accounting support

FOUNDATIONAL

Information and cybersecurity

LEADING

Software development and engineering

LEADING

Health care

Health care technicians and technologists

ADVANCED

Nursing

DEVELOPING

Manufacturing and engineering

Engineering

LEADING

Manufacturing/Trades technicians and technologists

FOUNDATIONAL

CATEGORY KEY

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
60% to <75%

● **Developing**
50% to <60%

● **Foundational**
<50%