



SOUTH DAKOTA

STATE SUMMARY
2025

South Dakota 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

66%



State
Opportunity
Index

strada

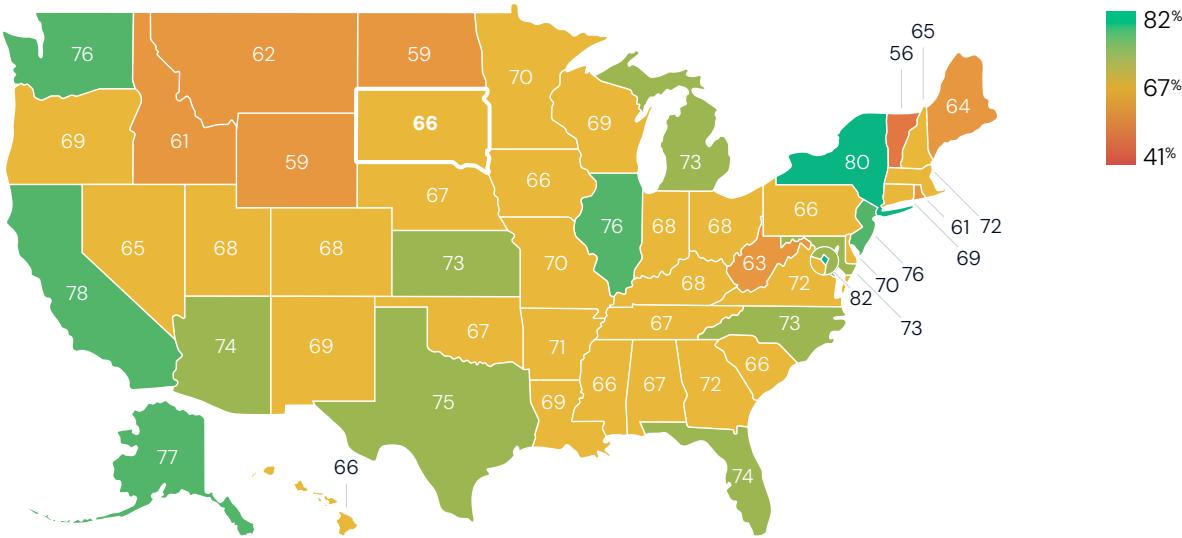
Positive ROI

South Dakota

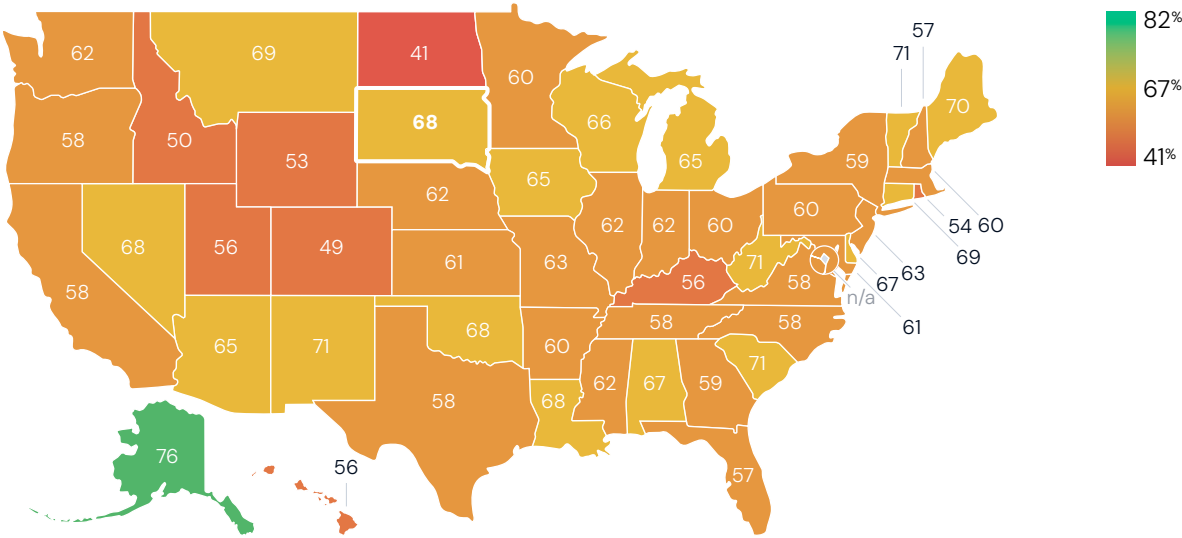
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	South Dakota	U.S.
Overall	66%	70%
Bachelor's	66%	73%
Associate	68%	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	South Dakota collects enrollment and credential outcome data from: (i) college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials; and (ii) WIOA-eligible training providers. The state links these nondegree credentials to employment outcomes.	DEVELOPING
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	South Dakota 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	South Dakota has integrated postsecondary education and employment data for: (i) public four-year institutions; (ii) public two-year technical colleges; and (iii) college-issued, for-credit, nondegree credentials available through the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation's annual Graduate Outcomes Job Placement Report . The state publishes integrated WIOA-eligible training provider-to-employment data as an interactive tool through South Dakota Works .	ADVANCED
4 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after high school completion and over time	Strada's research did not identify evidence 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	South Dakota partners with PSEO (>75% 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	Strada's research did not identify evidence 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	South Dakota publishes interactive resources containing education-to-employment statistics for WIOA-eligible training providers .	DEVELOPING
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	South Dakota provides customized postsecondary employment and wage outcomes data upon request. The request and review process is not clearly documented.	DEVELOPING

(::) 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	Strada's research did not identify evidence of the state demonstrating this element.	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 Labor Market Information Center at the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation publishes reports on postsecondary employment outcomes and supply/demand labor market attributes.	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



Quality Coaching

South Dakota

FOUR-YEAR

UNAVAILABLE

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.	UNAVAILABLE	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.	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE
Education-to-career paths that might be a good fit for student's strengths and interests		
Job opportunities that a particular education program could lead to		
Potential earnings in different careers related to student's education program		
Career outcomes of students from their own institution		
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.	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE
Setting education and career goals and developing a plan to achieve these goals		
Identifying and overcoming barriers		
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

South Dakota

FOUR-YEAR

FOUNDATIONAL

TWO-YEAR

DEVELOPING

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 38 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$18,660	DEVELOPING 27 hours per week Average annual net price, two-year institutions: \$14,598		
Low-income student hours of work needed	DEVELOPING 27 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$14,471	ADVANCED 19 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, two-year institutions: \$11,805		
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			
	39%			
CATEGORY KEY	Leading ≥65%	Advanced 50% to <65%	Developing 35% to <50%	Foundational <35%



Work-Based Learning

South Dakota

FOUR-YEAR

UNAVAILABLE

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	UNAVAILABLE	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 South Dakota, **0.30 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **1,461 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

FOUNDATIONAL

South Dakota

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

FOUNDATIONAL

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

FOUNDATIONAL

CATEGORY KEY

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
60% to <75%

● **Developing**
50% to <60%

● **Foundational**
<50%