

State Opportunity Index



UTAH

STATE SUMMARY
2025

Utah 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

65%



State
Opportunity
Index

strada

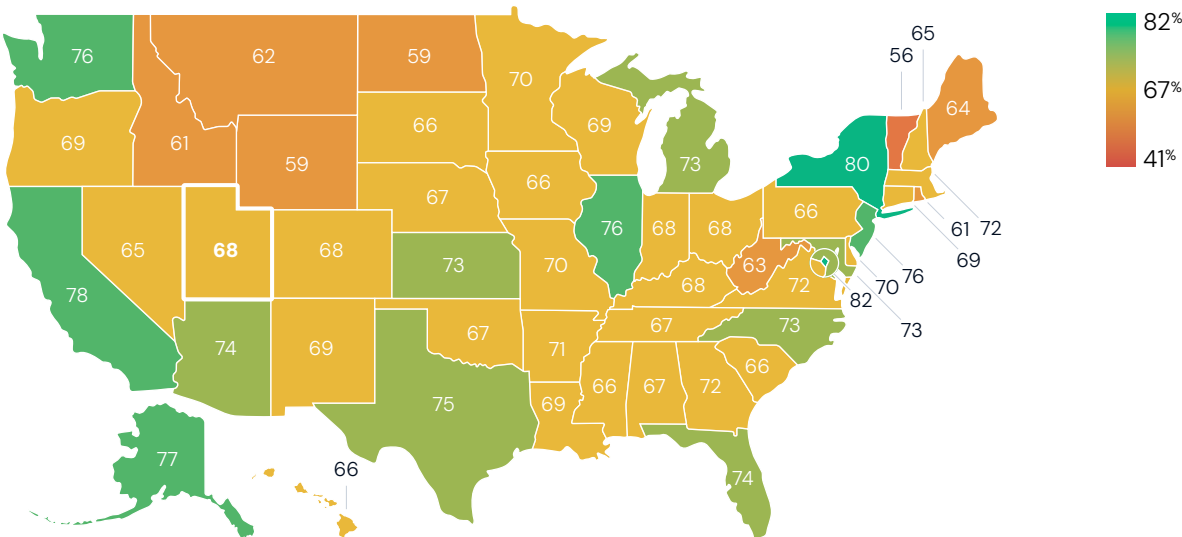
Positive ROI

Utah

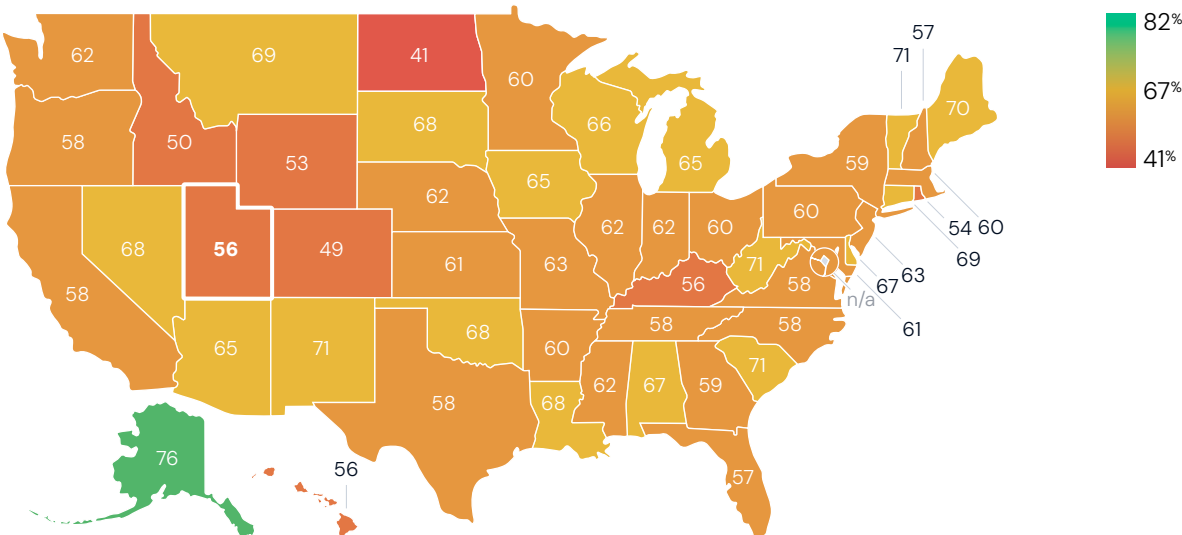
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	Utah	U.S.
Overall	65%	70%
Bachelor's	68%	73%
Associate	56%	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	Utah has a robust collection of enrollment and credential outcome data from nondegree and noncredit programs. The state collects: (i) college-issued, for-credit nondegree certificates; (ii) college-issued, noncredit nondegree credentials through occupational training; (iii) WIOA-eligible training providers; and (iv) other third-party credentials, namely apprenticeships. Utah is currently expanding its nondegree and noncredit collections to include occupational licensure. Through the Utah State Higher Education Graduate Workforce Outcomes portal , the state publishes employment outcomes for college-issued, for-credit, nondegree credentials.	LEADING
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	Utah 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	Utah has integrated and published several key types of postsecondary education and training and employment data, including: (i) public four-year institutions to employment, (ii) community and technical colleges to employment, and (iii) WIOA-eligible training providers to employment. Integrated data for public four-year institutions, community colleges, technical colleges, and college-issued, for-credit nondegree credentials to employment are available as a downloadable dataset and a public interactive reporting tool through the Utah State Higher Education Graduate Workforce Outcomes site . These employment outcomes are not currently disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and family income or economically disadvantaged status, but career and technical education graduates can be disaggregated from all other graduates. Utah publishes WIOA-eligible training providers-to-employment data as a public interactive reporting tool through the Utah training provider search site . The state 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	Utah integrates information on learners' earnings and employment for Utah public high school graduates with disabilities. The state publishes these employment outcomes as an interactive reporting tool but does not disaggregate by 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	Utah partners with PSEO (50–75% 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	Utah has downloadable data tables from an interactive reporting tool containing education-to-employment outcomes by program for: (i) public four-year institutions; and (ii) community colleges.	ADVANCED
7 Publishes robust, timely, and easily understandable interactive resources informing education-to-opportunity decision-making by learners, families, and institutions	Utah has a dashboard with education-to-employment outcomes by program for: (i) public four-year institutions; (ii) community colleges; and (iii) college-issued nondegree certificates. Utah has another dashboard showing enrollment by institution, with disaggregation by race/ethnicity, gender, and age.	LEADING
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	Upon request , the Utah Data Research Center affords researchers access to individual-level, de-identified, linked education-to-employment. The system has published a research agenda to guide internal and external research products data.	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	The Utah Division of Technology Services is implementing the technology, policies, and processes for state agencies to issue verified digital credentials and Utahns to easily demonstrate their qualifications and verify their identity online.	ADVANCED
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	Although not formally and exclusively dedicated to the topic, the Utah Data Research Center (UDRC) maintains ready access to integrated E2E data and produces original research in the E2E domain. UDRC produces reports on postsecondary employment outcomes but does not report on supply/demand labor market attributes. There is evidence of sustainable funding, governance, and dedicated staffing as well as partnerships with higher education and workforce development agencies. In addition, there exist several quasi-governmental organizations that conduct research in this domain; an example would be the Kem C. Gardner Institute located at the University of Utah.	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

Utah

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.		46% DEV./ADV.	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.		20% FOUNDATIONAL	UNAVAILABLE
Education-to-career paths that might be a good fit for student's strengths and interests		23%	
Job opportunities that a particular education program could lead to		26%	
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.		69% ADVANCED	UNAVAILABLE
Setting education and career goals and developing a plan to achieve these goals		69%	
Identifying and overcoming barriers		69%	
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

Utah

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	DEVELOPING 24 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$11,953	ADVANCED 15 hours per week Average annual net price, two-year institutions: \$9,248		
Low-income student hours of work needed	ADVANCED 13 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$8,430	LEADING 9 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, two-year institutions: \$7,371		
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		FOUNDATIONAL			
		28%			
CATEGORY KEY		● Leading ≥65%	● Advanced 50% to <65%	● Developing 35% to <50%	● Foundational <35%



Work-Based Learning

Utah

FOUR-YEAR

DEV./ADV.

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	46% DEV./ADV. Paid internship participation: 39% Percentage of students who participated in at least one of the five types of experiences (paid or unpaid): 76%	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 Utah, **0.27 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **4,867 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

Utah

ADVANCED

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

ADVANCED

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

ADVANCED

Nursing

LEADING

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%