



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

STATE SUMMARY
2025

District of Columbia 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

82%

	Clear Outcomes	DEVELOPING	
	Quality Coaching	FOUR-YEAR	UNAVAILABLE
		TWO-YEAR	N/A
	Affordability	FOUR-YEAR	FOUNDATIONAL
		TWO-YEAR	N/A
	Work-Based Learning	FOUR-YEAR	UNAVAILABLE
		TWO-YEAR	N/A
	Employer Alignment	DEVELOPING	

State
Opportunity
Index

strada

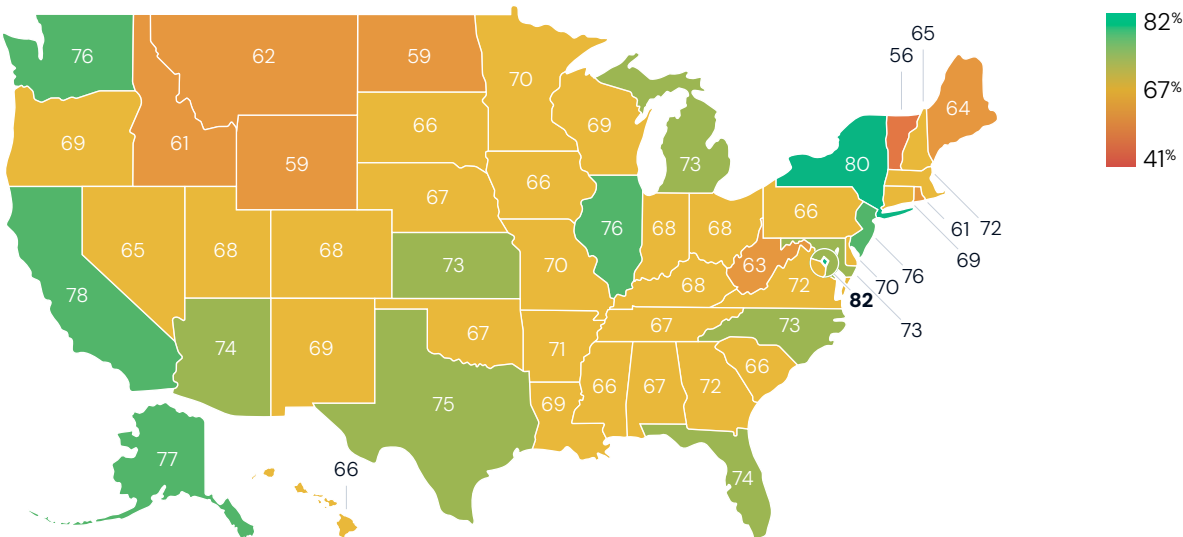
Positive ROI

District of Columbia

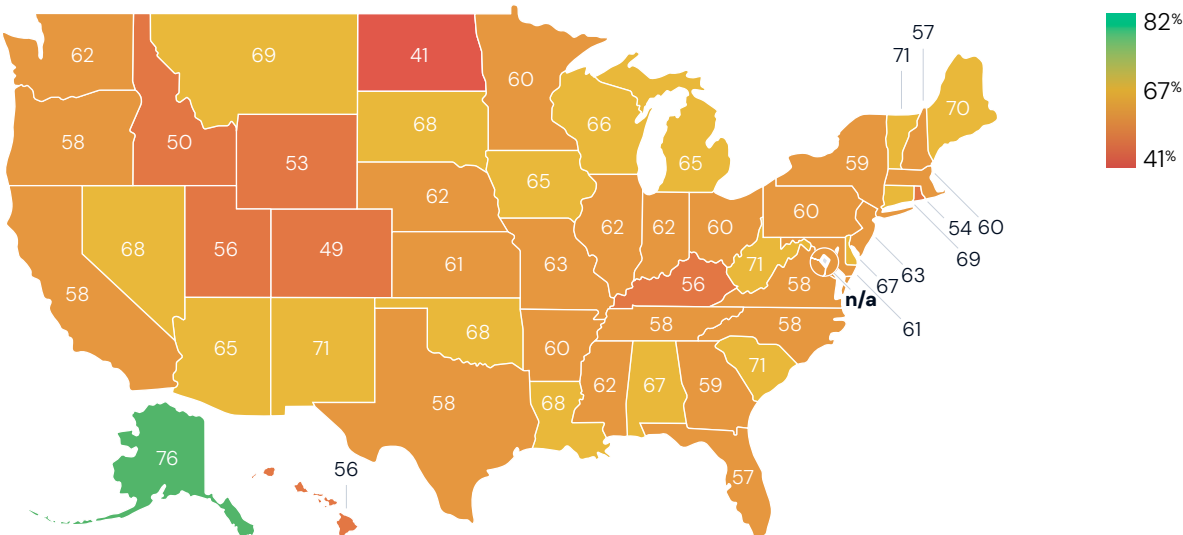
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	D.C.	U.S.
Overall	82%	70%
Bachelor's	82%	73%
Associate	N/A	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



According to the College Scorecard, the District of Columbia does not have any public institutions that predominantly award associate degrees or certificates. The only public institution in the district, the University of the District of Columbia, is classified by the College Scorecard as predominantly awarding bachelor's 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	The District of Columbia collects enrollment and credential outcome data for (i) occupational licensure; and (ii) other third-party nondegree credentials, including industry certifications through the DC Expenditure Guide .	DEVELOPING
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	The District of Columbia collects pay rate (hours worked) but does not collect occupation or work location.	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	The District of Columbia's SLDS, the Office of Education Through Employment Pathways, will report longitudinal postsecondary education and employment outcomes in fall 2025.	DEVELOPING
4 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after high school completion and over time	The Office of Education Through Employment Pathways will report longitudinal secondary education and employment outcomes in fall 2025.	DEVELOPING
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	The District of Columbia partners with PSEO (<25% graduate coverage), Multi-State Data Collaborative, and State Wage Interchange System.	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	While not addressing the criteria for this element, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education publishes downloadable data about college and career readiness on the DC School Report Card .	FOUNDATIONAL
7 Publishes robust, timely, and easily understandable interactive resources informing education-to-opportunity decision-making by learners, families, and institutions	The District of Columbia has public interactive resources containing education-to-opportunity statistics for the public four-year institution. While not addressing the criteria for this element, the District also publishes the Career Coach DC website, which makes local and national LMI data and information about education and training programs in the DC region available to teachers, program administrators, students, parents, and the general public. The Labor Market Awareness Dashboard provides users with important education and labor market data, including educational attainment, the number of degrees and certificates awarded in major occupations, the share of jobs by educational requirement, and high-demand technical skills that employers are looking for in the District of Columbia.	ADVANCED
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	The Office of Education Through Employment Pathways is developing a process for external researchers to request access to linked education-to-employment data for projects aligned with the office's research agenda . Researchers can currently request individual-level education data files via the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). OSSE responds to requests for individual or aggregate data on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with its Data Request Policy, through its Data Request Portal.	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	No evidence was identified through the state's response or in Strada's research 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 District of Columbia Office of Education Through Employment Pathways maintains access to integrated education-to-employment data and focuses on understanding the impact of education and workforce programs on future economic outcomes. The Office has dedicated capacity focused on generating insights in order to inform policymaking, program implementation, and resource allocation. The Office has evidence of sustainable governance, including partnerships with higher education and workforce 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

District of Columbia

FOUR-YEAR

UNAVAILABLE

TWO-YEAR

N/A

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	N/A		
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	N/A		
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	N/A		
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

District of Columbia

FOUR-YEAR

FOUNDATIONAL

TWO-YEAR

N/A

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 22 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$14,144	N/A
Low-income student hours of work needed	DEVELOPING 21 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$13,708	N/A

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

District of Columbia

FOUR-YEAR

UNAVAILABLE

TWO-YEAR

N/A

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	N/A

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 the District of Columbia, **0.47 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **1,931 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

District of Columbia

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

FOUNDATIONAL

Information technology and business

Data analytics

FOUNDATIONAL

Finance and accounting professionals

FOUNDATIONAL

Finance and accounting support

DEVELOPING

Information and cybersecurity

FOUNDATIONAL

Software development and engineering

ADVANCED

Health care

Health care technicians and technologists

FOUNDATIONAL

Nursing

FOUNDATIONAL

Manufacturing and engineering

Engineering

ADVANCED

Manufacturing/Trades technicians and technologists

DEVELOPING

CATEGORY KEY

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
60% to <75%

● **Developing**
50% to <60%

● **Foundational**
<50%