



WEST VIRGINIA

STATE SUMMARY
2025

West Virginia 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

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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.

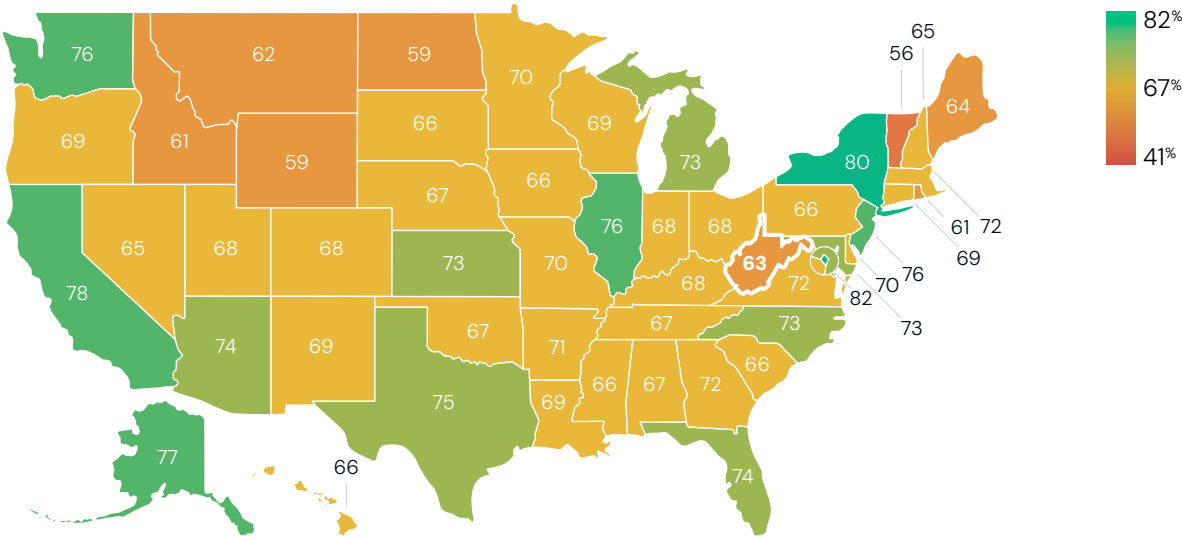
Positive ROI

West Virginia

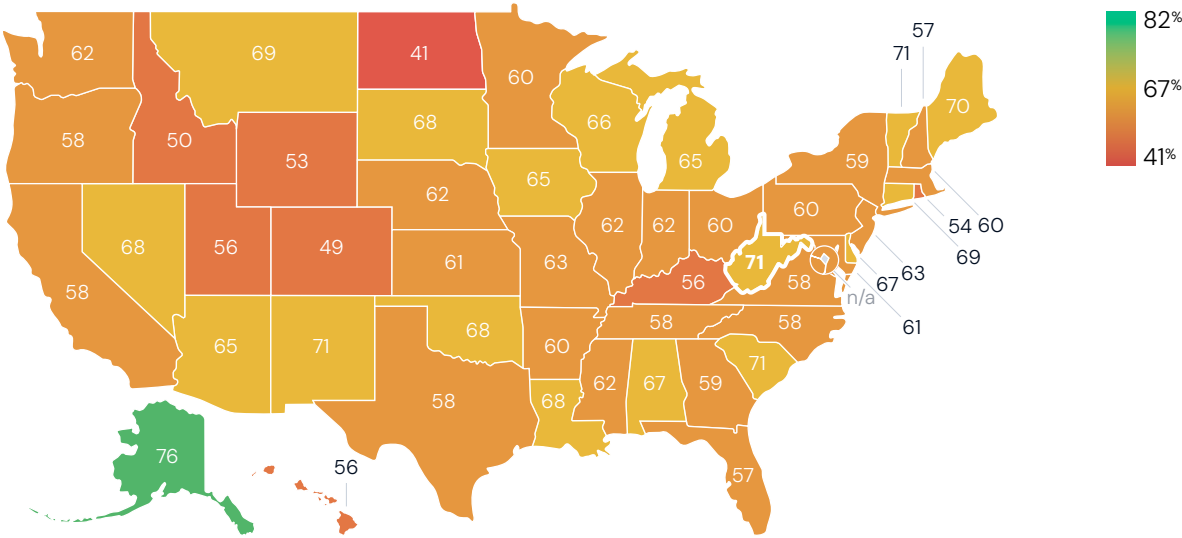
The positive ROI value for each state represents the estimated percentage of public college graduates whose earnings premium over high school graduates is enough to repay their total cost of a degree within 10 years.

	West Virginia	U.S.
Overall	66%	70%
Bachelor's	63%	73%
Associate	71%	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	West Virginia collects enrollment and credential outcome data from both: (i) college-issued for-credit; and (ii) college-issued, noncredit nondegree credentials. The state links these for-credit nondegree credentials to employment outcomes.	ADVANCED
2 Examines earnings by occupation, pay rate, and work location	In 2022, West Virginia enacted State Bill 548 to collect job title and work location, but the legislation does not include pay rate. Statewide collection commenced in January 2024, and the state is now positioned to use the data in education-to-employment analysis.	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	West Virginia integrates many key postsecondary education and employment data, including: (i) public four-year institutions to employment, and (ii) community colleges to employment. Employment outcomes for public four-year institutions, community colleges, and nondegree credentials are published through an interactive reporting tool from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, with disaggregation by race/ethnicity and gender. West Virginia does not currently integrate and publish data on private four-year institutions or WIOA-eligible training providers to employment.	ADVANCED
4 Integrates and delivers information on learner's earnings and employment after high school completion and over time	West Virginia has a public interactive reporting tool for high school-to-employment outcomes with disaggregation by race/ethnicity and gender.	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	West Virginia partners with PSEO (25–49% 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
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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, West Virginia has a process for requesting aggregate education-to-opportunity statistics.	FOUNDATIONAL
7 Publishes robust, timely, and easily understandable interactive resources informing education-to-opportunity decision-making by learners, families, and institutions	West Virginia has a dashboard containing education-to-employment outcomes for: (i) public four-year institutions; (ii) community colleges; (iii) nondegree credentials; and (iv) high schools.	LEADING
8 Gives researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets	West Virginia provides researchers access to individual-level matched education-to-opportunity datasets, upon request .	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	In 2024, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) launched Credential WV, an initiative to increase microcredential programs across the state's public four- and two-year institutions. The initiative both embeds microcredential programs into existing academic programs and expands opportunities for students to develop industry-recognized skills. These targeted, stackable credentials meet the evolving demands of the state's labor market. To further build from this work, West Virginia received two LER Accelerator grants : (i) HEPC will shift general education from a course-based to a competency-driven model, developing a statewide skills taxonomy and validation system, with plans to scale to four-year institutions; and (ii) Marshall University will work toward boosting the adoption of LERs in postsecondary education, which can empower learners to seamlessly showcase their skills and achievements while facilitating transparent and efficient pathways to employment and integrate credit and noncredit learning experiences to develop flexible credentialing models and quality assurance frameworks, enhancing learner employability and creating a more transparent education-to-workforce ecosystem.	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 West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) maintains the SLDS, ensuring ready access to integrated education-to-employment data for analysis. HEPC leverages this integrated data and dedicated expertise to produce reports on postsecondary employment outcomes. The Commission partners with Workforce West Virginia.	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



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.		32% 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.		22% FOUNDATIONAL	UNAVAILABLE
Education-to-career paths that might be a good fit for student's strengths and interests		24%	
Job opportunities that a particular education program could lead to		26%	
Potential earnings in different careers related to student's education program		20%	
Career outcomes of students from their own institution		17%	
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.		73% ADV./LEAD.	UNAVAILABLE
Setting education and career goals and developing a plan to achieve these goals		73%	
Identifying and overcoming barriers		74%	
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

West Virginia

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 23 hours per week Average annual net price, four-year institutions: \$11,109	LEADING 5 hours per week Average annual net price, two-year institutions: \$5,762		
Low-income student hours of work needed	ADVANCED 15 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, four-year institutions: \$8,684	LEADING 3 hours per week Average annual net price for low-income students, two-year institutions: \$5,014		
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 38%
CATEGORY KEY	Leading ≥65% Advanced 50% to <65% Developing 35% to <50% Foundational <35%



Work-Based Learning

West Virginia

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	40% DEVELOPING Paid internship participation: 35% 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 West Virginia, **0.50 percent** of the state labor force is made up of active apprentices, for a total of **3,888 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

West Virginia

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

ADVANCED

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

ADVANCED

Manufacturing/Trades technicians and technologists

FOUNDATIONAL

CATEGORY KEY

● **Leading**
≥75%

● **Advanced**
60% to <75%

● **Developing**
50% to <60%

● **Foundational**
<50%