

In 2011, the Washington Roundtable began tracking the Benchmarks for a Better Washington, a discrete set of metrics that speak to the heart of what constitutes a world class state: innovation, quality education, efficient transportation, and a healthy business climate. We use independent, 50-state data to determine where Washington ranks, to measure changes in performance, and to understand where there is opportunity for improvement.

Our goal: Make Washington a top 10 state for quality of life and innovation while ensuring it is not one of the 10 most expensive states in which to do business. Achieving that goal demands continuous evaluation and improvement with a long-term focus.

The Benchmarks chart Washington's progress. [See how our state ranks.](#)

GROWTH & INNOVATION

4th Private Sector Job Creation

Washington experienced 3.1% year-over-year job growth in the private sector from Nov. 2014 to Nov. 2015.

Previous ranking: 4th

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



5th Patent Generation

6,448 utility patents were issued to inventors in Washington state in 2014.

Previous ranking: 5th

Source: U.S. Patent & Trademark Office



EDUCATION

7th Student Achievement in Math

39% of Washington's 8th graders scored at or above proficient on the nation's math exam in 2015.

Previous ranking: 6th ▼

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress



TRANSPORTATION

COST OF BUSINESS

1st Electricity Rates

Washington has the lowest commercial and industrial electricity rates in the nation at 6.42 cents per kilowatt hour.

Previous ranking: 1st

Source: Washington State Economic Climate Study



18th Student Achievement in Science

36% of Washington's 8th graders scored at or above proficient on the nation's science exam in 2011.

Previous ranking: 15th ▼

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress



38th High School Graduation Rate

78.2% of Washington's Class of 2014 graduated from high school on time.

Previous ranking: 40th ▲

Source: U.S. Department of Education



39th Bachelor's Degrees Awarded

Washington awarded 4.6 bachelor's degrees for every 1,000 residents in 2013.

Previous ranking: 38th ▼

Source: U.S. Department of Education



31st Bridge Conditions

21.1% of Washington's bridges are functionally obsolete; 4.7% are structurally deficient.

Previous ranking: 32nd ▲

Source: Federal Highway Administration



39th Road Conditions

50% of Washington's roadways are rated in good or very good condition.

Previous ranking: 36th ▼

Source: Federal Highway Administration



40th Commute Time

The average statewide commute time has risen to 26.8 minutes.

Previous ranking: 38th ▼

Source: American Community Survey



38th Business Tax Burden

Businesses pay 5.4% of the total state and local tax burden as a percentage of gross state product.

Previous ranking: 32nd ▼

Source: Council on State Taxation



BOTTOM 10 STATES

45th Unemployment Insurance Tax Rates

Washington's average UI tax rate was \$698 in 2014, markedly higher than the national average.

Previous ranking: 44th ▼

Source: U.S. Department of Labor



50th Workers' Compensation

At \$827 per covered worker in 2013, Washington was the most expensive state in the nation for workers' compensation benefits paid.

Previous ranking: 50th

Source: National Academy of Social Science

