

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.** The Benchmarks tell us where Washington stands today and remind us that hard work is needed to catch up, keep up, and move ahead. An update based on data available in the spring of 2017:

### GROWTH & INNOVATION

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Private Sector Job Growth

Washington experienced 3.2% year-over-year job growth in the private sector from Dec. 2015 to Dec. 2016.

Previous ranking: 4<sup>th</sup> ▲

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



#### 5<sup>th</sup> Patent Generation

6,378 utility patents were issued to inventors in Washington state in 2015.

Previous ranking: 5<sup>th</sup>

Source: U.S. Patent & Trademark Office



### EDUCATION

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Student Achievement in Math

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

Previous ranking: 7<sup>th</sup>

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress



### TRANSPORTATION

### COST OF BUSINESS

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Electricity Rates

Washington has the second lowest commercial and industrial electricity rates in the nation at 6.61 cents per kilowatt hour.

Previous ranking: 1<sup>st</sup> ▼

Source: Washington State Economic Climate Study



#### 16<sup>th</sup> Student Achievement in Science

38% of Washington's 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored at or above proficient on the nation's science exam in 2015.

Previous ranking: 19<sup>th</sup> ▲

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress



#### 33<sup>rd</sup> Bridge Conditions

25.9% of Washington's bridges are functionally obsolete; 4.8% are structurally deficient.

Previous ranking: 31<sup>st</sup> ▼

Source: Federal Highway Administration



#### 37<sup>th</sup> Road Conditions

52.7% of Washington's highways are rated in good or very good condition.

Previous ranking: 39<sup>th</sup> ▲

Source: Federal Highway Administration



#### 40<sup>th</sup> Commute Time

The average statewide commute time has risen to 27.1 minutes.

Previous ranking: 38<sup>th</sup> ▼

Source: American Community Survey



#### 41<sup>st</sup> High School Graduation Rate

78.2% of Washington's Class of 2015 graduated from high school on time.

Previous ranking: 38<sup>th</sup> ▼

Source: U.S. Department of Education



#### 42<sup>nd</sup> Bachelor's Degrees Awarded

Washington awarded 4.5 bachelor's degrees for every 1,000 residents in 2014.

Previous ranking: 39<sup>th</sup> ▼

Source: National Center for Education Statistics



#### 41<sup>st</sup> Business Tax Burden

Businesses pay 5.5% of the total state and local tax burden as a percentage of gross state product.

Previous ranking: 38<sup>th</sup> ▼

Source: Council on State Taxation



#### 45<sup>th</sup> Unemployment Insurance Tax Rates

Washington's average UI tax rate was \$632 in 2015, markedly higher than the national average.

Previous ranking: 45<sup>th</sup>

Source: U.S. Department of Labor



#### 50<sup>th</sup> Workers' Compensation

At \$825 per covered worker in 2014, Washington was the most expensive state in the nation for workers' compensation benefits paid.

Previous ranking: 50<sup>th</sup>

Source: National Academy of Social Science



## TOP 10 STATES

## BOTTOM 10 STATES