

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 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 2018:

GROWTH & INNOVATION

5th Private Sector Job Growth

Washington experienced 2.7% year-over-year job growth in the private sector from Dec. 2016 to Dec. 2017.

Previous ranking: 3rd ▼

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



5th Patent Generation

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

Previous ranking: 5th

Source: U.S. Patent & Trademark Office



EDUCATION

5th Student Achievement in Math

41% of Washington's 8th graders scored at or above proficient on the nation's math exam in 2017.

Previous ranking: 7th ▲

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress



16th Student Achievement in Science

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

Previous ranking: 19th ▲

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress



40th High School Graduation Rate

79.7% of Washington's Class of 2016 graduated from high school on time.

Previous ranking: 41st ▲

Source: U.S. Department of Education



TRANSPORTATION

9th Bridge Conditions

4.9% of Washington's bridges are structurally deficient.

Previous ranking: 7th ▼

Source: Federal Highway Administration



37th Road Conditions

52.4% of Washington's highways are rated in good or very good condition.

Previous ranking: 37th

Source: Federal Highway Administration



BUSINESS COSTS

3rd Electricity Rates

Washington has the third lowest commercial and industrial electricity rates in the nation at 6.8 cents per kilowatt hour.

Previous ranking: 2nd ▼

Source: Washington State Economic Climate Study



BOTTOM 10 STATES

42nd Bachelor's Degrees Awarded

Washington awarded 4.6 bachelor's degrees for every 1,000 residents in 2015.

Previous ranking: 42nd

Source: National Center for Education Statistics



42nd Commute Time

The average statewide commute time increased to 27.8 minutes in 2016.

Previous ranking: 40th ▼

Source: American Community Survey



41st Unemployment Insurance Tax Rates

Washington's average UI tax rate was \$546 in 2016, down from \$632 in 2015.

Previous ranking: 45th ▲

Source: U.S. Department of Labor



42nd Business Tax Burden

Businesses pay state and local taxes equal to 5.5% of gross state product.

Previous ranking: 41st ▼

Source: Council on State Taxation



47th Workers' Compensation

At \$789 per covered worker in 2015, Washington is the fourth most expensive state in the nation for workers' compensation benefits paid.

Previous ranking: 50th ▲

Source: National Academy of Social Insurance

