

# 2026's Most & Least Innovative States

Innovation is a key engine of economic growth in the United States. Each year, the country invests more than \$800 billion in research and development, helping it rank third out of 139 nations on the Global Innovation Index—trailing only Switzerland and Sweden. The rankings highlight the strength of America's markets and business sophistication, along with its knowledge creation and technological output.

Some states play a larger role than others in sustaining U.S. leadership in the technology-driven economy. These states continue to foster innovation by investing in education, research, and new business formation, particularly within highly specialized industries.

To identify the nation's top contributors, WalletHub evaluated all 50 states and the District of Columbia using 25 key indicators of innovation friendliness. The data set includes measures such as the share of STEM professionals, R&D spending per capita, and the concentration of tech companies.

*"The most innovative states are especially attractive to people who have majored in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, as they offer abundant career opportunities and investment dollars, both for jobs at existing companies and for startups. These states also instill young students with the skills they need to succeed in the current workforce, skills which are useful whether or not they pursue a STEM career."*

Chip Lupo, Wallethub Analyst

## Most Innovative States

State	Score
1. District of Columbia.....	69.13
2. Massachusetts .....	66.90
3. California .....	64.31
4. Colorado.....	62.22
5. Washington .....	61.82
6. Maryland.....	60.66
7. Virginia.....	57.70
8. Delaware.....	53.94
9. Utah .....	52.78
10. New Jersey.....	51.86

## 2026's States With The Best & Worst Taxpayer ROI

### Best vs. Worst

♦ Red States have a higher taxpayer return on investment, with an average ranking of 20.74, compared with 33.26 for Blue States (1 = Best).

♦ Indiana has the lowest proportion of major roads in poor or mediocre condition, which is six times lower than in Rhode Island, the state with the highest.

♦ Maine has the fewest violent crimes per 1,000 residents, which is 7.2 times lower than in Alaska, the state with the most.

♦ New Hampshire has the lowest infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, which is 2.9 times lower than in Mississippi, the state with the highest.

11. Oregon .....	51.59	47. Iowa .....	28.37
12. New Hampshire .....	51.23	48. North Dakota .....	26.71
13. Texas .....	49.56	49. West Virginia.....	26.39
14. North Carolina.....	47.82	50. Louisiana.....	24.20
15. New Mexico .....	47.64	51. Mississippi.....	22.97

## 22. Illinois..... 41.60

### Least Innovative States

37. Hawaii.....	33.58
38. Nebraska.....	32.62
39. Missouri.....	32.57
40. Ohio.....	32.42
41. South Dakota.....	31.90
42. Alaska.....	31.06
43. Oklahoma .....	30.97
44. Kentucky.....	30.29
45. Kansas.....	29.69
46. Arkansas .....	28.78

### Key Stats

♦ The District of Columbia has the highest share of STEM professionals, which is 2.9 times higher than in Mississippi, the lowest.

♦ Delaware has the highest share of technology companies, which is 4.6 times higher than in North Dakota, the lowest.

♦ Massachusetts has the highest research and development (R&D) intensity, which is 17.8 times higher than in Wyoming, the lowest.

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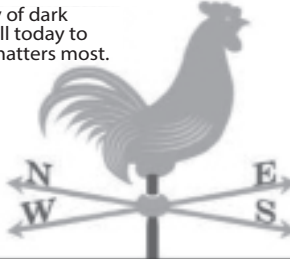


## Tomorrow, anything could happen

It could be the best day ever or it could be a day of dark clouds. No one knows what tomorrow holds. Call today to get prepared for your future and protect what matters most.



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## March Events

Lacon Area Community Center

♦ March 25-Wed.	11:00 am	Lutheran Church Service	♦
	6:00 pm	Card Players (call for more info.)	
♦ March 30-Mon.	9:00 am	Luminous Unveiled Homeschool Co-op	♦

♦ For more information about any of these programs, other activities and building rental use, please contact us: (309)246-4050 Laconcommunitycenter@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.



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**1726 W. Grandview Dr. Dunlap**

Welcome to this spacious split-level home in the heart of Dunlap. Featuring four generous sized bedrooms and two full bathrooms. This home offers both comfort and versatility. Updates include: Furnace (2024), Roof (2025), Slider (2025) & some replacement windows. The inviting layout is perfect for entertaining, with multiple living spaces and an abundance of natural light. Don't miss the chance to make this your dream home. **\$269,000**



**Fondulac Drive East Peoria**

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**Lacon: 501 Park Street**

Welcome to this charming 3 bedroom 2 bathroom residence. There is a main floor laundry for added convenience. Partially finished basement with a possible 4th bedroom. Detached 2-stall garage. Plus is located across the street from a beautiful city park. Schedule a private showing today! **\$159,000**