

State Opportunity Index

Opportunity in Action: Strengthening Vermont's Education-to-Workforce Pathways

Vermont Solutions Summit: Turning Strategy into Action
September 10, 2026

strada
EDUCATION FOUNDATION



A photograph of four diverse young adults walking along a paved path on a university campus. They are dressed in casual attire like hoodies, sweaters, and jeans. The background shows trees and a bench, typical of a campus setting. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

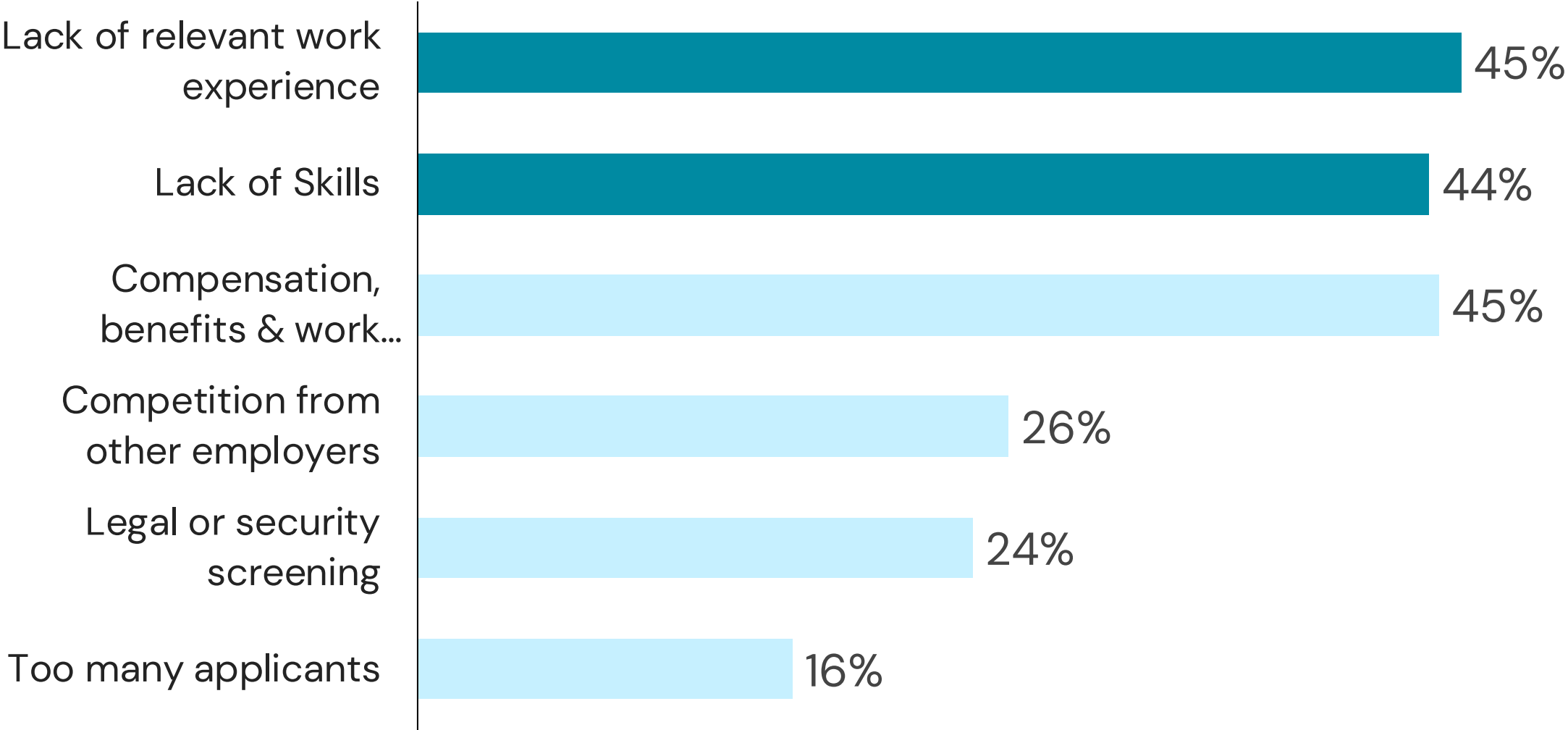
Talent Pipelines U.S. Employers

#1 Challenge: Lack of Skills and Qualifications

**45% of
Employers
Greatest
Workforce
Development
Challenge**

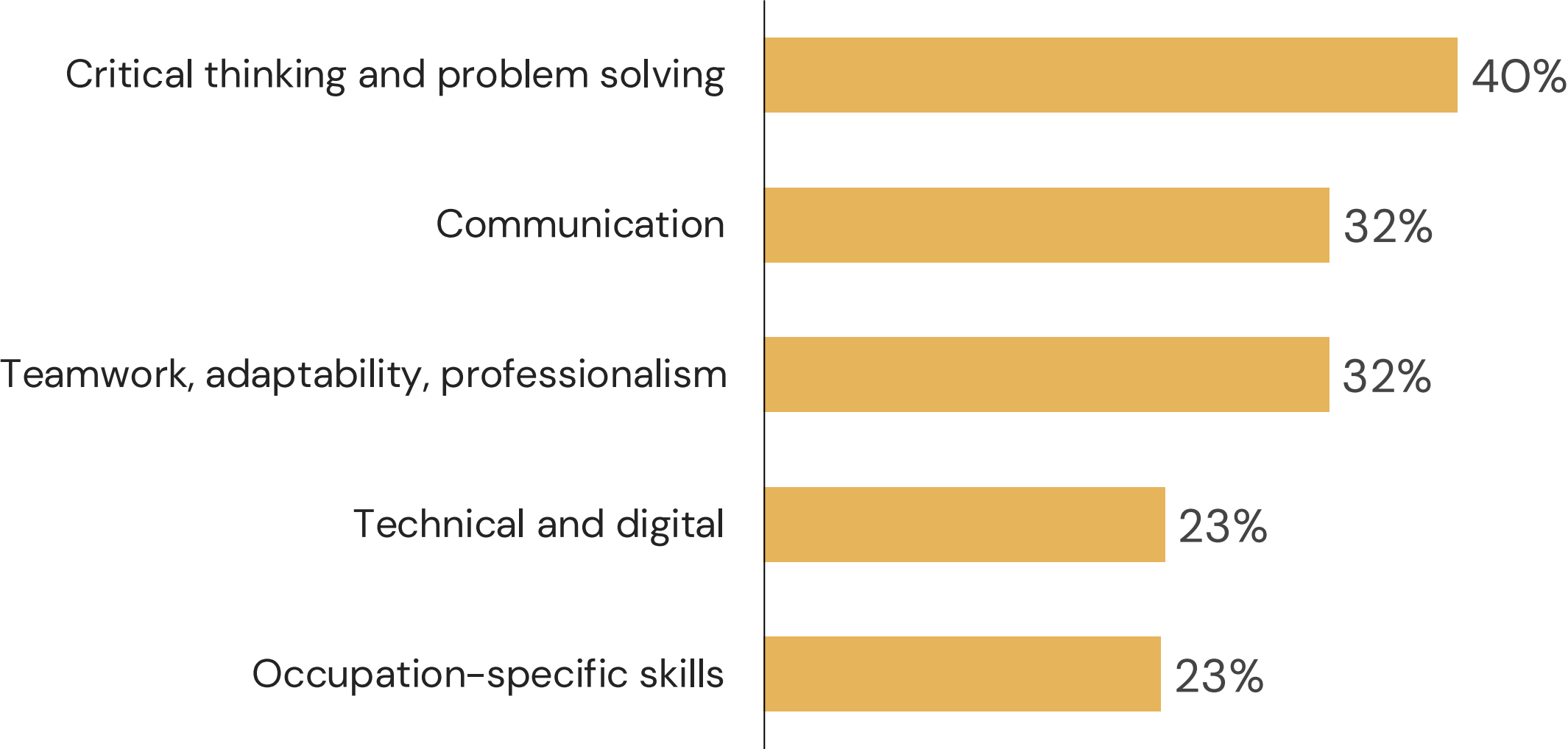
- ***Attracting and retaining highly skilled talent** in light of increasing competition, while ensuring that their skills keep pace with rapid technological changes.*
- *One of the biggest hiring challenges for our organization in the past 12 months has been **finding qualified machinists and skilled workers.***

Entry-Level Hiring Challenges



Which of the following challenges has your organization faced when hiring entry-level employees in the past year?

Skills Most Lacking Among Entry-Level Workforce



Thinking about your entry-level workforce, what are the skills that are the most lacking?

A photograph of four high school students walking along a paved path in a park-like setting. The students are two girls and two boys, dressed in casual attire like hoodies, sweaters, and jeans. They are engaged in conversation and looking in various directions. The background shows trees and a clear sky. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter, and the title text is centered in white.

The “Good Life” High School Class of 2027

The “Good Life”

59%

Career/Job
Success

#1

50%

Financial
Stability/
Money

#2

45%

Family/
Marriage/
Children

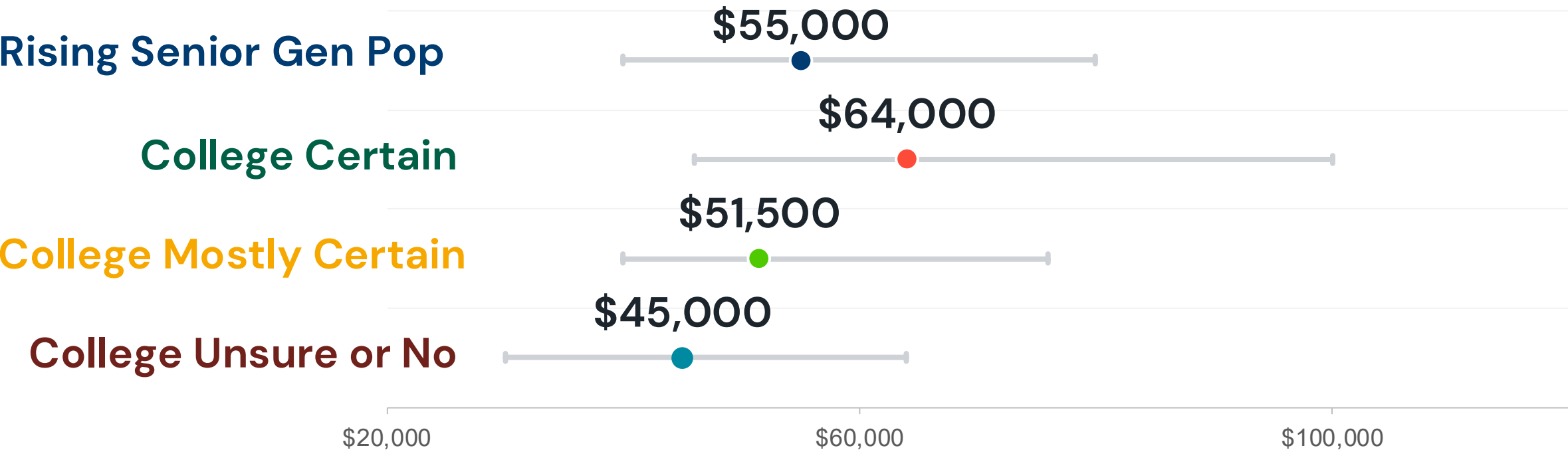
#3

23%

Education/
Degree

#6

Expectations: First-Job Earnings



Dots show Median, bars mark 25th and 75th percentile



Students and families believe in the promise of higher education

- College is *extremely* or *very important* for future goals
- College is a *great* or *good* investment

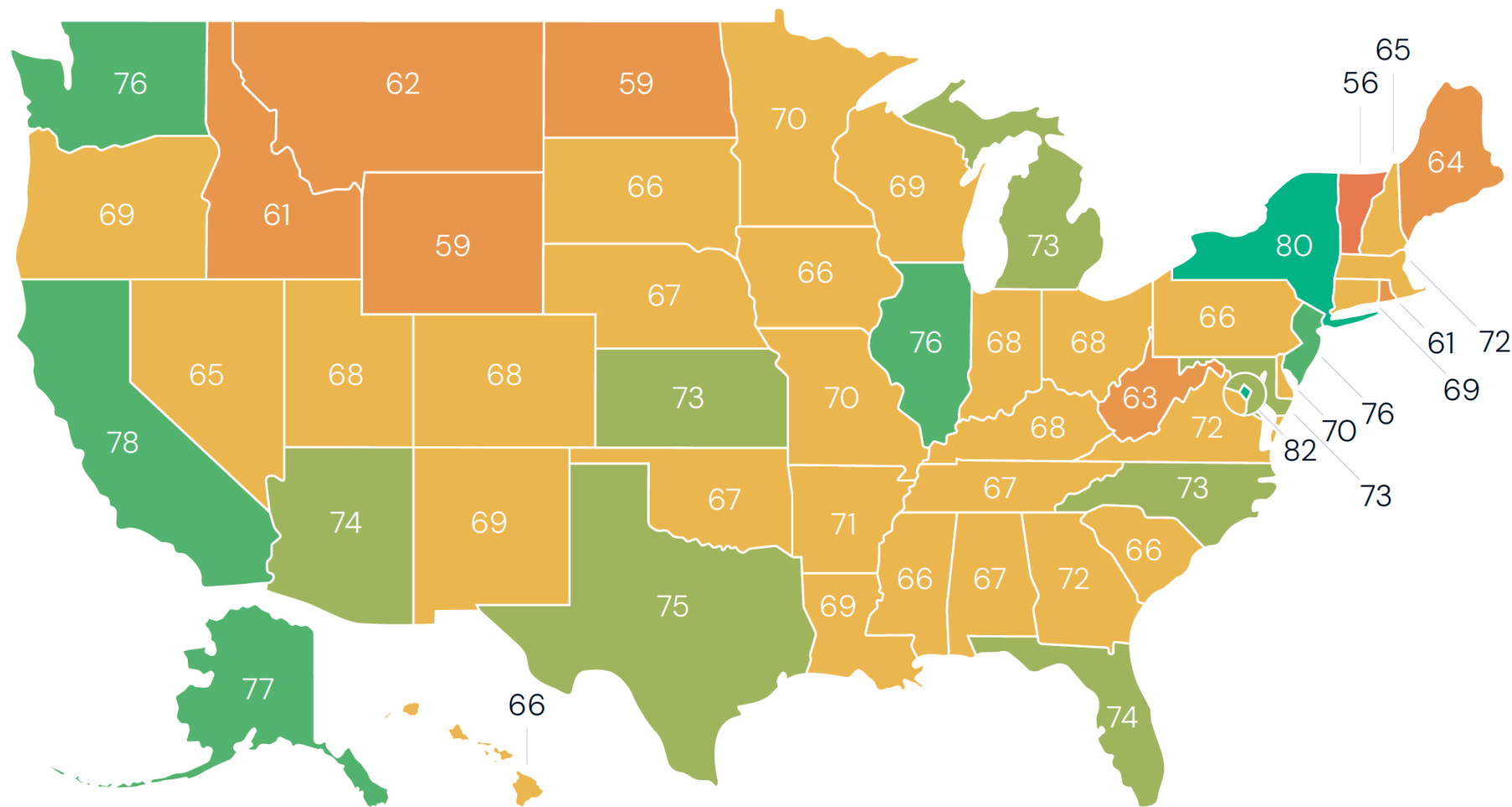
More than 8 in 10 prospective students, current students, and their parents **agree** — and 75% of current high school seniors



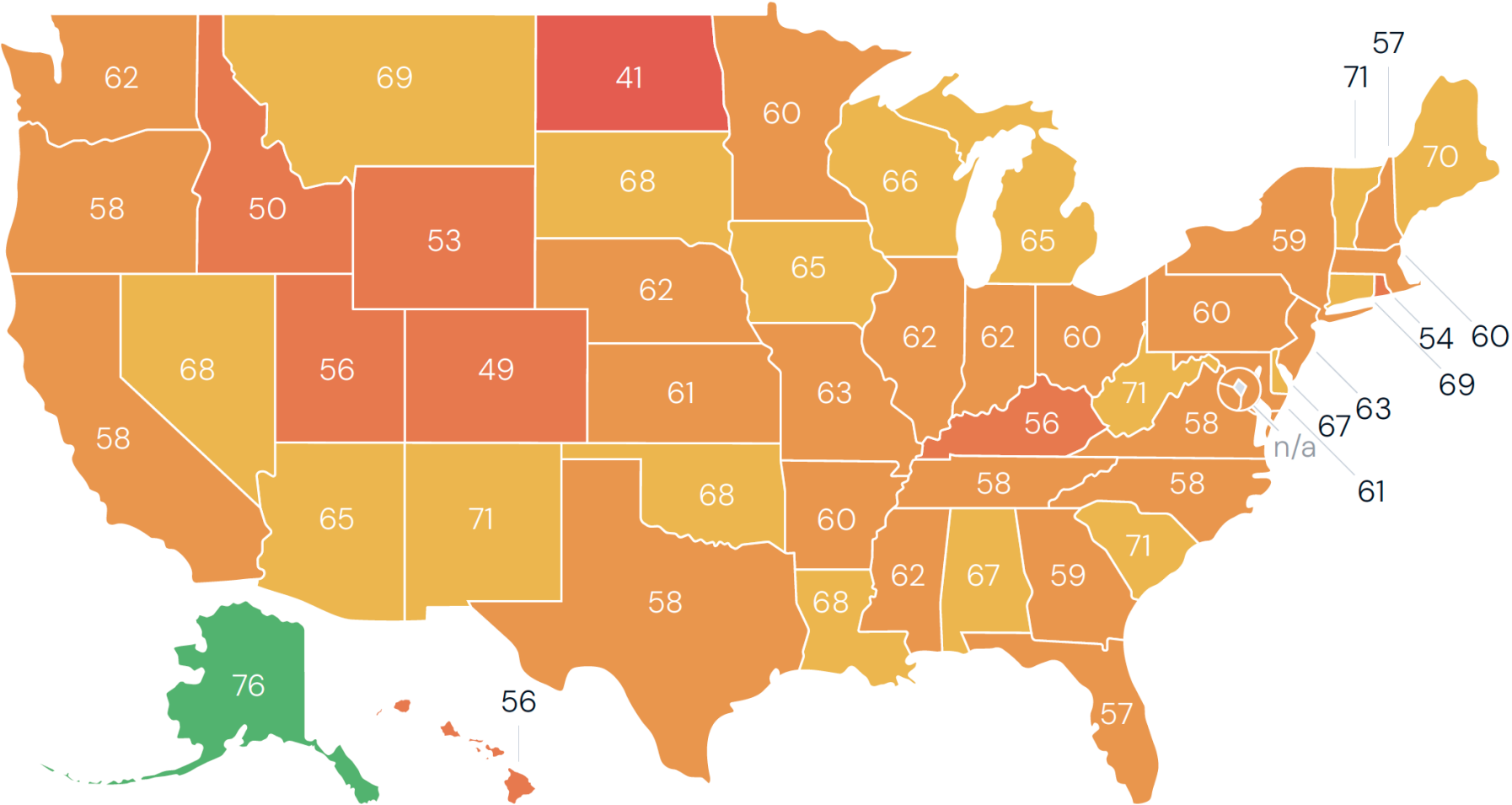
Positive Return on Investment

Everyone who earns a degree should be able to
achieve a positive ROI within 10 years.

POSITIVE ROI: BACHELOR'S DEGREE



POSITIVE ROI: ASSOCIATES DEGREE



State Opportunity Index

Five keys to connecting education with opportunity



Clear
Outcomes



Quality
Coaching



Affordability



Work-based
Learning



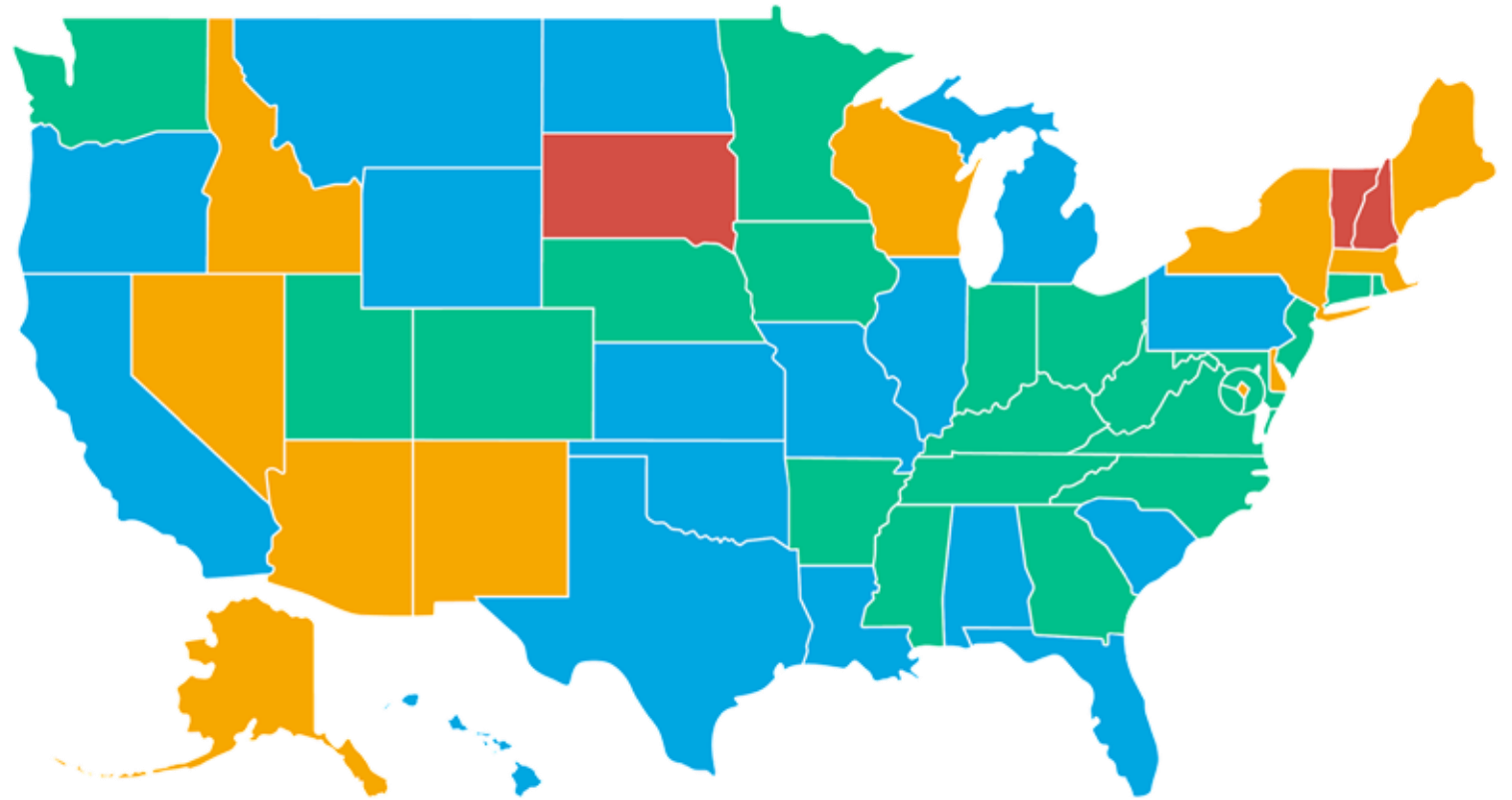
Employer
Alignment



Clear Outcomes

CLEAR OUTCOMES

Results



Foundational

Developing

Advanced

Leading

Clear Outcomes Elements

Foundational



COLLECT

1. Accumulates data for non-degree and non-credit postsecondary education and training programs
2. Includes occupation, pay rate, and work location in wage record collections

Foundational

Foundational



INTEGRATE

3. Integrates earnings and employment and postsecondary education and training outcomes
4. Integrates earnings and employment and high school data
5. Assesses postsecondary education training outcomes for those who relocate or work outside the state

Developing

Developing

Advanced



PROVIDE

6. Provides open data files containing aggregate education to employment statistics
7. Publishes interactive resources informing education to employment decision-making
8. Affords researchers with access to individual-level matched education to employment datasets

Developing

Developing

Foundational



IMPACT

9. Enables learners to access and utilize their own verified education and employment data
10. Designates unit with responsibility for generating education to employment insights

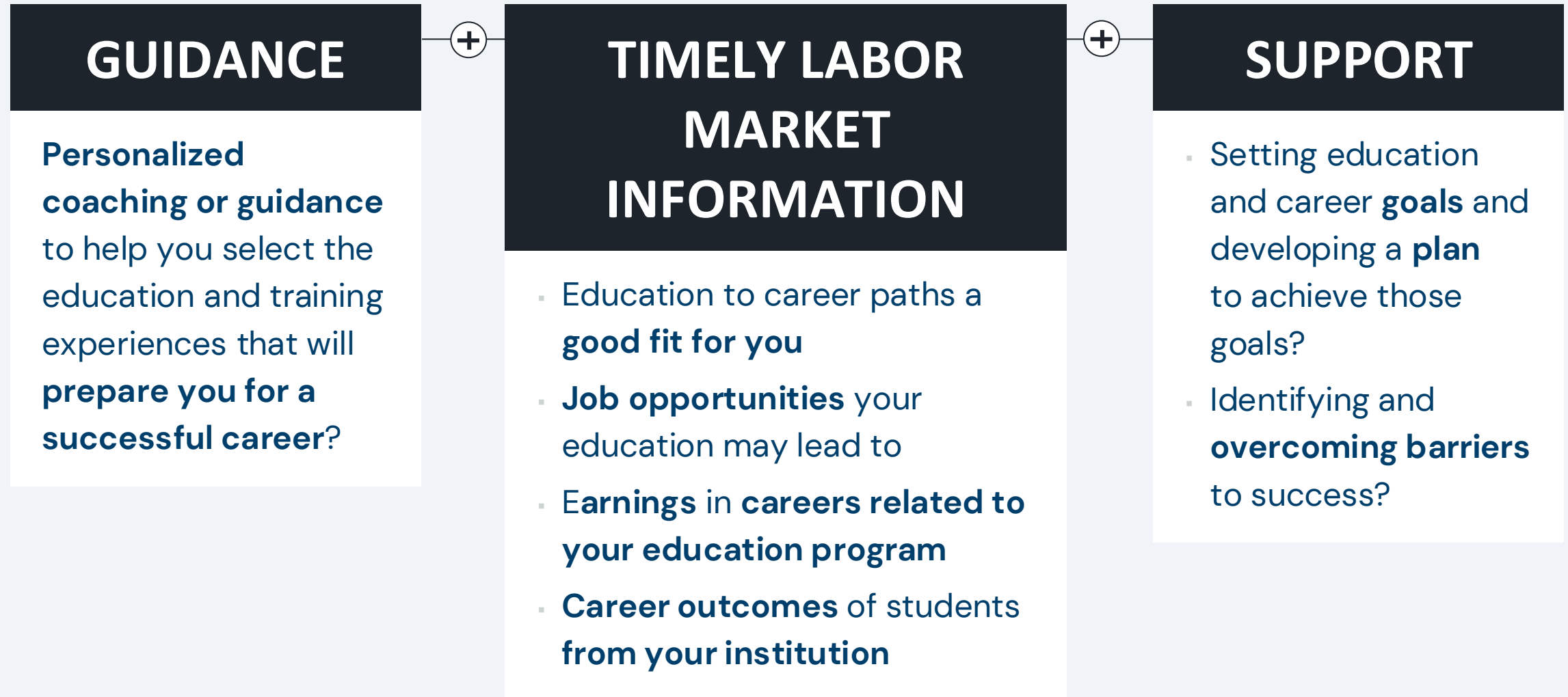
Developing

Developing



Quality Coaching

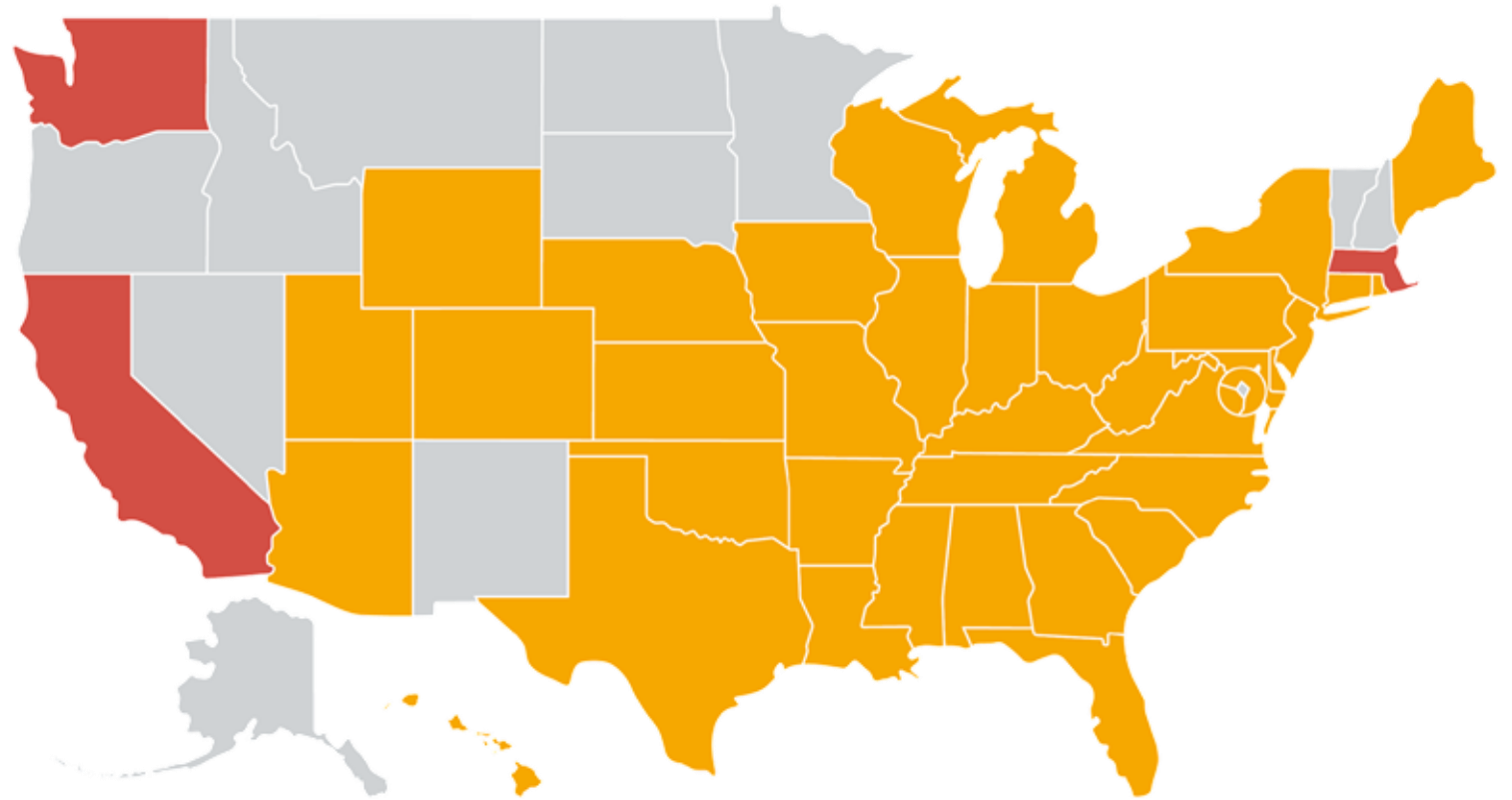
Quality Coaching Measure



QUALITY COACHING

Results

Four-Year Institutions



Foundational

Developing

Advanced

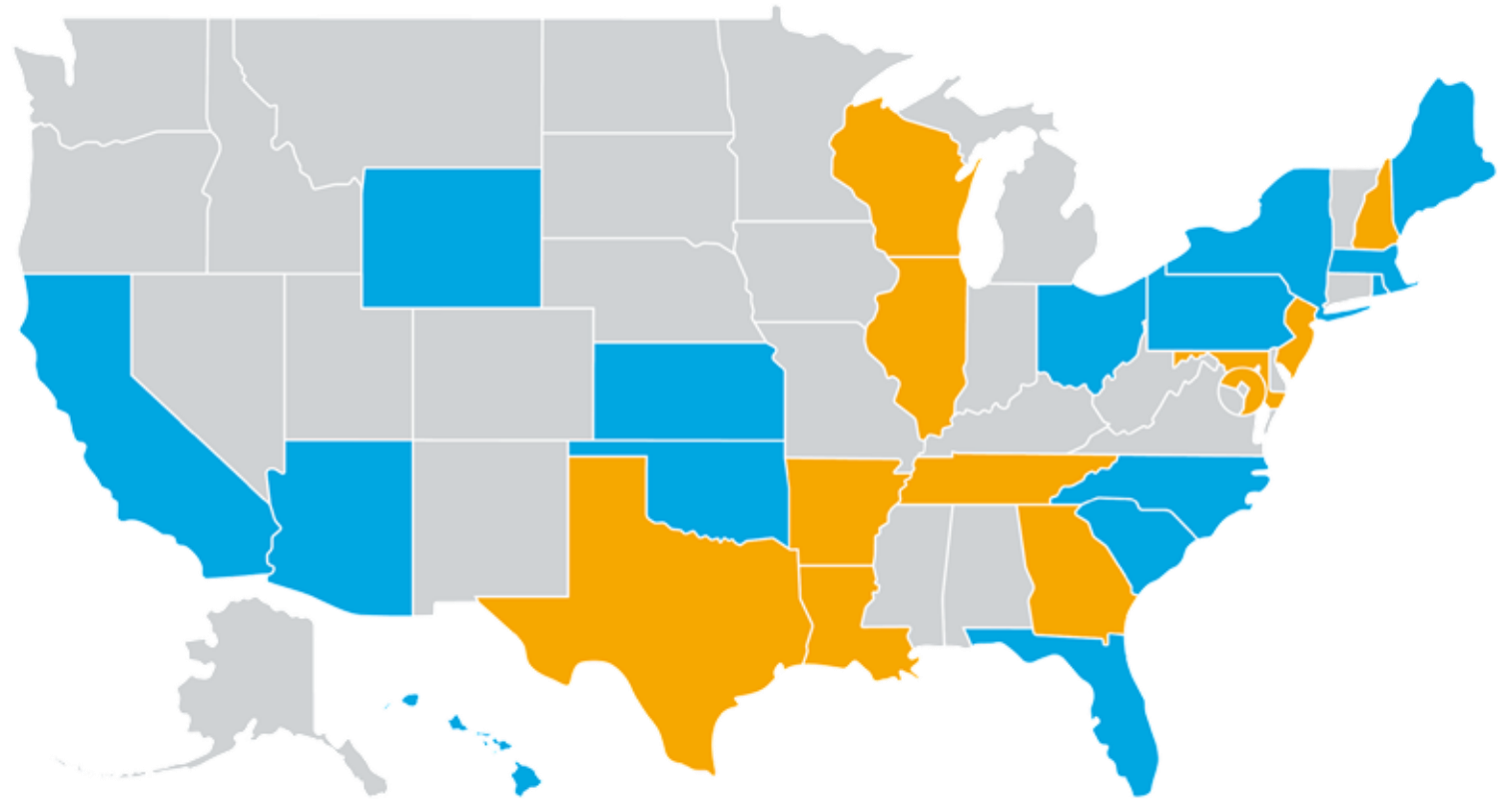
Leading

Insufficient data to report at this time

QUALITY COACHING

Results

Two-Year Institutions



Foundational

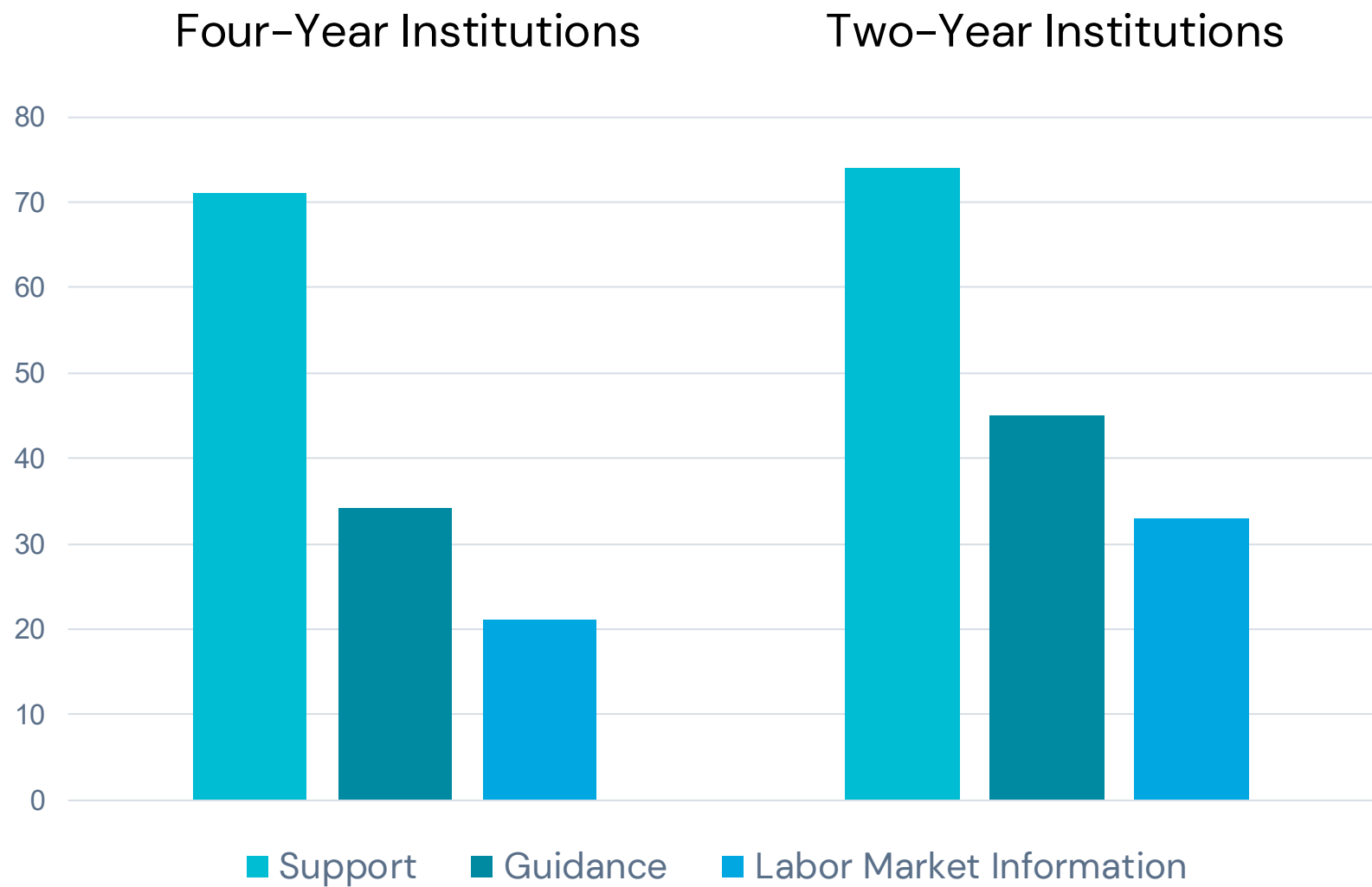
Developing

Advanced

Leading

Insufficient data to report at this time

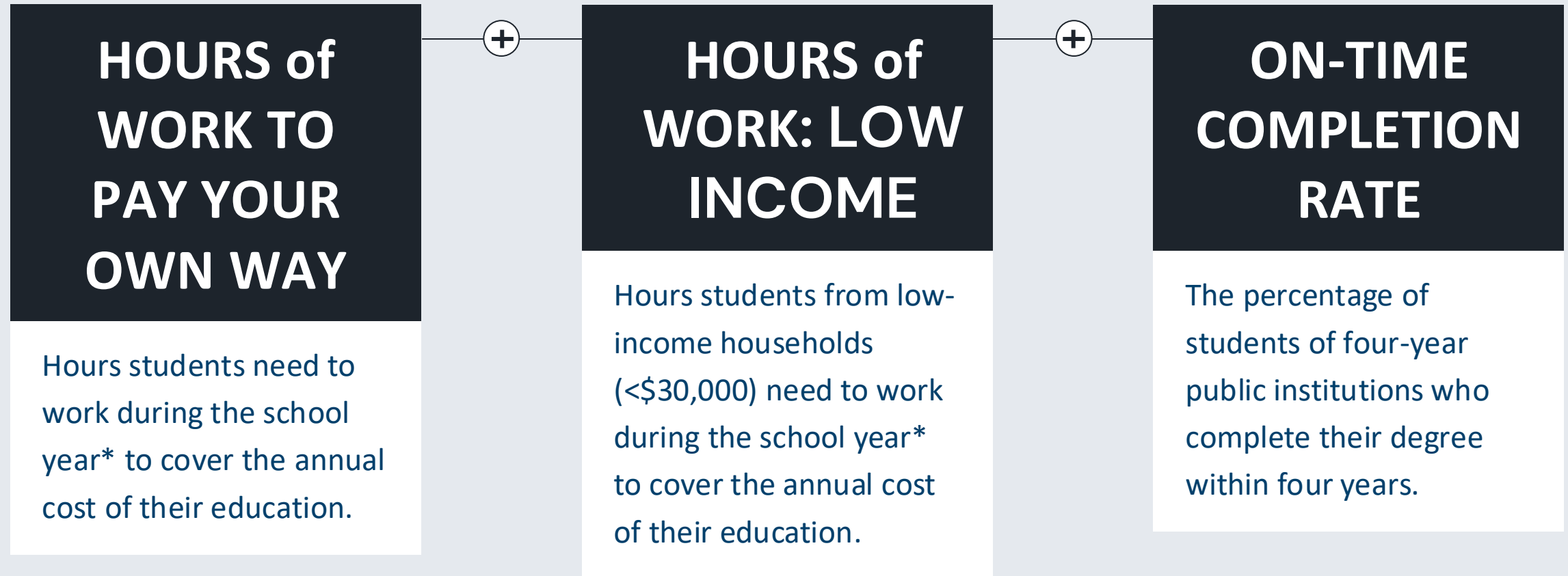
Elements of Quality Coaching





Affordability

Affordability Measure

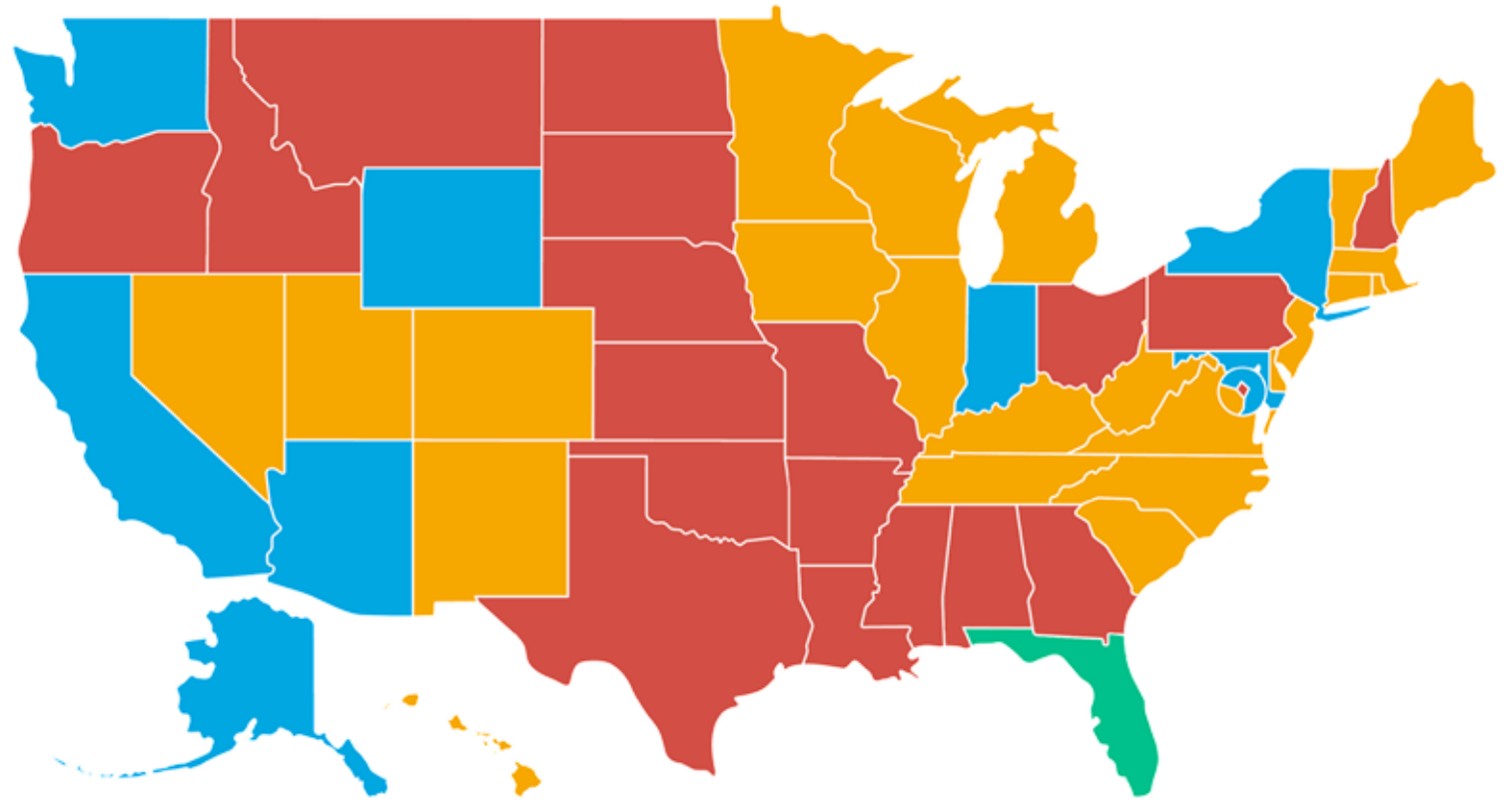


*This measure assumes students work 400 hours during the summer and 30 weeks during the school year.

AFFORDABILITY

Results

Four-Year Institutions



Foundational

Developing

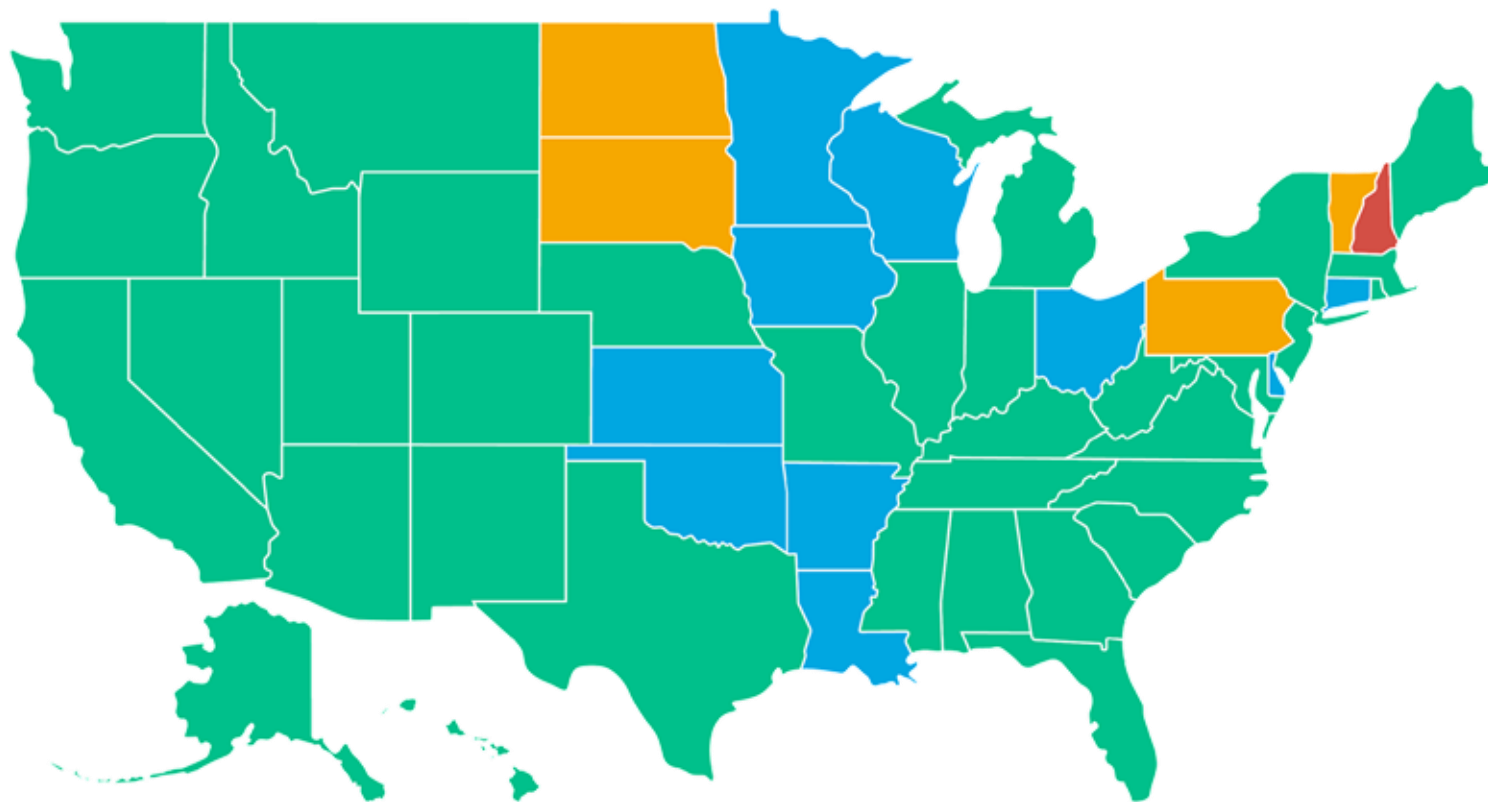
Advanced

Leading

AFFORDABILITY

Results

Two-Year Institutions



Foundational

Developing

Advanced

Leading

AFFORDABILITY:

Vermont

Affordability: Four-year	Developing	
Average student	Foundational	33 hours per week
Low-income student	Advanced	15 hours per week
On-time completion	Advanced	59%
Affordability: Two-year	Developing	
Average student	Developing	20 hours per week
Low-income student	Advanced	13 hours per week



Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning Measure

Participated in at least one of these
five experiences:

Paid
internship

Paid
apprenticeship

Paid co-op

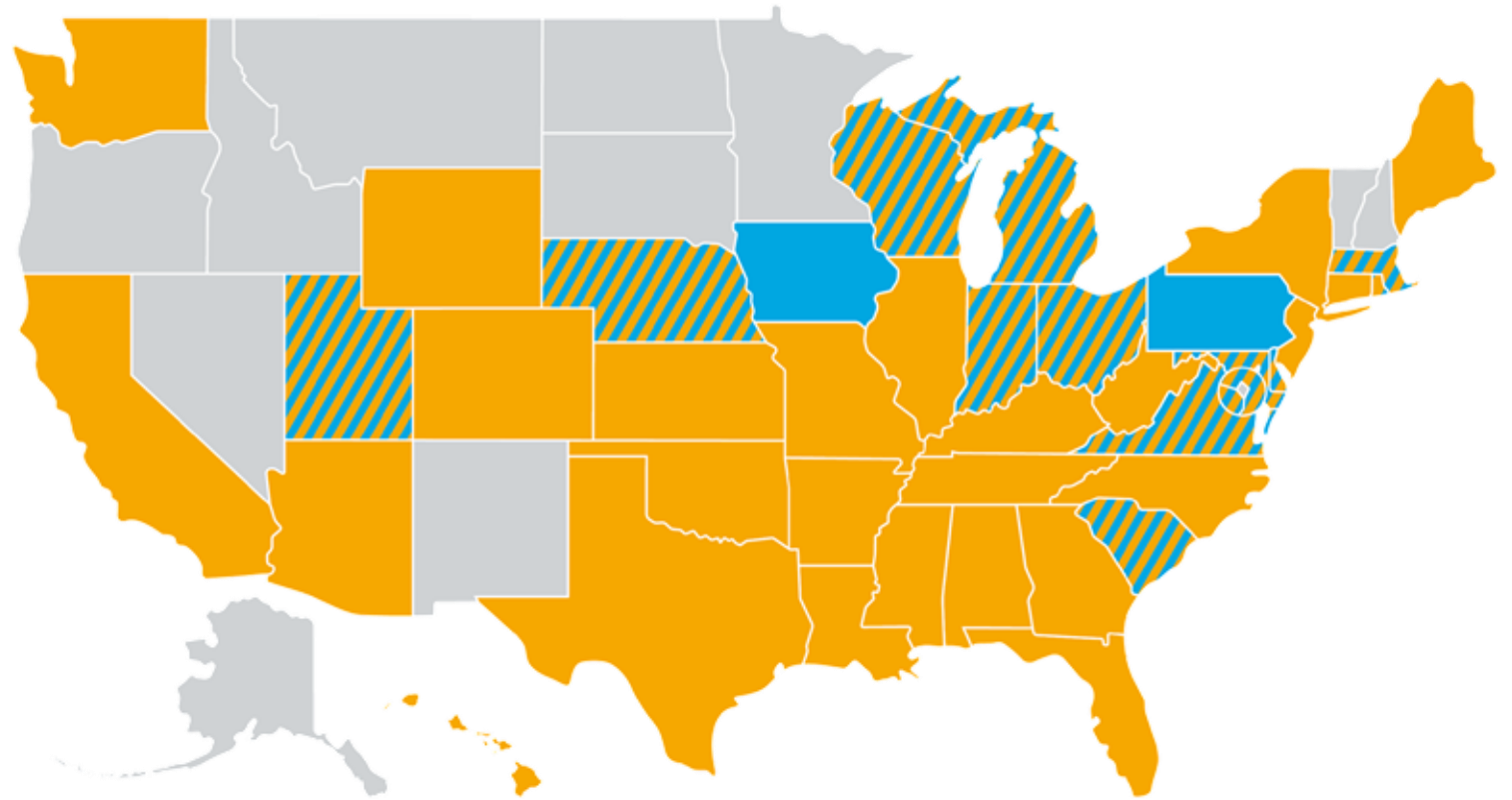
Paid
practicum

Paid
undergraduate
research
experience

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Results

Four-Year Institutions



Foundational

<25%

Developing

25% to < 50%

Advanced

50% to < 75%

Leading

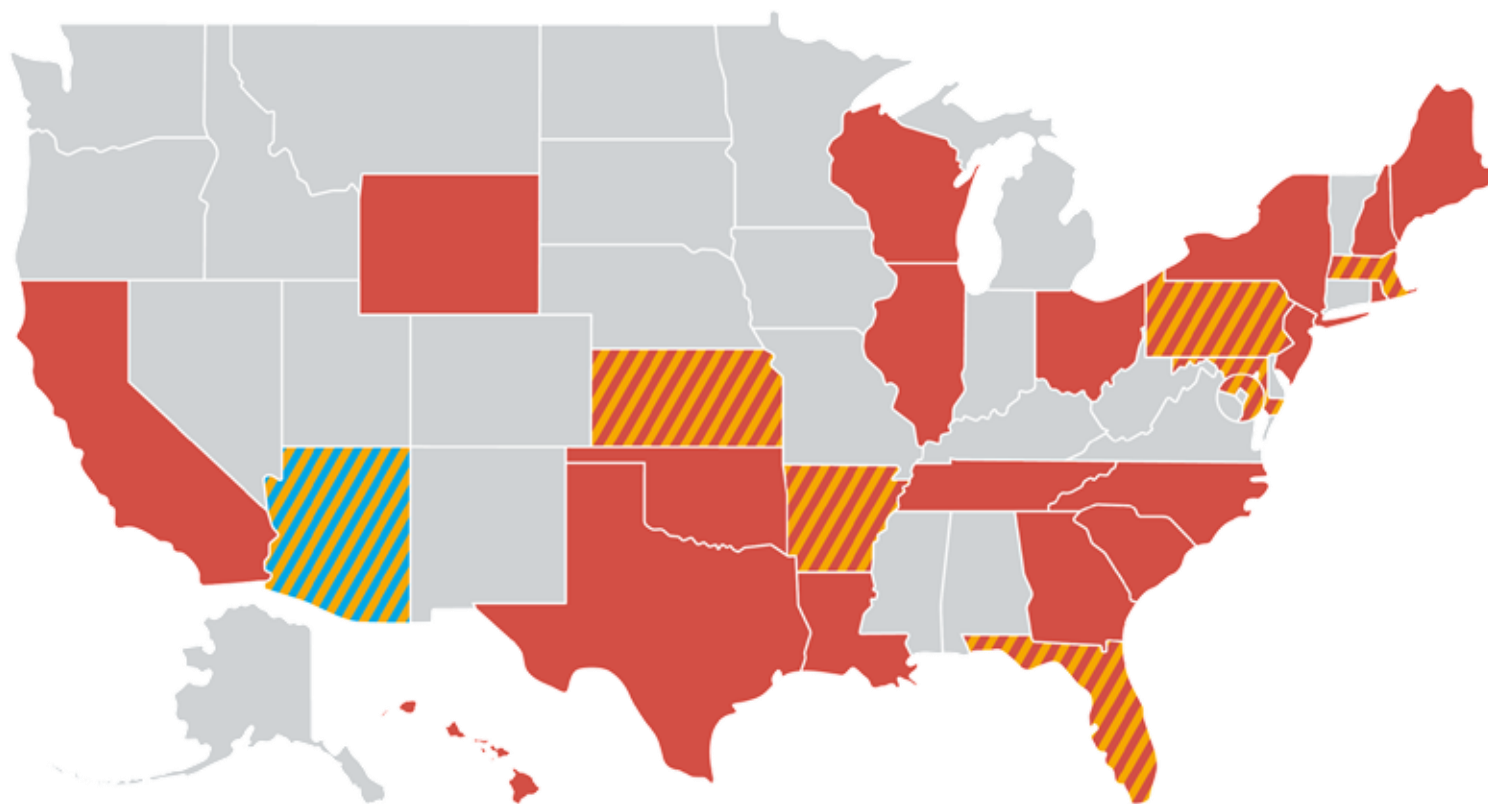
≥ 75%

Insufficient data to report at this time

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Results

Two-Year Institutions



Foundational

<25%

Developing

25% to < 50%

Advanced

50% to < 75%

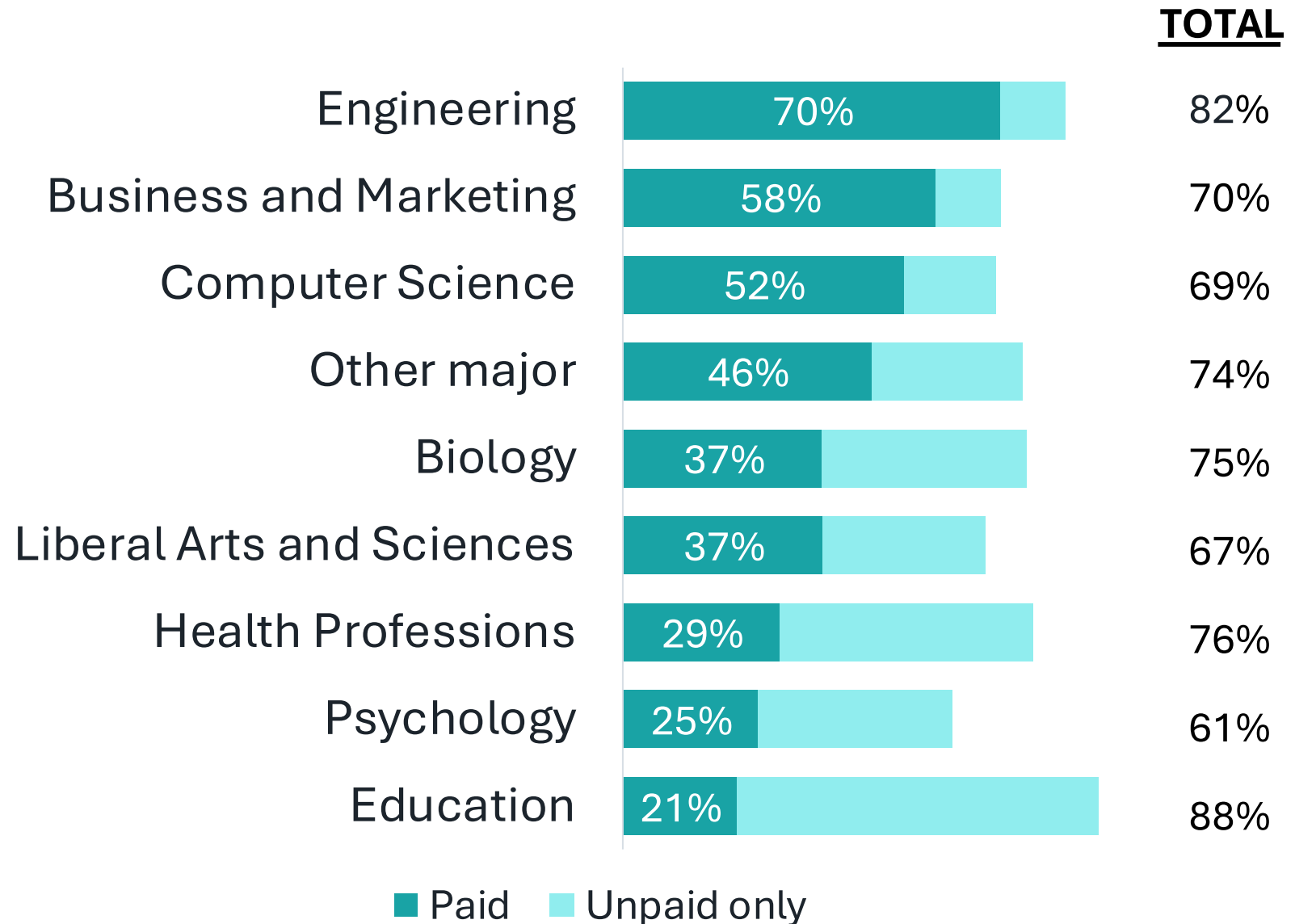
Leading

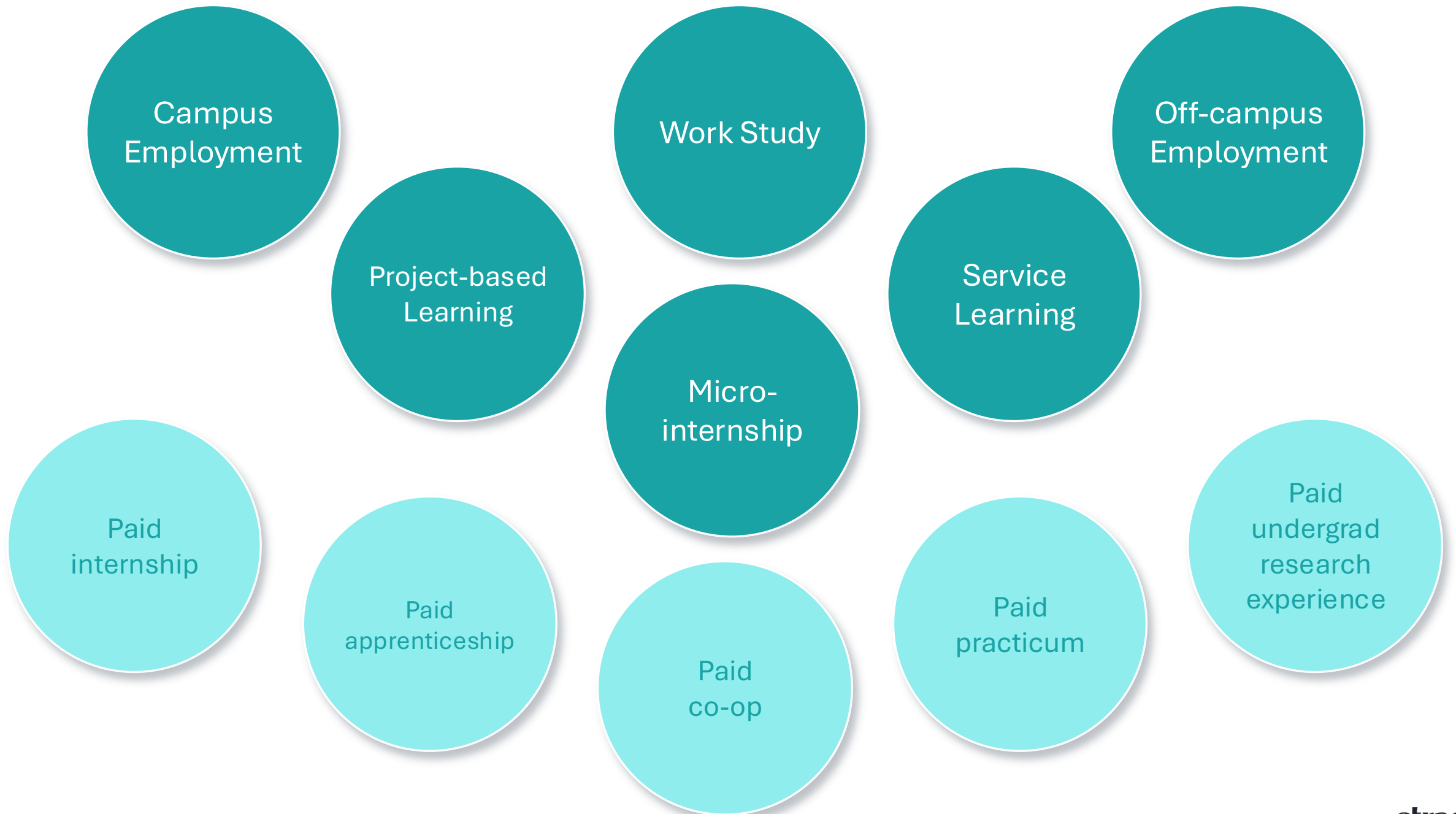
≥ 75%

Insufficient data to report at this time



Work-based learning by major







Employer Alignment

All learners can readily access programs that lead to quality jobs and mobility.

Employer Alignment Measure

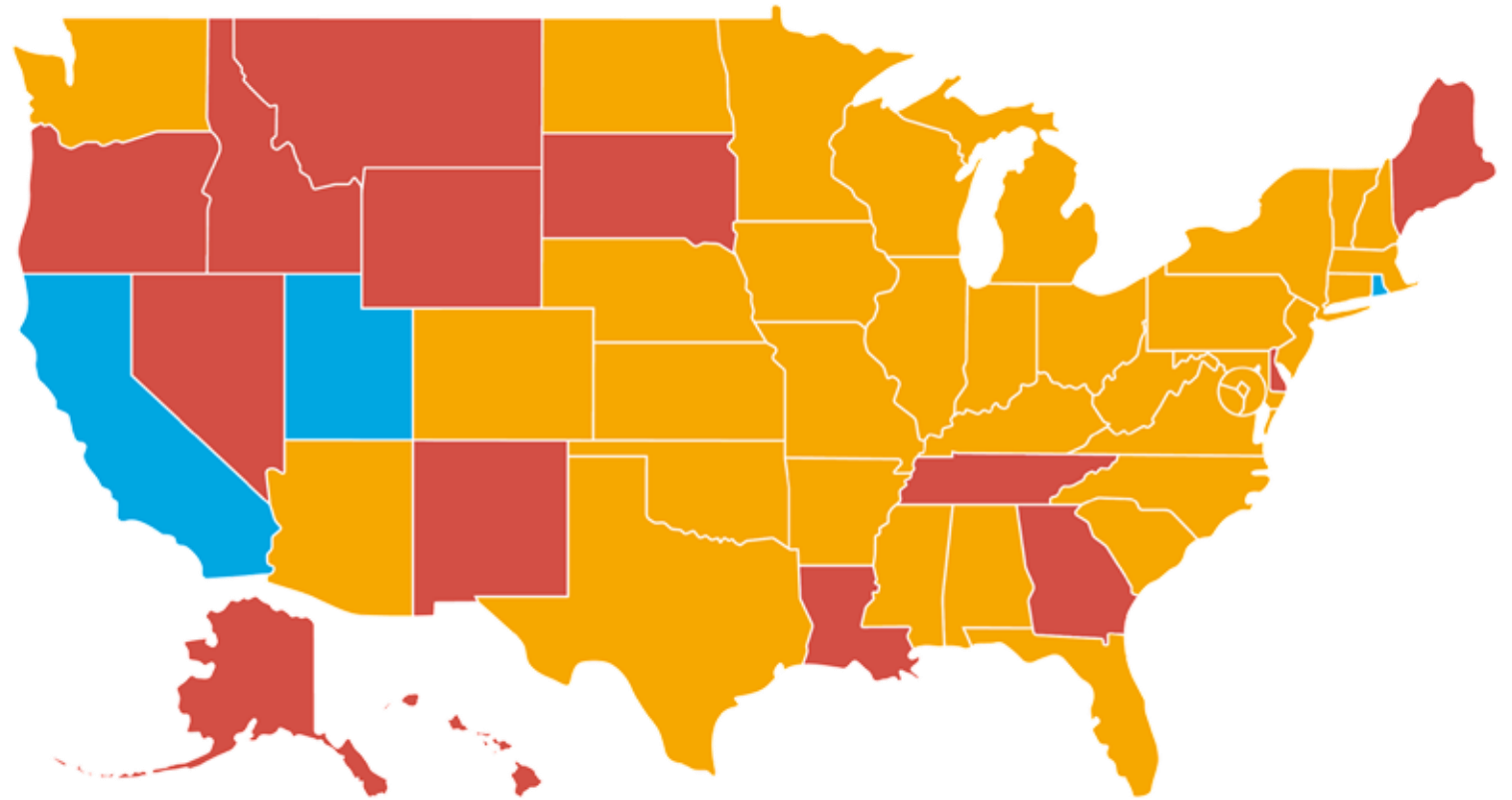


COLLEGE-LEVEL EMPLOYMENT: Measured among 25-34 year olds with a bachelor's degree and no additional education.

OPPORTUNITY JOBS: Data analytics, Engineers, Finance and accounting professionals, Finance and accounting support, Health care technicians and technologists, Information and cybersecurity, Nursing, Software development and engineering, Manufacturing/trades technicians and technologists.

EMPLOYER ALIGNMENT

Results



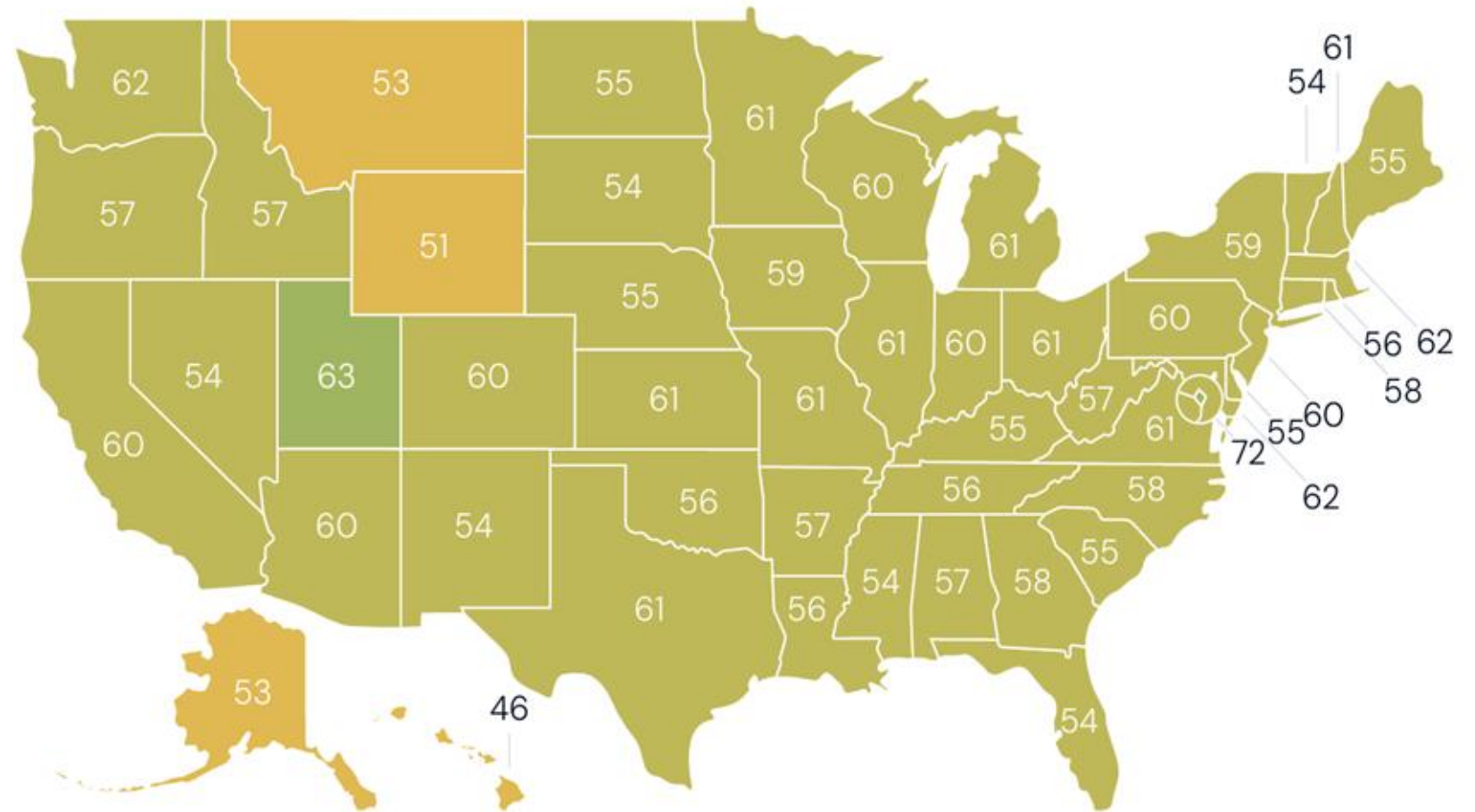
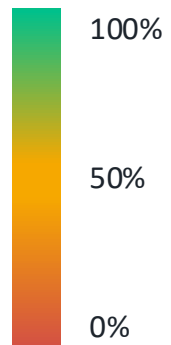
Foundational

Developing

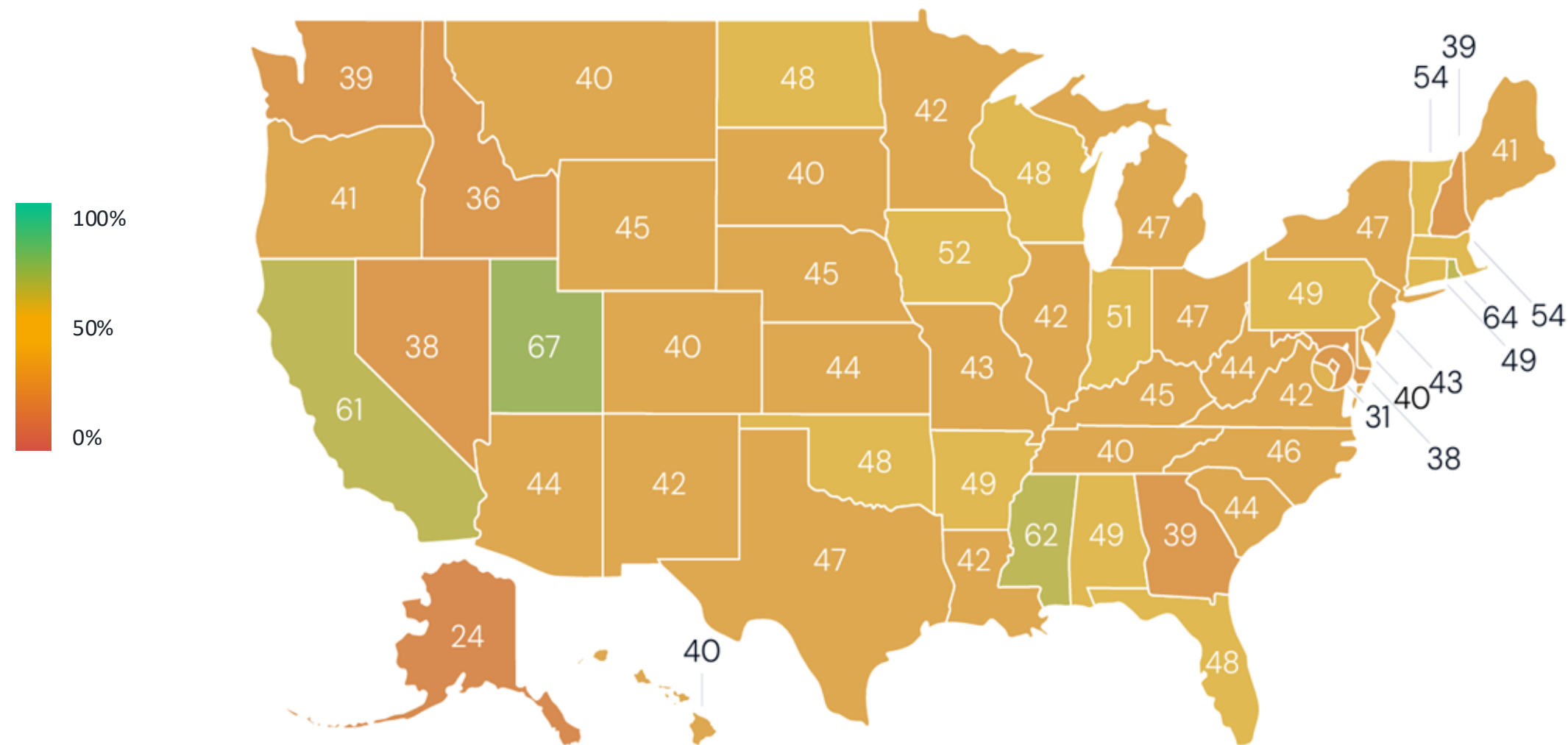
Advanced

Leading

College-Level Employment



Supply/Demand Ratio



Vermont

Information technology and business

Employer Alignment

Developing

College-Level Employment

Developing

Supply/Demand Ratio

Developing

- Data analytics

Leading

- Finance and accounting professionals

Advanced

- Finance and accounting support

Foundational

- Information and cybersecurity

Leading

- Software development and engineering

Leading

Healthcare

- Healthcare technicians and technologists

Developing

- Nursing

Foundational

Manufacturing and engineering

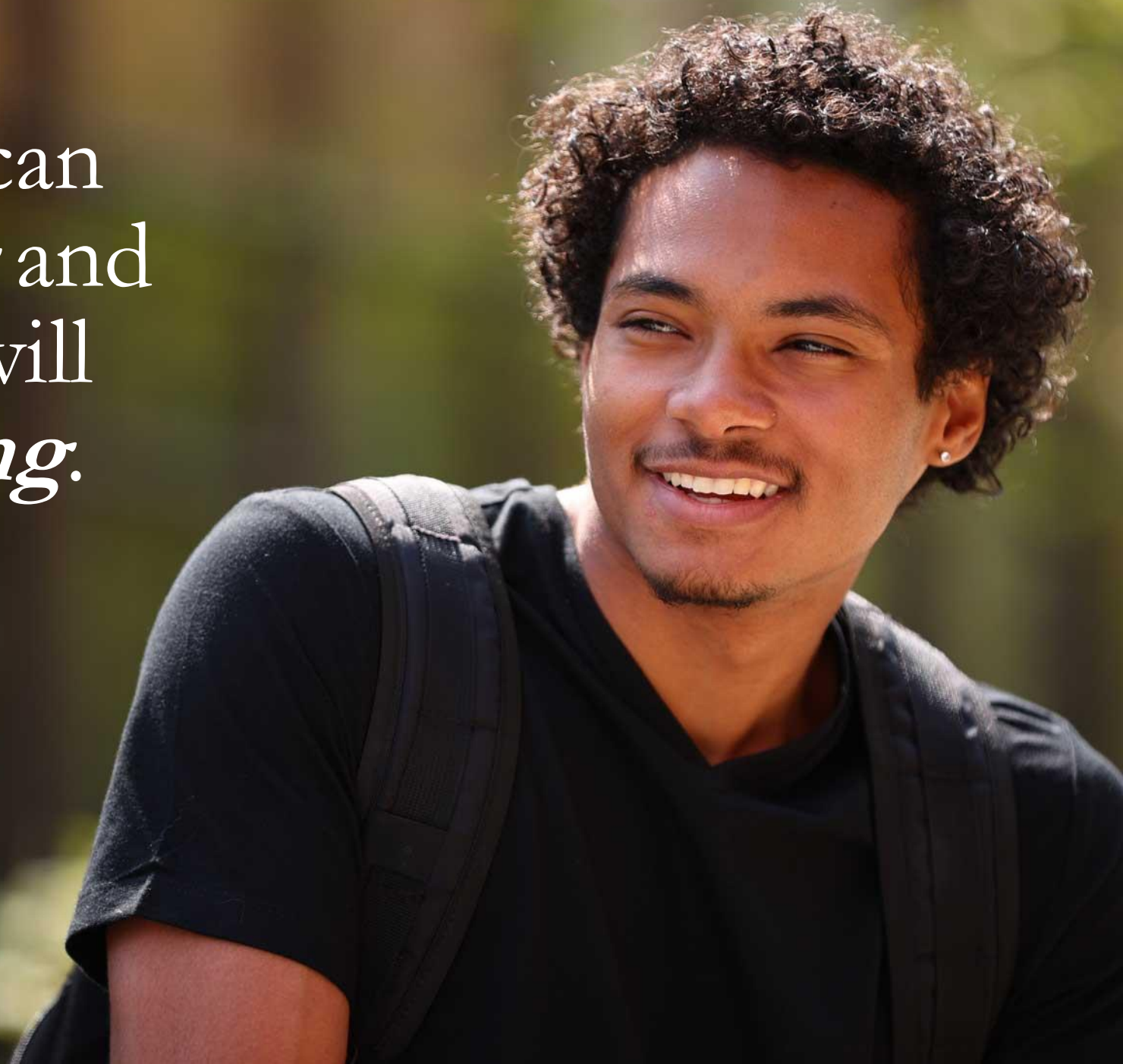
- Engineers

Leading

- Manufacturing/trades technicians and technologists

Foundational

The promise you can
become *anything* and
the certainty you will
become *something*.



State Opportunity Index

Report webpage



State reports



Methodology

