Vermont's Competitive Edge

A Blueprint for Action

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Composite Indices

The following rankings are third party analyses that each combine multiple datasets in developing a topical index.

Camoin Associates Economic Momentum #51 out of 51	CNBC Top States for Business #38 out of 50	ALEC-Laffer Economic Outlook #49 out of 50
Lightcast Talent Attraction Scorecard #22 out of 51	Cato Institute Economic Freedom #43 out of 50	C2ER Cost of Living #43 out of 51
ITEP Tax (In)equality Index #3 out of 51	Tax Foundation State Tax Competitiveness #42 out of 50	Ernst & Young Effective Business Tax Rates #51 out of 51

Population & Demographic Metrics

- Table of States Ranked by Total Population Change (#49 out of 50)
- Table of Natural Population Change (#42 out of 51)
- Table of Net Migration (#46 out of 51)
- Table of Median Age and Dependency Ratio (#50 out of 51)
- Table of Percentage of Population by Age Groups (#50 out of 51 for 25-44 years age cohort)

Housing Metrics

- Map of Housing Permits by State (#46 out of 51)
- Table of Housing Price Appreciation as of 2025 Q3 (#45 out of 51 for 5-year percent change)

Economy and Business Metrics

- Map of Economic Momentum (#51 out of 51)
- Table of Real GDP Growth (#37 out of 50 for GDP per capita)
- Map of CNBC Top States for Business Rankings (#38 out of 50)
- Table of CNBC Top States for Business with Component Ranks
- Opening and Closing Rates of Establishments (#45 out of 50)

Cost of Living Metrics

- Map of Cost of Living Index (#41 out of 51)
- Table of Cost of Living Index (with component categories)
- Table of Median Household Income and Change Over Time (#20 out of 51 for 2024)
- Table of Average Retail Electricity Prices (#42 out of 51)

Education and Workforce Metrics

- Map of Talent Attraction Scorecard (#22 out of 51)
- Table of Talent Attraction Scorecard with Component Ranks
- Table of Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years & Older (#3 out of 51)
- Table of National Assessment of Educational Progress Scores (#36 out of 51 for 4th Grade Reading)
- Table of Public School Spending Per Pupil (#49 out of 51)
- Table of Net Migration of College-bound Students Between States (#12 out of 51 for Import/Export Ratio)
- Table of Retention of College-bound Students Attending School in Home State (#50 out of 51)

Tax Metrics

- Map of 2026 State Tax Competitiveness Index (#42 out of 50)
- Table of 2026 State Tax Competitiveness Index with Component Ranks
- Table of Total Effective Business Tax Rate (#51 out of 51)
- Table of ITEP Tax (In)equality Index (#3 out of 51)

Policy Metrics

- Map of ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index (#49 out of 50)

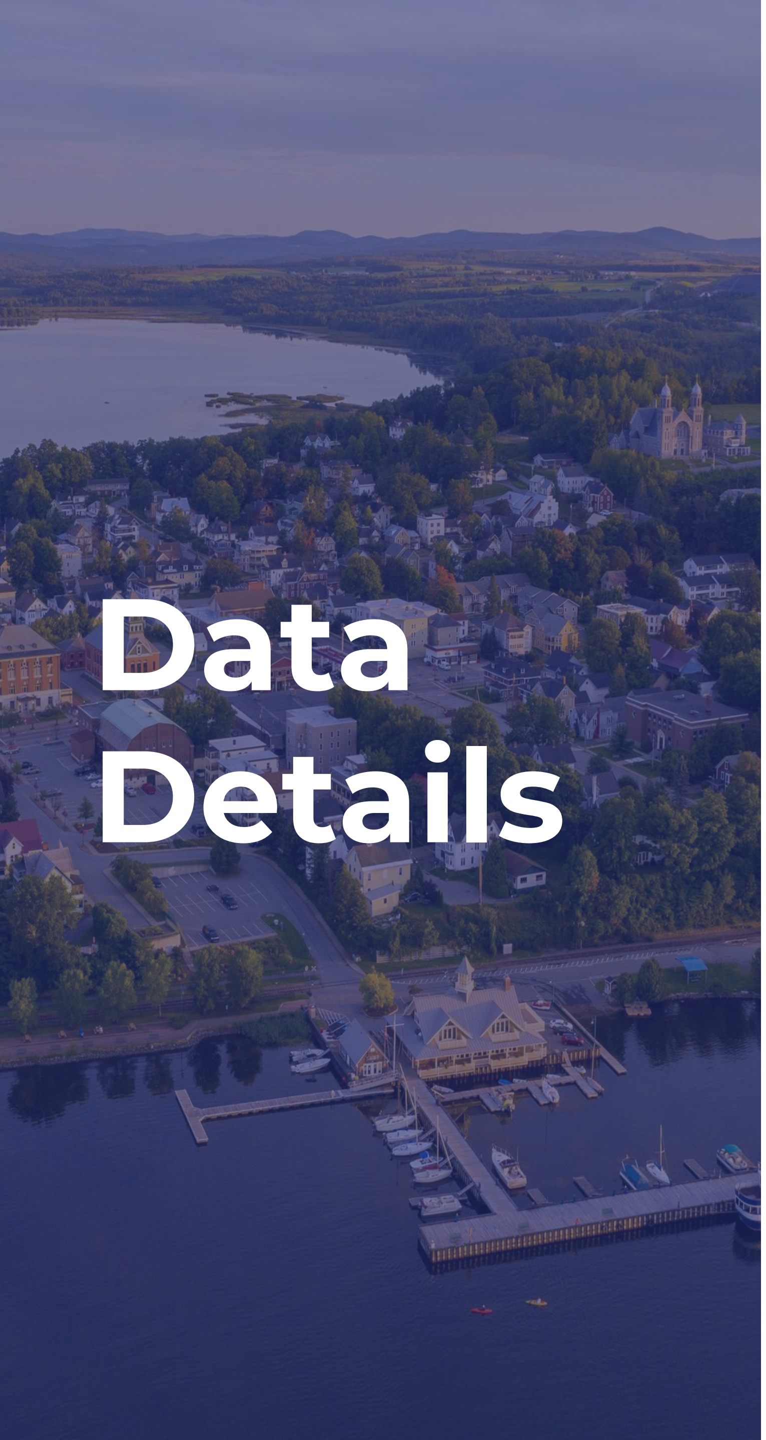


Table of Median Household Income and Change Over Time (#20 out of 51 for 2024)

Median Household Income and Change Over Time

Vermont has the 20th highest median household income and the 3rd fastest rate of income growth over the last 5 years.

This table is sorted by 2024 Median Household Income from highest to lowest by default. Click on any header to sort by that category -- click again to toggle between ascending and descending order. The rankings will update accordingly.

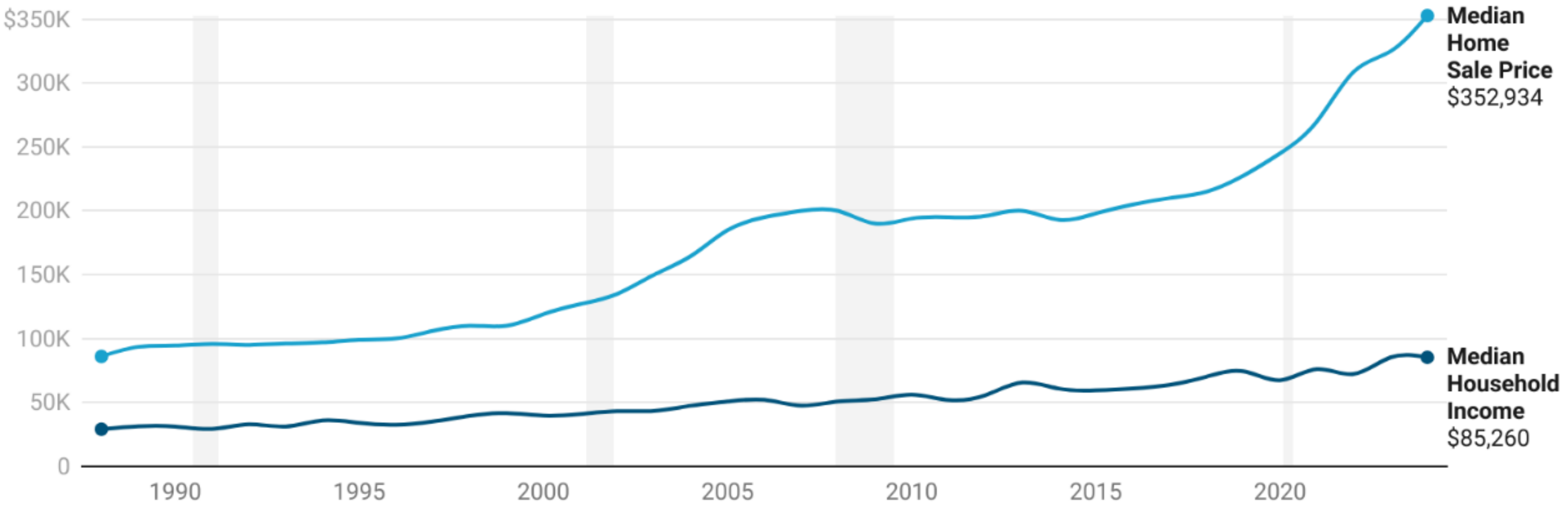
Search in table

State	2024 Median Household Income	▲ 2024 Rank	5-year Percent Change	5-year Percent Change Rank	10-year Percent Change	10-year Percent Change Rank
District of Columbia	$109,707	1	18.90%	47	53.12%	17
Massachusetts	$104,828	2	22.12%	33	51.57%	20
New Jersey	$104,294	3	21.62%	36	45.02%	37
Maryland	$102,905	4	18.64%	48	39.12%	46
Hawaii	$100,745	5	21.23%	39	44.77%	40
California	$100,149	6	24.50%	26	61.71%	9
New Hampshire	$99,782	7	28.04%	16	49.98%	26
Washington	$99,389	8	26.31%	21	61.96%	8
Colorado	$97,113	9	25.91%	22	58.41%	13
Utah	$96,658	10	27.55%	17	58.66%	12
Connecticut	$96,049	11	21.84%	34	37.12%	47
Alaska	$95,665	12	26.77%	20	33.64%	49
Virginia	$92,090	13	20.45%	43	41.89%	42
Delaware	$87,534	14	24.73%	24	46.58%	31
Minnesota	$87,117	15	16.79%	50	41.70%	43
New York	$85,820	16	19.02%	46	45.76%	33
Oregon	$85,220	17	27.08%	18	66.85%	2
Rhode Island	$83,504	18	17.33%	49	52.13%	19
Illinois	$83,211	19	20.27%	44	44.86%	39
Vermont	**$82,730**	**20**	**31.32%**	**3**	**52.73%**	**18**
Arizona	$81,486	21	31.31%	4	62.75%	4

Vermont is in demand

Vermont Housing Affordability

In 1988, the income-to-price ratio was 2.97. In 2024, the ratio was 4.14.



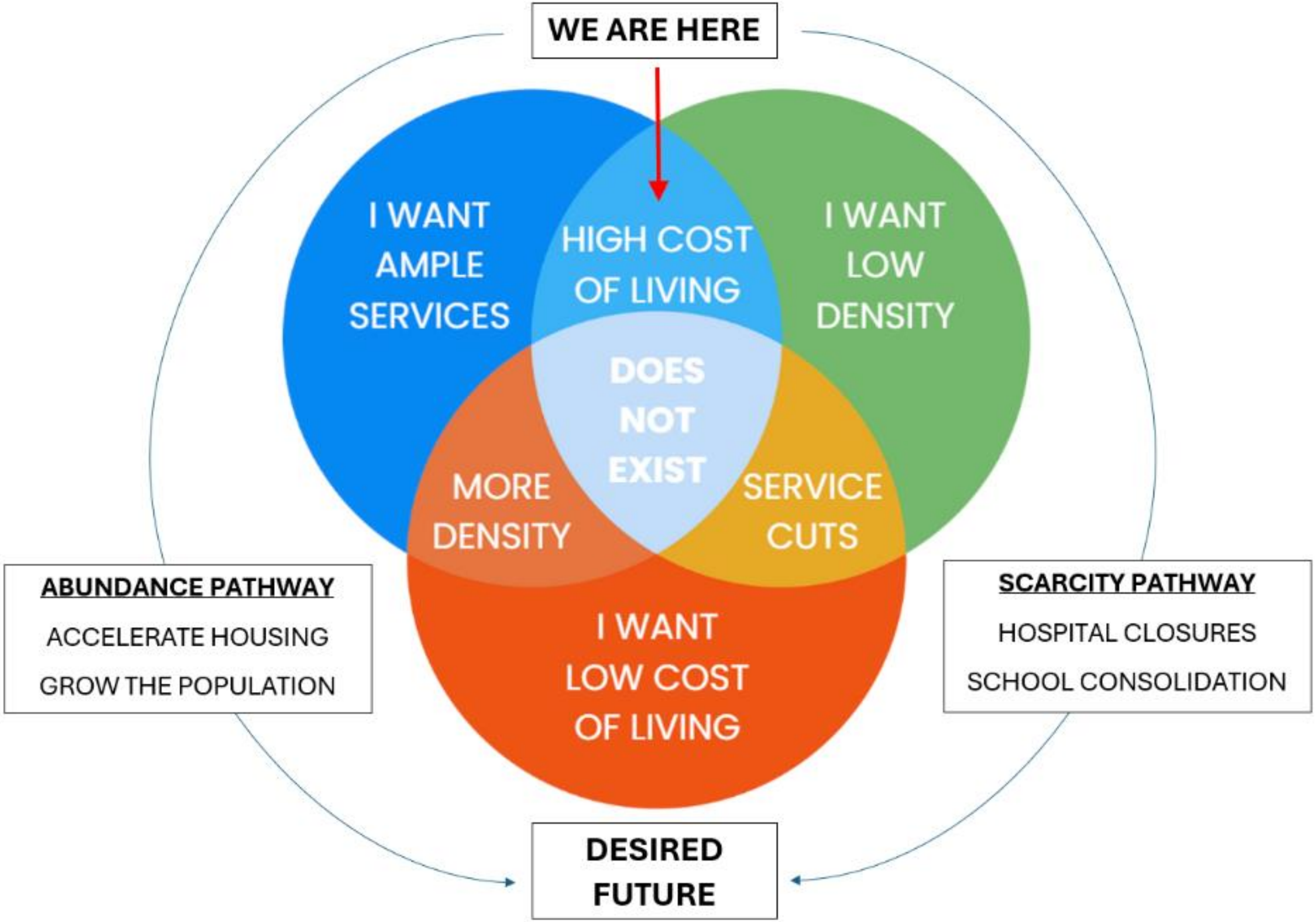
Shaded gray columns represent recessions.

Chart: Vermont Futures Project • Source: VT Dept. of Taxes and US Census Bureau via Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. • Created with Datawrapper


“Vermont needs more people.
More people need Vermont.”

VERMONT ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

Towards Affordability and Abundance


WE ARE HERE
I WANT AMPLE SERVICES
HIGH COST OF LIVING
I WANT LOW DENSITY
DOES NOT EXIST
MORE DENSITY
SERVICE CUTS
I WANT LOW COST OF LIVING
ABUNDANCE PATHWAY
ACCELERATE HOUSING
GROW THE POPULATION
SCARCITY PATHWAY
HOSPITAL CLOSURES
SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION
DESIRED FUTURE

Vermonters Want Affordability and Abundance

Data below shows Vermonter Poll results for this prompt:

Across the country and in Vermont, people are experiencing dramatic increases in their costs of living. Based on this, rank the following in order of importance to you with (1) being most important and (3) being least important.

Over 80% of respondents ranked maintaining low population growth and low population density as their least important. Addressing cost of living was most important to over 60% of respondents.

	1st	2nd	3rd
Maintaining adequate public infrastructure like roads and schools	33.2%	57.2%	9.6%
Decreasing the rate at which Vermont's cost of living is increasing	61.7%	30.7%	7.6%
Maintaining Vermont's low population growth and low population density	8.4%	11.1%	80.5%

Table: Vermont Futures Project • Source: UVM Center for Rural Studies • Created with Datawrapper

HEALTHCARE AFFORDABILITY AND COST OF DOING BUSINESS

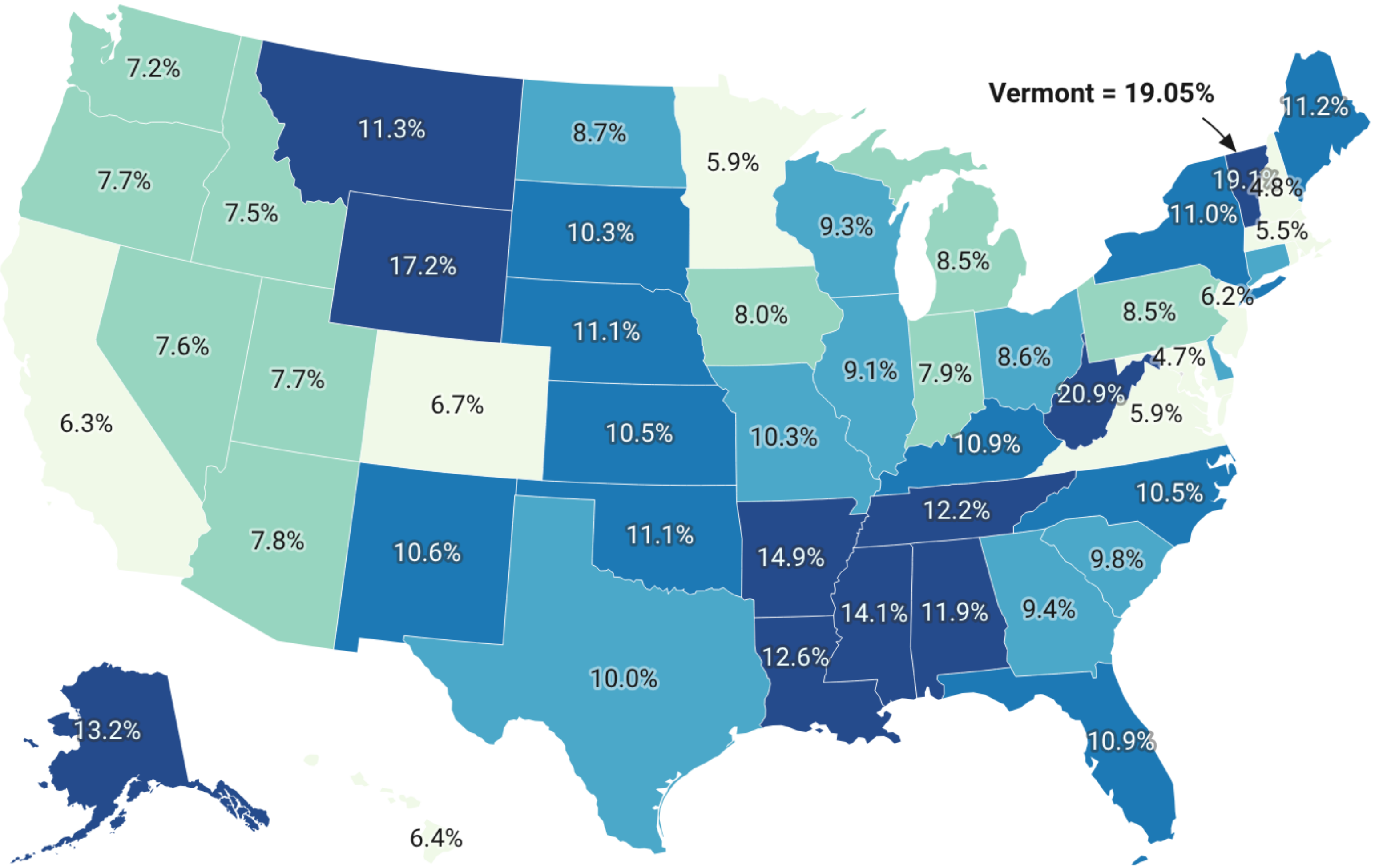
Inhibiting Growth

Health Insurance Costs as a Percentage of Median Household Income

Vermont ranks 49th with health insurance premiums that are 19% of median household income.

State Rankings (1 = least expensive, 50 = most expensive)

Top 10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | Bottom 10



Comparison across states is for premiums associated with Silver Health Insurance Plans. Data for Median Household Income are from U.S. Census Bureau

Map: Vermont Futures Project • Source: Kaiser Family Foundation • Created with Datawrapper

Percentage of Population by Age Groups

This table is sorted by the percentage in the 25-44 years cohort from most to least. Click on any header to sort by that category -- click again to toggle between ascending and descending order. The rankings will update accordingly.

Search in table

	State	25-44 ▼	<18	18-24	45-64	65+
1	District of Columbia	38.71%	18.51%	10.09%	19.78%	12.91%
2	Colorado	30.82%	20.26%	9.16%	23.31%	16.46%
3	Washington	30.02%	20.76%	8.48%	23.42%	17.32%
4	Alaska	29.93%	23.54%	9.19%	22.56%	14.78%
5	Texas	28.78%	24.47%	9.77%	23.03%	13.95%
6	California	28.68%	21.33%	9.24%	24.19%	16.55%
7	Nevada	28.60%	21.05%	8.02%	24.72%	17.61%
8	Utah	28.59%	26.62%	11.92%	20.46%	12.41%
9	North Dakota	28.28%	22.35%	10.96%	20.80%	17.61%
10	Oregon	28.14%	19.32%	8.48%	24.16%	19.90%
11	Massachusetts	27.41%	18.98%	9.91%	24.98%	18.72%
12	Georgia	27.33%	22.64%	9.49%	24.75%	15.79%
13	New York	27.28%	20.00%	8.94%	24.87%	18.91%
14	Virginia	27.14%	21.27%	9.36%	24.64%	17.60%
15	Illinois	27.08%	21.19%	9.19%	24.65%	17.90%
16	Rhode Island	26.96%	18.30%	10.04%	24.91%	19.79%
17	Maryland	26.89%	21.85%	8.47%	25.23%	17.56%
18	Tennessee	26.81%	21.81%	9.06%	24.69%	17.63%
19	Oklahoma	26.79%	23.52%	9.88%	22.91%	16.90%
20	Arizona	26.76%	20.91%	9.59%	23.08%	19.67%
30	Nebraska	26.26%	23.92%	9.92%	22.54%	17.36%
31	Kansas	26.24%	23.11%	10.01%	22.66%	17.97%
32	Missouri	26.19%	21.88%	9.21%	24.00%	18.72%
33	Ohio	26.00%	21.61%	8.93%	24.34%	19.11%
34	Kentucky	25.97%	22.23%	9.20%	24.60%	18.00%
35	Montana	25.83%	20.23%	9.10%	23.62%	21.23%
36	Arkansas	25.80%	22.61%	9.44%	23.94%	18.22%
37	Connecticut	25.79%	19.79%	9.30%	25.71%	19.41%
38	Pennsylvania	25.77%	20.07%	9.09%	24.69%	20.38%
39	Michigan	25.64%	20.75%	9.21%	24.80%	19.60%
40	Florida	25.63%	19.22%	8.16%	25.20%	21.80%
41	South Dakota	25.62%	23.53%	9.07%	22.77%	19.02%
42	Wisconsin	25.48%	20.69%	9.31%	24.87%	19.65%
43	Alabama	25.47%	21.95%	9.41%	24.65%	18.52%
44	South Carolina	25.40%	20.99%	9.18%	24.67%	19.76%
45	Iowa	25.38%	22.44%	9.93%	23.36%	18.90%
46	New Hampshire	25.33%	17.61%	8.72%	26.82%	21.52%
47	Mississippi	24.90%	22.83%	9.77%	24.44%	18.05%
48	Maine	24.84%	17.41%	7.86%	26.40%	23.48%
49	Delaware	24.66%	20.32%	8.69%	24.67%	21.66%
50	**Vermont**	**24.26%**	**17.28%**	**9.58%**	**25.99%**	**22.90%**
51	West Virginia	24.24%	19.64%	8.68%	25.58%	21.86%

Healthiest for older adults

2025 Senior Report State Rankings

Healthiest and least healthy states for older adults ranked across Social and Economic Factors, Physical Environment, Clinical Care, Behaviors and Health Outcomes.

No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5
VT	CO	WA	UT	CT
No. 50	No. 49	No. 48	No. 47	No. 46
MS	LA	WV	OK	KY

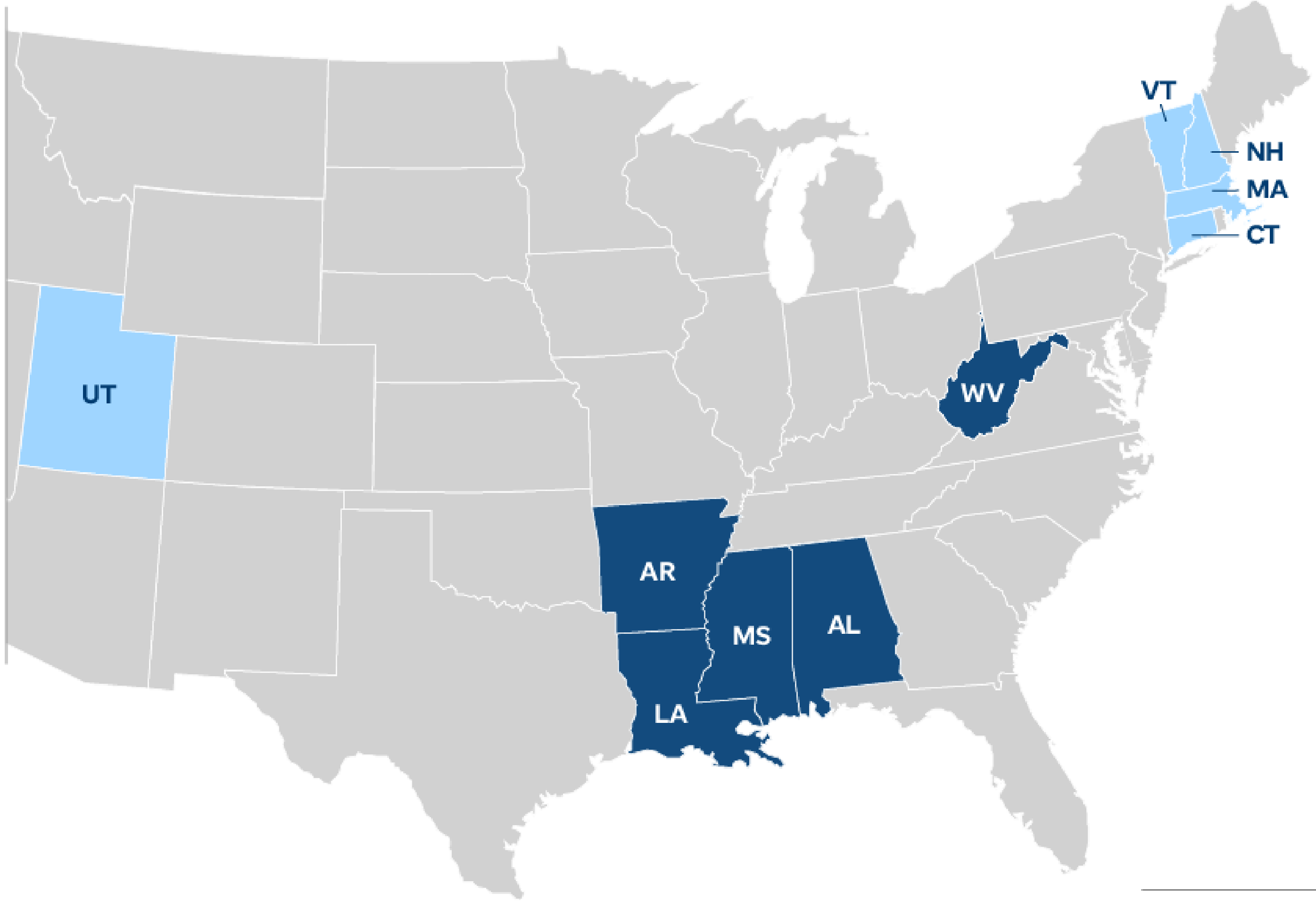
Healthiest States   Least Healthy States

Source: *America's Health Rankings* composite measure, 2025.

#3 Overall Healthiest

2025 Annual Report State Rankings

Healthiest and least healthy states ranked across Social and Economic Factors, Physical Environment, Clinical Care, Behaviors and Health Outcomes.



Healthiest States

1. New Hampshire
2. Massachusetts
3. Vermont
4. Connecticut
5. Utah

Least Healthy States

50. Louisiana
49. Arkansas
48. Mississippi
47. Alabama
46. West Virginia

Source: *America's Health Rankings* Composite Measure, 2025.

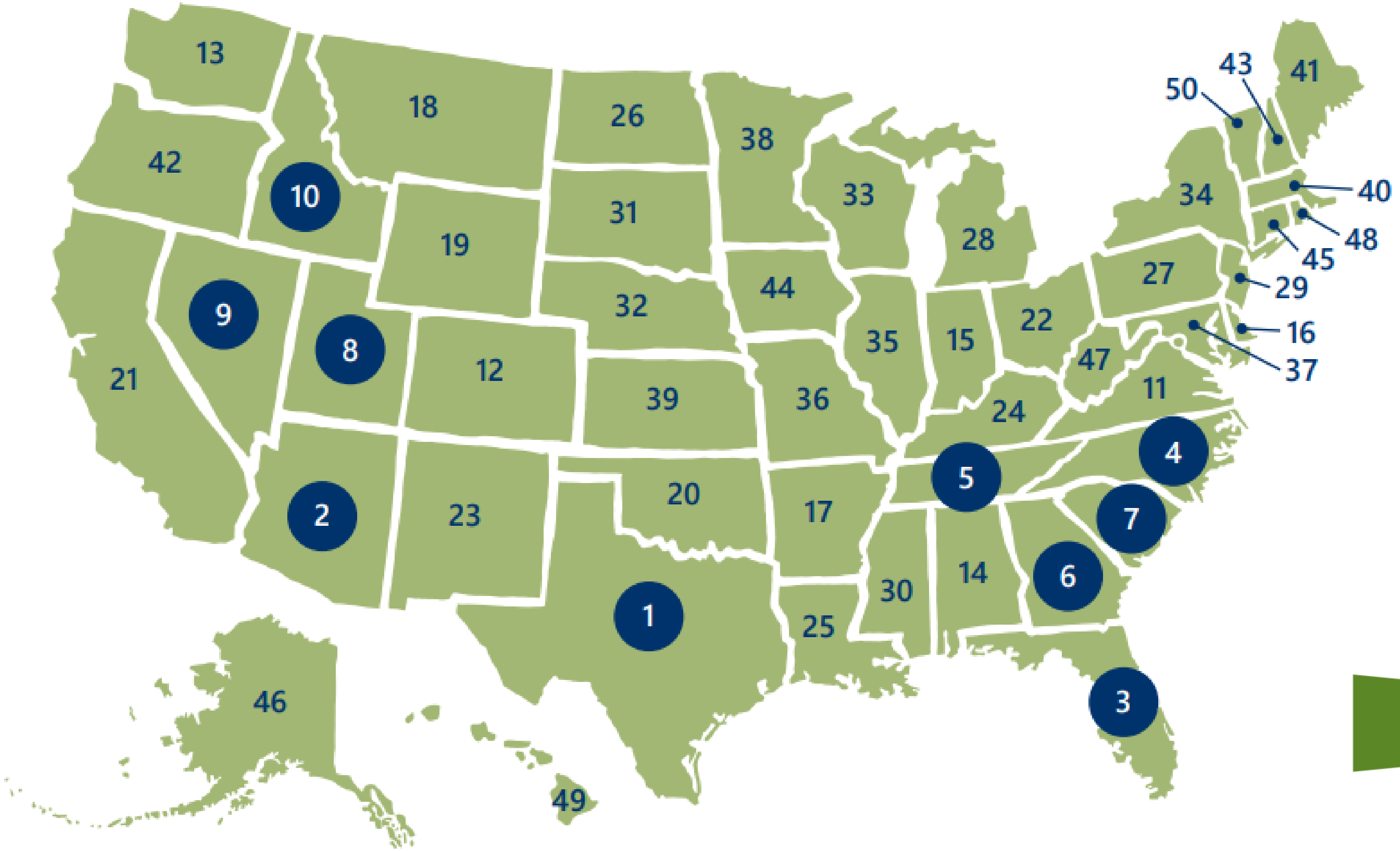
Fully Insured Small Group Market Comparison

On Exchange only	On & Off Exchange
2 Insurance Carriers	3 Insurance Carriers
13 Exchange Plans	78 Exchange Plans 163 Off Exchange Plans
Association Health Plans *prohibited*	Association Health Plans *permitted*
One National EPO Network	Four Networks: Narrow Network, HMO, PPO & EPO
Commissions not included in premiums. TRGs fee is $20 PEPM	Commissions included in premiums and paid by carriers. Commissions range from $31-$35 PEPM

The Richards Group TOTAL REWARDS

ECONOMIC GROWTH, TAX POLICY AND COMPETITIVENESS

2026 State Rankings for Economic Momentum



Vermont ranks last in the country for the second year in a row

camoin associates

What is Economic Momentum?

Camoin Associates says,

“Our model leans on hard growth metrics, including **population shifts** signaling labor and consumer demand, **employment trends** showing job creation, and **macroeconomic output** reflecting economic health. To gauge business friendliness, we’ve also included entrepreneurial signals, like new **business starts** and **tax structure analysis**. The result? A clear ranking of states that have experienced momentum in key growth categories over the past 4+ years and are poised for long-term success…”

Components of Economic Momentum

- **Population shifts**
  - 49 out of 51 for absolute change (-1,858)
  - 51 out of 51 for percent change (-0.29%)
- **Employment trends**
  - 46 out of 50 for percent change (-0.44%)
- **Macroeconomic output**
  - 50 out of 50 for absolute GDP ($36,399,000,000 chained 2017 dollars)
  - 37 out of 50 for per capita GDP ($56,128)
- **Business starts**
  - 50 out of 51 for net change in establishments (70)
  - 45 out of 51 for net change rate (0.37)
- **Tax Structure**
  - 42 out of 50 for tax competitiveness (Tax Foundation)
  - 51 out of 51 for effective business tax rate (Ernst & Young)
  - 3 out of 51 for tax progressivity (Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy)

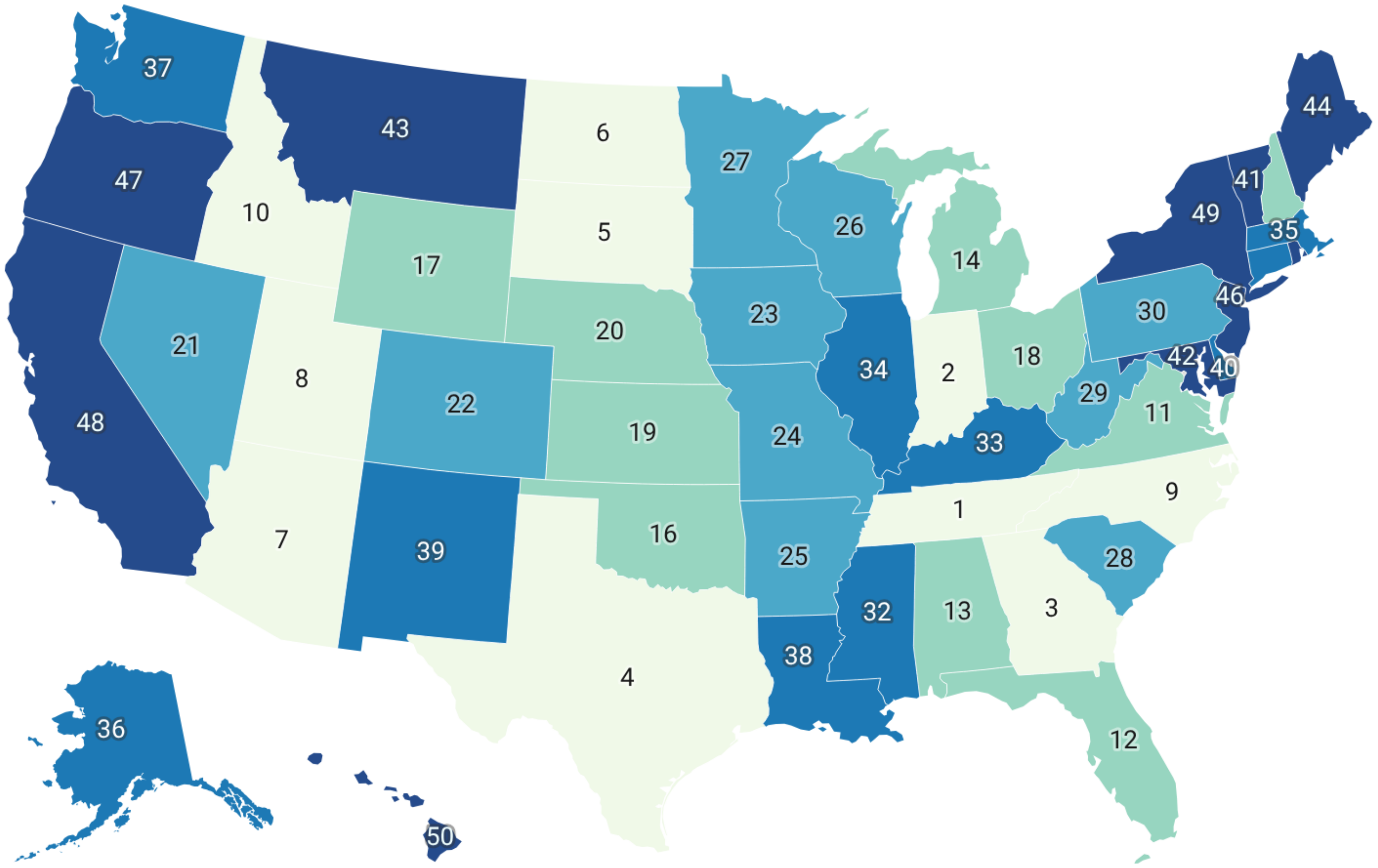
PERMITTING, REGULATION, AND PREDICTABILITY

Red Tape Index

The index evaluates states on the overall ease of building and operating a business, ranking them from 1 (least regulatory friction) to 50 (most burdensome). The composite benchmark aggregates performance across nine economic and regulatory dimensions: fiscal policy, land use, labor regulations, growth, affordability, infrastructure, business costs, general business friendliness, and approval/permitting velocity.

Red Tape Index Rank

Top 10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | Bottom 10



Map: Vermont Futures Project • Source: Red Tape Index powered by Labrynth • Created with Datawrapper

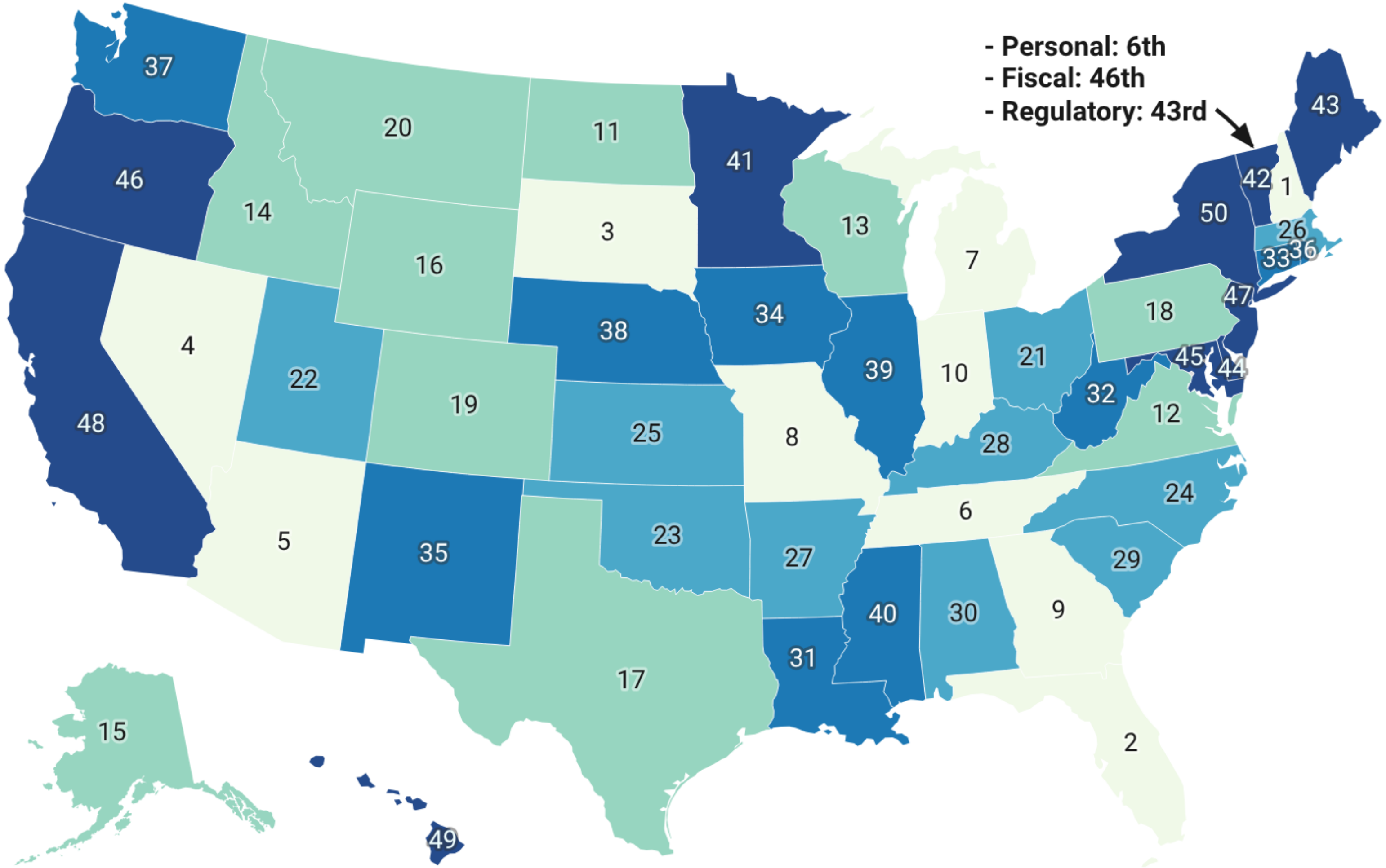
Social values and policy

Overall Freedom Ranking

The overall freedom ranking is a combination of personal, fiscal, and regulatory freedoms based on more than 230 state and local public policies. Vermont ranks 6th for Personal Freedom, but it's overall ranking of 42 is due to its low marks on economic freedom.

Overall Rank

Top 10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | Bottom 10



Map: Vermont Futures Project • Source: Cato Institute • Created with Datawrapper

Domestic Migration, Cost of Living, and Household Income

In general, states with lower cost of living experienced a net gain in domestic migration while states with higher cost of living experienced net losses. Housing is a major component impacting overall cost of living.

This table is sorted from highest to lowest by net domestic migration as a percentage of a state's overall population. Click on any header to sort by that category -- click again to toggle between ascending and descending order. The rankings will update accordingly.

Cost of Living Rank

Top 10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-51

	State	% of Overall Pop.	Domestic Migration	Cost of Living Index	Housing Component	2024 Median Household Income
1	South Carolina	1.20%	66,622	92.7	80.6	$72,350
2	Idaho	0.98%	19,915	99.3	100.3	$81,166
3	North Carolina	0.75%	84,064	97.9	94.0	$73,958
4	Delaware	0.65%	6,855	103.1	102.3	$87,534
5	Tennessee	0.58%	42,389	90.1	82.4	$71,997
6	Montana	0.55%	6,348	96.8	94.4	$75,340
7	Maine	0.52%	7,406	114.0	135.7	$76,442
8	Arkansas	0.46%	14,475	90.1	78.8	$62,106
9	New Hampshire	0.46%	6,554	110.5	115.6	$99,782
10	Alabama	0.45%	23,358	88.1	71.2	$66,659
11	Nevada	0.45%	14,914	99.7	110.7	$81,134
12	Arizona	0.41%	31,107	110.3	127.3	$81,486
13	West Virginia	0.36%	6,408	88.0	71.2	$60,798
14	Oklahoma	0.35%	14,492	84.7	68.8	$66,148
15	Wyoming	0.25%	1,474	94.6	87.1	$75,532
16	Georgia	0.24%	27,333	92.2	79.7	$79,991
17	South Dakota	0.23%	2,169	91.8	85.9	$76,881
18	Missouri	0.22%	14,028	88.9	77.5	$71,589
19	Texas	0.21%	67,299	91.1	79.4	$79,721
20	Indiana	0.17%	12,197	90.7	75.4	$71,959
21	Kentucky	0.16%	7,269	91.5	74.8	$64,526
22	Minnesota	0.14%	8,300	93.6	80.6	$87,117
23	Washington	0.12%	9,238	112.9	118.3	$99,389
24	Wisconsin	0.12%	6,984	98.5	99.0	$77,488
25	Florida	0.10%	22,517	101.4	103.5	$77,735
26	Ohio	0.10%	11,926	94.6	87.6	$72,212
27	Utah	0.09%	3,343	99.5	108.8	$96,658
28	Virginia	0.07%	6,268	102.2	106.7	$92,090
29	North Dakota	0.06%	512	91.1	75.7	$77,871
30	Oregon	0.05%	2,228	112.8	127.4	$85,220
31	Michigan	0.02%	1,796	91.9	78.3	$72,389
32	Kansas	-0.02%	-519	88.4	76.9	$75,514
33	Nebraska	-0.02%	-366	91.8	78.7	$76,376
34	Pennsylvania	-0.02%	-2,936	97.1	86.8	$77,545
35	Iowa	-0.03%	-970	89.8	77.7	$75,501
36	Mississippi	-0.03%	-917	86.0	71.6	$59,127
37	New Mexico	-0.11%	-2,267	93.7	88.6	$67,816
38	**Vermont**	**-0.11%**	**-726**	**113.5**	**129.0**	**$82,730**
39	Rhode Island	-0.14%	-1,551	110.7	115.1	$83,504
40	Connecticut	-0.16%	-5,945	114.0	122.3	$96,049
41	Maryland	-0.19%	-12,127	117.4	141.3	$102,905
42	Colorado	-0.20%	-12,100	103.1	108.8	$97,113
43	Illinois	-0.31%	-40,017	95.0	84.3	$83,211
44	Louisiana	-0.31%	-14,387	92.9	84.5	$60,986
45	New Jersey	-0.39%	-37,428	115.3	141.9	$104,294
46	Massachusetts	-0.47%	-33,340	148.5	221.0	$104,828
47	California	-0.58%	-229,077	143.1	199.4	$100,149
48	District of Columbia	-0.60%	-4,128	137.8	204.7	$109,707
49	Alaska	-0.61%	-4,525	126.7	123.6	$95,665
50	Hawaii	-0.62%	-8,876	183.9	299.0	$100,745
51	New York	-0.69%	-137,586	125.8	174.7	$85,820

Cost of Living index is benchmarked to a score of 100 which represents the United States average. Scores higher than the benchmark indicate higher cost of living; scores below the benchmark indicate lower cost of living.

Cost of Living Index data are 2025 averages from the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)

Domestic Migration and Median Household Income Data come from the US Census Bureau.

Table: Vermont Futures Project • Get the data • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

WORKFORCE, EDUCATION, AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT


802,000 by 2035

Status of talent pipeline: low volume, inefficient

Vermont lags behind the region in key educational performance metrics

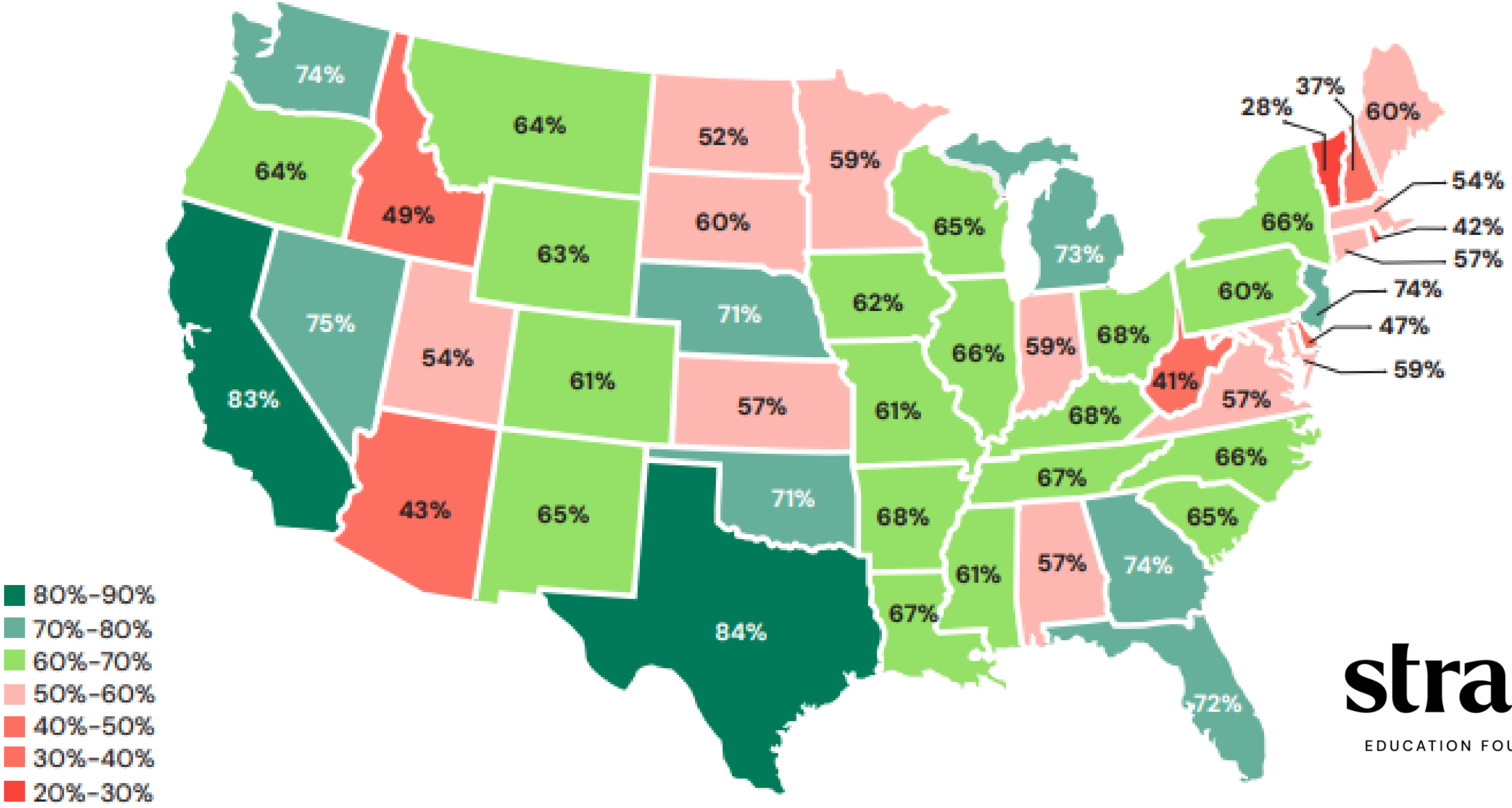
Category	Vermont	New England Average
High School Graduation (4-year)	82.0%	88.4%
High School Dropout	15.4%	5.9%
College Enrollment	40.1%	58.8%
College Completion	66.1%	66.2%

Table: Vermont Futures Project • Source: Great Schools Partnership: Common Data Project - 2024 Report • Created with Datawrapper

- Vermont ranks last out of all states for retention of college-bound students at just 45.4%, one of three states below 50%. Most states are above 70% and top states are just below 90%.

- Vermont 12th for import/export ratio meaning we attract a lot of students from other states to offset homegrown talent leaving. Improving post graduate retention would capitalize on this strength.

The retention of college-educated talent produced by in-state colleges differs appreciably across states



strada
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Recommendations from Strada

- Continue to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations for interstate migration.
- Strengthen high-impact investments in public postsecondary education to meet workforce needs.
- Facilitate statewide economic opportunities across all career stages.

“States with **high retention** of in-state college graduates tend to have **favorable economic conditions** for college-educated workers, including higher college wage premiums, **robust employment growth, and lower income tax rates**. This is consistent with college graduates of all age groups citing **economic opportunity as the primary reason for their interstate migrations**. State policymakers may consider **prioritizing economic development initiatives that attract employers** who will create jobs at multiple experience levels and ensure that workforce development and relocation incentive programs include mid-career and senior professionals in addition to entry-level workers.”

Summary

- There are strengths (healthy communities, strong demand, room to grow)
- Weaknesses are fixable (regulations, tax policy, economic opportunity)
- Data shows what is and isn’t working across the country

Vermont’s future depends on people and places.

We need more of both, and most Vermonters support this.

VERMONTER POLL RESULTS

Are you supportive of growing Vermont's population size to strengthen its workforce?

Response	2022	2025	2026	Change from 2022 to 2026
Yes	48.7%	60.2%	**64.2%**	15.5%
No	38.5%	20.8%	**13.5%**	−25.0%
Unsure	12.8%	19.0%	**22.3%**	9.5%

Table: Vermont Futures Project • Source: Vermonter Poll - UVM Center for Rural Studies • Created with Datawrapper

VERMONTER POLL RESULTS

Are you supportive of creating new housing to increase the population in...?

Local, regional, and state level support for more housing has increased while opposition and uncertainty has decreased.

	Response	2023	2025	2026	Change from 2023 to 2026
Vermont	**Yes**	**60.0%**	**73.4%**	**78.9%**	18.9%
	No	20.3%	12.9%	**11.6%**	−8.7%
	Unsure	19.7%	13.7%	**9.5%**	−10.2%
Your Town	**Yes**	**57.2%**	**65.9%**	**73.6%**	16.4%
	No	24.6%	19.2%	**18.5%**	−6.1%
	Unsure	18.2%	14.8%	**7.9%**	−10.3%
Your Neighborhood	**Yes**	**46.3%**	**50.5%**	**62.0%**	15.7%
	No	31.0%	31.9%	**28.8%**	−2.2%
	Unsure	22.7%	17.6%	**9.3%**	−13.4%

Table: Vermont Futures Project • Source: Vermonter Poll - UVM Center for Rural Studies • Created with Datawrapper

BUSINESS CLIMATE SURVEY

COMPETITIVENESS DASHBOARD