



Touchstones for a Stronger New Jersey

New Start New Jersey produced **Touchstones for a Stronger New Jersey** to measure the state's performance and current standing within consequential categories – Fiscal Health, Innovation, Business and Economy, Quality of Life and Affordability, Education, and Infrastructure.

This combined information aims to provide New Jersey's citizens with relevant data by which to assess the overall health of the state at present, as well as establish objective standards to which New Jersey can aspire in the future.

FISCAL HEALTH	INNOVATION	BUSINESS & ECONOMY	QUALITY OF LIFE & AFFORDABILITY	EDUCATION	INFRASTRUCTURE
New Jersey's poor fiscal management, notably the underfunded pension, presents challenges.	New Jersey owns a history of innovation, but limited funding and middling STEM support hinders progress.	While New Jersey's proximity to major markets and strong workforce offer opportunity, growth appears inhibited.	Despite being one of the most affluent states in the country, the high cost of living pushes many New Jersey households into or near poverty.	New Jersey's education system consistently ranks highly, although with the drawback of costly college tuition.	Poorly maintained roads and bridges, as well as brutal commute times, undermine productivity and compromise overall quality of life.
			<p>9th lowest poverty rate in 2017, down from 4th lowest in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>Talk Poverty</i></p>	<p>4th best in overall education in 2017, up from 6th in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>CNBC</i></p> <p>10th most highly educated state in the nation.</p> <p>Source: <i>WalletHub</i></p>	
↑ TOP 10 STATES ↑					
MID RANGE	<p>Ranked 18th most innovative state in 2017, previously ranked 17th in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>CNBC</i></p> <p>13th highest R&D spending in 2015, but 31st in federal funds received for such activities.</p> <p>Source: <i>National Science Foundation</i></p> <p>22nd highest concentration of STEM graduates in the nation.</p> <p>Source: <i>Site Selection Group</i></p>	<p>Ranked 26th best workforce in the country in 2017, previously ranked 16th in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>CNBC</i></p> <p>Unemployment rate of 4.5%, the 32nd highest in the U.S.</p> <p>Source: <i>Bureau of Labor Statistics</i></p> <p>Rated 39th overall state to do business, up from 41st the prior year.</p> <p>Source: <i>Forbes</i></p>			MID RANGE
↓ BOTTOM 10 STATES ↓					
<p>Rated 50th worst solvency in the country in 2017, down from 48th in 2016.</p> <p>Sources: <i>Mercatus Center</i></p> <p>Ranked 50th in the nation for funding ratio of public pension obligation.</p> <p>Source: <i>Bloomberg</i></p>	<p>Ranked 5th highest cost of doing business in 2017, previous ranking of 8th in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>CNBC</i></p>	<p>Ranked 8th highest in income inequality in 2015, down from 14th in 2014.</p> <p>Source: <i>United States Census Bureau</i></p> <p>Ranked 10th highest cost of living in 2017, previously ranked 9th in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>CNBC</i></p>	<p>4th most expensive public in-state college tuition in 2017.</p> <p>Source: <i>Collegeboard</i></p>	<p>2nd longest commute time in the U.S.</p> <p>Source: <i>United States Census Bureau</i></p> <p>Ranked 5th worst infrastructure in 2017, previously ranked 6th worst in 2016.</p> <p>Source: <i>CNBC</i></p>	