
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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IOWA'S 2019 STATE RANKING

Iowa's Rank. Iowa has been recognized as the 14th best overall state in the country by U.S. News & World Report. The [Best States rankings](#) evaluate all 50 states across a range of criteria, including education, health care, infrastructure, and the economy. Iowa was ranked 1st overall in 2018.

About the Rankings. The Best States rankings are the centerpiece of the U.S. News Best States portal, a platform combining analysis, daily reporting, historical information, and photos related to state issues. This year, U.S. News streamlined the ranking methodology. The [rankings are based on](#) more than 70 metrics and tens of thousands of data points. Adding to a set of annual surveys that determine the weights of the eight categories, U.S. News conducted a survey asking more than 23,000 people across the country to provide levels of satisfaction with government services and to prioritize where state governments should focus resources.

U.S. News is continually assessing the data used in the rankings and the methods used to evaluate them. Feedback from industry experts, government officials, and state residents informed a methodology review process that resulted in several changes. The 2019 Best States rankings should, therefore, be viewed independently from prior years' rankings.

Each state's performance in the overall ranking correlates directly with its ranking in each of the eight categories, including health care, education, economy, infrastructure, opportunity, fiscal stability, crime and corrections, and natural environment. The overall ranking takes a holistic view of all these category rankings to determine which states are best for their citizens in all aspects. If a state performed well in several categories, especially those weighted more heavily, it is likely to rank highly overall. Also, state rankings are relative; a low ranking does not necessarily mean a state is failing, but just that other states outperformed it in that category or metric.

Weights. The overall Best States ranking is determined from how each of the 50 U.S. states ranks in eight categories. The weights of the categories are as follows:

- Health Care 16.0%
- Education 15.8%
- Economy 13.8%
- Infrastructure 12.9%
- Opportunity 12.7%
- Fiscal Stability 10.5%
- Crime and Corrections 9.9%
- Natural Environment 8.4%

Iowa's Rank by Category. Iowa was ranked by category as follows:

- Crime and Corrections 19th
- Economy 32nd
- Education 9th

- Fiscal Stability 17th
- Health Care 20th
- Infrastructure 23rd
- Opportunity 2nd
- Natural Environment 32nd

Iowa was ranked 1st in several subcategory components:

- High school graduation rate.
- Government credit rating score.
- Child wellness visits.
- Health care affordability.
- Housing affordability.

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