



2025 ThinkTennessee State of Our State Dashboard

Charting Tennessee's Prosperity: 15 Metrics that Matter Most

Following a comprehensive review of peer frameworks and academic research, **ThinkTennessee has identified 15 key metrics that have been shown to improve economic prosperity.** These metrics cover a range of issue areas, including overall state economic performance, the environment, health, economic opportunity, housing, infrastructure, education, and civic participation. This report summarizes the data available for *Tennessee's 15 Metrics that Matter Most*. All data was compiled by Think Tennessee from the sources listed.

Issue Area	Indicator	TN Rank	TN Value	U.S. State Average	Description	Source
Elections & Civic Life	Volunteering - Overall	#17	33.2%	30.6%	Percentage of residents who spent any time volunteering for any organization or association in the past year.	AmeriCorps, 2023.
Housing	Home Ownership - Overall	#25	68.9%	68%	Percentage of households who own their homes.	U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
Energy & Environment	Air Pollution - Overall	#26	7.7µg/m3	7.7µg/m3	Average exposure of the public to particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less, measured in micrograms per cubic meter.	United Health Foundation's analysis of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data, 2023.
Economic Opportunity	Workers Earning Living Wages - Overall	#29	24.3%	25.4%	Percentage of workers who earn an hourly wage equal to or higher than the state's living wage for a two-working-adult, one-child household.	National Bureau of Economic Research; A. K. Glasmeier, 2024.
Housing	Renter Housing Affordability - Overall	#29	47.1%	47.6%	Percentage of renter-occupied housing units who spend less than 30% of their income on housing costs.	U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
Transportation & Infrastructure	Average Commute to Work - Overall	#32	25.70 Minutes	25 Minutes	Average travel time to work, in minutes, traveling one way.	U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
Health	Low Birthweight - Overall	#35	9%	8.6%	Percentage of live births weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds). Births of unknown weight are excluded.	The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022.
State Economy	Labor Force Participation Rate - Overall	#40	59.5%	63.1%	Percentage of the total civilian, non-institutionalized population	National Bureau of Economic

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					that is either working or actively looking for work.	Research, 2024.
Education	Post-High School Educational Attainment - Overall	#41	41.2%	46.5%	Percentage of people aged 25 to 64 with at least an associate's degree.	Lumina Foundation, 2022.
Economic Opportunity	Poverty - Overall	#42	14%	12%	Percentage of the total non-institutionalized population over the age of 16 whose income over the past 12 months was below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).	U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
Economic Opportunity	Borrowers with Severely Delinquent Debt - Overall	#42	17.7%	13.3%	Percentage of borrowers with at least one severely delinquent type of debt (debt being 90+ days past due, in collections, or classified as severely derogatory).	States for the Future analysis of Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia data, 2022.
Criminal Justice & Courts	Total Incarceration Rate - Overall	#44	817 per 100,000 Residents	603 per 100,000 Residents	Number of people that are confined in state, local, juvenile, federal, or other correctional facilities per 100,000 residents.	Prison Policy Initiative, 2022.
Education	Young Children Not in School - Overall	#44	61%	55.1%	Children ages 3 to 4 not enrolled in school, including nursery school, preschool school or kindergarten, during the previous three months.	U.S. Census Bureau, 2022.
Health	Adults Avoiding Care Due to Cost - Overall	#46	14.9%	10.7%	Percentage of adults that forgo needed medical care due to cost as part of the civilian non-institutionalized population 18 years and over.	SHADAC, 2023.
Elections & Civic Life	Voter Turnout (Presidential Election) - Overall	#47	59.81%	67.87%	Percentage of the eligible voting population who cast a ballot, reported by the state's leading election authority.	MIT Election Data and Science Lab, 2020.

To learn more about the supporting literature on the *15 Metrics that Matter Most*, please visit our **Technical Documentation** section.