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Connecticut Ranks 3rd In 'Opportunity Index'

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Despite the taxes and the cold weather, Connecticut offers its residents more “access to opportunity” than nearly every other state in the nation, according to a recent report.

The “**Opportunity Index**,” developed by **Measure Of America**, ranks all 50 states and thousands of counties according to 16 measures, among them income, employment, education level, engagement in civic life and youth engagement.

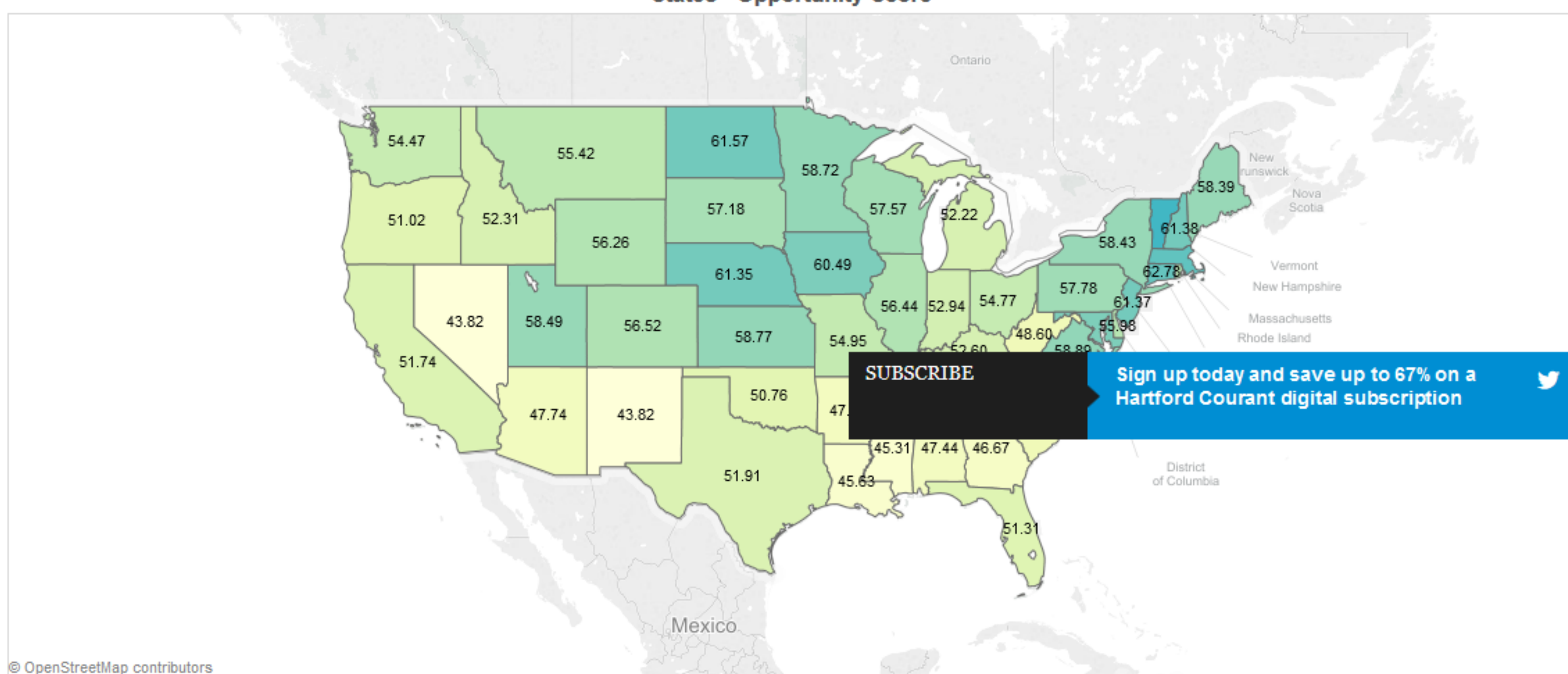
Connecticut ranks third overall, behind Vermont and Massachusetts. New Mexico, Nevada and much of the Deep South are at the bottom of the list.

Connecticut, Land Of Third-Most Opportunity

← Connecticut ranks 3rd in the "opportunity index"
Counties in the Northeast had higher grades.
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Show on map: Year:

States - Opportunity Score



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Values: 43.82 to 66.03

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In the education category — an index combining the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds in school, the percentage of high schoolers who graduate in four years, and the percentage of adults with at least an associate’s degree — Connecticut ranks second, behind only New Jersey.

In the “community and civic life” category — including membership in social and civic groups, youth engagement with the community, crime, number of doctors and grocery stores — Connecticut is the fourth-highest-ranked state, behind Vermont, New York and Massachusetts.

A **previous report** from the group showed that the level of “disconnected youth” in Connecticut was relatively low.

But in the “jobs and the local economy” category, Connecticut doesn’t do as well, according to the report — coming in 17th. While the poverty rate is low, the “80-20” ratio, which measures the distance between rich and poor, is high. Connecticut is also the seventh-worst state for the percentage of households that spend less than 30 percent of their income on housing (61.5 percent). In North Dakota, the top-ranked state in that category, 76.8 percent of households spend less than 30 percent of their incomes on housing.

But overall, the picture is good, according to the report.

“Access to opportunity has increased nearly 9 percent nationally since 2011, reflecting a dramatically improved post-recession employment picture, higher high school graduation rates and a significant drop in violent crime, among other factors,” the report states. “Despite these gains, increasing poverty and income inequality combined with stagnant wages continue to impede progress for middle and lower income communities.”

“The increased scores and grades seen over the past five years were driven primarily by improvements in the Jobs and Local Economy dimension; as the economy recovered from the Great Recession, unemployment fell with positive effects on Index Scores,” according to **the full report**. “These improvements are heartening. But the above analysis shows that more progress is urgently needed on multiple indicators to expand upward mobility more broadly, particularly for low-income youth.”

The data in the report come from government sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the FBI, the report states.

"Measure of America" is a project of the national Social Science Resource Council, which itself is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the United Nations, as well as some foreign governments, according to the SSRC's website. U.S. government agencies also provide support, especially the Department of State and the National Science Foundation, the website states.



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