



New Jersey

Addressing the threat of brain drain

New Jersey was one of a handful of states on the 2018 U.S. Innovation Scorecard to improve its rank, rising from Innovation Adopter to Innovation Leader. That jump was supported by solid grades in most categories, most notably Fast Internet and Grants Advanced Degrees.

The Garden State tied Delaware for the highest score in Fast Internet: 86 percent of its households have internet connections of at least 10 mbps, and a remarkable 83 percent enjoy speeds of 25 mbps or more. And with more than 14 percent of New Jersey residents holding graduate or professional degrees, the state outperformed all but four others in Grants Advanced Degrees.

The state's tech workforce saw a steep decline during the recession but has been on a steady upward trend since 2012. Despite those promising trends, the state faces challenges in keeping homegrown talent from leaving for other locales. While its tech industry is growing, the workers needed to fill those jobs are increasingly flocking to other states. From 2007 to 2014, more than 800,000 millennials left the state.

That data spurred the state's business community and academics to determine how to retain and attract young talent to the state. Early proposals include efforts to offset the state's high tuition costs with financial aid for graduating New Jersey high school seniors to attend school in-state. "There's tremendous innovation going on in higher education in the state of New Jersey, but we're not shining enough of a light on it," said Nicole Sandelier, a New Jersey policy analyst.

Sources: (Comptia) (Press of Atlantic City) (NJB Magazine)

WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

Nearly 90 percent of households have internet speeds of at least 10 mbps.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR?

The state's Innovation-Friendly grade was hurt by unrealistic e-waste recycling goals and an unevenly applied law that amounts to a state takeover of a privately-managed system.

WHERE HAVE WE MOST IMPROVED?

A 2017 law legalized rideshare services, improving the state's grade from a 'B' in 2017.

Best & Brightest	C
Fast Internet	A+
Grants Advanced Degrees	A-
Tech Workforce	B
Tax Friendly	F
Attracts Investment	B
Entrepreneurial Activity	B
Ridesharing	A
Short-Term Rentals	B+
Sustainable Policies	D-
Self-Driving Vehicles	A
Drones	A



Fast Internet

New Jersey topped most other states in Fast Internet with 86 percent of households having access to internet speeds of at least 10 mbps and 83 percent having broadband speeds of at least 25 mbps.



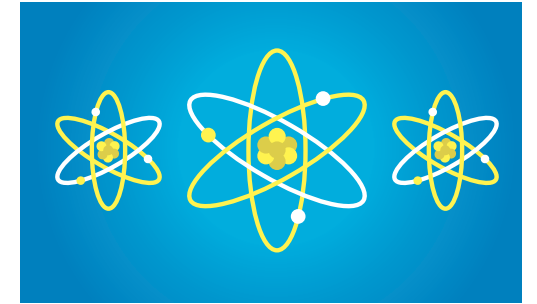
Entrepreneurial Activity

Small businesses created just under 60 jobs per 1,000 people between Q2/2011 and the end of 2016.



Tech Workforce

Roughly 39 jobs per 1,000 people are in the tech industry, a step ahead of many other states.



Grants Advanced Degrees

New Jersey outpaces most other states in Grants Advanced Degrees, with 14.4 percent of its residents holding diplomas from graduate programs.

Automating Order Fulfillment, Without Displacing Factory Workers

Workers have long worried about automation costing them their jobs. But in New Jersey, one company is flipping the script.

When bulk shopping company Boxed installed three-story robots to automate work at its Garden State fulfillment center, it no longer needed the work of more than 100 employees, but rather than slashing payroll, the startup kept everyone on staff by retraining its workers for other positions, such as customer service or machine operation. The startup also turned many of its temps into full-time employees, boosting their salaries by 13 percent.

A recent report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that 14 percent of jobs in OECD countries, including the U.S., are "highly automatable." In the United States, the report estimates that 13 million jobs are at risk from automation. But companies such as Boxed are showing how automation can be a win-win for businesses and workers. If the process goes well in New Jersey, the company plans to retrain employees at its centers in Georgia, Texas and Nevada.

PHOTO CREDIT: Ben Fox Rubin, CNET | Source: (Fortune)

