Washington

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Most Washington men are working. But boys trail girls in reading and college entry, tens of thousands of young men are outside work and school, and real pay has stalled for men without a degree.

Boys trail girls in reading and college entry

Share of Washington public school students and graduates

Fourth-grade reading, at or above NAEP Proficient, 2024



Enrolled in college within a year, class of 2024



3rd

One of the widest reading gaps

Washington's gap between girls and boys in fourth-grade reading is the **third largest among states**. Boys fell from 33% in 2019; girls held steady.

59%

Men's rate in 2008

Share of male graduates enrolling in college within a year, before falling to 47% for the class of 2024.

89%

of men ages 25–54 were working or looking for work, compared with 78% of women.

245,000

men ages 25–54 were not employed, 15% of civilian men in that age group.

36%

of men ages 25–54 outside the labor force reported a disability.

Young men outside work and school

53,000

Neither working nor in school

Men ages 16–24, 12% of that age group.

2 in 3

Live with a parent

Share of men ages 16–24 neither working nor in school who live in a parent's home.

2 in 3

Not looking for work

Share of men ages 16–24 neither working nor in school who were not looking for work.

15%

At home at 25–34

Share of men ages 25–34 living in a parent's home, compared with 11% of women.

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics (NAEP); Washington Education Research and Data Center; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2020–2024; AIBM analysis. Full notes on page 3.

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Men with degrees have pulled ahead on pay, and the fields adding the most jobs in Washington employ few men. Opening education and career pathways into those fields is an economic priority.

Pay gains have favored men with degrees

1.9×

A wider degree pay gap

Median pay for men with a bachelor's degree compared with men without one in 2022–24, up from 1.7× in 2005–07, **fifth highest among states**.

+12%

Gains with a degree

Change in real median pay for men with a bachelor's degree, 2005–07 to 2022–24.

~0%

Flat without one

Change in real median pay for men without a bachelor's degree over the same period.

Growing fields, few men

95,000

additional private-sector jobs in education, health care and social assistance projected in Washington from 2024 to 2034.

3 in 10

of all projected new nonfarm jobs in the state are in those fields.

Men's share of employed Washington residents in each field (green); women's share in gray. 2020–2024.

All jobs in health care and social assistance 24% men



Registered nurses 14% men



Pre-K–12 teachers, including preschool 22% men



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics (CPI-U); Washington Employment Security Department, July 2026 projections; AIBM analysis. Earnings cover full-time, year-round male wage earners ages 25–54, in 2024 dollars. Ranks compare point estimates across the 50 states. Full notes on page 3.

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Data, sources and notes

Measure	Washington finding	Source	Notes
Fourth-grade reading	Boys 27%, girls 37%; gap 11 points, third largest. Boys 33% in 2019.	NAEP, 2019, 2024	Public school students at or above NAEP Proficient. Percentages and gap rounded independently.
College enrollment	Male 47%, female 59% (class of 2024). Male 59% in 2008.	ERDC, 2008, 2024	Public high school graduates; enrollment from the summer after graduation through the next spring, in or out of state.
Degree pay ratio	1.7× (2005–07); 1.9× (2022–24). Fifth highest.	ACS PUMS; CPI-U	Men 25–54, 35+ hours a week, 50+ weeks a year, positive wage income; BA compared with no BA. Rank uses 2020–24.
Real pay growth	With BA +12%; without BA about 0%, 2005–07 to 2022–24.	ACS PUMS; CPI-U	Weighted median wage and salary income for the same group; annual CPI-U adjustment to 2024 dollars.
Working or looking	Men 89% (17th highest); women 78%.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Ages 25–54, including Armed Forces. Participation counts working and looking for work.
Not employed	245,000 men; 15% of civilian men 25–54.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Unemployed men plus men outside the labor force; not an unemployment rate.
Disability	36% of men 25–54 outside the labor force.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Denominator is men outside the labor force; self-reported disability.
Outside work and school	53,000 men; 12% (20th highest). Two-thirds live with parents; two-thirds not seeking work.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Men 16–24 not employed or enrolled in the past three months; includes institutions. Exact count: 53,399.
Living with parents	Men 15% (11th lowest); women 11%. Men 10% in 2005–07.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Ages 25–34; child of householder. Historical figure uses pooled 2005–07 ACS samples.
Health care and social assistance	24% male.	ACS table C24030, 2020–24	Employed civilian residents 16+ by industry; excludes educational services (31% male).
Registered nurses	14% male; 12th-highest male share.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Employed civilian residents 16+; occupation code 3255.
Pre-K–12 teachers	22% male; 24th-highest male share.	ACS PUMS, 2020–24	Employed civilian residents 16+; public, private and preschool. Occupation codes 2300, 2310, 2320, 2330.
Job growth	95,000 additional private-sector jobs, 2024–34; about 30% of net new nonfarm jobs.	ESD projections, July 2026	Education, health care and social assistance: 547,200 to 642,200. Public schools counted separately. Net growth excludes replacement openings.

Ranks: unrounded point estimates across the 50 states; DC and territories excluded. Small rank differences may reflect sampling uncertainty. **Rounding:** whole percentages and percentage-point gaps are rounded independently; calculations retain full precision.