

METHODOLOGY

America's Best in State Employers Ranking **2026**



America's Best in State Employers honors organizations that have a reputation for being an ideal place to work in the future

Ranking's cornerstones



Methodology

America's Best in State Employers are identified in an independent survey from a vast sample of over **245,000 employees** working for companies employing **at least 500 people** within the U.S.

The survey is conducted using several online access panels, providing a representative sample of the U.S. workforce. Each employee is asked in which state and for which company/firm/institution/organization he or she works for in an open-ended question with an autofill option. The ranking is open to companies **from all industry sectors**, which have **more than 500 employees in the U.S.** In total, the survey takes an average of 8-12 minutes to complete. The survey is conducted periodically over the course of the previous 3 years. Around **2 million employer evaluations** are considered.

The consideration of data from a 3-year period allows a robust differentiation between organizations that consistently perform well from those that may only have had a single good year.

An employer's final score is determined on a state-by-state basis and is built upon two types of employee evaluations:

1. **Personal Evaluations** (those given by employees themselves, also known as *direct* evaluations): employee willingness to recommend their own employers to friends and family, on a scale from 0 to 10. Evaluations from employees *within* the state are given the highest weight
2. **Public Evaluations** (from friends and family members of employees, or members of the public who work in the same industry- also known as *indirect* evaluations): capture public perception and represent a mix of in-state (more highly weighted) evaluations and national (lower weighted) evaluations

The final ranking is composed of 51 state-sublists (50 states + Washington DC). Each state-sublist ranks from 3* to 101* employers, depending on the size of the state and the number of responses we receive. Employers receiving the highest total scores within a given state are awarded as the "Best in State Employers 2026". Employers are eligible to be ranked in multiple states. In total, there are 2500 ranking positions.



Executive Summary

- **Title of ranking:** America's Best in State Employers 2026
- **Media partner:** Forbes
- **Edition:** 8th
- **Number of awardees:** 2500
- **Methodology:** Survey
- **Criteria used for determining rank:** Online survey of employees assessing various evaluations of company performance as an employer within their state. Companies were scored across multiple dimensions, with the highest scores determining the final ranking.

America's Best in State Employers follows the same approach as other employers projects

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Process

Data-based results



The ranking is based on data collected through online panels, with **over 245,000 participants** across various employers

Data collection through online access panels



Online Access Panel

An online access panel is a sample group set up by a survey company and available for custom-built surveys. People register and agree to take part in online surveys.



>245,000 Participants

- ✓ **Full-Time** (> 35 hours per week)
- ✓ **Part-Time** (< 35 hours per week)
- ✗ **Unemployed**
- ✗ **Self-employed**
- ✗ **Company size** < 500 employees



Survey Periods

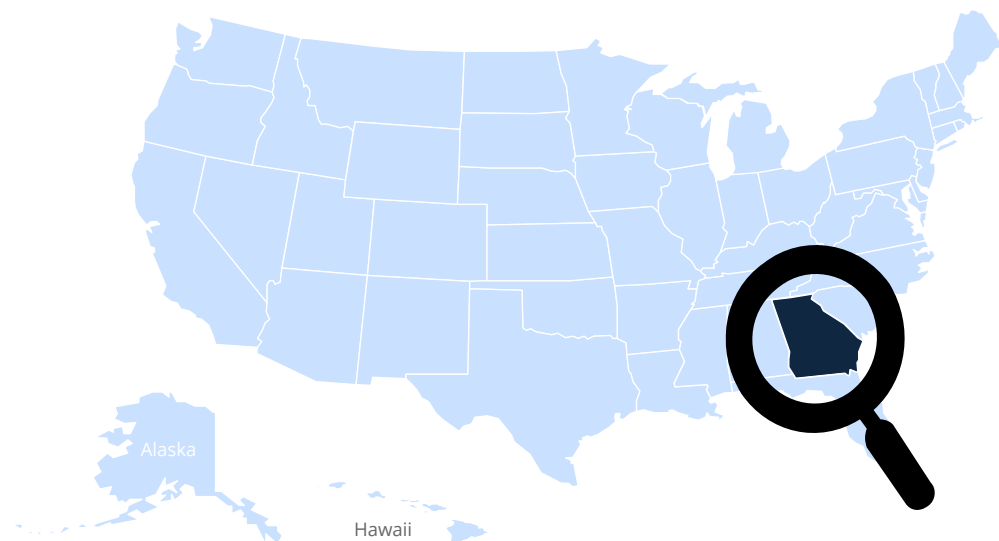
January - July*, September - November*
Over a 3 year period

The survey is conducted using an **online access panel**, providing a representative sample of **>245,000 employees** over the last three years working part- or full-time for companies and institutions employing **at least 500 employees in the U.S.**

Employers have the chance to be ranked in multiple states

Employers are evaluated on a state-by-state basis

State specific focus

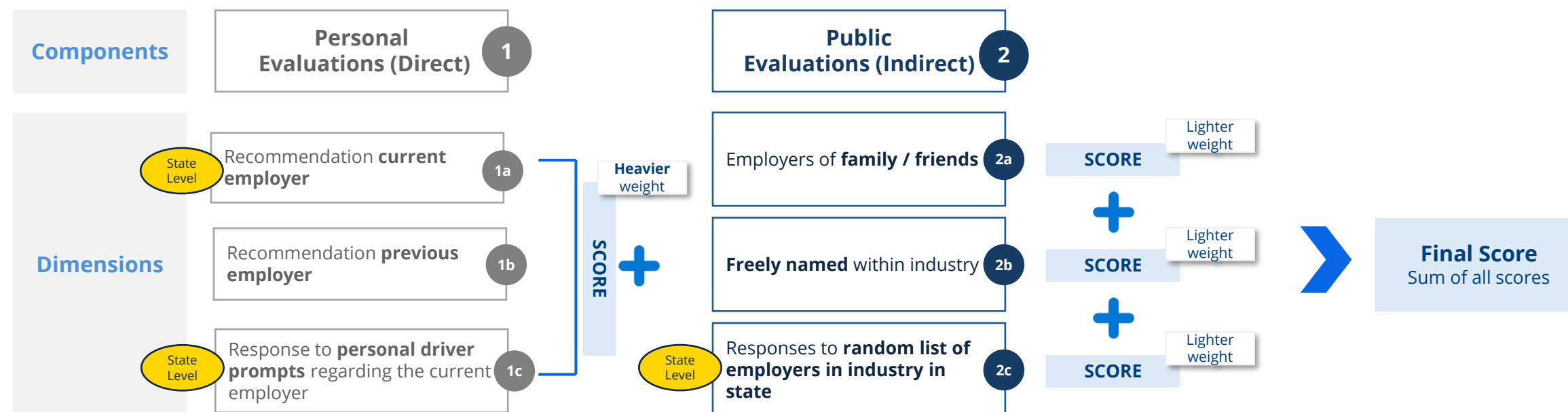


Benchmarks

- > In order to be considered, an organization must have at least **~500 employees** in the respective state
- > Employers with operations in more than one state can be **ranked in multiple states**
- > The **number of employers** awarded in each state **varies** based on the number of relevant employers and size of the states' workforce, as well as the amount of data collected in that state
- > The **number of employers** awarded in any given state ranges from **3 to 101***
- > All 50 states are included, plus Washington DC (for a total of 51 sublists)

The scoring model is founded on two key components: Personal Evaluations and Public Evaluations

Scoring Model



Data from the **previous three years is considered**, with a **heavier weight put on more recent data**. The results of these elements are combined to calculate a final score for the U.S. employers captured in our sample.

Overview of "Personal Driver" Prompts give an indication of employee preferences

Prompts categorized into six dimensions, shown below

Atmosphere & Development

- Good performance at work is recognized and praised
- The management is loyal to the employees
- There is a climate of fairness and trust
- I am given the necessary information I need to do my work
- My employer encourages me to take initiative and develop new ideas
- There are career advancement opportunities
- Colleagues work well together
- My direct supervisor makes his/her decisions clear

Salary / Wage

- My company pays fair wages/salaries
- Wages/salaries paid are in line with responsibilities
- The medical insurance, paid holidays/vacation/sick days, and retirement plan offered by my employer are competitive with comparable jobs in my industry

Image

- The company enjoys a good image
- I am proud of the product/service that my company produces/offers

Company Culture

- My employer respects individuals and values their differences
- My employer provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs
- My employer takes appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination

Working Conditions

- I can organize my own work
- I am satisfied with my working hours

Workplace

- Working equipment is state of the art
- Work stations are safe and ergonomic

Industries

Each employer is grouped by industry



Manufacturing and Heavy Industry

- Aerospace & Defense
- Automotive (Automotive and Suppliers)
- Construction, Chemicals, Raw Materials
- Engineering, Manufacturing



Consumer Goods and Retail

- Clothing, Shoes, Sports Equipment
- Food, Soft Beverages, Alcohol & Tobacco
- Packaged Goods
- Retail & Wholesale



Healthcare and Biotechnology

- Drugs & Biotechnology
- Health Care Equipment & Services
- Healthcare & Social Services



Technology and Telecommunication

- Telecommunications Services, Cable Supplier
- IT Software & Services
- Semiconductors, Electronics, Electrical Engineering



Finance and Professional Services

- Banking & Financial Services
- Business Services & Supplies
- Professional Services
- Insurance



Media, Advertising, and Leisure

- Media & Advertising
- Restaurants
- Travel & Leisure



Others

- Utilities
- Transportation and Logistics
- Education
- Government Services