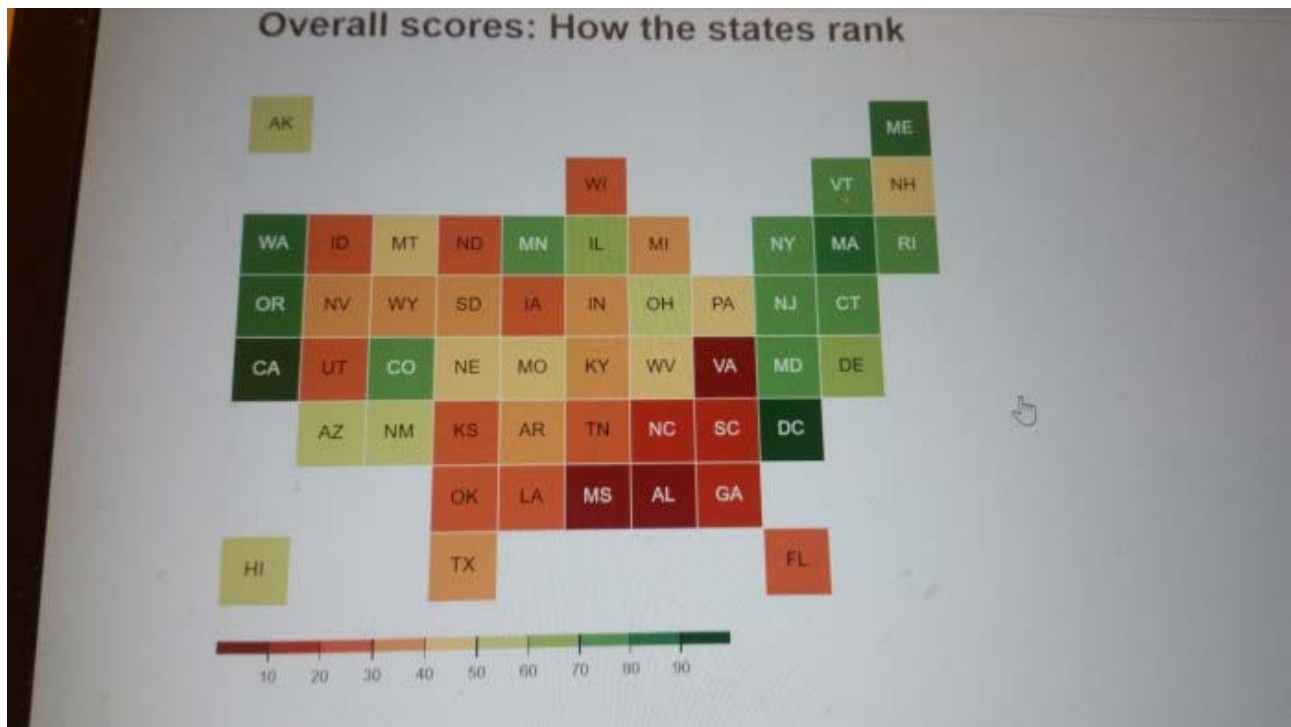


# Best States to Work in America: Maryland Is No. 13

By [Josh Kurtz](#)  
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Source: Oxfam America

Maryland is the 13<sup>th</sup> best state to work in in America, according to a [Labor Day-themed study](#) conducted by the anti-poverty organization Oxfam.

The Free State has dropped one notch since a similar study was conducted a year ago, flipping places with New Jersey, which is now No. 12.

Oxfam looked at three factors in its survey: A state's wage policies, its right to organize policies, and its worker protection policies.

Maryland was in a 21-way tie for first place in the right to organize category; it was No. 12 in its wage policies (a \$10.10-an-hour minimum wage as of July 1, though that is due to increase to \$15 an hour over a period of years); and it was No. 13 in worker protection policies.

Maryland was praised for mandating accommodations for pregnant workers in state labor law; for mandating equal pay along gender and race; for prohibiting pay secrecy practices in the workplace; for paid sick leave; and for sexual harassment protections in state law.

The best place to work in the U.S., according to Oxfam? The District of Columbia. Rounding out the top five: California, Washington, Massachusetts and Maine.

Virginia – a state that Maryland officials often believe they’re competing with, especially when it comes to attracting businesses – was ranked the worst state to be a worker. Rounding out the bottom five: Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina.

In Virginia, the minimum wage is \$7.25; the state only meets one of Oxfam’s 14 criteria for worker protections – mandating equal pay across gender and race; and union organizing is almost nonexistent.

The Northeast, the Mid-Atlantic and the West Coast generally score higher in the Oxfam survey than the South, the Midwest and the Mountain states.

With the federal government paralyzed by partisan gridlock, states and cities are doing more to boost workers’ pay and protect their rights, Oxfam found.

“Most voters and legislators believe that hard work should pay enough to sustain a worker and their family,” said Minor Sinclair, Oxfam America’s US Domestic Program director. “As the federal minimum wage has been stuck at the poverty wage of \$7.25 an hour for over a decade, many states and cities have made the move to increase the minimum within their borders.”

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Co-founder and Editor Josh Kurtz is the leading chronicler of Maryland politics and government. He began covering the State House in 1995 for *The Gazette* newspapers, and has been writing about state and local politics ever since. He later became an editor at *Roll Call*, the Capitol Hill newspaper, and spent eight years at *E&E News*, an online subscription-only publisher of news websites covering energy and environmental issues. For seven of those years, he led a staff of 20 reporters at *E&E Daily*, which covers energy and environmental policy on Capitol Hill and in national politics. For 6 1/2 years he wrote a weekly column on state politics for *Center Maryland* and has written for several other Maryland publications as well. Kurtz has given speeches and appeared on TV and radio shows about Maryland politics through the years.