



# Positioning Louisiana to Win

Louisiana Economic Development

2025 Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan

*Approved by the Louisiana Economic Development Partnership  
Advisory Committee on March 26, 2025.*

# Contents

- Letter from Governor Jeff Landry & Secretary Susan Bourgeois ..... 1**
- I. Executive Summary .....2**
- II. Overview of Strategy Effort.....4**
- III. Louisiana’s Competitive Position ..... 6**
  - A. Sectors .....7**
  - B. Talent .....9**
  - C. Innovation ..... 11**
  - D. Infrastructure ..... 12**
  - E. Ease of Doing Business ..... 13**
  - F. Enhancing Competitiveness ..... 14**
- IV. Vision for the future: Louisiana’s economic aspiration ..... 16**
  - A. Mission and Vision ..... 16**
  - B. Priority Sectors ..... 16**
    - Energy and Process Industries ..... 16**
    - Logistics ..... 17**
    - Aerospace & Defense ..... 18**
    - Agribusiness ..... 19**
    - Professional, Technical and Scientific Services ..... 19**
    - Life Sciences ..... 20**
    - Technology ..... 21**
  - C. Louisiana’s Five Pillars of Prosperity ..... 22**
    - Ease of Doing Business ..... 23**
    - High Wage Employment ..... 24**
    - Thriving Regions ..... 25**
    - Growth and Innovation ..... 26**
    - Global Impact ..... 28**
- V. Activating the Strategy ..... 30**
- VI. Conclusion ..... 32**

# Letter from Governor Jeff Landry & Secretary Susan Bourgeois

Louisiana's path to prosperity has never been more clear. From the first day of this administration, economic development has been a top priority – because the future of our state depends on it.

We are already seeing the results of our commitment. Over the past year, the passage of Act 590, known as the *Positioning Louisiana to Win* bill, modernized and streamlined LED's organizational framework. Meta's \$10 billion investment in Richland Parish, Hyundai's \$5.8 billion steel manufacturing facility in Ascension Parish, and Louisiana's performance on the world stage during Super Bowl LIX represent the impact of our recent efforts. Our growing momentum and unprecedented pipeline of game-changing projects are just the beginning of what we know is possible for our state.

This Comprehensive Statewide Strategic Plan serves as a blueprint for accelerating our momentum and positioning Louisiana for long-term business growth, innovation, and talent retention. It builds upon our state's inherent strengths, addresses longstanding challenges head-on, and establishes a clear, data-driven roadmap to capitalize on every opportunity before us.

This plan is not just about our economy – it's about our people. It's about following through on our commitment to thriving Louisiana regions, access to better career opportunities for our citizens, and success tools for our businesses across the state, large and small.

Through targeted investments, smart policies, and a "whole-of-government" approach, we will unlock additional opportunities across legacy and emerging industries, foster a business climate that attracts more top-tier companies, and connect more Louisianans with high-wage jobs and a quality lifestyle right here at home.

As we unveil the LED Statewide Economic Development Strategic Plan, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of the members of the Louisiana Economic Development Partnership Board. This distinguished group of business leaders, representing diverse sectors and every region of our state, has been instrumental in shaping a vision that will drive economic growth and prosperity. We are grateful for their dedication and leadership, which have been pivotal in crafting a roadmap for Louisiana to become a beacon of opportunity.

In partnership with local and regional economic development organizations, we invite all of Louisiana to join this bold new chapter in our state. Together, we are positioning Louisiana to win, and we can secure prosperity not just in the near-term, but for generations to come.

Governor Jeff Landry

Secretary Susan Bourgeois

# I. Executive Summary

## Louisiana today

Despite Louisiana's dynamic economic development assets, including robust natural resources, multimodal infrastructure, and a diverse collection of industrial partners, the state has lagged behind Southern U.S. peers (e.g., Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia) in population growth and prosperity over the last decade. Advancements in technology, customer preferences, automation, and ways of working have significantly disrupted traditional economic models. Historically, Louisiana's economic outcomes have been closely tied to the state's dominant "asset industries" in which Louisiana has significant global expertise, while other states have balanced investment in traditional sectors while also nurturing fast-growing sectors like life sciences and technology. While talent and workforce have been a strength, including rates of STEM talent production that led peers historically<sup>i</sup>, there is a risk this strength is eroding.<sup>ii</sup> Many Louisianans, particularly those who are young or have advanced degrees, are leaving the state at increasing rates in search of greater economic opportunity.<sup>iii</sup>

## Louisiana's vision for the future

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) aspires to change this trend and build the most robust, innovative, and dynamic economy in the Southeast. With strengths in key asset sectors, world-class universities and research facilities, a favorable business climate, and an extensive network of trade infrastructure, Louisiana has incredible potential to create more jobs, grow wages, and spur innovation.

## A new strategy for Louisiana

In pursuit of this vision, the state's new strategy for economic growth will pursue action across five organizing pillars:

- **Ease of doing business:** Position Louisiana to compete and win by making it the easiest and best place to do business
- **High wage employment:** Ensure every Louisianan has the opportunity for proud and ever-growing wages
- **Thriving regions:** Create thriving regions that attract and retain talent and are continually capitalizing on opportunities
- **Asset industries:** Optimize Louisiana's asset industries for growth and innovation to lead in the future as they have in the past
- **Global impact:** Drive Louisiana's business ecosystem towards global impact

LED's strategy will build on the strengths of existing asset sectors – sectors in which Louisiana has developed a unique competitive advantage through historical investments in infrastructure, talent, capital equipment, and supply chains – while also nurturing high-opportunity sectors of the future. Going forward, Louisiana's

industry efforts will not only continue to promote asset sectors – energy and process industries, agribusiness, and logistics and warehousing – but also support emerging high-opportunity sectors like aerospace and defense, professional and technical services, technology, and life sciences.

### **Activating the strategy**

Shifting from strategy to execution will require focus on priority initiatives. Paramount among them is the focus on (1) developing and delivering a whole-of-government approach to economic development, and (2) launching a Louisiana “opportunity campaign.” The whole-of-government approach is designed to ensure state partners effectively collaborate and collectively support the execution of the strategy. This approach will bring leaders of key agencies together to solve problems and advance priorities across workforce and education, business regulation, infrastructure, quality of life, and various interdisciplinary initiatives that impact economic development objectives. The approach will further work with and support Louisiana’s economic development regions and local communities in alignment with this strategic direction. The Louisiana opportunity campaign will be a national marketing initiative to build awareness of state efforts to enhance competitiveness and expand the state’s reach to attract new businesses and talent to the state.

Activating this strategy for Louisiana will proceed along three phases: establishing foundations for growth, accelerating growth, and embracing and improving upon the new normal for economic development in Louisiana. LED will establish a statewide performance management platform to measure progress against strategic objectives, including payroll growth, capital deployment, and business attraction.

### **Delivering on LED’s vision**

Louisiana has an opportunity to achieve global impact. The state is rich in history, culture, natural resources, talent, and research institutions. Private enterprise, particularly in energy innovation and logistics, has positioned Louisiana as a leader in exports and a magnet for foreign direct investment from new markets. New efforts in growth sectors across the state represent emerging pockets of opportunity for the Louisiana economy.

Capturing this opportunity requires targeted action to address the state’s challenges head-on. Growth requires talent, capital, and innovation. LED’s strategy codifies the efforts that the agency is already leading and develops additional initiatives that will position Louisiana as a premiere destination for talent and businesses of the future. These initiatives will improve ease of doing business, retain and match talent to opportunities, and spur growth and innovation, while ensuring shared prosperity across regions.

LED welcomes your partnership in activating this strategy to position Louisiana to win. We hope, too, that your community or organization will join us to ***build the most robust, innovative, and dynamic economy in the Southeast.***

## II. Overview of Strategy Effort

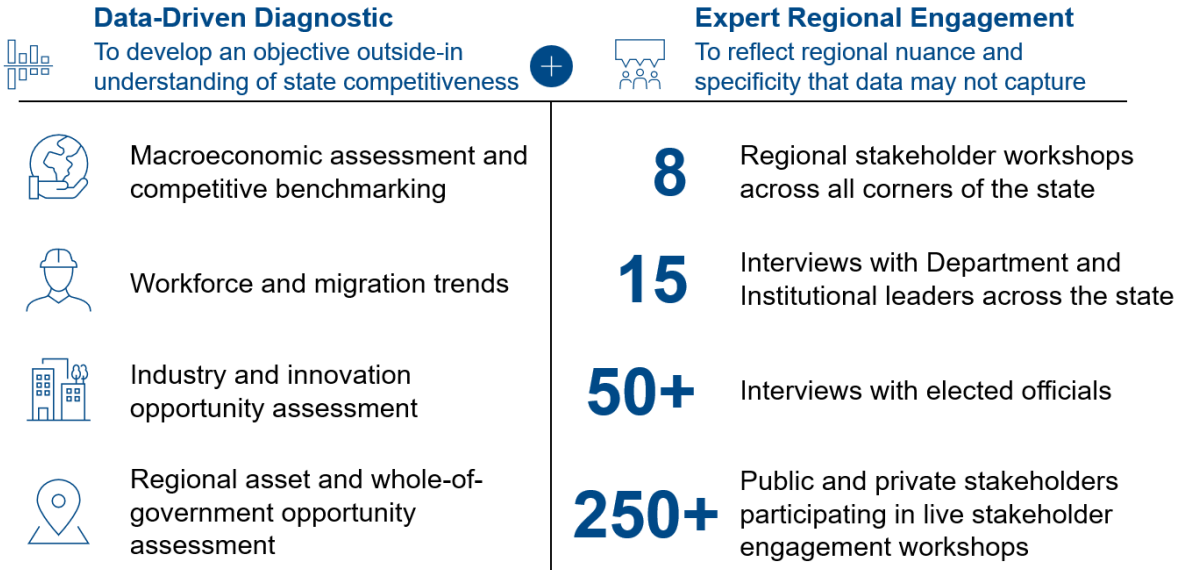
Louisiana Economic Development (LED) plays a crucial role in making the state more competitive, strengthening the state's business environment and creating the foundation for a thriving Louisiana economy. With a mission to ensure the people of Louisiana can attain ever-growing wages and family-sustaining job opportunities, LED strives to work closely with businesses to navigate the resources they need to make relocation and expansion activities profitable and successful.

Historically, LED has played a role in facilitating capital investments and wage-earning initiatives throughout Louisiana, building on Louisiana's significant economic development assets – including a strong portfolio of industrial partners, abundant natural resources, and a skilled workforce. The state, however, has consistently lagged its peers in key economic indicators such as private sector employment growth, personal incomes, and population growth. This discrepancy underscores the need to reassess and revitalize Louisiana's and LED's strategic approach to fully leverage Louisiana's strengths and unlock its potential for sustained prosperity.

Recognizing this opportunity, under the leadership of Governor Jeff Landry, LED partnered with key economic development leaders to support and pass Act 590 (formerly SB494) during Louisiana's 2024 Regular Legislative Session. Known as the "Positioning Louisiana to Win" bill, the legislation brought LED's organizational framework more in line with the best practices of other state economic development agencies with an overarching focus of positioning LED to move at the speed of business. Act 590 established the Louisiana Economic Development Partnership (LEDP), a private sector advisory board charged with developing a strategic plan for LED and advising on policies, programs and initiatives that will supercharge economic growth in the state.

Building on the dynamic assets, strengths, people, and economic contexts across Louisiana's eight economic development regions, LED adopted a two-pronged approach to gathering insights and testing strategic priorities. LED's strategy was first informed by a comprehensive data-driven assessment of industry, talent, innovation, infrastructure, and business climate – both in Louisiana and relative to other states. LED conducted in-depth interviews, small group meetings, and focus groups with key leaders and stakeholders to gather nuanced perspectives and build awareness for the strategic planning process. Emerging insights were then sharpened through regional workshops in all eight economic development regions by capturing input of over 250 leaders from the private, public, and civic sectors across the state to ensure that strategic priorities reflected each region's goals and expectations (See Appendix for details on the insights and takeaways from each of the regional engagement sessions).

**Exhibit 1: Overview of the diagnostic and engagement process**

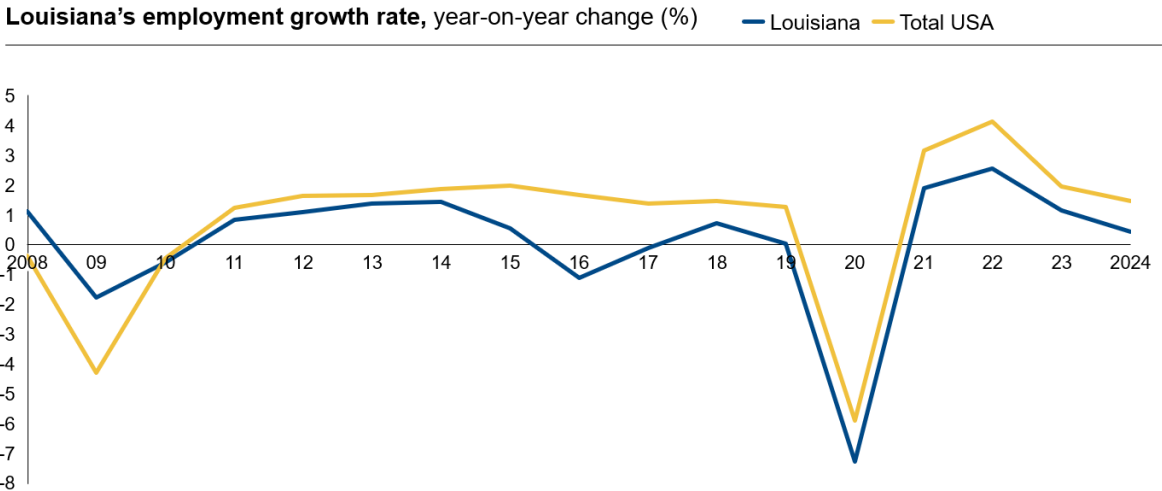


# III. Louisiana’s Competitive Position

Technological disruption, a shifting landscape of global trade, and innovative new business models have accelerated the pace of change across the U.S and globally. The rise of new trade patterns and new technologies, including artificial intelligence and advanced computing, are creating new demands for reliable, cost-efficient energy and modern logistics infrastructure. Louisiana is well positioned to deliver on many of these trends, with the existing strengths and assets across the state.

Geographic competition for these opportunities remains fierce. Employment in Southeastern peer states has grown 2.7% annually since 2020, compared to 1.5% in Louisiana,<sup>iv</sup> and the state has trailed the overall U.S. average employment growth since 2010.<sup>v</sup> Bold change is required to advance Louisiana’s relative economic position, including in competitiveness of certified sites, workforce readiness, innovation and entrepreneurship, infrastructure, and stronger coordination among local, regional, and statewide economic development organizations.

**Exhibit 2:** Louisiana’s employment growth vs US average since 2010<sup>vi,1</sup>



## Louisiana has a unique set of economic strengths from which to grow

Louisiana has a robust foundation of economic strengths to advance this economic development strategy. These strengths include:

- High specialization in “asset” sectors:** Employment in Louisiana is 5x more concentrated in the energy sector than U.S. averages. The state is also specialized in other high growth areas including process industries, transportation and logistics (particularly shipbuilding and maritime activities), propulsion unit parts manufacturing, and agricultural chemicals manufacturing. Within energy, Louisiana’s natural assets complement emerging energy

<sup>1</sup> Growth is measured as the percent change from the previous year.



technologies such as carbon capture and sequestration and direct air capture and position the state as a leader in carbon ecosystem management while also continuing to serve demand for liquified natural gas (LNG).<sup>vii</sup>

- **National leader in export volume:** 31% of GDP driven by exports, the highest in the U.S.<sup>viii,ix</sup>
- **History of leadership in production of STEM graduates:** 16.2% of Louisiana college graduates receive degrees in STEM fields, comparable levels to nationally leading peers such Virginia and Texas, whose STEM production Louisiana outpaced as recently as 2018<sup>x</sup>
- **High rate of entrepreneurship:** Top 20 nationwide in new business formation<sup>xi</sup>
- **Low cost of doing business:** 8<sup>th</sup> lowest cost of doing business in the U.S.<sup>xii</sup>

A diagnosis of the state's competitive economic position considered areas of strengths and challenges to address across six lenses: (1) Louisiana's portfolio of sectors, (2) talent ecosystem, (3) innovation, (4) infrastructure, (5) ease of doing business, and (6) opportunities to enhance competitiveness.

## A. Sectors

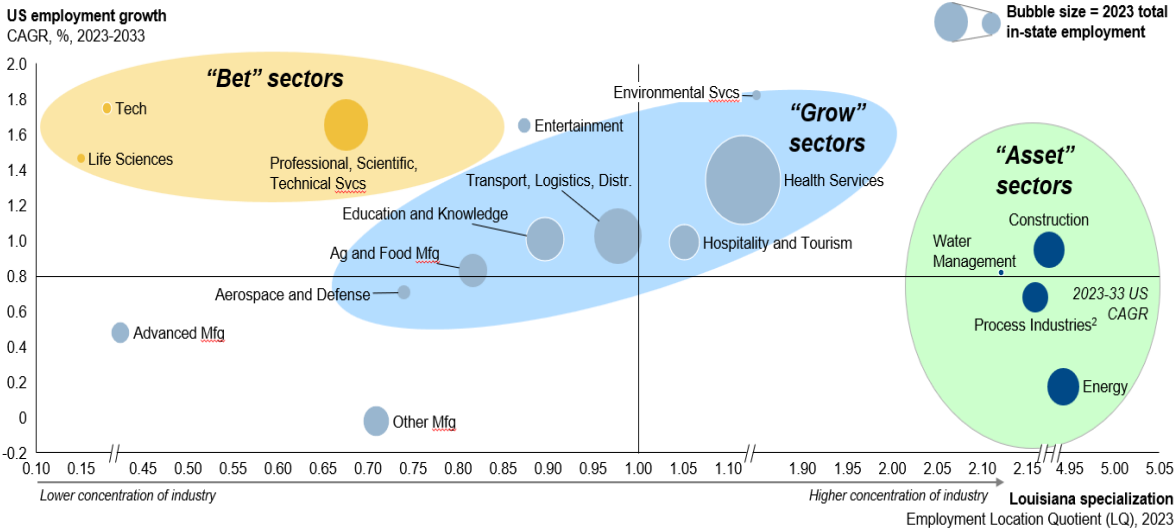
### Economic strengths

- **High specialization in asset sectors** – Employment in Louisiana is 5x more concentrated in the energy sector than U.S. averages<sup>xiii</sup>
- **National leader in export volume** – 31% of state GDP is driven by exports, the highest in the U.S.<sup>xiv,xv</sup>

### Challenges to address

- **Lack of sector diversification** – Economic outcomes are highly correlated with economic cycles of energy and process industries
- **Missing industry “growth waves”** – Low concentration in high growth industries correlated with periods of below average growth in GDP, jobs, and population<sup>xvi</sup>

**Exhibit 3: Louisiana’s portfolio of sectors by growth and specialization**



Louisiana’s economy may be thought of as a portfolio of industries, with several existing or emerging comparative advantages that can fuel the next wave of growth and economic outcomes across the state. By mapping this portfolio of industries by the specialization and growth, three categories of sectors emerge (see Exhibit [X]).

- **“Asset” sectors** – for example energy, process industry, ports and waterways – are areas where Louisiana has a high concentration relative to U.S. averages, with positive growth profiles with variation by sector and subsector on where the greatest opportunities for growth exist.
- **“Grow” sectors** – for example transportation and logistics, agriculture, aerospace and defense – are areas where Louisiana’s specialization is average relative to the U.S., though growth prospective is above average, and specific regions or assets point to areas to grow greater comparative advantages around
- **“Bet” sectors** – professional, scientific and technical services, life sciences and technology - are high growth areas nationally where Louisiana, as a whole, does not currently have a high specialization compared to other regions. These sectors, however, do present opportunity in the pockets of strengths to build from based in specific regions or even assets (e.g., an anchor company or leading research institution).

Louisiana will cultivate this portfolio, and as outlined later in this strategic plan, and differential strategies will support each of these different categories of sectors. Asset sectors will continue to be areas of expected strength and wins, further cultivating national if not global leadership. Grow sectors will deepen investment around regions and assets that provide a comparative advantage to the state. And Bet sectors will receive targeted investment to plan for future waves of growth.

Diversifying the portfolio of Louisiana’s economy can support the growth and resilience of economic outcomes. Attracting high-growth, high-wage companies in life sciences, professional services, and technology will help create opportunities for Louisianans, retain the state’s workforce, and ensure outcomes aren’t subject to factors that may disproportionately impact asset sectors. Continued investment in the state’s asset sectors will cement Louisiana’s unique strengths and encourage new corporate Research & Development (R&D) partnerships to position Louisiana at the forefront of innovation in these fields (See Section 4B for more details on priority sectors).

## B. Talent

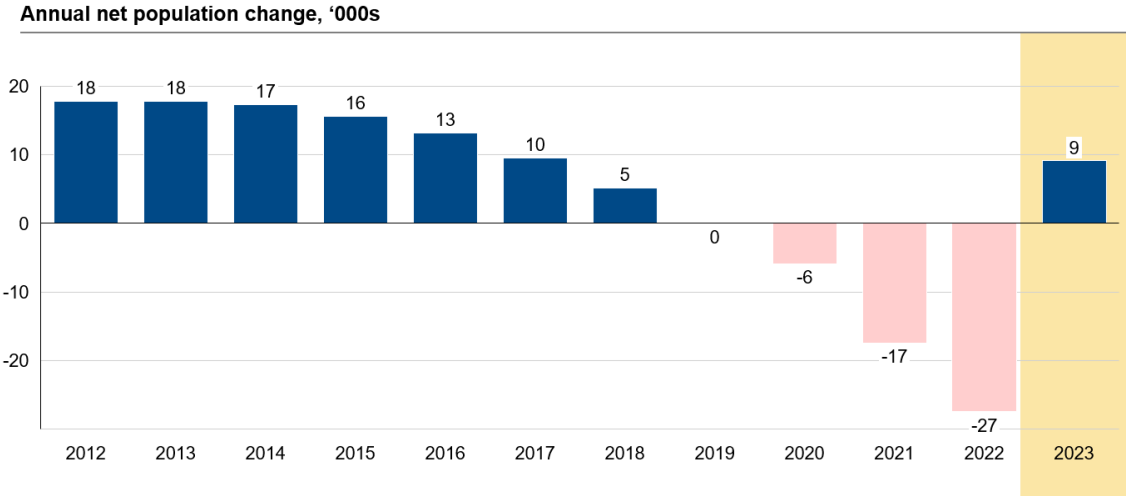
### Economic strengths

- **Upward trend on population growth: positive growth for the first time since COVID** – +9K net residents in 2023, an upward trajectory that has formed coming out of the COVID-era trend of population loss<sup>xvii</sup>
- **History of leading in STEM production** – Louisiana has above average rates of STEM production, with a history of leading peers in STEM graduates as a percent of degrees awarded<sup>xviii</sup>

### Challenges to address

- **High domestic outmigration, particularly among well-educated** – ~30K net domestic outmigration each year<sup>xix</sup> , 41.6% with a bachelor’s degree or higher<sup>xx</sup>
- **Many sectors unable to fill jobs for key roles** – ~34K positions currently unfilled and misaligned talent production and workforce services, with tech roles being some of the most in-demand in the state<sup>xxi,xxii</sup>

**Exhibit 4:** Louisiana net population growth from 2012-2023



A thriving economy requires a skilled workforce and a functioning talent marketplace to match workers with high-wage employment opportunities and attract new talent to the state. Louisiana's postsecondary institutions (including two year and technical colleges) have a long history of producing high-quality, in-demand talent. FastStart, LED's workforce readiness program, is cited by site selectors as among the best-in-class workforce solutions in the U.S. FastStart provides customized employee recruitment, screening, training development and training delivery for eligible new or expanding companies, and includes a team of dozens of experienced professionals from a range of businesses — manufacturing to corporate headquarters, digital media to customer support centers and R&D.<sup>xxiii</sup>

While population growth has rebounded in recent years, Louisiana faces challenges in retaining the state's most productive talent. The state lost an estimated 50,000 residents from 2020-2022<sup>xxiv</sup>, of which 40% had a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>xxv</sup> Increasingly, households cite job-related factors as the primary reason for moving out of state – departing Louisianans are 3.8 times more likely to cite job-related factors as a rationale for moving than national averages.<sup>xxvi</sup> By attracting more higher-wage career opportunities, continuing to support talent in discovering and matching to these opportunities, and supporting quality-of-place and quality-of-life efforts, Louisiana can grow and thrive in the decades ahead.

### *Key statistics*

- Louisiana experienced **total net population loss of ~42K** from 2020-2023<sup>xxvii</sup>; those that left were more likely to hold a college degree or higher (41.6% vs 27%)<sup>xxviii</sup>
- Two-thirds of those that left cited **job-related factors as the top reason for leaving the state**; the proportion that cited job-related factors as the primary reason for moving grew from 53% in 2014-2018 to 65% in 2019-2023<sup>xxix</sup>
- Louisiana's **unemployment rate (3.65%) aligns with U.S. averages (3.63%)** but remains higher than most peers, including Alabama (2.47%) and Mississippi (3.19%)<sup>xxx</sup>
- Louisiana's **labor force participation rate of 58.6%** - compared to a U.S. average of 62.6% - suggests that too many residents are on the sidelines of the economy, have **withdrawn from the workforce**, or lack marketable skills<sup>xxxi</sup>
- **55% of Louisianans have some form of postsecondary education** compared to 62% in Texas and 67% in Virginia<sup>xxxii</sup>
- Louisiana's **share of total STEM grads decreased** from 18.9% of degrees awarded in 2018 to 16.2% 2023, the largest decrease among peers<sup>xxxiii</sup>
- There are **~34,000 unfilled positions** in Louisiana, suggesting an opportunity to better reskill/upskill and match qualified residents with available roles, and to recruit more talent to the state<sup>xxxiv,xxxv</sup>

# C. Innovation

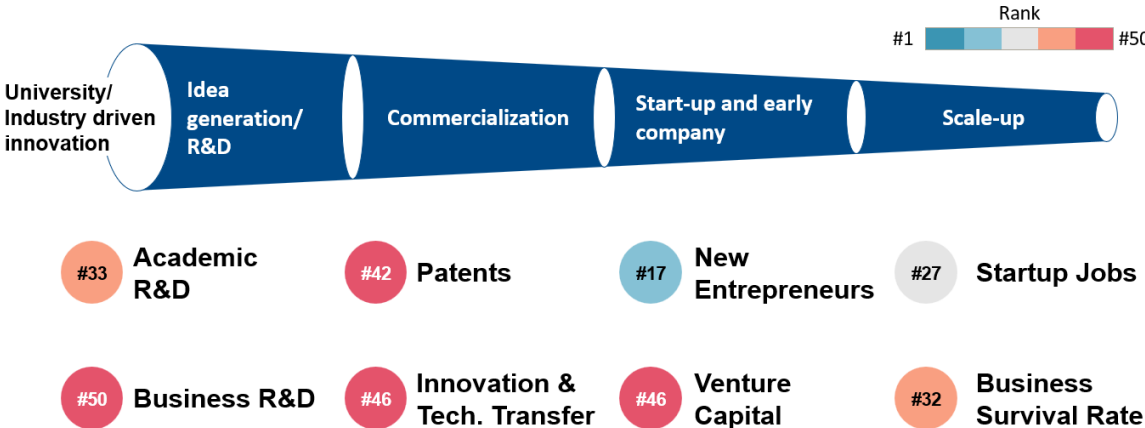
## Economic strengths

- **High rate of entrepreneurship** – Louisiana is a Top 20 state in new business formation<sup>xxxvi</sup>
- **High specialization or venture capital (VC) investment in multiple high-growth sectors** – Louisiana attracts 0.06% of all VC in the U.S., with a 10-13x higher share of VC deployed in nanotechnology and interactive entertainment<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## Challenges to address

- **Low levels of corporate R&D** – Louisiana ranks 50<sup>th</sup> for rate of corporate R&D spending in the state<sup>xxxviii,xxxix</sup>
- **Low rates of commercialization and risk capital** – Louisiana ranks #46 in both technology transfer and venture capital deployment in the U.S.

**Exhibit 5:** Louisiana ranks highly on entrepreneurship but lags in commercialization and risk capital



Louisiana ranks 17<sup>th</sup> among U.S. states in new entrepreneurs.<sup>xi</sup> While Louisiana attracts 0.06% of all venture capital deployed in the United States, Louisiana attracts 1.5-2.5x its relative share in high-technology and high-growth areas like robotics and cybersecurity. In nanotechnology and interactive entertainment (e.g., esports and video games), Louisiana captured over 10x its average share of venture capital in those sectors, suggesting particularly differentiated strengths.<sup>xii</sup> The opportunity for the state is to position its companies for scale and innovation by unlocking both corporate and academic R&D, progressing new ideas from conception to commercialization, and encouraging scale by connecting ambitious small businesses to growth capital.

## Key statistics

- Louisiana ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> nationwide in academic R&D as a percent of GDP<sup>xlii</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup> in corporate R&D as a percent of GDP<sup>xliii,xliv</sup>
- Louisiana ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in patent production per 1M residents<sup>xlv,xlvi</sup>
- Louisiana ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in the rate of new entrepreneurs<sup>xlvii</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> in job creation among new businesses<sup>xlviii</sup>, but 43<sup>rd</sup> in new employers as a share of all employer firms<sup>xlix</sup>
- Louisiana ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in venture capital deployed per 1M residents<sup>l,li</sup>

## D. Infrastructure

### Economic strengths

- **Diverse infrastructure network** – Louisiana offers a comprehensive mix of port, rail, highway, and pipeline networks for commerce
- **Energy costs** – Among Southeastern peers, Louisiana offers the lowest average electricity costs per kwh for both residential and industrial consumers<sup>lii</sup>

### Challenges to address

- **Transportation** – Louisiana ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in transportation infrastructure, based on commute time, road quality, bridge quality and public transit usage, with several Southeastern peers in the Top 20 (AL, GA, KY)<sup>liii</sup>
- **Housing affordability** – 49.2% of Louisiana renter-households are considered rent burdened (i.e., spend 30% or more of income on housing) compared to an average 45.7% in Southeastern peers<sup>liv</sup>

Louisiana boasts an extensive network of aviation, ports and waterways, freight and passenger rail, and strategic transit corridors for commercial trucking. The diversity of Louisiana's infrastructure network, coupled with the advantages of low-cost and high-proximity energy transmission and distribution make Louisiana an attractive state for companies to manufacture and move goods.

Louisiana plays a particularly critical role in the nation's waterborne trade. The state is home to five of the nation's top 15 ports, transporting 25% of US waterborne commerce, 60% of the nation's grain and 20% of the nation's petroleum and energy commodities. Of the state's 32 active public ports, five ports—Greater Baton Rouge, New Orleans, South Louisiana, St. Bernard, and Fourchon—form the largest port complex in the world. These ports serve as critical gateways for a diverse range of goods and commodities, including agricultural products, industrial materials, petrochemicals, and LNG.<sup>lv</sup>

While the breadth of infrastructure represents a potential advantage for the state, maintaining competitiveness will require more investment in infrastructure,

particularly port and transportation infrastructure, to improve productivity and efficiency of moving goods and people. Cost of housing may constrain talent attraction efforts – nearly 50% of renter-households spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs, among the highest share in the Southeast.<sup>lvi</sup>

Regional competition is intensifying. Texas' Port Houston overtook the Port of South Louisiana as #1 for waterborne tonnage in 2019. In 2021, Alabama's Port of Mobile surpassed the Port of New Orleans in container traffic, despite New Orleans's prime location on the Mississippi River and access to six Class 1 railroads, with Louisiana's only international port ranking 17<sup>th</sup> among U.S. container ports by TEU volume. To maintain competitiveness and reclaim its leadership position, Louisiana must strategically invest in its ports and intermodal infrastructure to secure the best returns, drive state economic development, and solidify its position as a world-class global trade partner.<sup>lvii</sup>

## E. Ease of Doing Business

### Economic strengths

- **Cost of doing business** – Louisiana ranks 8<sup>th</sup> nationwide in cost of doing business<sup>lviii</sup>, with total cost of doing business indices 7.1% lower than U.S. averages<sup>lix</sup>

### Challenges to address

- **Business friendliness** – Louisiana ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in business friendliness based on state legal and regulatory frameworks, support for emerging industries and land use regulations<sup>lx</sup>
- **Quality of life** – Louisiana ranks 43<sup>rd</sup> in overall quality of life, including crime rates, environmental quality, healthcare, worker protections, and availability and affordability of childcare<sup>lxi</sup>

Louisiana ranks in the top 10 among states in cost of doing business<sup>lxii</sup>, looking in summation across labor, land, utilities, tax, and other categories. Recent tax reforms aspire to further increase the state's relative standing among peers in measures of cost-effectiveness and business friendliness. The state also oversees a suite of comprehensive incentive programs to promote job creation, R&D, workforce readiness and job placement, and technical assistance for small businesses. Among Southern peer states, Louisiana ranks #1 in capital expenditure unlocked per dollar of incentive spend.<sup>lxiii</sup>

**Exhibit 6:** Louisiana’s ranks favorably on the cost of doing business, but low on ease of doing business

CNBC's Top States for Business National Rankings, 2024

Legend: # 1-10 (dark blue), # 11-20 (medium blue), # 21-30 (light blue), # 31-40 (yellow), # 41-50 (orange)

	Louisiana	Alabama	Arkansas	Georgia	Kentucky	MS	South Carolina	Texas	Virginia
Access to capital	38	29	32	12	32	43	40	6	8
Business friendliness	35	13	31	19	16	28	27	17	5
Cost of doing business	8	14	14	23	4	10	10	6	24
Quality of life	43	48	46	40	32	36	39	50	19
Technology and innovation	37	21	42	18	40	49	28	1	15

To attract business that will drive Louisiana’s economy of the future, the state’s cost advantage and incentive portfolio must be coupled with an integrated, business-friendly approach to site selection, talent navigation, and business supports. By expanding the state’s portfolio of high-quality sites for development, for example, Louisiana may improve its competitive position among site selectors relative to Southern states, and continuing to invest in programs to mitigate risk and control the costs of insurance across the state may help Louisiana maintain its cost advantages.

**F. Enhancing Competitiveness**

*To compete to win, Louisiana must invest in addressing challenges that have traditionally hindered growth*

Over the last several years, Louisiana missed out on some of the trends accelerating growth in other states. Technology and life sciences, sectors where Louisiana has localized strengths but low statewide specialization, have lifted productivity and employment in many of Louisiana’s Southern peers. Highly educated Louisianans, struggling to find roles aligned to their skillsets at home, are moving outside the state at high rates. And while Louisiana shows strengths in capital attraction for certain industry verticals (e.g., robotics, cybersecurity and nanotechnology), overall VC funding remains low on a per capita basis, meaning innovation is not translating to high-growth business opportunities as often as it could.

Engagement with regional stakeholders reinforced the need to address four critical challenges through a new economic development strategy for Louisiana:

- **Capturing a greater share of industry growth waves:** The state must further cultivate “Bet” sectors, among the highest growth areas nationally where Louisiana, overall, has very low specialization. More limited



participation in these sectors has factored into Louisiana's periods of below average growth in GDP, jobs, and population.<sup>lxiv</sup>

- **Stemming out-migration of highly educated people:** The state still faces ~30K net domestic outmigration each year<sup>lxv</sup>, and 41.6% of outmigrants have a bachelor's degree or higher<sup>lxvi</sup>, compared to only ~25% of the population with the same level of education<sup>lxvii</sup>, despite change toward positive overall migration in recent years
- **Catalyzing more risk capital and R&D investment:** The state is 46th nationwide in VC funding per capita, and 50<sup>th</sup> in business R&D as a percent of state GDP<sup>lxviii, lxix</sup>
- **Addressing perception of Louisiana as a challenging place to do business:** Bottom 15 nationally in access to capital, business friendliness, and tech and innovation<sup>lxx</sup>

This strategic plan highlights the potential investments needed to address these challenges and unlock a new wave of economic outcomes across the state by removing constraints to growth.

# IV. Vision for the future: Louisiana’s economic aspiration

## A. Mission and Vision

*Louisiana aspires to build the most robust, innovative, and dynamic economy in the Southeast*

LED’s strategy for Louisiana is anchored in its mission to cultivate jobs and economic opportunity for the people of Louisiana. In pursuit of this mission, LED aims to build the most robust, innovative, and dynamic economy in the Southeast.

## B. Priority Sectors

Louisiana must aim for faster growth by building a stronger sector portfolio that includes asset industries in which the state has unique strengths, adjacent sectors that serve or complement asset industries, and selective bet sectors through which Louisiana could capture its share of future growth. Louisiana’s seven priority sectors include Energy and Process Industries, Logistics, Aerospace & Defense, Agribusiness, Professional Services, Life Sciences, Technology, and Professional Services. The diagnostic assessment shows all eight regions have varied opportunities across these sectors.

**Exhibit 7:** Seven sectors emerge as priorities for the strategic plan

	Energy & Process Industries	Logistics	Aerospace & Defense	Agribusiness	Professional Services	Life Sciences	Tech
<b>Example subsectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liquefied natural gas</li> <li>Nuclear components</li> <li>Carbon ecosystem management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ports and maritime freight</li> <li>Warehousing</li> <li>Transportation equipment &amp; heavy machinery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ship building</li> <li>Instrument manufacturing</li> <li>Propulsion unit manufacturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertilizer manufacturing</li> <li>Precision and digital agriculture</li> <li>Food manufacturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engineering services</li> <li>Data centers</li> <li>General management and operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical device manufacturing</li> <li>Pharma manufacturing</li> <li>Biotech R&amp;D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robotics and industrial controls</li> <li>IoT software</li> <li>Cyber-security</li> </ul>

### Energy and Process Industries

Louisiana has a longstanding, robust specialization in the energy and process sector, which includes subsectors such as Liquefied Natural Gas, Nuclear Components, and Carbon Ecosystem Management.<sup>lxvi</sup> The state’s rich natural resources (the Bossier and Haynesville Formations, for example, are estimated to contain 4.0 billion barrels of oil, 304.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 1.9 billion barrels of natural gas liquids<sup>lxvii</sup>), abundance of employment opportunities, and innovative university-based research centers make Louisiana a world-class hub for energy and process entities.

Tail winds for the sector include a sustained demand for natural gas, which is estimated to grow 11-18% through 2050<sup>lxxiii</sup>; increasing public support for nuclear energy; and a 20% annual growth in demand for hydrogen energy through 2050.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

Despite the positive trends in energy demand, the sector is expected to see slow employment growth nationwide in the next 10 years (0.2% CAGR 2023-2033).<sup>lxxv</sup> However, Louisiana's high specialization in Energy – a five times higher concentration of employment in this sector compared to the U.S. average<sup>lxxvi</sup> – positions the state to align its assets to drive sustained growth. The state may explore investing in the nuclear generation and supply chain, leading the future of gas, and utilizing its universities and energy research programs to identify pockets of international demand. At the same time, there are opportunities to strengthen the energy talent pipeline by once more becoming a top STEM graduate producer among states, and attracting back Louisiana-born innovators to develop their ideas within the state.

#### *Key Facts:*

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 82,500<sup>lxxvii</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10-year CAGR): 0.2%<sup>lxxviii</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Liquefied Natural Gas, Nuclear Components, and Carbon Management*

## **Logistics**

Louisiana's logistics industry—which includes subsectors such as Ports and Maritime Freight, Warehousing, and Transportation Equipment & Heavy Machinery – is one of the state's largest sectors by employment, providing jobs for more than 110,000 residents in 2023.<sup>lxxix</sup> Louisiana enjoys relative specialization in this sector across a majority of its regions, positioning it to capture its fair share of national growth, which is projected to be 1.0% CAGR over the next 10 years.<sup>lxxx</sup> Global trends have created both pressures and opportunities for this sector. The acceleration in e-commerce during COVID caused expectations on delivery times and reliability to rise, with average parcel delivery speed accelerating by about 40 percent, from the first quarter of 2020 to the second quarter of 2023. This advance has been powered by shippers' investments in efforts to shorten the distances that deliveries need to travel to reach customers.<sup>lxxxi</sup> Similarly, the adoption of automation across the industry is expected to accelerate. Companies increasingly regionalizing their supply chains, shifting sourcing strategies from Asia to Mexico, present new opportunities.

Louisiana has the opportunity to grow one of its largest sectors by staying on the forefront of these global trends and capitalizing on its competitive advantages, such as the state's high concentration of capital-intensive industries, access to large ports, and low cost of business. The state may also explore opportunities in key asset subsectors such as Commercial and Industrial Equipment Rental and Leasing and Navigational Services. These opportunities, alongside investments in scaling talent

and supporting warehousing and equipment rental businesses, would allow Louisiana to continue to build on its strong foundation in logistics.

*Key Facts:*

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 110,000<sup>lxxxii</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10-year CAGR): 0.2%<sup>lxxxiii</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Ports and Maritime Freight, Warehousing, and Transportation Equipment & Heavy Machinery*

**Aerospace & Defense**

Louisiana has a long and storied Aerospace & Defense (A&D) sector, which includes subsectors such as Ship Building, Instrument Manufacturing, and Propulsion Unit Manufacturing. The state played a significant role in America’s space program, spanning from the establishment of NASA’s Michoud Assembly Facility in the 1970s to more recent missions, and is the proud home to multiple U.S. military bases, including the Air Force Global Strike Command. Louisiana has relative specialization in this sector, with competitive advantages in talent, supply chain access (housing five of North America’s 20 largest ports), and lower cost of business compared to most other states with an A&D presence. The sector has seen growth from geopolitical trends, with countries around the world accelerating defense spending and the economy forecasted to grow 7% per year through 2035.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> However, it also faces challenges such as lagging supply chains, increased maintenance costs from aging aircraft, and slower technological adoption compared to other sectors.

Louisiana has an opportunity to continue growing A&D in the next ten years by closing talent gaps, supporting technological innovations such as AI solutions, and effectively capturing the growth of the national space ecosystem and international defense spend. The state may also explore opportunities to further invest in its assets, such as Missile/Space Vehicle Propulsion Unit Manufacturing and Ship Building and Repair, where Louisiana has high specialization. By supporting key levers across talent and supply chain, the state can create a path towards becoming one of the leading A&D ecosystems in the U.S.

*Key Facts:*

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 8,000<sup>lxxxv</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10-year CAGR): 0.7%<sup>lxxxvi</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Ship Building, Instrument Manufacturing, and Propulsion Unit Manufacturing*

## Agribusiness

Louisiana's agribusiness plays a vital role in the state and national economy: its ports ship 60% of America's grain, and its fisheries produce 25% of the nation's seafood.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Agribusiness includes subsectors like Food Manufacturing, Precision and Digital Agriculture, and Fertilizer Manufacturing, and employs over 40,000 residents statewide<sup>lxxxviii</sup>, with a particularly high level of specialization in the Southeast region. The state enjoys a competitive advantage in supply chain access, with its high specialization of natural gas and hydrogen production; crop production, which sees a high job fill rate (>80%)<sup>lxxxix</sup>; and above-national-average yields in key crops.<sup>xc</sup> The agribusiness sector is expected to grow nationwide in the next 10 years (0.8% CAGR)<sup>xcii</sup> and see tailwinds such as increasing demand for U.S. crops, protein innovation, and growing bio-fuel demand. At the same time, the sector also faces a growing natural disaster risk.

In agribusiness, Louisiana has an opportunity to leverage existing competitive advantages to become more highly specialized and capture a larger share of the nationwide growth, particularly given the sector's important links with the state's energy and logistics industries. Louisiana has an opportunity to strengthen its talent pipeline for jobs in subsectors with large employment bases (e.g., Fertilizer and Food Manufacturing), while simultaneously adopting technology to mitigate natural disaster risk and boost yields to support the growing global demand for food and protein.

### Key Facts:

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 40,600<sup>xcii</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10-year CAGR): 0.8%<sup>xciii</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Food Manufacturing, Precision and Digital Agriculture, and Fertilizer Manufacturing*

## Professional, Technical and Scientific Services

As one of Louisiana's largest sectors by employment, Professional Services provided 96,000 jobs in 2023<sup>xciv</sup> and includes subsectors such as Engineering Services, Data Centers, and General Management and Operations. The state has specialization in engineering services and technical consulting for technical sectors like energy and process industries and enjoys a competitive advantage with its low cost of doing business (7% lower versus U.S. average<sup>xcv</sup>, ranked #9 nationally for corporate tax rate).<sup>xcvi</sup> The sector is poised to grow nationwide, with a high 10-year CAGR of 1.7%, and contends with trends such as accelerating innovation, growing customer expectation, automation of services like office support, and increasing growth of data center activity (10-12% annually until 2030) that present both risks and opportunities.<sup>xcvii</sup>

Looking ahead, the state may explore ways to further capitalize on Professional Services' nationwide growth and drive statewide job creation in this sector. While there is an opportunity to double down on Louisiana's existing strengths in engineering and consulting services for specialized industries, there are also opportunities to strengthen the talent pipeline in high growth subsectors like Computer Programming and Data Processing. Expanding the state's footprint in Professional Services could help its residents and college graduates capture a fair share of the nationwide wage growth projected for this sector.

*Key Facts:*

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 96,000<sup>xcviii</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10-year CAGR): 1.7%<sup>xcix</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Engineering Services, Data Centers, and General Management and Operations*

## **Life Sciences**

Louisiana's Life Sciences sector includes subsectors such as Medical Device Manufacturing, Pharma Manufacturing, and Biotech R&D, and is poised to see growth nationwide in the next decade (1.5% CAGR).<sup>c</sup> There are several strong tailwinds for Life Sciences. First, companies have been increasingly regionalizing their supply chains to mitigate risks: 36% of companies are near-shoring their suppliers, while 27% are near-shoring their own production.<sup>ci</sup> Additionally, the sector is experiencing accelerated growth due to technological advancements, including AI (\$50Bn+ has been invested in over 500 AI-first life science firms since 2015).<sup>cii</sup> Life Sciences has seen steady wage growth nationwide as well, with subsectors such as Medicinal and Botanical Manufacturing and R&D in Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences seeing above 3% CAGR wage growth 2018-2023.<sup>ciii</sup>

Louisiana has an opportunity to become an emerging hub for this sector by capitalizing on its strong research assets. The state's major research centers, such as the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at LSU, Louisiana Tech Institute for Micromanufacturing, and Advanced Materials Research Institute in New Orleans, can help Louisiana become an attractive source for advanced R&D capabilities and talent. To foster the growth of this high-potential sector, the state may explore scaling its biomedical talent and implementing measures to increase the availability of early-stage venture investments.

*Key Facts:*

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 2,800<sup>civ</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10 year CAGR): 1.5%<sup>cv</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Medical Device Manufacturing, Pharma Manufacturing, and Biotech R&D*

## Technology

Louisiana is home to over 6,000 companies in the technology sector<sup>cvii</sup>, which includes subsectors like Robotics and Industrial Controls, IoT Software, and Cybersecurity. Nationwide, technology remains one of the fastest-growing sectors, with projected employment growth of 1.7% annually through 2033.<sup>cvi</sup> Continued patent innovation and the accelerated development and adoption of AI, with GenAI global equity investment growing sevenfold between 2022 and 2023.<sup>cvi</sup> While macroeconomic trends have caused a slowing in tech investments and jobs in the last year, the sector is still poised to see growth, with investors increasingly favoring businesses with strong revenue and margin potential.

Louisiana can increase its specialization in this sector and capture its fair share of growth by capitalizing on a unique ecosystem of technology players. As a state with a high concentration of capital expenditure-intensive industries, there is potential to scale innovation for connected hardware. Businesses concentrating in energy and process manufacturing, which have slower digital adoption than most other sectors, may also benefit from increased software adoption. With technology trends like applied AI, digital trust and cyber security, and cloud & edge computing impacting most – if not all – of Louisiana’s priority sectors, bolstering its technology specialization would serve as an enabler across many pockets of growth.

### *Key Facts:*

- *Louisiana Employment (2023): 4,000<sup>cix</sup>*
- *Forecasted Nationwide Growth (10 year CAGR): 1.7%<sup>cx</sup>*
- *Sample subsectors: Robotics and Industrial Controls, IoT Software, and Cybersecurity*

# C. Louisiana’s Five Pillars of Prosperity

**Exhibit 8:** LED Mission, Vision, and Strategic Pillars



To achieve this vision, LED will drive initiatives and catalyze new partnerships across five ‘Pillars of Prosperity’, each defining a specific mode of action for the organization.

1. **Ease of doing business:** Position Louisiana to compete and win by making it the easiest and best place to do business
2. **High wage employment:** Ensure every Louisianan has the opportunity for proud and ever-growing wages
3. **Thriving regions:** Create thriving regions that are continually capitalizing on opportunities
4. **Growth and innovation:** Optimize Louisiana’s asset industries for growth and innovation to lead in the future, as they have in the past
5. **Global impact:** Drive Louisiana’s business ecosystem towards global impact

Across all of five pillars, collaboration and coordination will be critical to achieve Louisiana’s goals. This collaboration starts first and foremost with LED’s regional partners. Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs) will play a key role and are encouraged to be deeply engaged in signature initiatives across all pillars, not just thriving regions initiatives. Partnerships will extend further to include other departments and agencies, education and workforce partners, private sector leaders, among others.



Two foundational priority initiatives will underpin and support the Pillars of Prosperity:

- **Governor’s whole-of-government economic strike force:** A formalized collaboration between cabinet-level agencies, with each member owning priority initiatives that contribute to economic development. Multiple agencies across the state make significant contributions to the enablers of economic growth areas like infrastructure, talent, and the state’s business climate. While collaboration happens across agencies, these efforts too often are not proactive or systematic. The formalization of this collaboration is required to ensure critical priorities get the full attention and support from the leaders across the public sector. This initiative can help enhance shared accountability, incentives, role clarity and transparency in performance.
- **Louisiana opportunity campaign:** A holistic communications strategy, targeting businesses and high-potential talent to relocate to or remain in Louisiana. Talent and businesses are drawn to regions where the narrative of opportunity aligns with their goals. The state has an opportunity to shape the national narrative about Louisiana and offer a proactive message on Louisiana as a land of opportunity for both talent and businesses. This initiative will focus on designing a holistic communications strategy, targeting businesses and high-potential talent to relocate and stay in Louisiana, with a focus on messaging at key decision points.

## Ease of Doing Business

*Position Louisiana to compete and win by making it the easiest and best place to do business*

Louisiana has long offered a cost advantage to employers seeking to build operations in the state, ranking 8<sup>th</sup> nationally in favorable cost of doing business.<sup>cxii</sup> Louisiana also ranks #1 in capital investment per capita, a strong endorsement of private sector confidence.<sup>cxii, cxiii</sup>

The goal for this pillar is to build on this cost advantage and further be known as the easiest and best state to do business. To do so, this strategic plan calls for efforts to enhance the business ecosystem and business development processes for prospective employers to fully experience the benefits of living and working in Louisiana.

LED, in coordination with state and regional partners, will actively invest in existing business development processes to promote an integrative, user-friendly journey from exploration to relocation to expansion. Furthermore, as the first point-of-contact with businesses, LED will continue to develop the state’s incentive toolkit to increase competitiveness with other states. These enhancements will further support investments in critical enablers of growth, including in-demand talent pipelines, site

preparedness, and industry-specific requirements (e.g., energy sufficiency and reliability for large scale capital investments).

As the plan considers shifting towards implementation, the measure of success for this initiative is to maintain Louisiana's position as the top destination for capital investment per capita, as a clear indication of business enthusiasm in the state.

**How the state will measure success:** Maintain #1 CapEx per capita nationwide (i.e., capital expenditures (CapEx) deployed by companies to acquire, upgrade, and maintain physical assets, like property, plants, or equipment)

### **Signature initiatives:**

In support of delivering on this goal to make Louisiana the best place to do business, LED plans to launch or sustain two signature initiatives:

- **Business development process excellence:** Redesign LED's deal processes to be more effective, flexible, and seamless. This effort will include end-to-end review of company experiences operating in Louisiana. It will also enhance the state's ability to provide a one-stop-shop for all business needs.
- **Fit-for-purpose incentive toolkit:** Ensure a full portfolio of tools is available across sectors, regions, functions, and company size and life cycle stage, aligned with the priorities of the Strategic Plan. For example, LED will explore a "High Impact Jobs" incentive focused on co-investing with companies that create employment opportunities with wages above regional benchmarks, helping to spur wage growth across the state. While the state's current incentive toolkit is robust, this initiative is designed to ensure additional tools and capabilities are in place to help businesses succeed, and further enhance the competitiveness of Louisiana's economy.

## **High Wage Employment**

*Ensure every Louisianan has the opportunity for proud and ever-growing wages*

Improving the skills, productivity and wages of Louisianans will help lift economic prosperity across the state and advance its goals and mission. These improvements will require investments in people and businesses to create more high-productivity, high-wage jobs in the state. Without aggressive action, employment growth in Louisiana is forecasted to be outpaced by its Southern peer states.

LED's strategy will not only aim for employment growth but will proactively target employment opportunities for Louisianans that enable increases in the quality living standards across regions. Filling these jobs will require a coordinated effort across state and regional partners to ensure Louisianans have the skills they need and are connected to these opportunities. By nurturing high-quality job opportunities,

strengthening the state’s talent-to-employment pipelines, and customized support of business-led projects with large job creation potential, LED aims to keep Louisiana’s best and brightest within the state, growing productivity and innovation.

**How the state will measure success:** *Reach #1 wage growth rate among Southern peer states*

**Example actions:**

In support of delivering on this goal and ensuring every Louisianan has the opportunity for proud and ever-growing wages, LED plans to launch or sustain two signature initiatives:

- **Scaling employer-backed talent development and placement solutions:** Connect key employers to qualified talent for priority occupations. In close partnership with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and other key talent agencies of the state, LED plans to work with employers to create programs and opportunity to connect them with the talent and skills they need.<sup>cxiv</sup> FastStart remains a nationally recognized program for talent solutions for companies seeking to move to Louisiana. Similar levels of talent supports must also be offered to existing employers to help them address any skills gaps. The state’s workforce and higher education institutions will continue to be key partners as LED strives to maintain a highly responsive system, filling the skills employers need.
- **Talent retention:** Increase retention of bachelor and master’s graduates in Louisiana through targeted investments and higher education policy changes. Louisiana has a history of leadership in producing high quality, in-demand talent, particularly in STEM fields. Recent trends have seen this talent leave the state at a rapid rate. Working with employers and skill providers, the state will help increase the connectivity of its highly skilled, talented Louisianans with employment opportunities, ensuring awareness of opportunities for prosperous and fulfilling careers.

## Thriving Regions

*Create thriving regions that are continually capitalizing on opportunities*

Louisiana is home to eight unique regions, each with its own cultural and economic strengths. LED envisions a future where all eight economic development regions share in the gains from growth. Over the last five years, all but one region experienced population decline.<sup>cxv</sup> Activities in LED’s “thriving regions” pillar will both advance quality-of-place efforts to make Louisiana an even more attractive place to live, work, and play, as well as modernize site development efforts across the state.

**How the state will measure success:** *Achieve positive population and migration in all regions*

**Example actions:**

- **Support regionally driven quality of place investments:** Partner with regional economic development organizations (REDOs) to diagnose the most relevant regional issues, design a plan focused on quality of life, and support the delivery of these plans within the regions. These plans and associated investments can improve safety, cleanliness, and quality-of-life across the state by partnering with regional leaders, understanding their most acute needs, and driving focused action to make each region an attractive place to live and work.
- **Dedicated site development fund:** Determine target sites for each priority sector and support investments in them. Businesses looking to relocate or expand in Louisiana first consider the fit and quality of available sites. Louisiana is blessed with an abundance of land and energy, key factors in site selection. A dedicated site development fund will ensure Louisiana's site portfolio remains competitive with peer states and improve Louisiana's ability to offer tailored site solutions for high-impact projects.
- **Rural Toolkit:** Support the Governor's Office of Rural Development, REDOs and others to develop strategies for different archetypes of parishes. Louisiana's economic context varies considerably across regions, with unemployment as low as 2.1% in some parishes and as high as 21.5% in others. A real, intentional rural toolkit, building upon best practices developed in partnership with regional and parish leaders and the Governor's Office, will identify and support economic development efforts best suited for Louisiana's rural areas.
- **Small business capability structure:** Support small businesses with digitization and tech adoption, capability building, and access to capital. Small and medium businesses (those with less than 500 employees) employ 54% of Louisiana workers, compared to a peer average of 45%. Small and medium businesses,<sup>cxvi</sup> therefore, will be instrumental in creating prosperity across regions. This initiative aims to connect small businesses with the tools, technology, and expertise to scale their operations, attract capital, and find and manage talent within their regions.

## **Growth and Innovation**

*Optimize Louisiana's asset industries for growth and innovation to lead in the future*

Louisiana's asset industries, like energy and process industries, creates opportunities for further growth, including the industry "cluster effects" in which research & development spurs innovation in the form of high growth start-ups. Despite Louisiana's strengths in entrepreneurship, Louisiana ranks 46<sup>th</sup> nationwide in venture capital per capita<sup>cxvii,cxviii</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup> in patent generation<sup>cxix,cxx</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup> in corporate R&D.<sup>cxxi,cxxii</sup> Activities within this pillar aim to support large employers to identify, pursue, and capture the next wave of growth in their industry, and increase Louisiana's high growth startups, from discovery to scale-up.

Initiatives will promote R&D partnerships between academic researchers and large employers, connect Louisiana businesses (or businesses considering Louisiana) to new markets and product opportunities to spur growth, and catalyze investment in early-stage ventures to support growth of high-potential ideas in Louisiana. Business attraction efforts will further prioritize subsectors in which Louisiana not only has a strong right-to-win based on its domestic expertise and industry assets, but also companies most likely to expand production, employment, wages, and capacity for innovation within Louisiana.

**How the state will measure success:** *Reach #1 VC per capita among Southeast peer states*

**Example actions:**

- **Regional CEO mobilization:** Revamp efforts in business attraction, expansion and post-deal engagement with industry partners. When businesses are considering expanding or relocating operations to a new state, one of their first steps is often contacting local private sector leaders in the region to learn more about the business environment. By engaging statewide CEOs in each region, LED aims to partner with these leaders on ways that LED can help support growth and innovation in their region and industry, further arm them with information about efforts to improve Louisiana's competitive position, and source business development prospects from their national networks.
- **Facilitate corporate-academic partnership and improve R&D commercialization:** Increase opportunities to collaborate with higher education and research institutions to drive research and enable commercialization. Louisiana has some of the best educational and research centers in the nation. In partnership with the industry-leading firms based in the state, Louisiana can be an exemplar of R&D, from upstream discovery and primary research to downstream commercialization and product development of new innovations.
- **Louisiana Innovation (LA.IO):** LED recently launched LA.IO, a new division of LED dedicated to making Louisiana a leader in the development of more high-growth, technology-enabled startup companies. The first LA.IO program

is the creation of the Louisiana Growth Fund, with initial federal funding of \$50 million that innovators can utilize in establishing and scaling startups across Louisiana. Among LA.IO's early efforts will be the development of the Louisiana Institute for Artificial Intelligence. This 501c3 will serve as the state's lead anchor for the statewide AI strategy, which is focused on applied research and development, commercialization, workforce development and policy. The Institute's first project will seek to upgrade 5,000 small businesses across Louisiana with AI tools that will enable them to scale their business and improve their competitiveness. These examples are the starting point for new programs and efforts to further catalyze innovation and increase the role of innovation ecosystems in economic development.

## Global Impact

### *Drive Louisiana's business ecosystem towards global impact*

Louisiana has an opportunity to build on its strength in international markets. Louisiana ranks #1 in the U.S. in exports as a share of GDP, with total export value of 21.1% of all annual production in the state. Oil & gas related exports represent 32% of exports, downstream petrochemical products represent 24%, and agricultural products are 21%. Louisiana also attracts a significant share of all inbound Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with 5% of all FDI in the U.S. deployed within Louisiana.

This pillar of LED's strategy aims to build on Louisiana's strengths in international markets by supporting businesses in strengthening their global competitiveness and strategically targeting international companies within priority sectors to locate in the state.

**How the state will measure success:** *Maintain top 3 rank in FDI nationwide*

### **Example actions:**

- **Next-gen lead development:** Develop the analytical tools and capabilities to improve lead identification, outreach, and tracking. New technology-driven approaches and an expanded scope to identify target business attraction opportunities may expand Louisiana's pool of companies interested in locating in Louisiana or the Southeastern US. These efforts will target both U.S. and internationally based companies, increasing the volume of opportunities of companies attracted to Louisiana's unique value proposition for their industry.
- **Targeted international strategy:** Pursue high potential value pools for international trade. Louisiana has built strong international trade networks in critical industries, including LNG and carbon capture technologies, and boasts a differentiated and diversified base of infrastructure to support international trade. As the international trade landscape evolves, Louisiana may be positioned to capture trade opportunities from peer states and identify new

high-growth value pools (e.g., blue hydrogen) aligned to Louisiana's distinct advantages and trade networks.

## V. Activating the Strategy

This strategy codifies and builds on the work LED and its partners are doing today to make Louisiana a great place to live and to do business. Achieving success will require a thoughtful approach to activation over time, collaboration with economic development partners, and tracking accountability.

### **Phased activation**

Activating this strategy for Louisiana will proceed along three phases: establishing foundations for growth, accelerating growth, and embracing and improving upon the new normal for economic development in Louisiana. As highlighted in vision for the future, the activation will be built on broad and deep partnerships in execution. Paramount among these is working in close collaboration with LED's regional partners in the design and execution of highest priority initiatives in each region. In addition, department and agency leaders, largely through the whole-of-government approach, will be key partners in delivering on the potential impact of these initiatives

Initial priorities for LED will be to set foundations by focusing on whole-of-government, process excellence, and talent initiatives. Priority initiatives in this phase may include a Louisiana opportunity campaign, business development process excellence, building public-private partnerships to accelerate innovation, and scaling employer-backed talent placement solutions.

Phase two priorities are aligned with accelerating growth by applying learnings from whole-of-government to regional initiatives and executing on process excellence efforts by pursuing priority sectors and scaling innovation. Priority initiatives in this phase may include supporting regionally-driven quality-of-place investments, regional CEO mobilization, and a targeted international strategy.

Finally, LED expects future "new normal" initiatives that will continue to leverage the whole-of-government model and adapt to shifting goals and priorities, which may not yet be contemplated in this plan, but build off the growth and momentum of implementation efforts.

### **Taking a "whole-of-Louisiana" approach**

Capturing these opportunities will require coordinated action across state agencies and regional partners, including the Board of Regents and public and private higher education institutions, Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Department of Education, Department of Environmental Quality, the Secretary of State, the Department of Transportation & Development, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission. A proposed "Economic Development Strike Force," which includes LED and core agencies will provide a framework for lasting collaboration across the state. There will also be a set of Extended Economic Development Partners, which includes both the economic strike force, statewide elected officials and agencies that influence



the broader economic, industry and talent ecosystem, as well as state, regional and local economic development organizations.

### **Keeping Louisiana on track**

Working in collaboration with the LEDP, LED will measure progress against these strategic objectives. LED will report on statewide outcomes and agency-specific operating targets to LEDP, to promote accountability and to direct resources towards initiatives with the highest potential for impact.

## VI. Conclusion

“We have always had the most skilled and dedicated workers, the richest natural resources and the best location for national and international commerce in the country. Now, we can finally take full advantage of all the things that make Louisiana so special and give our workers and their families the future they deserve.” – **Governor Jeff Landry**

**Louisiana has an opportunity to achieve global impact.** The state is rich in history, culture, natural resources, talent, and research institutions. Private enterprise, particularly in energy innovation and logistics, has positioned Louisiana as a leader in exports and a magnet for foreign direct investment from new markets. New efforts in healthcare / life sciences, technology, and professional services across the state represent emerging pockets of growth for the Louisiana economy, alongside existing asset sectors in energy, agribusiness, warehousing & logistics, and aerospace and defense.

**Capturing this opportunity requires targeted action to address the state’s challenges.** Growth requires talent, capital, and innovation. Louisiana has some of the hardest working, entrepreneurial talent in the nation – but it too often loses its young, well-educated talent to other states. The state attracts significant foreign direct investment in capital projects – but small businesses too often struggle to find and attract scale-up capital. Research institutions and private enterprise research efforts are among the best in the world – but R&D and commercialization rates remain low by national standards. LED’s strategy codifies the efforts that the agency is already leading to position Louisiana as a destination for talent and businesses of the future through targeted initiatives to improve ease of doing business, retain and match talent to high-wage opportunities, and spur growth and innovation, while ensuring shared prosperity across regions.

**Partnership will be critical in activating this strategy to position Louisiana to win.** To advance the shared ambition for the state, Louisiana is adopting a whole-of-government approach to economic development, bringing agencies together to collectively solve problems and unlock new growth opportunities for citizens and Louisiana businesses. Through this collaboration, Louisiana can ***build the most robust, innovative, and dynamic economy in the Southeast.***

## End Notes

---

- <sup>i</sup> In 2018, Louisiana produced a higher proportion of STEM graduates (18.9%) than any peer state, exceeding Texas and Georgia, among others.
- <sup>ii</sup> In 2023, LA STEM graduates as a percent of all graduates dropped to 16.2%, while peers like Texas and Georgia increased their proportion of STEM production to 18.1% and 22.6% respectively.
- <sup>iii</sup> While the education attainment of 25% of the population is a BA or more, 40% of outmigrants have a BA or higher, a disproportionately higher level.
- <sup>iv</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>v</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>vi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>vii</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>viii</sup> USA Trade Online. US Census Bureau. Retrieved March 2025, from <https://www.usatrade.census.gov>
- <sup>ix</sup> GDP by State. US Bureau of Economic Analysis. Retrieved March 2025, from <https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state>
- <sup>x</sup> Program Table. Lightcast. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>xi</sup> Early-Stage Entrepreneurship. Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.indicators.kauffman.org/series/earlystage>
- <sup>xii</sup> America's Top States for Business 2024. (2024, July 11). CNBC. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/americas-top-states-for-business-full-rankings.html>
- <sup>xiii</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>xiv</sup> USA Trade Online. US Census Bureau. Retrieved March 2025, from <https://www.usatrade.census.gov>
- <sup>xv</sup> GDP by State. US Bureau of Economic Analysis. Retrieved March 2025, from <https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state>
- <sup>xvi</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>xvii</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>xviii</sup> Program Table. Lightcast. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>xix</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>xx</sup> IPUMS USA. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.bls.gov/jlt/data.htm>
- <sup>xxii</sup> Local Area Unemployment Statistics. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/data.htm>

- 
- xxiii Site selector interviews
- xxiv Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- xxv IPUMS USA. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>
- xxvi IPUMS CPS. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>
- xxvii Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- xxviii IPUMS USA. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>
- xxix IPUMS CPS. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>
- xxx Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- xxxi Ibid.
- xxxii American Community Survey. US Census Bureau. Retrieved February 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/>
- xxxiii Program Table. Lightcast. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- xxxiv Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.bls.gov/jlt/data.htm>
- xxxv Local Area Unemployment Statistics. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/data.htm>
- xxxvi Early-Stage Entrepreneurship. Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.indicators.kauffman.org/series/earlystage>
- xxxvii [Pitchbook Data, Inc.](https://pitchbook.com/) Retrieved December 2024, from <https://pitchbook.com/>. The cited data has not been reviewed by Pitchbook analysts and may be inconsistent with Pitchbook methodology.
- xxxviii Business Enterprise Research and Development: 2022. (2024, September 30). National Science Foundation. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/business-enterprise-research-development/2022#data>
- xxxix Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- xl Early-Stage Entrepreneurship. Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.indicators.kauffman.org/series/earlystage>
- xli [Pitchbook Data, Inc.](https://pitchbook.com/) Retrieved December 2024, from <https://pitchbook.com/>. The cited data has not been reviewed by Pitchbook analysts and may be inconsistent with Pitchbook methodology.
- xlii Higher Education Research and Development: 2023. (2024, November 25). National Science Foundation. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/higher-education-research-development/2023#data>
- xliii Business Enterprise Research and Development: 2022. (2024, September 30). National Science Foundation. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/business-enterprise-research-development/2022#data>
- xliv Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>

- 
- <sup>xlv</sup> PatentsView. US Patent and Trademark Office. Retrieved November 2024, from <https://patentsview.org/>
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>xlvii</sup> Early-Stage Entrepreneurship. Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.indicators.kauffman.org/series/earlystage>
- <sup>xlviii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xliv</sup> New Employer Business. Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.indicators.kauffman.org/series/earlystage>
- <sup>i</sup> [Pitchbook Data, Inc.](https://pitchbook.com/) Retrieved December 2024, from <https://pitchbook.com/>. The cited data has not been reviewed by Pitchbook analysts and may be inconsistent with Pitchbook methodology.
- <sup>li</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>lii</sup> State Energy Profiles and Estimates. US Energy Information Administration. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://www.eia.gov/state/>
- <sup>liii</sup> Best States Rankings. US News Best States. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states>
- <sup>liiv</sup> American Community Survey. US Census Bureau. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/>
- <sup>liv</sup> By 2021 waterborne tonnage; top five Louisiana ports include South Louisiana, New Orleans, Greater Baton Rouge, Plaquemines, Lake Charles; Louisiana Legislative Auditor informational report Louisiana's Public Ports System issued January 31, 2024
- <sup>lvi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lvii</sup> Louisiana Legislative Auditor informational report, Louisiana's Public Ports System, issued January 31, 2024
- <sup>lviii</sup> America's Top States for Business 2024. (2024, July 11). CNBC. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/americas-top-states-for-business-full-rankings.html>
- <sup>lix</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>lx</sup> America's Top States for Business 2024. (2024, July 11). CNBC. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/americas-top-states-for-business-full-rankings.html>
- <sup>lxi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> fDi Incentives Flow. (2025). FT Locations. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://incentivesflow.wavteq.com/>
- <sup>lxiv</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>lxv</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>lxvi</sup> IPUMS USA. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>
- <sup>lxvii</sup> American Community Survey. US Census Bureau. Retrieved February 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/>

- 
- <sup>lxviii</sup> [Pitchbook Data, Inc.](https://pitchbook.com/) Retrieved December 2024, from <https://pitchbook.com/>. The cited data has not been reviewed by Pitchbook analysts and may be inconsistent with Pitchbook methodology.
- <sup>lxix</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>
- <sup>lxx</sup> America's Top States for Business 2024. (2024, July 11). CNBC. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/americas-top-states-for-business-full-rankings.html>
- <sup>lxxi</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>lxxii</sup> Oil and Gas Resources of the Bossier and Haynesville Formations. (2017, April 13). US Geological Survey. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://www.usgs.gov/news/national-news-release/usgs-estimates-304-trillion-cubic-feet-natural-gas-bossier-and>
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> Global Energy Perspective. (2024, September 17). McKinsey & Company. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/energy-and-materials/our-insights/global-energy-perspective>
- <sup>lxxiv</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxv</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>lxxvi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxvii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxviii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxix</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxx</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxxi</sup> McKinsey & Company, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/logistics/our-insights/what-do-us-consumers-want-from-e-commerce-deliveries>
- <sup>lxxxii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxxiii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxxiv</sup> Space: The \$1.8 Trillion Opportunity for Global Economic Growth. (2024, April 8). World Economic Forum. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://www.weforum.org/publications/space-the-1-8-trillion-opportunity-for-global-economic-growth/>
- <sup>lxxxv</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>lxxxvi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxxvii</sup> Agribusiness. Louisiana Economic Development. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/key-industry/agribusiness>
- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> Job Postings Table. Lightcast. Retrieved January 2025, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>xc</sup> 2024 State Agriculture Overview: Louisiana. US Department of Agriculture. Retrieved January 2025, from [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick\\_Stats/Ag\\_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=LOUISIANA](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=LOUISIANA)
- <sup>lxxci</sup> Industry Table. Lightcast. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://www.lightcast.io>
- <sup>lxxcii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxciii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxciv</sup> Ibid.



---

<sup>cxxi</sup> Business Enterprise Research and Development: 2022. (2024, September 30). National Science Foundation. Retrieved December 2024, from <https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/business-enterprise-research-development/2022#data>

<sup>cxxii</sup> Data Buffet. Moody's Analytics. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.economy.com/databuffet/>