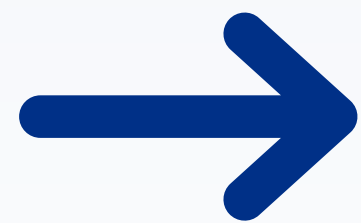
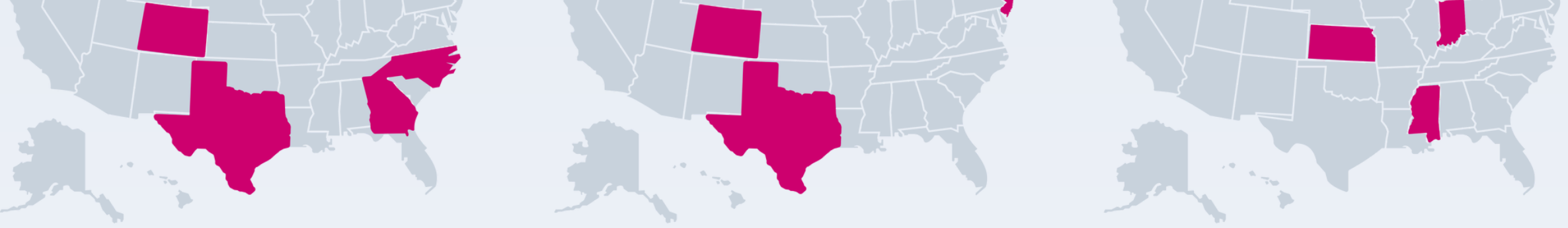


SEARCH TRENDS BY THE STATES

How employee benefit search trends
differ between states.



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EMPLOYEES MAKE THE WORLD GO ROUND

Employees make the world go round, and as that world changes, so do priorities.

Job seekers are consistently reporting that benefits need to reflect the real world in which they live, work, and play. According to a Glassdoor survey, **80% of employees would prefer additional benefits over a pay increase.(1)** But which benefits specifically? And, outside of the benefits themselves, what else is important to them?

From “negotiation” in Colorado and Texas, to “transparency” in Kansas, we looked at employees’ top search topics to see how the states’ priorities around employee benefits compare.



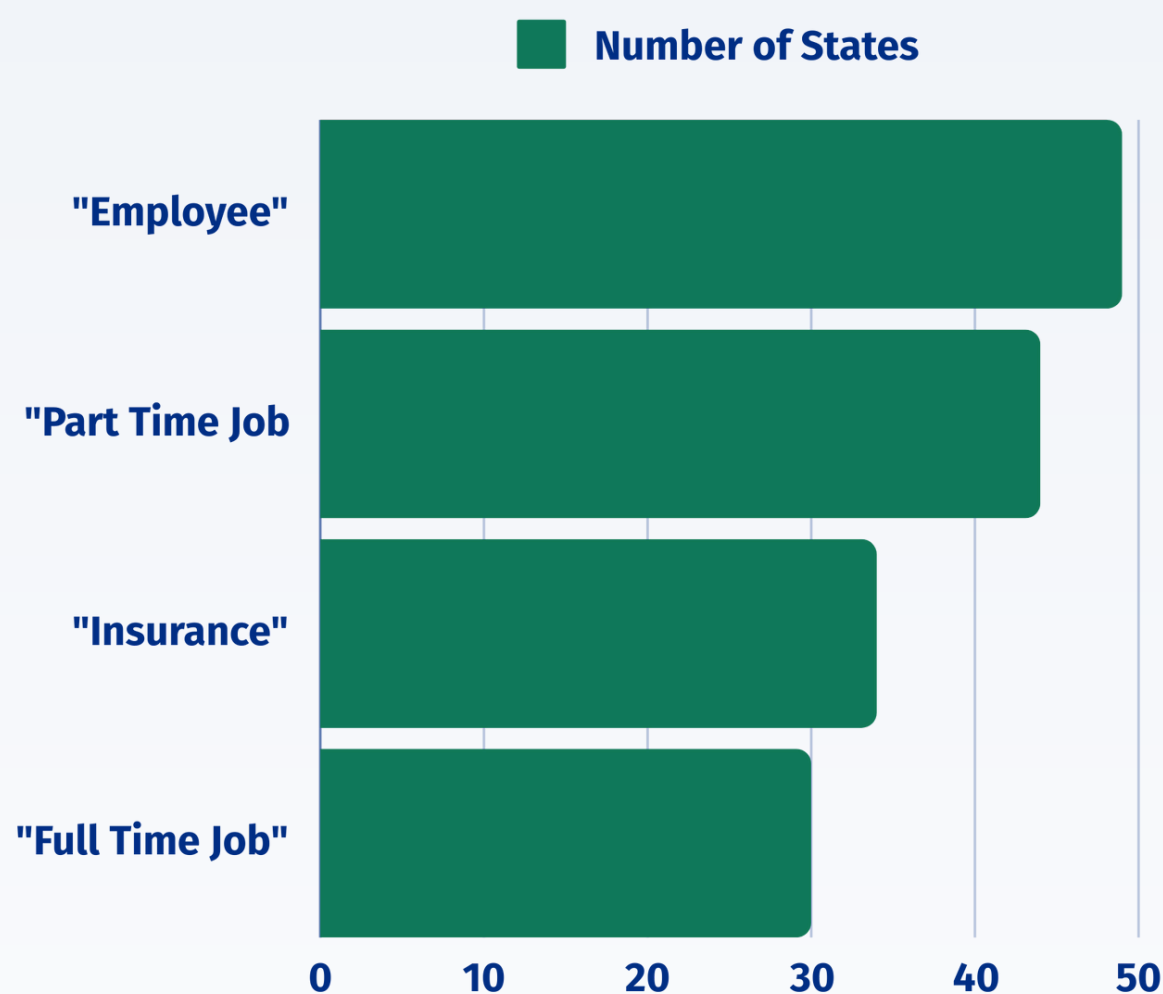
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SEARCH TRENDS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Over the past 12 months, when searching the topic of employee benefits, people in almost all states searched the words **"Employee"** and **"Part time job."** A majority also searched for **"Insurance," "Full time job,"** and **specific employers, industries or professions.**

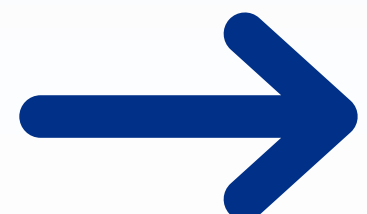
Terms Searched by a Majority of States



These insights are unsurprising and easily explained without too much interrogation. Once we'd excluded these and other explainable terms (see methodology), some unique search terms rose to the top.



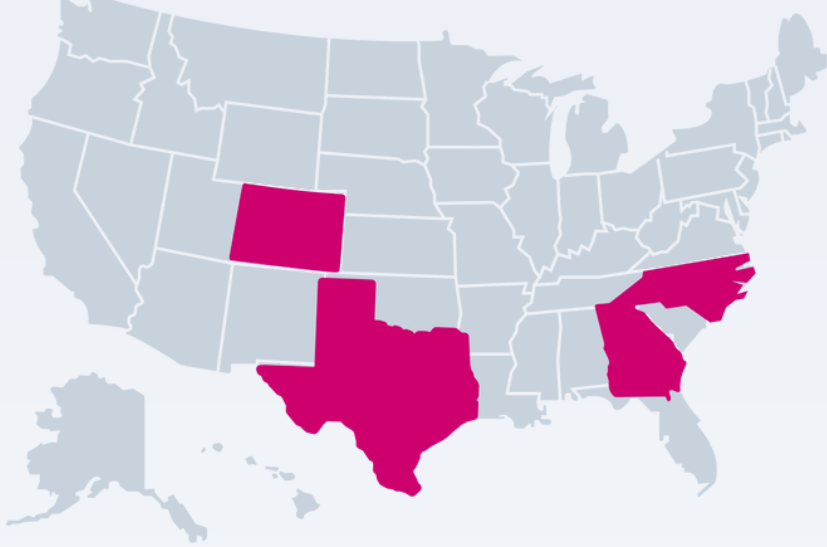
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Google Trends. Topics that appeared in search trends (indexed 0-100 based on percentage of searches for that topic, as a proportion of all searches at that time and location) of 26 or more states, in the context of "Employee Benefits" and "Jobs and Education" between 7/12/23 and 7/12/24.

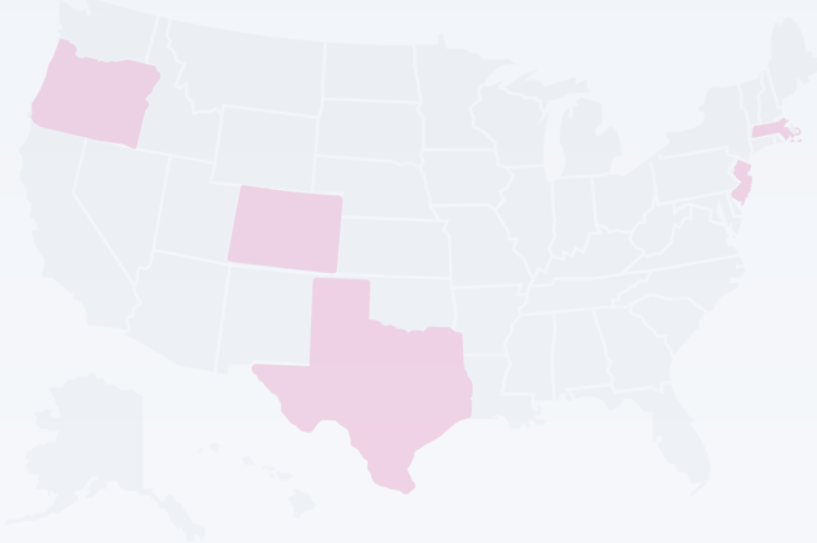
TERMS SEARCHED BY 3-5 STATES

"Paid Time Off"



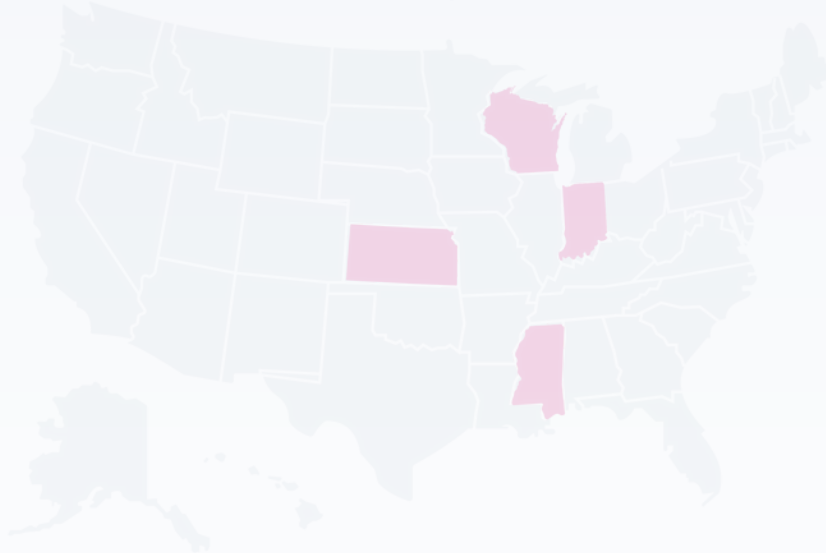
Perhaps it's the call of the Rocky Mountains or that world-famous southern hospitality that make the people of **Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas** the only ones to search for **"Paid time off."**

"Negotiation"



Colorado is known for its comprehensive PTO mandates (and Georgia has statutory but not mandated PTO laws) and is the state with the most remote workers,(2) so PTO may play a different role in the dynamics of work life balance here.

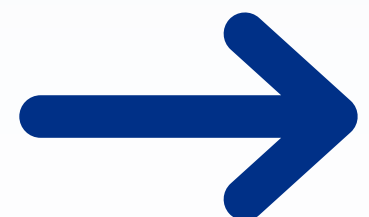
"Job Description"



North Carolina and Texas laws do not require PTO but these states' high prevalence of research and development, manufacturing, technology, and biotech companies may contribute to employees' need for a rest!

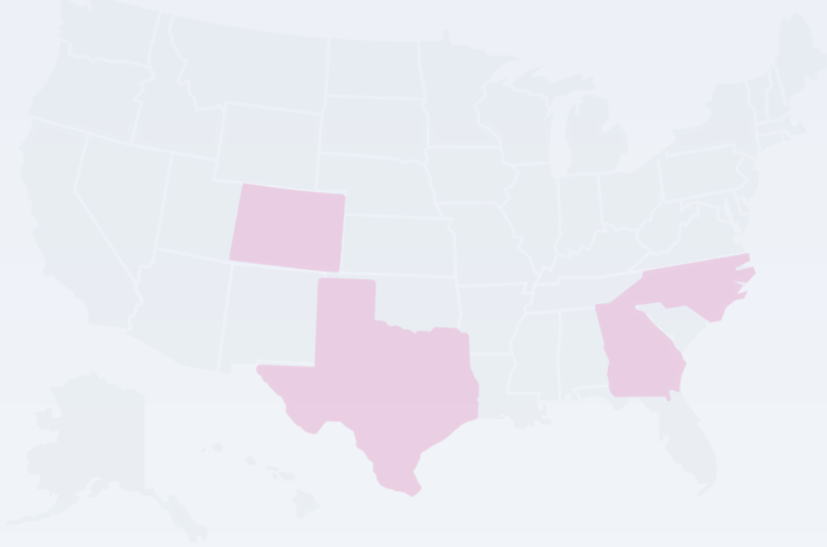


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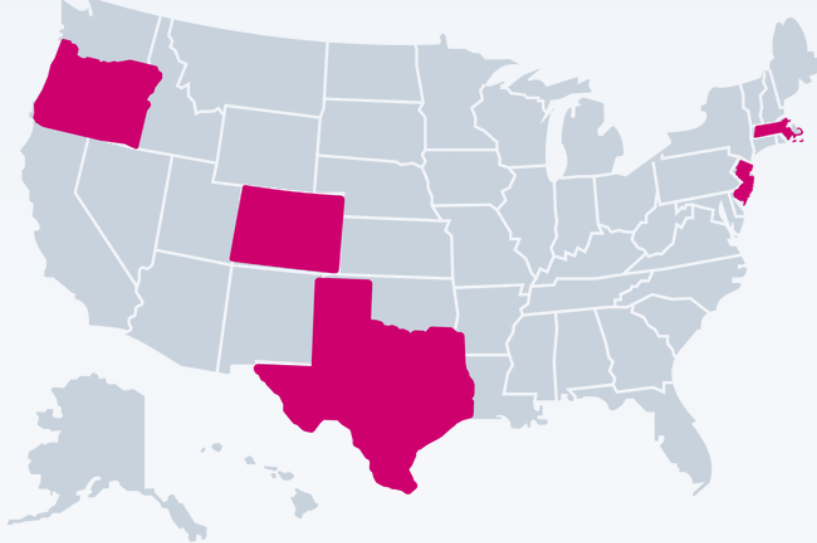


TERMS SEARCHED BY 3-5 STATES

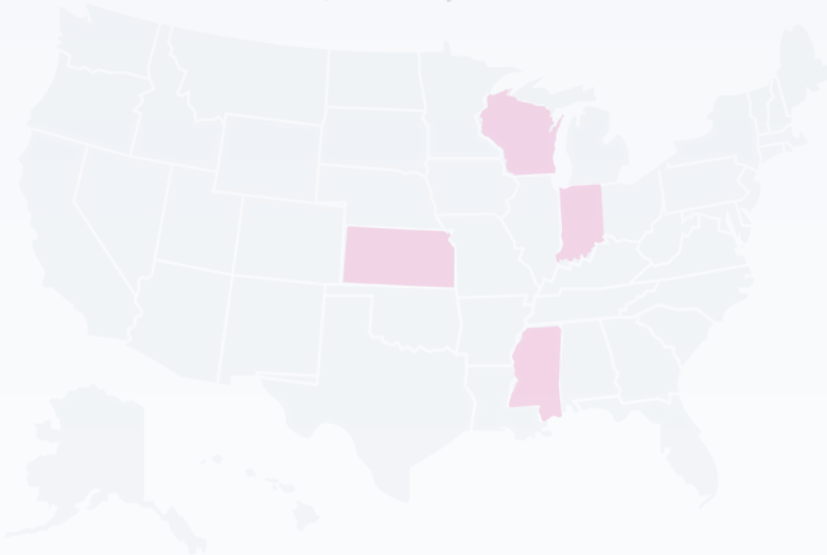
"Paid Time Off"



"Negotiation"



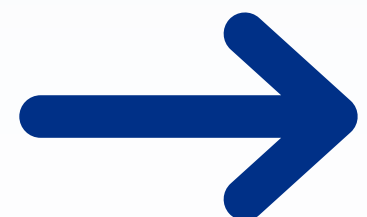
"Job Description"



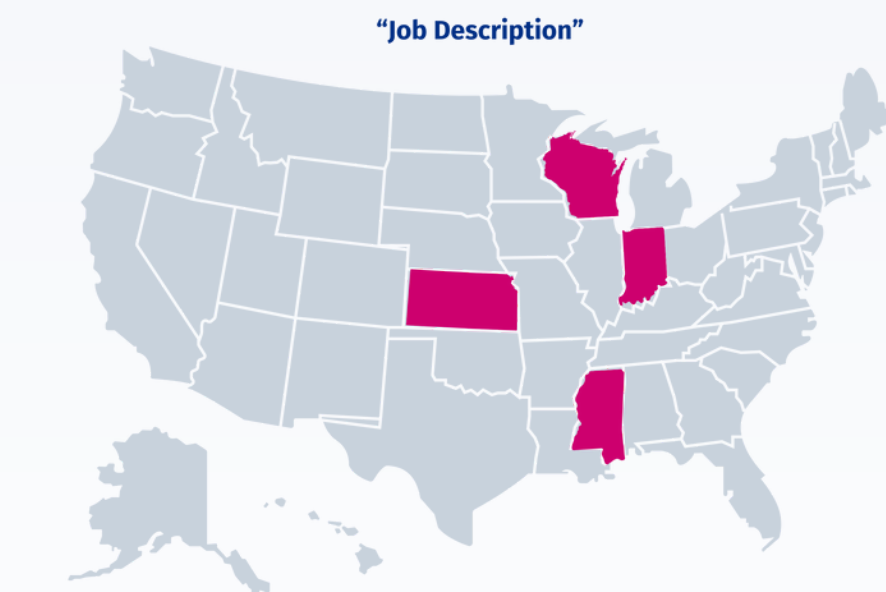
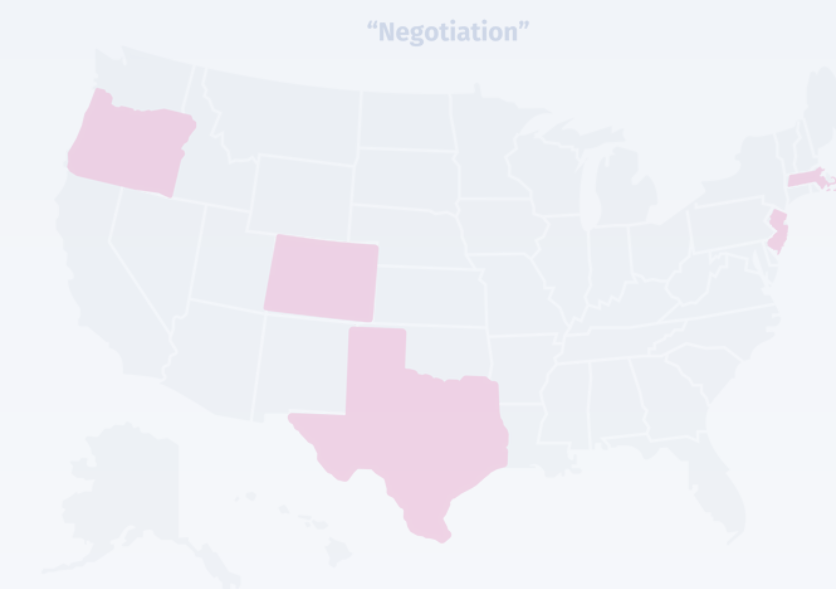
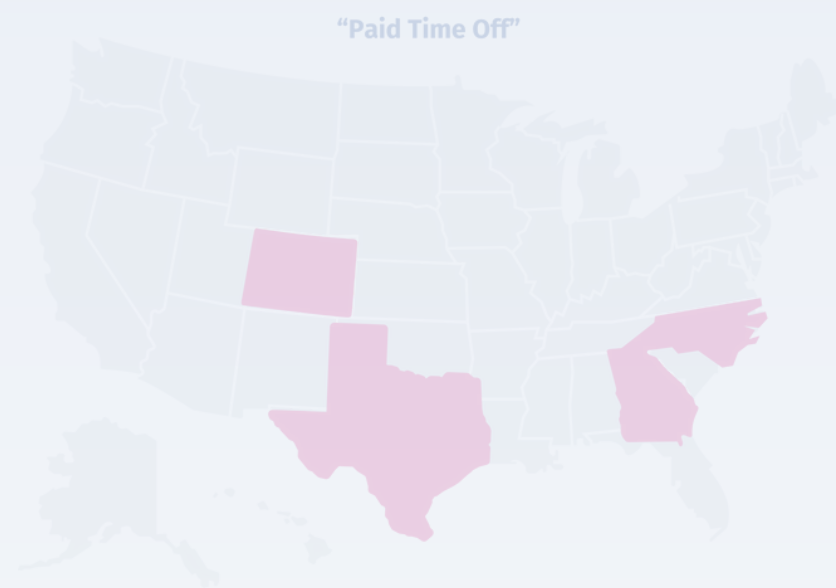
"Negotiation," in the context of employee benefits, was searched only in **Colorado, Oregon, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Texas.** The employee voice is important to employers and perhaps these states are listening and using it to drive a certain kind of empowerment in job seekers and employees.



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TERMS SEARCHED BY 3-5 STATES

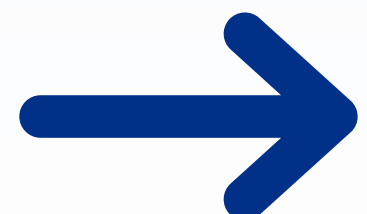


Searchers in **Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, and Wisconsin** appear to want transparency from the get-go, being the only states to include **"Job description"** in their searches.

Detailing salary ranges and benefits packages up front has often been seen as a surefire way to attract under-qualified candidates but, in contrast, the quality applicants that this transparency also brings may be worth the risk.



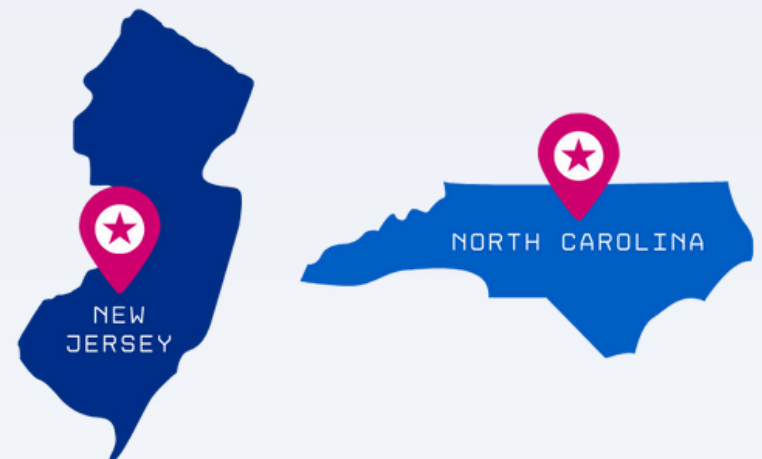
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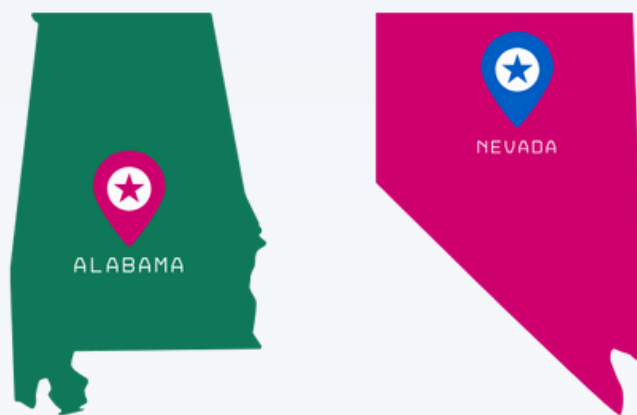
TERMS SEARCHED BY JUST 2 STATES

“Apprenticeship.” Increased funding for state and employer initiatives such as *ApprenticeshipNC*, and *GAINS*, *PACE*, and *NJBuild* could be behind the high search volume around apprenticeships in **North Carolina** and **New Jersey**.

“Apprenticeship”



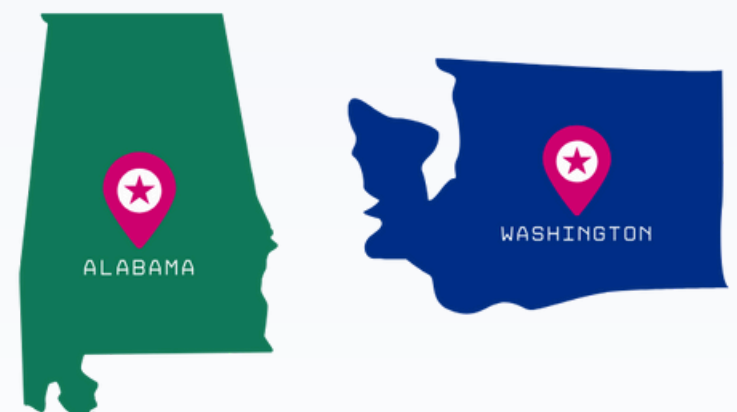
“Glassdoor”



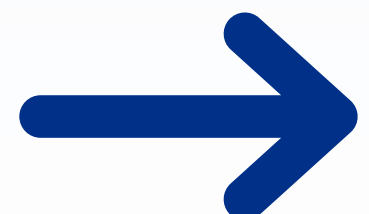
“Glassdoor.” The popular employer review site is clearly a trusted resource for job seekers in **Alabama** and **Nevada**, indicating that they too value transparency and employee insight.

“Hourly/Hour.” **Washington State** has some unique labor laws, including family leave and minimum wage, so it makes sense that employees would over-index on searches around other labor laws. Similarly, in **Alabama** a new overtime law for hourly employees could help explain this unique search term.

“Hourly/Hour”



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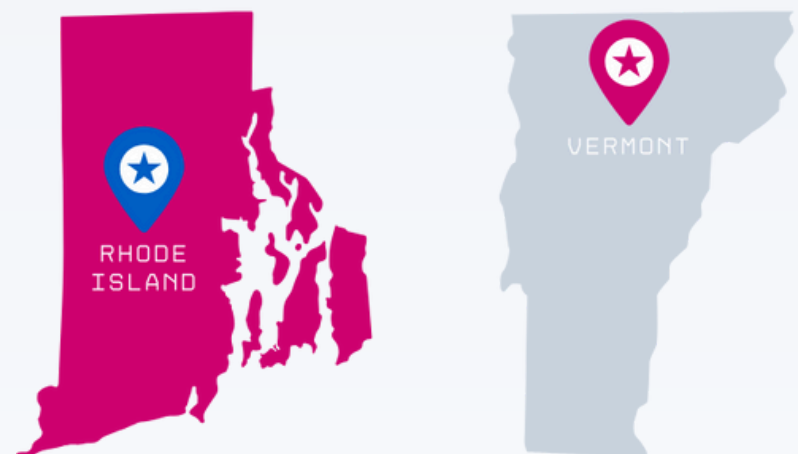
TERMS SEARCHED BY JUST 2 STATES

“Leave of Absence.” Usually defined as extended, unpaid time off from regular work, leaves of absence appear to be of particular interest to searchers in **Massachusetts** and **North Carolina**. Leaves of absence are taken for many (often very personal) reasons so can be stressful for individuals and their teams. Direct Billing solutions can help automate benefit administration during a leave of absence without creating more stress for anyone concerned.

“Leave of Absence”



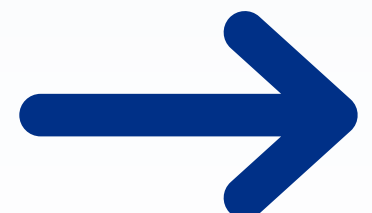
“Tuition Payments”



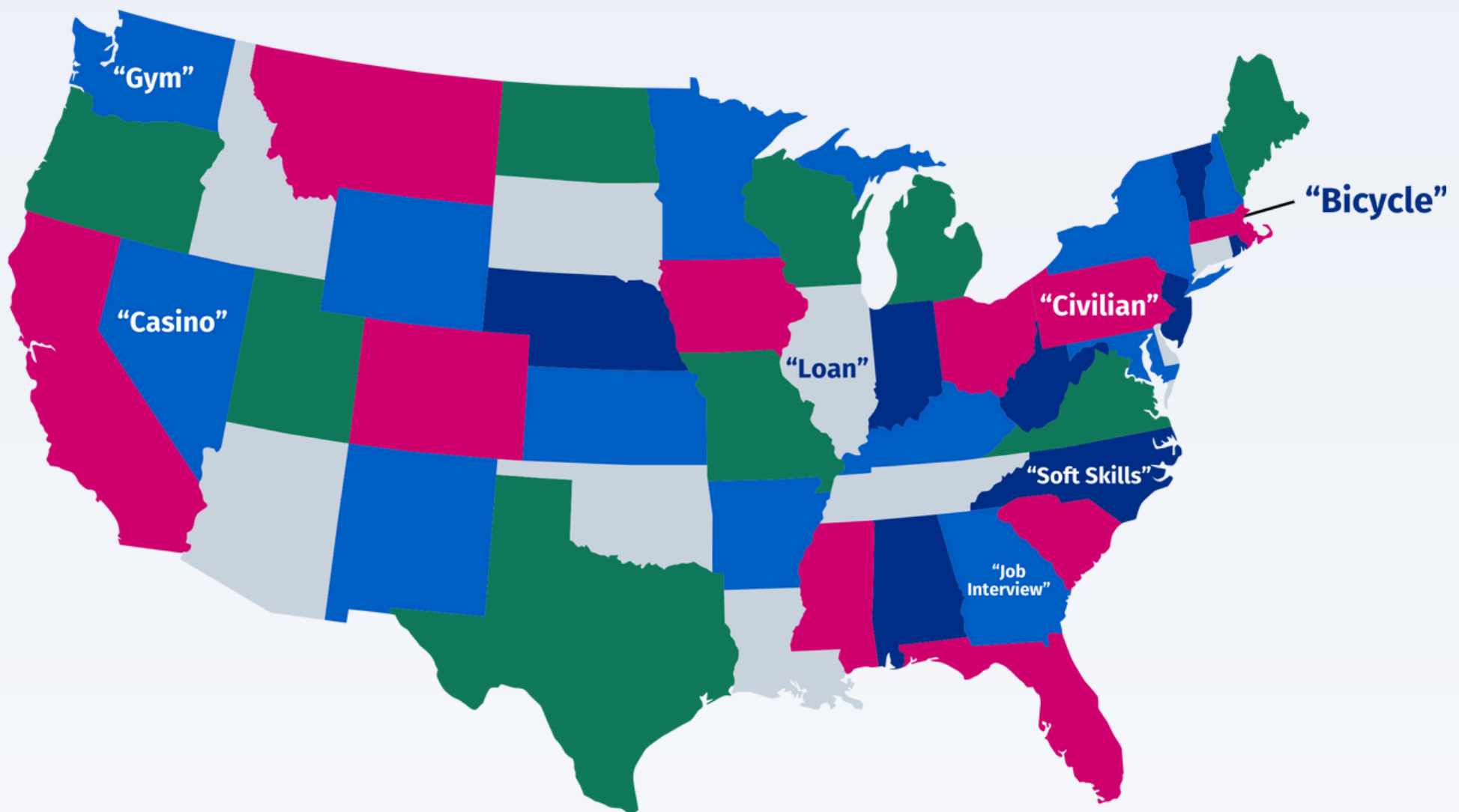
“Tuition Payments.” It tracks that people in **Rhode Island** and **Vermont** are accustomed to seeing tuition reimbursements in action—both states participate in the New England Regional Student Program, which provides significant tuition savings to residents of the six New England states. In the absence of a dedicated tuition reimbursement program, a Lifestyle Spending Account is a great way to make continuous learning accessible to employees.



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TERMS EXCLUSIVE TO ONE STATE



Illinois: "Loan." Illinois has a significant financial sector, so it's possible that employees have a greater awareness of employer loans, leading to more searches. Illinois also has several student loan forgiveness programs, a topic that has seen increasing national conversation in recent years.

Georgia: "Job Interview." There was once a time when discussing compensation and benefits in a job interview was taboo. But with evolving calls for transparency, these conversations are more expected than in the interview stages of previous years. Georgia, particularly Atlanta, is a major business hub so naturally has a high volume of job interviews that could lead to a higher search volume for this term.



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TERMS EXCLUSIVE TO ONE STATE

Massachusetts: “Bicycle.” In Massachusetts, bicycle commuter benefits have gained attention due to recent legislative changes. Bicycle-related purchases including bikeshare memberships, bicycles, and bicycle improvements were recently added to a tax relief bill, requiring state tax policy to provide all transit and bicycle commuters with the same tax deduction as those who drive to work.

Nevada: “Casino.” OK, so this one isn’t quite so “unexplainable,” but it does highlight a nuance synonymous with Nevada which alone accounted for 23% of all U.S. and nearly 6% of global casino revenue in 2023.(3) As a unionized but dynamic and volatile industry—think stressful, high-risk, antisocial hours—benefits packages can make a significant impact to stability for casino workers.

North Carolina: “Soft Skills.” In addition to being home to world-renowned science and engineering programs at Duke University, North Carolina has thriving science & engineering, finance, and IT industries. And it just so happens that despite their technical exterior, these are among the industries that focus on soft skills the most.(4) With employers that place so much value on soft skills, it makes sense that employees expect these to be reflected in their benefits.

A Lifestyle Spending Account is one way for employers to practice what they preach. With a wide range of eligible health and wellness expenses, LSAs can help fund hobbies and behaviors that lead to healthy relationships and workplace skills.



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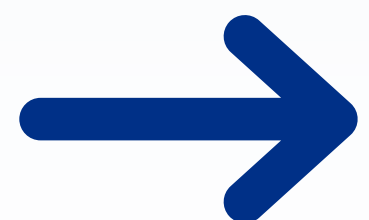
TERMS EXCLUSIVE TO ONE STATE

Pennsylvania: “Civilian.” Pennsylvania’s largest employer is the federal government. Its second largest? The state government.(5) So, the term civilian likely applies to hundreds of thousands of employees. Government benefit packages are often highly coveted because they are comprehensive, flexible, and stable, something that all employers should keep in mind when building their packages.

Washington: “Gym.” Simply put, Washington values wellness. A quarter of Washingtonians have a health club membership, putting them at number 10 in the nation,(6) and with 6 gyms per capita, 13th in terms of saturation.(7) Seattle is home to many niche but growing fitness classes and with a number of state-led health and wellness initiatives, discounts, and programs, Washington is a gym-bunny’s happy place! Employers here should certainly prioritize wellness programs and financial products that reward healthy lifestyles.



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THREE THINGS BROKERS NEED TO BRING VALUE TO THEIR CLIENTS

1. Flexible Products

The United States is home to more 167 million employees,(8) so it's unsurprising that benefit needs differ across the country. Times change, people change, culture changes, and benefit offerings need to keep up.

2. Real-World Benefits

In the same vein, benefits must reflect real world needs. Employees' empowerment to ask for what they need is growing, as is their willingness to walk away from an employer that isn't prepared to provide it. When benefits are treated as a checkbox exercise, they stop being benefits.

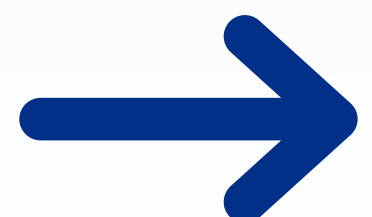
3. Partnership

Ultimately, to offer a benefits landscape that is flexible and truly reflective of employee needs, brokers and benefit providers must work together. Critically a benefits provider must understand each market at a human level to develop and offer relevant, appropriate product solutions. When it comes to both products and service, one size does not, and never will, fit all.

If you're looking for your own partner that can help you deliver all of these things, Surency can help. Visit [Surency.com/LearnMore](https://surency.com/LearnMore) to get started.



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Methodology

Google Trends Report | Parent Topic: Employee Benefits, Category: Jobs and Education | Topics searched in the context of the above between 7/12/23 and 7/12/24, by state, indexed 0-100 based on percentage of searches for that topic, as a proportion of all searches at that time and location | Occurrence of search terms in each state's report noted 0-50 | Terms occurring in 26 or more states excluded | Terms pertaining to industry, profession, job title, employer, government benefits, technical terms, and benefit providers excluded

Endnotes

1. Glassdoor, 2015
2. Select Software Reviews, 2023
3. AP News, Statista, and Nevada Independent, 2023
4. Indeed, 2020
5. Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, 2023
6. Statista, 2020
7. Zippia.com, 2022
8. Statista, 2023



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