



# U.S. infrastructure not making the grade

If us citizens were the parents of our country, and government was the child, we would not proudly hang its latest infrastructure report card on the refrigerator. In fact, we would probably limit its screen time and send it to its room to hit the books.



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*InSites*

Every four years the American Society of Civil Engineers issues a report card on the state of the nation's infrastructure. It assigns an overall grade, which was a C this year, and individual grades for different categories of infrastructure. These grades, along with in-depth explanations, are posted online at [infrastructurereportcard.org](http://infrastructurereportcard.org). No category of national infrastructure earned a grade of A. The highest was a B for rail.

The report card shows why infrastructure is such a hot topic in the nation's capital, and at all levels of government across the country. The American Society of Civil Engineers supports the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which was passed by the Senate in August, but held up by negotiations over the Build Back Better Act

in the House until finally passing Nov. 5. President Biden intends to sign it into law tomorrow.

Obviously, civil engineers benefit when we spend money on building. They are the people paid to design and build roads, parks, ports, railroads and the other structures and systems that keep society functioning. But they make a good case for why it's smart to invest the money necessary to improve and maintain the systems that keep us healthy and productive. They claim not doing so ends up costing more in the long run. Preventing dam breaks, bridge collapses or compromised drinking water systems is cheaper than rebuilding them and fixing the damage after they fail. In the case of catastrophic failures, lost lives can't be repaired or replaced.

As you might expect from engineers, the site is organized and has logical navigation. The home page features a full width background photo of an elegantly designed suspension bridge. The nation's C- infrastructure grade is prominently displayed in the center. Across the top of the page is a set of navigation links. Across the bottom of the photo are three blocks of brightly-colored text highlighting some of the deficiencies of our infrastructure.

As you scroll down there are articles on various related topics. There's a grid with icons representing 18 categories of infrastructure. Hovering over an icon reveals the grade it received. Clicking on it brings you to a page detailing how it was graded, what its challenges are, possible solutions and more. Each page has photos, graphics, maps and links to more information.

Further down the page is a U.S. map. Clicking on a state opens a page showing the state's overall grade (Pennsylvania also got a C-). It also has grades for the different categories in the state, explanations, solutions, facts and more.

Another map on the site lets you see where different types of infrastructure are located around the country. You can select what you want to see, such as dams or airports, and the map will display location markers. You can pan and zoom to isolate specific areas.

As you explore the other sections of the site you will dig deeper and deeper into all aspects of infrastructure, the economics involved and how to take action. This is a very robust site loaded with information on a topic of concern to everyone.

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