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Source of Portland-metro's income decline? College-educated workers

*Value of Jobs Coalition reveals \$2.7 billion earnings gap between
Portland-metro college-educated workers, U.S. metro average*

PORTLAND, Ore. – Today, the Value of Jobs coalition released a [groundbreaking study](#) examining Portland-metro's decline in personal income per capita relative to the U.S. metro average. The findings show that Portland-metro's college-educated workers earn **10 percent less** than the U.S. average, creating a **\$2.7 billion earnings gap** between Portland-metro and the U.S. metro average. What is the largest population segment contributing to the gap? White, college-educated workers, and more specifically, white college-educated males who are working *and* earning less than their peers. This earnings gap means less money for families and public services, impacting the region's overall quality of life.

"Ever since our first economic study revealed this disturbing relative decline in our region's per capita income, we've been attempting to identify both the cause and solution for the decline," said Dennis Rawlinson, firm chair of Miller Nash and chair of the Portland Business Alliance.

"This new study gives us some answers about the cause of the decline, but more importantly, it sounds the alarm for strategic policy-making that retains and grows jobs in our region. These jobs will only arise in sufficient quality and quantity if we improve the overall educational achievement of Oregonians and are strategic about increasing the number of graduates in key fields."

Key takeaways:

- Portland-metro's college-educated workers annually earn 10 percent less than the U.S. metro average, which results in a \$2.7 billion earnings gap.
- Roughly **\$110 million would be available to K-12 schools** in Oregon if Portland-metro's college-educated workers earned the same amount as the U.S. metro average, which could fund more than 1,200 teachers.
- Portland-metro's white, college-educated 25- to 39-year-old males rank **270 out of 284** U.S. metros in the number of annual hours worked.
- Portland-metro has **6 percent fewer** white, college-educated males with business degrees compared to the U.S. metro average.
- Portland-metro lawyers earn **\$42,218 less annually** compared to the U.S. metro average.

This study focuses on the earnings of Portland-metro's white, college-educated males because they are the largest contributor to the regional income gap and, from an economics point of view, the characteristics of the white, college-educated males remain relatively consistent among U.S. metro areas making comparisons easier. The coalition members want to be clear, however, that the region must focus on correcting the income gaps associated with all Oregonians.

The report's data and analysis were compiled by ECONorthwest for the Value of Jobs Coalition, which includes Associated Oregon Industries, Greater Portland Inc., Oregon Business Association, Oregon Business Council, Port of Portland and the Portland Business Alliance.

To view all reports, visit www.valueofjobs.com.

The Portland Business Alliance

The Portland Business Alliance is Greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce. With more than 1,200 members, the Alliance strives to promote and foster an environment in the Portland region that attracts, supports and retains private-sector jobs, spurs economic vitality and enables quality educational opportunities for the region's residents. Learn more at www.portlandalliance.com