



# VALUE OF JOBS NEWS

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**For more information, contact:**  
Valerie Cunningham  
[vcunningham@portlandalliance.com](mailto:vcunningham@portlandalliance.com)

## **New study reveals state of Portland-metro's middle-income jobs**

*Value of Jobs Coalition reports middle-wage jobs and related purchasing power are in decline*

PORTLAND, Ore. – Today, the Portland Business Alliance, in partnership with the Value of Jobs Coalition, released a first-of-its kind study: *Middle-income jobs in the Portland-metro economy*. The report closely examines the economic impacts of a decline in Portland-metro's middle-income jobs. The report can be found [here](#).

The study looks at several aspects of middle-income job loss in the Portland-metro area between 1980 and 2013, including share of total employment, wage growth, industries and job location. Overall, the report concludes that jobs at the top and bottom ends of the wage scale have grown, while those in the middle have declined, contributing to income disparity in the region amidst increases in costs of living. The report also shows global market changes and technology have had major impacts on labor markets across the U.S. and in Portland-metro. At the same time, the report shows that technological advancements and growing global trade are major drivers of jobs in Oregon and Portland-metro.

“While Portland-metro has recovered the jobs lost during the recession, this study shows us that jobs and incomes in the middle aren't coming back as quickly. This is concerning, as these are the jobs that support families and are the backbone of our economy,” said Roger Hinshaw, president of Oregon and Southwest Washington for Bank of America, and a founding member of the Value of Jobs Coalition. “The question we must ask ourselves is, how can we create an environment that allows us to retain the quality jobs we have while growing employment opportunities in the private sector that support future growth?”

“If we want Portland to be a place where families can prosper, then restoring middle-income jobs should be top a priority,” said Debbie Kitchin, Portland Business Alliance chair and owner of InterWorks LLC. “This will require policies and investments now in areas that grow private-sector jobs, including education and skills training, international trade, industrial land development and transportation infrastructure. Together, we can position our region for a brighter future.”

Highlights of this study include:

- Middle-income jobs, as a share of the region's total employment, have dropped from 69 percent in 1980 to 57 percent in 2013.
- Low- and high-income jobs account for an increasingly larger share of the region's overall employment base.
- From 1980 to 2013 wages for low- and middle-income jobs have been stagnant.
- Adjusting for the region's relatively higher cost of living, middle-income wages provide families in Portland-metro with less buying power than those in comparator cities throughout the country.
- Middle-income jobs are disproportionately concentrated along rivers, near medical facilities, along the high-tech corridor and in Vancouver, Washington.
- Families earning less than \$70,000 a year are increasingly priced out of buying a home in the region's core and near middle-income job centers.

A summary and full copy of the report can be found at [www.valueofjobs.com](http://www.valueofjobs.com).

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***The Value of Jobs Coalition***

*The Value of Jobs Coalition is based on the premise that in order to have a prosperous, healthy Portland region with a good quality of life, we need more private-sector jobs. The coalition began with an economic study in the fall of 2010, which uncovered troubling economic data about the Portland-metro region. A number of other studies have followed that highlight the region's economic opportunities and challenges. Find out more at: [www.valueofjobs.com](http://www.valueofjobs.com).*

***The Portland Business Alliance***

*The Portland Business Alliance is Greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce. With more than 1,800 members, we strive 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](http://www.portlandalliance.com).*