



# VALUE OF JOBS NEWS

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## For more information, contact:

Liza Dossick, 503.552.6772

[ldossick@portlandalliance.com](mailto:ldossick@portlandalliance.com)

## Study reveals strong Portland-metro job growth

*Full-time work and incomes lag; affordability remains a challenge*

PORTLAND, Ore. – Today the Value of Jobs Coalition of business and civic leaders released the 2015 Economic Check-Up, the latest in a series of economic studies examining how the Portland-metro region is performing compared to the U.S. metro average and other comparable metro areas. The study shows the Portland region has gained more jobs than there were before the recession, but median household incomes lag pre-recession levels. This year's report also reveals that Portland-metro is falling behind in the ability of household incomes to meet the increasing cost of living, raising questions about affordability for many.

The report also looks at Portland-metro's labor force participation rate by age, relative to the U.S. metro average. The data reveals that Portland area residents are participating in the workforce at a higher rate than their counterparts in other U.S. metro areas, but a disproportionate number are in part-time jobs.

"Our region has some clear strengths. We're growing private-sector jobs and productivity and exports remain strong, largely due to electronics and semiconductor manufacturing," said Sandra McDonough, president & CEO of the Portland Business Alliance. "However, it's concerning to see that household incomes still have not rebounded as jobs have come back and that affordability is becoming a bigger challenge. This has implications for our economy, and for working families who are trying to stay afloat, buy homes, or put kids through college. It's critical that we keep our collective focus on growing quality middle-wage jobs."

This sixth Economic Check-Up focuses on three measures that indicate the health of the Portland-metro economy: employment, income and Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP). It also looks at how incomes relate to cost of living using the Regional Price Parity measurement. Key report findings for Portland-metro include:

- Job growth outpaced the national average with 35,800 jobs added between September 2014 and September 2015. The region now has 70,700 more jobs over and above the 2007 level, before the recession losses.
- The greatest job gains were in professional and business services; education and health services; leisure and hospitality; and trade, transportation and utilities.
- Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP) growth ranked ninth in the nation from the trough of the recession to the first quarter of 2015.
- Real median household income grew slowly from 2013 to 2014, increasing by \$120.
- Per capita income lags the U.S. metro average by \$1,821; median household income is \$3,700 greater than the U.S. metro average.
- Portland-metro's lowest 20 percent of households earn on average 19 percent more than the national metro average; the top 20 percent of households make 3 percent less on average.
- Per capita employment for full-time and full-year employment underperforms the U.S. metro average and has declined to 47.9 percent of the population, down from 2000.

The report's data and analysis were compiled by ECONorthwest for the Value of Jobs Coalition and produced by the Portland Business Alliance. Coalition partners include Associated Oregon Industries, Greater Portland Inc., Oregon Business Association, Oregon Business Council, and Port of Portland. View the full report at [valueofjobs.com](http://valueofjobs.com).

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**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)*