An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Portland, Oregon, featuring a river in the foreground, greenery, and various buildings, including a prominent tall skyscraper.

boly:welch

# 2025 TRENDS REPORT

Portland Metro Area

EXECUTIVE SEARCH | RECRUITING | CONTRACT STAFFING | HR CONSULTING

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Photography by Corbin C., Boly:Welch Career Advisor. His book *Choice Cuts: Disposable Camera Archives* came out this year – consider this a small preview of his work.

# INTRO

## 40 Years of Boly:Welch

Forty years ago, Diane Boly and Pat Welch set out to build the workplace they wished had existed for them — a place where collaboration didn't just feel good, but paid off. Where women, including single mothers, weren't just surviving; they were top billers, and still there for every soccer game, sick day, and moment that mattered. And where belonging didn't mean squeezing into some 1980s idea of "professional."

What began in the Jackson Tower, overlooking Pioneer Square, has grown into one of Portland's most trusted recruiting and consulting firms. Through four decades of economic cycles, shifting industries, and a constantly evolving world of work, two things have remained steady: making work work for people, and a belief in Portland's potential.

After 40 years, we still feel like we're just getting started. This industry doesn't stand still, and neither do we. We may be changing addresses in 2026 — by all of one block — but our commitment to Portland and sustaining a culture where everyone can thrive isn't going anywhere.

We're excited for the decades ahead, connecting exceptional talent with meaningful opportunities and helping Portland's employers build a strong, resilient workforce.



## **2025: A YEAR OF SLOWDOWNS, RESETS, AND REALITY CHECKS**

The year opened with surprising resilience: Oregon held unemployment near 4.1–4.2%, wages continued to outpace inflation, and key sectors – from construction to hospitality – posted steady gains. Early job growth signaled confidence, even as federal layoffs and new tariffs hinted that the ground was starting to move beneath us.

By spring and summer, that movement became clearer. National job creation slowed, white-collar roles tightened, and Oregon’s unemployment rate crept upward. Multnomah County in particular saw contraction while surrounding counties continued to attract both people and jobs. Wage growth held strong, but job seeker confidence hit decade-low levels. “Job hugging” became the phrase of the year – workers staying put unless a truly compelling opportunity came along.

Late 2025 brought a cooler, more cautious labor market. Major data revisions and a government shutdown blurred the full picture, but the trend line was already set: frequent news of large-scale layoffs, slower wage gains, and employers taking their time in the hiring process.

Yet even in a quieter market, demand for specialized talent never disappeared, but every hire had to count.

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?**

Tuning into Portland’s market realities and benchmarks helps organizations make smarter decisions, strengthen employee engagement, and contribute to a more resilient and equitable business ecosystem across the region.

After decades of partnering with many of Portland’s standout employers, we’ve watched firsthand how their choices shape the hiring landscape. We’re happy to share what we’ve learned with you.

Here’s a look at the trends we saw in 2025, and the salaries and benefits offered to candidates in some of the job categories we specialize in:

**Accounting**  
**Financial Services**  
**Human Resources**  
**Operations & Administration**  
**Attorneys**  
**Legal Support**

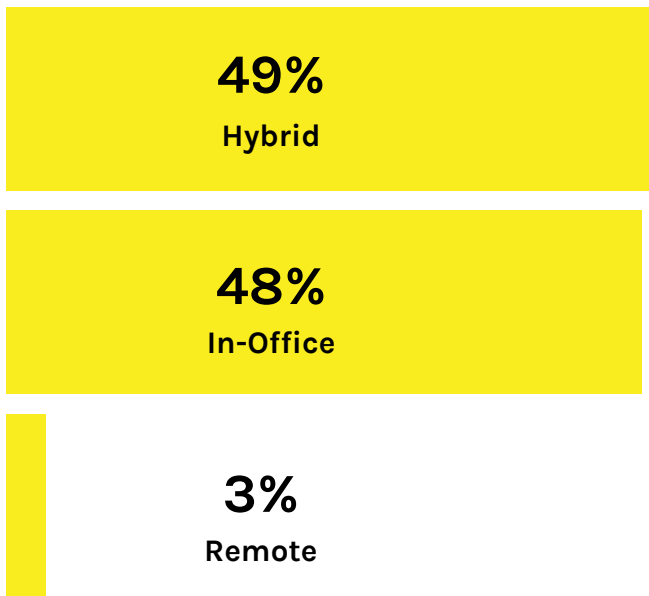
# WHERE DID WORK HAPPEN?

## Stats on In-Office, Remote & Hybrid Work

As the pandemic years fade further into the background, more organizations are formalizing on-site expectations and tightening flexible arrangements. This shift reflects what we're hearing from hiring managers across industries: teams collaborate faster in person, culture feels easier to maintain, and productivity concerns are driving more structured attendance policies.

At the same time, Portland still has an unusually high share of remote workers – around 24% – many of whom are employed by companies outside the region.

That doesn't translate into an abundance of fully remote roles locally, however. For Portland-based employers, hybrid remains the preferred middle ground, while fully remote opportunities continue to decline.



**FLEXIBILITY CONTINUES TO DRIVE HIRING & RETENTION:** Hybrid work is expected to remain the dominant model in Portland, with most local employers sticking to 2-3 in-office days per week, while fully remote roles hold steady for specialized talent.



# ASK an HR EXPERT

ABBY ENGERS, J.D., SHRM-CP  
Director of HR Consulting

**Q I'm a manager with a few Gen Z direct reports who seem unprepared for the workplace. One got upset and left early after mild feedback, another has missed multiple deadlines citing "bad mental health days," and someone wore a crop top to a client event. They're smart, but I feel like I'm babysitting. What's going on?**

**A** This isn't just a generational mismatch, but a shift in norms and context. Gen Z entered the workforce with less exposure to professional culture. Many missed internships, graduated during lockdowns, or started careers remotely, so they didn't get the informal learning older generations relied on: how to receive feedback, manage deadlines, or dress for client settings.

They also came of age during instability: pandemic years, social upheaval, burnout culture, economic precarity, and a volatile job market. Many watched institutions fail their parents, saw layoffs early in their own careers, and learned to prioritize boundaries and mental health. Their reactions and choices aren't rebellion; they're signals of gaps in context, inexperience, or overwhelm.

You're right to expect accountability – but what these employees need is mentoring, clarity, and modeling. Normalize feedback as growth, be explicit about standards, as well as what support looks like when someone is struggling, and stay calm and consistent. This isn't about lowering the bar. It's about giving emerging professionals the context they never got, and preparing your workplace to meet them where they are.



# PERKS & BENEFIT TRENDS

## Perks with Purpose: Navigating Employee Benefits on a Budget

Employee perks continue to evolve, but 2025 is shaping up to be the year of resourceful generosity. With budgets tighter and teams stretched, employers are looking for ways to offer meaningful, inclusive benefits without adding major costs.

The good news? Many of the perks that employees value most aren't expensive – they're about care. They signal trust, respect, and belonging.

Today's workforce wants support that feels practical, human-centered, and connected to real life: time to breathe, space to grow, and a culture that acknowledges them as whole people. Small, thoughtful benefits can go a surprisingly long way in strengthening morale and retention.

Here are free or low-cost perks that can make a big impact:



Every workplace is different, so the best perks come from listening. Ask your team what would genuinely support them right now – and revisit that feedback regularly. Even in a cost-conscious year, thoughtful perks signal that employees are seen, valued, and worth investing in.

### TIME & FLEXIBILITY PERKS

- Early Fridays or rotating Summer Fridays
- Flexible start/end times
- One “free remote day” a month
- Birthdays off
- Office closure (or optional WFH) between Christmas and New Year's
- Work-from-anywhere week 1-2x a year

### LEARNING, GROWTH & SUPPORT

- Internal lunch & learns (invite an expert from your team)
- Financial literacy workshops
- Health and wellbeing sessions (many insurers offer them at no cost)
- Peer mentorship circles or cross-team skill shares

### CULTURE & CONNECTION

- Sponsored intramural teams (kickball, softball, bowling)
- Company-hosted volunteer outings
- Book or podcast clubs
- Team appreciation rituals

# PERKS & BENEFIT TRENDS

## What Did Benefits Look Like in 2025?



### Health Insurance

Large Oregon employers – those with more than 50 full-time employees – are required to offer employer-sponsored health insurance, and every organization we worked with in 2025 did.

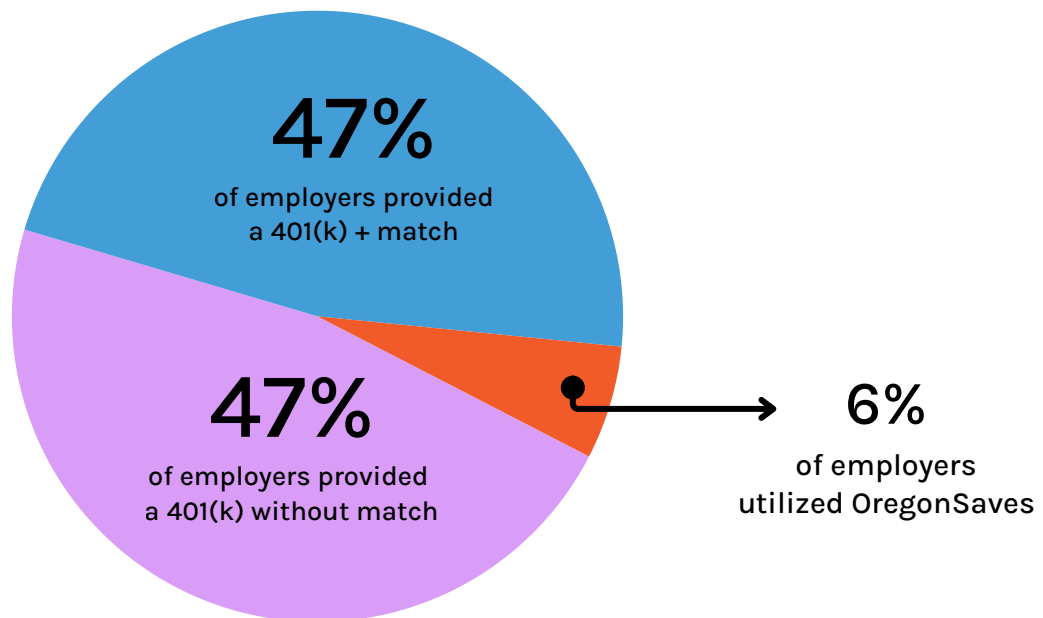
The state continues to stand out for its generous employer health insurance contributions, but rising premiums are testing that standard. In 2025, premium increases ranged from 5.7% to 16% on average, pushing some organizations to scale back contributions or shift to high-deductible plans to control expenses.

One organization even faced an initial 44% rate hike before securing a more reasonable plan by switching carriers. With costs climbing, companies will need to rethink how they provide competitive benefits while keeping budgets in check.

## Retirement Plans

In Oregon, retirement plans aren't optional – at least not for employers. Full-time staff must have access to a savings plan, and if a company doesn't offer one, OregonSaves steps in with a default 5% payroll-deducted IRA.

- The average 401(k) employer match in 2025 was 5%
- At Boly:Welch, we provide a 3% contribution to full-time employees' 401(k) – no employee contribution necessary. Only 10% of businesses offer this safe harbor 401(k) plan.

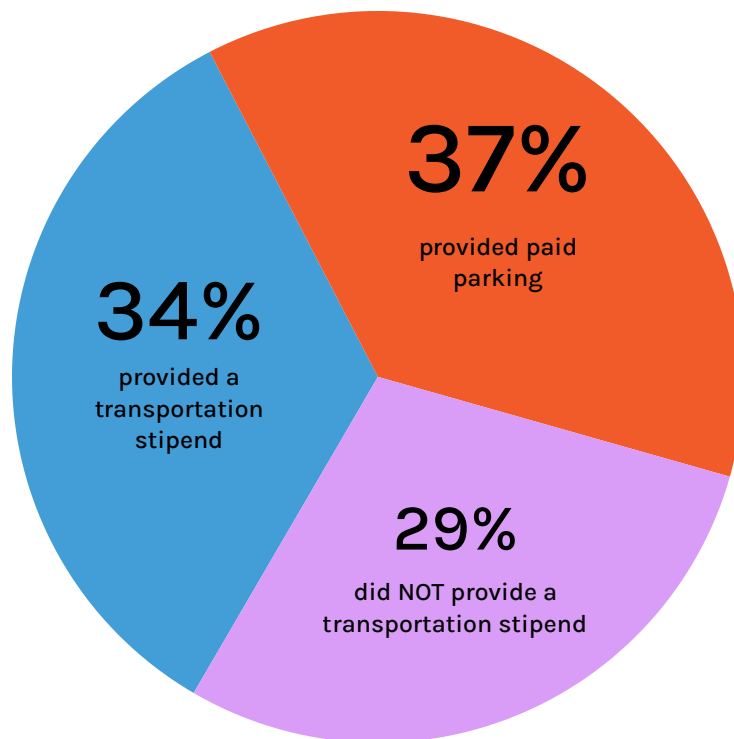


# PERKS & BENEFIT TRENDS

## Transportation Stipend

A transportation stipend might look like:

- Paid parking
- TriMet pass
- Pre-tax reimbursement for transportation
- Stipend added to paycheck



**On-site expectations tend to come with perks:**  
70% of in-office employers picked up the tab for parking or transit – and hybrid employers nudged that up to 74%.

## Paid Time Off

Every employer we partnered with in 2025 offered PTO – going well beyond Oregon’s sick time requirements for employers with 10+ full-time employees (6+ in Portland).

Want to stand out? Benefits packages with 20+ days of PTO continue to signal generosity and competitiveness, while three weeks remains the going minimum.



### COMBINED VS. SEPARATE VS. UNLIMITED PTO

In 2025, how you structure time off is just as important as how much you offer.

Combined PTO banks keep things simple with one catch-all bucket, but they can unintentionally nudge people to work through sick days. Separate banks protect true downtime and play well with Oregon’s sick-leave rules, but they can encourage “use it or lose it” behavior and make vacation feel less generous.

And then there’s unlimited PTO: flashy on paper, but often leaving employees taking less time off without clear norms.

No matter the model, the magic comes from clarity: smart carryovers, consistent expectations, and leaders who actually take time off, too.



## ASK an EXPERT

**EILEEN CROSBY**  
Business Development Manager

**Q** **AI has streamlined a lot of our entry-level work, which is great for efficiency, but someone on my team raised a concern about “succession gaps.” What does that mean, and should we be worried?**

**A** When AI takes over early-career tasks, it frees up time and reduces bottlenecks – but it also removes the foundational work that traditionally teaches people how the business runs. Entry-level roles have always been the training ground for judgment, context, and pattern-recognition. If those opportunities disappear, the pipeline to mid-level and future leadership roles thins out fast.

Succession planning in an AI-driven environment means being intentional about where development happens. One of our accounting clients automated most of the basic reconciliation work that used to train new staff. At first, it saved time. But within a year, managers noticed something was off – early-career employees weren’t building the skills they needed to move into more complex work. Senior accountants were carrying too much of the load, and promotions stalled. The firm adjusted by giving junior staff a mix of automated tools and real client work, plus guided “practice projects” where they could make small mistakes and learn.

AI can boost efficiency, but it can’t replace experience. As you integrate new tools, ask: Are we building future leaders, or eliminating the very roles that create them?



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR PORTLAND

## Strategy in a Shifting Market

### **STAYING STEADY AMID POLICY AND MARKET WHIPLASH**

With tariffs, policy changes, and volatile data reshaping forecasts overnight, many employers find themselves reacting to the news cycle. The organizations that fare best do the opposite: they slow down, zoom out, and focus on quarterly clarity instead of daily churn. This long-arc thinking keeps critical projects and hiring plans moving even when the ground feels unsteady.

### **AGILITY THAT BUILDS, NOT SCRAMBLES**

True agility isn't about pivoting constantly – it's about creating systems, partnerships, and talent pipelines that can flex without breaking. Keeping your talent relationships warm and your staffing plans up to date gives you a steadier footing for whatever the market throws your way.

### **SUCCESSION PLANNING IN THE AGE OF AI**

As AI absorbs more entry-level tasks, organizations risk hollowing out the early-career roles that traditionally grow the next generation of leaders. Planning for succession now means intentionally creating learning paths, hands-on opportunities, and clear role progression – especially for mid-career talent who need real experience to advance.

### **BUILDING FOR THE LONG ARC**

As we move toward 2026, the opportunity is clear: use this quieter market to do the strategic work that gets sidelined in boom times. Reassess your staffing models. Strengthen the relationships that help you tap passive talent and hard-to-reach skill sets. Shore up retention levers so key talent stays engaged. And revisit compensation now, while wage pressure is easing, so you're positioned to compete when momentum returns.

The market may be cooler – but it's not frozen. Employers who stay steady, invest in connection, and plan for the long arc rather than the daily noise will be the ones ready to accelerate when the cycle turns.



# ASK an HR EXPERT

**KAREN FOGG**  
Chief People Officer

**Q We're growing fast, and hiring has started to feel like a vibe check. We've prioritized "culture fit," but someone suggested thinking more about "culture add." What's the difference, and which should we hire for?**

Culture fit asks "Do they feel like us?" It's about shared values, easy rapport, and cohesion – great for building trust quickly, especially in early growth stages. But relying only on fit risks hiring clones and missing perspectives that drive innovation.

**Culture add flips the question:** "What can they bring that we don't already have?" It's intentional growth, not contrarianism.

For example, a wealth management client had mostly traditional finance hires. When a CFP with a background in community development applied, her experience helping first-generation clients build wealth brought fresh perspectives. She attracted new clients, launched literacy programs, and helped make the firm's messaging more accessible. She didn't just fit – she expanded the culture to support growth goals.

Fit builds trust fast. Add builds long-term resilience. As you scale, ask: Are we hiring copies, or catalysts?

# WHAT DID EMPLOYEES MAKE IN 2025?

Inside Portland's Payroll: Salary Insights  
Employers Should Know

In 2025, pay strategies shifted. Gone are the ultra-competitive salary wars of recent years; employers are pulling back on aggressive base pay and bonuses, instead prioritizing sustainable total compensation. Raises are leveling off at around 3.5%, as companies balance pay pressures with investments in upskilling and employee wellbeing.

**Here's the thing:** national salary surveys often don't cut it. They miss important factors like bonuses, equity, and perks.

**That's why our Portland-specific benchmarks matter:** they reflect real data on base pay plus the full mix of compensation in our local market, giving you clarity and more actionable insights.

# ACCOUNTING

## Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- Controller
- Staff Accountant
- Accounting Manager
- CFO

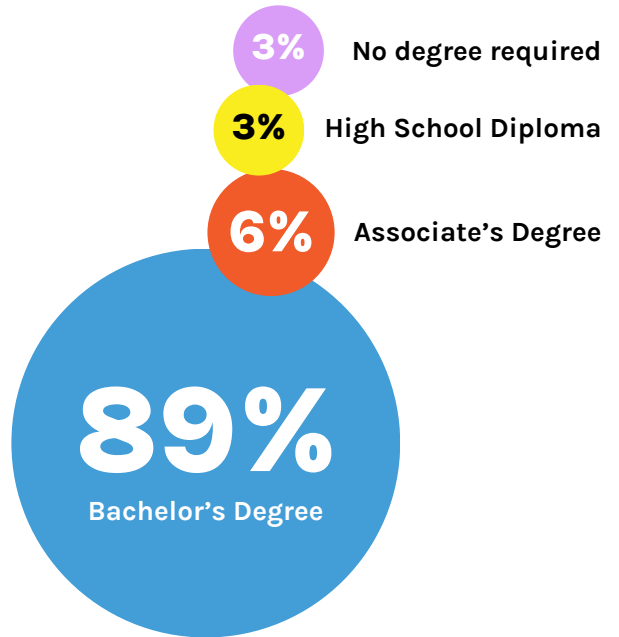
## Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

**Average Salary: \$99K**  
**Most Common Range: \$100K-\$120K**  
**Total Range: \$50K-\$250K**

## Salary Ranges & Years of Experience

## Highest Level of Education Required

Degree requirements are sometimes used by employers as a differentiator in our tighter labor market, as companies prioritize candidates who can contribute beyond transactional accounting.



Role-Based Benchmarks

Years of Experience	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14+
Entry Level/Staff Accountant \$50K-\$65K	Blue														
Senior Staff/Junior Analysts \$65K-\$80K				Blue											
Senior, Accounting Manager \$80K-\$140K							Blue								
Controller, Director \$140K-\$200K										Blue					
C-Suite \$250K+											Blue				

## Accounting Industry Trends

Three key ways organizations can stay aligned with the talent landscape:

**Higher Expectations Require Better Alignment:** This year, employers asked for more. Roles that once centered on transactional work now require firm GAAP fluency, sharper analytical thinking, and real ERP know-how. Many companies leaned on degree requirements as a screening tool in a tighter market – even as plenty of strong, non-degreed candidates proved themselves through hands-on experience. The takeaway? Make sure your job requirements, salary ranges, and expectations match the level of technical and compliance expertise you're truly seeking.

**Tech Investments are Changing the Game:** With ERP overhauls and automation sweeping through accounting departments, system experience wasn't just optional this year – it became one of the most in-demand skills. Employers prioritized candidates with formal training in data, systems, and process improvement, especially for analysis-forward roles. This shift pushed salaries upward for mid-senior talent and made compliance-savvy candidates even more valuable.

**Leadership Movement is Reshaping Teams:** Retirements and leadership transitions continued to ripple through accounting teams, creating real demand for senior talent. Companies got more strategic: interviewing at the top of their ranges, targeting candidates with deeper compliance knowledge and ERP experience, and investing in credentials like CPAs to strengthen risk mitigation. With accounting and audit unemployment hovering around – and often under – 1.9%, forward-looking succession planning became a must-have, not a nice-to-have.



**CHRISTINA HOLTOM**  
Sr. Recruiter

# OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

## Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- Executive Assistant
- Marketing Proposal Manager
- Sales Support Administrator
- Operations Specialist
- Coordinator
- Office Manager
- Customer Service Manager
- Client Relationship Associate
- Administrative Assistant
- Building Engineer
- Director of Operations
- Communications Specialist

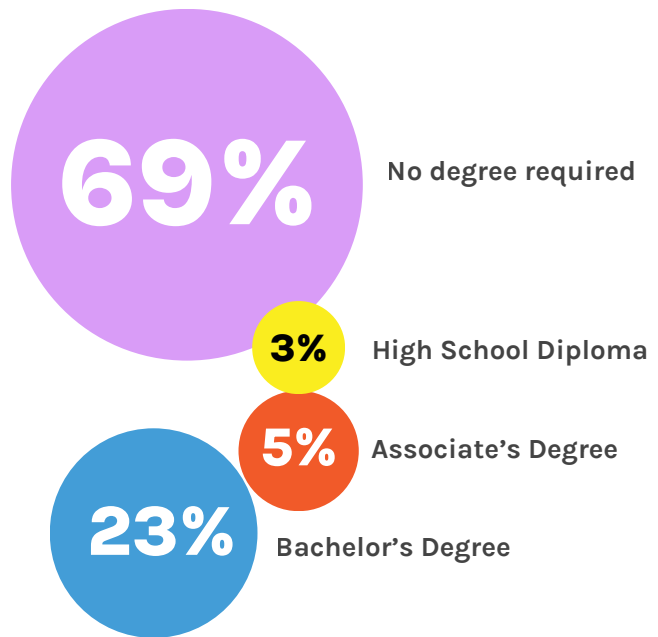
The actual function of any given job title will vary from place to place, as will compensation ranges.

Operations and administrative roles span from mid-level Coordinators to Senior Executive Assistants, with salary ranges reflecting both responsibility and experience. In 2025, we worked on fewer entry-level roles and more mid- to high-level positions, continuing the trend of higher compensation for seasoned EAs who bring expertise and strategic impact.

## Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

**Average Salary: \$76K**  
**Most Common Range: \$60K-\$70K**  
**Total Range: \$40K-\$135K**

## Highest Level of Education Required



## Salary Ranges & Years of Experience

		Years of Experience									
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Salary Range	\$45K-\$70K	Blue									
	\$50K-\$100K				Blue						
	\$70K-\$135K							Blue			

## Administration & Operations Industry Trends

**Deliberate Searches, Elevated Expectations:** In 2025, administrative and operations hiring is all about precision. Organizations are focusing on mid- and senior-level roles, with less attention on entry-level positions. Clients are laser-focused on industry experience, years in role, and software skills, leaving little wiggle room – even as the candidate market is tighter than perceived.

**Full-Time, In-Person, and Cautious:** Office-first work dominates, and both candidates and clients are taking their time. Longer timelines, multiple panel interviews, and careful validation of skills, motivations, and cultural fit are the norm. Authenticity counts: why this role, why this company, and how can candidates address any pauses or pivots on their resume?



**SALLY WILLIAMS**  
Sr. Recruiter



**JEN LIND**  
Sr. Recruiter

# FINANCIAL SERVICES

## Portland Employers Hired Most for:

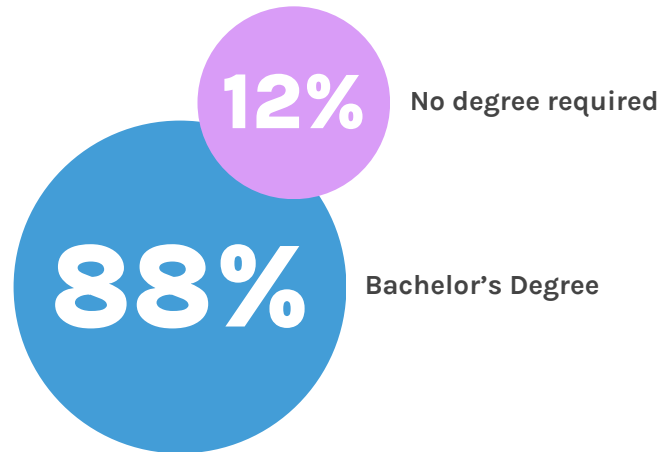
- Client Services Associate
- Client Relations Specialist
- Relationship Manager
- Investment Planning Associate
- Financial Services Business Consultant
- Director of Finance
- Financial Analyst
- Investment Advisor
- Wealth Advisor
- Financial Planner

## Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

**Average Salary: \$82K**  
**Most Common Range: \$60K-\$70K**  
**Total Range: \$60K-\$120K**

## Highest Level of Education Required

As the market has stabilized, companies have turned to more traditional degree expectations, normalizing requirements for roles with salaries above \$60K. Licenses remain a key differentiator: advisor-level positions often require a CFP designation, while mid-tier, client-facing roles typically call for FINRA licensure for anyone giving investment guidance.



Financial Services salaries have stabilized as the market normalizes. With talent in short supply, we expect compensation to rise in 2026 as firms compete for the top candidates they need to meet their client's needs.

## Salary Ranges & Years of Experience

		Years of Experience									
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Salary Range	\$60K-\$70K	Blue									
	\$70K-\$100K				Blue						
	\$80K-\$120K							Blue			

## Financial Services Industry Trends

**Talent Shortages and Job Hugging:** Portland’s financial services market is settling into post-pandemic normalcy, but uncertainty has professionals clinging to their roles. Even as firms post openings, top-tier talent remains scarce, creating a “job hugging” market that’s likely to drive salaries higher in 2026.

**Compact Market, Consolidated Firms:** The local finance landscape has tightened. Many larger players have moved out of state, while boutique firms are being snapped up. Portland once drew talent from Seattle and the Bay Area, but the city’s reputation is recovering slowly – just enough to keep the pipeline tight.

**Expertise That Commands Premium Pay:** Niche roles, like Institutional Investment Advisors with expertise in fixed income and consulting, are commanding top-dollar compensation, often approaching \$200K. Expertise and specialization are more valuable than ever in a market where the right skill set is scarce.

**Creative Relocation Support:** With competition fierce, firms are getting inventive, offering relocation perks and other incentives to lure talent back to Portland, signaling a strategic approach to workforce planning in 2026.

**ROXANNE ROTTICCI**  
Chief Revenue Officer



**CHRISTINA HOLTOM**  
Sr. Recruiter



**CORY MLADY**  
Sr. Recruiter



**HANNAH BERGERSEN**  
Sr. Recruiter



# HUMAN RESOURCES

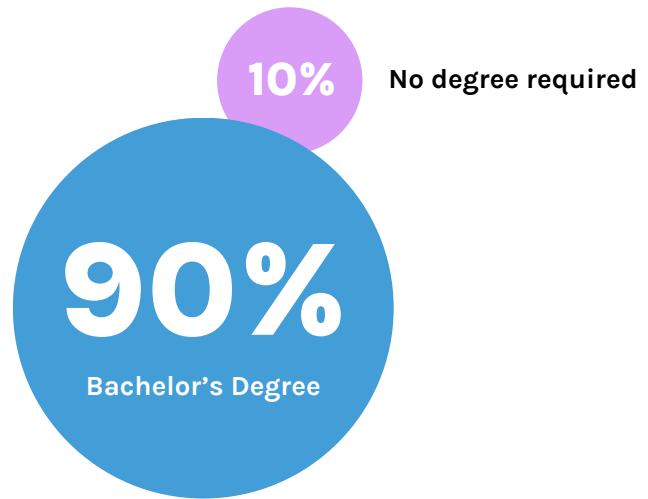
## Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- HR Director
- HR Generalist
- HR Manager
- HR Assistant
- Director of People and Culture
- HR Coordinator

## Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

**Average Salary: \$94K**  
**Most Common Range: \$100K-\$120K**  
**Total Range: \$59K-\$165K**

## Highest Level of Education Required



## Salary Ranges & Years of Experience

In HR, title and scope rule compensation. Pay in Portland is shaped by industry, company size, and responsibility more than experience or credentials.

Years of Experience

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14+
\$50K-\$70K	Blue														
\$60K-\$80K				Blue											
\$80K-\$150K							Blue								
\$100K-\$165K										Blue					

## Human Resources Industry Trends

**Leadership Takes Center Stage:** HR hiring remains modest in volume, but the focus is squarely on senior roles. Companies are prioritizing high-impact leadership hires over mid-level positions, putting their time and resources where it matters most.

**Exclusive, Targeted Searches:** Key HR roles are increasingly filled through exclusive searches, with hiring teams deeply involved. This strategic approach ensures the right leaders are in place to shape culture, strategy, and long-term impact.

**Smaller Pools, Bigger Stakes:** Director- and VP-level roles draw from a limited specialized candidate pool. Every hire counts, making these searches deliberate, highly targeted, and essential to organizational success.



**HANNAH BERGERSEN**  
Sr. Recruiter



**CORY MLADY**  
Sr. Recruiter

# ATTORNEYS

## Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- Associate Attorney
- Litigation Associate
- Family Law Associate
- Commercial Litigation Associate
- Senior Associate
- Workers Comp Associate
- Plaintiff’s Attorney
- Lateral Real Estate Attorney
- Lateral Employment Law Attorney

## Salary Ranges for Roles in 2024

**Average Salary: \$140K**  
**Most Common Range: \$120K-\$150K**  
**Total Range: \$75K-\$250K**

## Highest Level of Education Required

All positions require J.D.s, but we’re seeing an increase in calls for specialized LLM degrees – mostly in tax and privacy. Oregon has made reciprocity much easier, but we’re still noticing a significant dip in out-of-state applicants.



**Clarity is the New Currency:** As hybrid and remote work continue to shape attorney mobility – especially for parents and caregivers – candidates are prioritizing roles that offer balance and predictability. Clear PTO structures and transparent bonus plans are quickly becoming top decision-drivers in this market.

## Salary Ranges & Years of Experience

		Years of Experience														
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14+
Salary Range	\$75K-\$120K	Blue														
	\$95K-\$140K				Blue											
	\$110K-\$180K							Blue								
	\$120K-\$250K										Blue					

## Attorney Industry Trends

**Mid-Level Talent Remains Scarce:** Firms are feeling the squeeze in the middle. There's no shortage of junior attorneys or seasoned veterans, but true mid-level attorneys remain elusive – just as retirements pick up pace. Add in generational tension around resume “hopping,” and firms are navigating a market where loyalty looks different than it used to.

**Growth is Surgical, Not Sweeping:** While more candidates – especially from government roles – are exploring new opportunities, firms aren't racing to expand. Hiring is highly intentional, favoring specialized expertise over generalists. A few firm closures and an inability to backfill retiring attorneys have only amplified the need for niche skills.

**AI is Rising, But Advocacy Still Reigns:** AI is creeping deeper into workflows – most visibly in estate-planning templates – but it isn't replacing legal judgment any time soon. Firms are exploring new tools while keeping a close eye on cybersecurity and the limits of automation.

### Hot Practice Areas in 2025

Demand is strongest in:

- Commercial Litigation
- Family Law
- Estate Planning | Probate | Trust Administration
- Transactional Practices (especially for litigators seeking stability)

**KELSEY WILLIAMS, J.D.**  
Recruiter



**JON PRITCHARD, J.D.**  
Recruiter



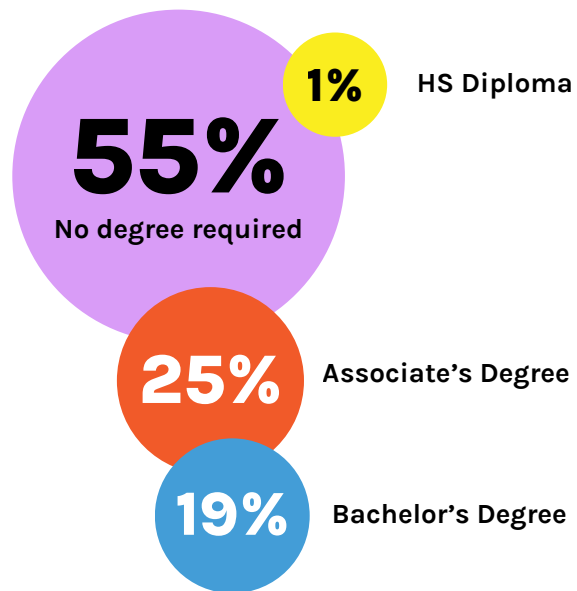
# LEGAL SUPPORT

## Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- Legal Assistant
- Litigation Assistant
- Litigation Paralegal
- Legal Receptionist
- Paralegal
- Office Administrator
- Corporate Paralegal
- Junior Paralegal
- Docketing Coordinator
- File Clerk / Office Services

## Highest Level of Education Required

Education helps, but hands-on experience carries the most weight. For entry-level roles, a paralegal certificate or related degree offers a real advantage – signaling commitment, direction, and readiness to grow in the legal field.



## Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

**Average Salary: \$75K**  
**Most Common Range: \$65K-\$85K**  
**Total Range: \$45K-\$135K**

Many factors influence salary: firm size, technical skill, type of experience, quality of references and job tenure, and specialization in specific practice areas.

## Salary Ranges & Years of Experience

		Years of Experience														
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14+
Salary Range	\$45K-\$55K	■														
	\$50K-\$70K				■											
	\$60K-\$80K							■								
	\$70K-\$90K+										■					

## Legal Support Industry Trends

**Attracting Experienced Talent is Tough:** Top legal support professionals are often already in stable roles, earning competitive pay with flexibility. Convincing them to move requires more than salary – it means addressing onboarding hurdles, benefit delays, and vacation accrual gaps while showing a compelling reason to make a switch.

**Culture and Growth Drive Decisions:** Candidates today care about more than titles – they seek supportive teams, manageable workloads, and clear paths for advancement. Firms with strong collaboration, positive morale, and opportunities to make an impact stand out in a market where burnout and stagnation are common.

**AI and Tech are Reshaping Roles:** From drafting and document review to research, scheduling, and correspondence, AI is increasingly part of legal workflows. Some firms embrace it fully, others restrict it entirely, but everyone is watching its impact closely. Meanwhile, cybersecurity remains a critical consideration, influencing staffing and operational decisions across the sector.

### Hot Practice Areas in 2025:

These practice areas are driving most of the hiring demand – and where competition for skilled support staff is expected to stay strongest.

- Business & Commercial Litigation
- Medical Malpractice | Insurance Defense | Personal Injury
- Estate Planning | Probate | Trust Administration
- Family Law
- Labor & Employment

**BRITTNEY RERECICH**  
Sr. Recruiter



**GWEN RUDOLPH**  
Sr. Recruiter





# WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN FOR 2026?

As Portland moves through a cooler, more cautious labor market, 2025 has become a year of resets and recalibration. Here are the dynamics shaping what comes next:

## **A MARKET DEFINED BY MODERATION**

Job growth slowed, wage gains leveled, and “job hugging” took hold. Expect this caution to continue into 2026, with candidates moving only for truly compelling opportunities.

## **COMPENSATION IS STABILIZING – AND ALIGNMENT MATTERS**

Raises have normalized around 3.5%, and employers are emphasizing sustainable total compensation over rapid pay escalation. Clear alignment between job requirements, expectations, and salary ranges is now essential in attracting the right talent.

## **HIGHER SKILL EXPECTATIONS ACROSS ROLES**

Across industries, technical skills, systems fluency, and compliance knowledge are carrying more weight. Employers are raising the bar, especially for mid- and senior-level roles, and candidates with strong hands-on experience remain highly competitive.

## **LEADERSHIP HIRING IS HIGH STAKES**

Senior HR, accounting, and operational roles continue to require deliberate, targeted searches. Succession planning is becoming more urgent as retirements rise and AI reshapes early-career pathways.

Portland’s market may be cooler, but it’s far from stagnant. Employers who stay steady, sharpen expectations, and plan for the long arc will be best positioned to accelerate when momentum returns.

# 2025'S BIGGEST TREND AT BOLY:WELCH?

## *A Baby Boom*

In just nine months, five babies arrived – and more are on the way.

Fortunately, our culture was ready.

Our family-first approach has always shaped how we work, and this year it truly shined. With a Bring Your Baby to Work policy, dedicated spaces for feeding, diapering, napping, and a kid-friendly hangout/homework room, the office naturally adapted.

Babies nap during Zooms, coworkers serve as quick stand-in baby holders, and older kids roam the bull pen taking drink orders (usually delivering lukewarm tea or water with way too much pebble ice). Some days we get “cute news” newspapers featuring the office dogs.

**This flexibility isn't new; it's the product of 40 years of intentional culture-building.** Policies like grief leave, caregiving leave, hybrid flexibility, and bring your baby (and dog) to work all reflect a belief that work should flex around real life.

In 2025, that belief helped our team not just work well, but thrive together.



# **LOCAL TIPS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECS FROM OUR TEAM**

As professional matchmakers and longtime Portland enthusiasts, we have plenty to share.



**CREATIVE MORNINGS – JEN**

“I love Creative Mornings. Every month it pops up in a new venue, with coffee and donuts, and I always walk out thinking, ‘Wow, people are doing wild, creative stuff before 10 AM.’ It makes me feel plugged into something bigger.”

**GIRLS INC. – JOSI**

“Helping pack STEM boxes for Girls Inc. is such a serotonin boost. It’s low-lift but high-impact. You look at the pile when you’re done and think, ‘Some girl is going to open this and feel powerful.’ That’s a good day.”

**ROCKY BUTTE SUNSETS – CHLOE**

“Rocky Butte at sunset is purest kind of Portland romance – the skyline, the colors, the whole thing. Stay after and watch the planes take off.”

**PCC JOB FAIRS & ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS (ALA) EVENTS – GWEN**

“I love the PCC job fairs for meeting brand-new legal talent. There’s something exciting about talking to people right at the start of their careers. And the ALA events tend to be genuinely enjoyable – good conversations, low pressure, and a great way to stay plugged in.”

**SINCERE STUDIO – BRIDGET**

“Sincere Studio is one of my favorite Portland gems. They make sewing feel meditative instead of intimidating, and they’re genuinely welcoming. Plus, their sliding-scale classes and mending services make creativity feel accessible to everyone – it’s basically adult summer camp in the best way.”

**ROSE HAVEN BACK-TO-SCHOOL – HANNAH**

“Volunteering at Rose Haven’s Back-to-School event absolutely melted me. Watching kids pick out their backpacks? I had to pretend I got dust in my eyes.”

**SUNDAY PARKWAYS – KAREN**

“Sunday Parkways is peak Portland joy. No cars, just bikes and kids and bubbles.”

**DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS TREE ARRIVAL – SALLY**

“Hands down the best perk of working downtown is watching the giant Christmas tree roll down 6th Ave from our office windows. It feels like the Macy’s Parade... but Portlandified.”

**DOLLY OLIVE – MAX**

“I’ve eaten my way through the entire Dolly Olive menu and genuinely recommend that strategy. There isn’t one bad dish. It’s... kind of perfect.”

**AVALON THEATER & WUNDERLAND GAMES – RYAN**

“Avalon is frozen in time in the best possible way. Nickel games, goofy prizes, slightly chaotic energy – it’s exactly how I remember it, and my kids think it’s magic.”

**UMBRELLA CULTURE – CHRISTINA**

“The Portland rule is: if you use an umbrella, we assume you’re visiting.”

**MIKE BENNETT ART INSTALLATIONS – ABBY**

“Mike Bennett’s work is some of the easiest joy in Portland. The signs, Wonderwood Mini Golf, the Aquarium – it’s funny how a little cardboard and whimsy remind you that Portland still has some magic.”

**SNEAKER WEEK – COLLIN**

“If you want to get into footwear, you need to be there. Wear something cool.”

**DRIVING IN PORTLAND – ROXANNE**

“Only in Portland will you stop your car for a pedestrian who is not crossing, not looking at you, maybe on their phone, maybe in another dimension. We will stop. It’s who we are.”

# WHAT WE DO

We look beyond the resume to find those special qualities that make a person uniquely suited to succeed in your organization.

People know us as “recruiters” or a “staffing agency,” but that doesn’t really cover who we are. We’re one-part guidance counselor, one-part therapist, and potentially your organization’s new best friend.

Because we’re committed to helping our clients become better workplaces for the people they employ, we invest time and curiosity in getting to know your needs as an employer. Your pain points, goals, and company culture are all impacted by the people who make up your organization.

When Boly:Welch makes a great match, we’re not just filling open roles.

We’re helping businesses build more cohesive teams, driven by shared goals and values, empowering growth for all.

## **DIRECT HIRE & CONTRACT STAFFING**

- Accounting
- Attorneys & Legal Support
- Financial Services
- Footwear, Apparel & Outdoor
- Human Resources
- Marketing & Advertising
- Operations & Administration

## **EXECUTIVE SEARCH**

## **HR CONSULTING**



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