

2025 TRENDS REPORT

boly:welch

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 began with surprising resilience: Oregon's unemployment hovered around 4.1-4.2%, wages outpaced inflation, and sectors from construction to hospitality showed steady growth. Early job openings signaled opportunity, even as federal layoffs and new tariffs hinted that the market was starting to shift.

By spring and summer, the changes became clearer. National job creation slowed, white-collar roles tightened, and Oregon's unemployment inched upward. Multnomah County saw more contraction, while surrounding counties continued to attract people and opportunities. Wages remained strong, but confidence among job seekers dipped. "Job hugging" became the phrase of the year – workers stayed put unless a truly compelling role appeared.

Late 2025 brought a cooler, more deliberate labor market. Data revisions and a government shutdown blurred the picture, but trends were clear: slower wage growth, longer hiring timelines, and more selective openings.

The good news for candidates? Specialized skills never went out of demand. In a market like this, preparation, clarity, and strategy matter most – every application, connection, and interview counts, and the right moves can pay off faster than you might expect.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Understanding Portland's hiring realities – from pay benchmarks to benefit norms – helps candidates make more informed career decisions, advocate for themselves with confidence, and navigate the market with clarity.

After decades of partnering with many of Portland's standout employers, we've had a front-row seat to how hiring decisions are made and how they impact candidates at every stage of the process. We believe that insight shouldn't stay behind closed doors.

This report offers a snapshot of what we saw in 2025, including salary ranges and benefits offered to candidates across several of the job categories we specialize in:

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

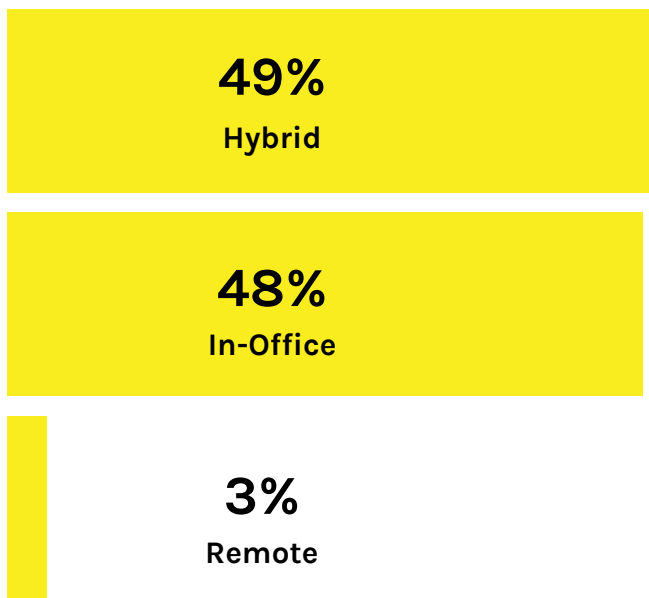
WHERE DID WORK HAPPEN?

Stats on In-Office, Remote & Hybrid Work

As the pandemic era fades further into the rearview mirror, candidates are seeing clearer – and more predictable – expectations around where work happens. Many employers are dialing back ad-hoc flexibility in favor of defined on-site and hybrid models, creating more structure around collaboration, culture, and day-to-day rhythms.

Portland still stands out for its high share of remote workers (about 24%), many of whom work for companies based elsewhere. But for candidates focusing on local employers, hybrid has emerged as the norm.

The good news? Flexible work hasn't vanished – it's just more specific. With that clarity, candidates can aim smarter, ask better questions, and choose roles that actually fit their lives.



FLEXIBILITY CONTINUES TO DRIVE HIRING & RETENTION:

Hybrid work is expected to remain the dominant model in Portland, with most local workplaces sticking to 2-3 in-office days per week, while fully remote roles hold steady for specialized talent.



ASK an HR EXPERT

CORY MLADY
Senior Recruiter

Q **Is AI going to replace my job? How do I know if I'm at risk?**

A AI has taken over headlines, and the messaging hasn't exactly been reassuring. Between viral takes and sweeping predictions, it can feel like entire careers are on the brink. But the reality employers are navigating is far more measured than the fear suggests.

What's changing fastest isn't jobs, but tasks. Generative AI is effective at handling repetitive, predictable work: drafting basic content, summarizing information, processing data. That means some responsibilities are shifting, particularly in roles built around routine outputs. But most jobs rely on judgment, context, collaboration, and relationship-building — areas where AI still struggles.

In practice, we're seeing roles evolve far more often than they disappear. AI is being used as a productivity tool, not a wholesale replacement. For many professionals, that means learning new systems and workflows, not being pushed out of the workforce.

If you're concerned about your role, look beyond the headlines. Pay attention to how your industry is actually adopting AI, which skills are gaining value, and what employers are emphasizing in hiring. Recruiters and peers offer a clearer view than any bold prediction.

AI is reshaping work, but people who think critically, communicate well, and adapt remain essential.



PERKS & BENEFIT TRENDS

Perks with Purpose: What Today's Benefits Say About a Workplace

Employee perks continue to evolve, and 2025 shaped up to be a year of resourceful generosity. With budgets tighter and teams stretched, many employers are being more intentional about which benefits truly matter – and candidates feel the difference.

Many of the perks people value most aren't flashy or expensive, they're about care. They signal trust, respect, and whether an organization sees employees as whole humans, not just job titles.

Today's candidates are looking for support that feels practical, human-centered, and grounded in real life: time to breathe, space to grow, and flexibility that acknowledges competing priorities. Small, thoughtful benefits often say more about a workplace than a long list of shiny extras.

Here are perks worth watching for – and asking about – as you evaluate opportunities:



Every workplace is different, but the best perks are rooted in listening. Pay attention to what employers emphasize, encourage, and actually use – those signals often matter more than the benefits list itself.

LEARNING, SUPPORT & GROWTH

- Dedicated development time during work hours
- Sponsored certifications
- Stipends for courses
- Access to career coaching

TIME & FLEXIBILITY

- Flexible start/stop times
- Required PTO minimums
- Compressed workweek options
- “Work from anywhere” weeks

CULTURE & CONNECTION

- Quarterly team offsites
- Budget for team socials
- Home office/coffee stipend
- Peer recognition rewards

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 in 2025, every organization we worked with did. For job seekers, that means health coverage is still the baseline expectation, not a differentiator, at larger companies.

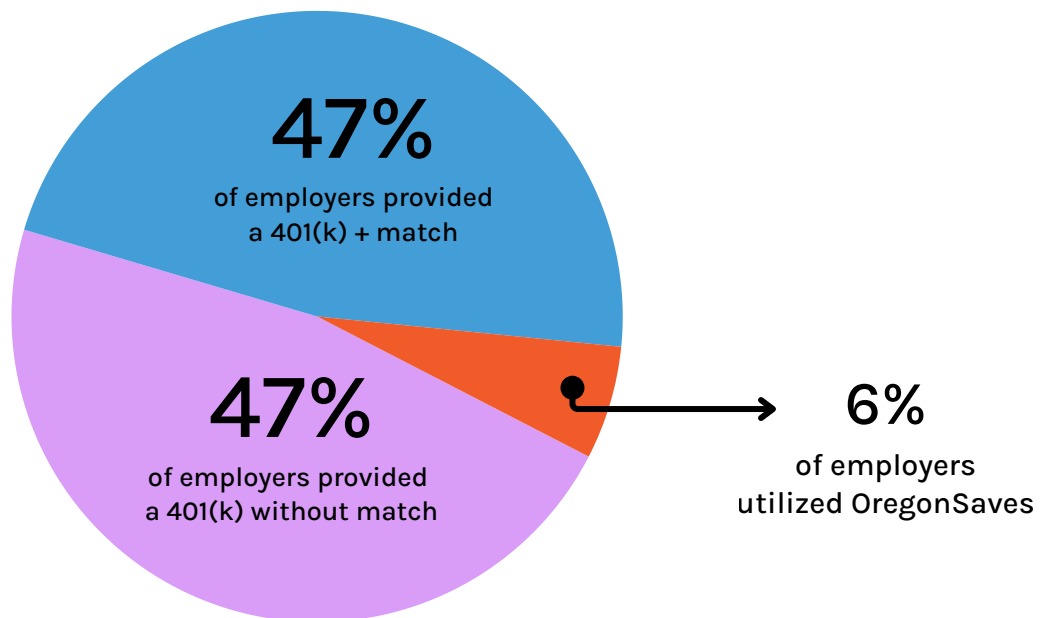
Oregon continues to stand out for relatively generous employer contributions, but rising premiums are putting pressure on those plans. In 2025, premium increases ranged from 5.7% to 16% on average, leading some employers to reduce contributions or move toward higher-deductible plans to manage costs.

In one case, an organization initially faced a 44% rate increase before securing a more sustainable option by switching carriers. For candidates, this underscores the importance of asking detailed questions about premiums, deductibles, and employer contributions once an offer is in hand – not just whether coverage exists.

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.

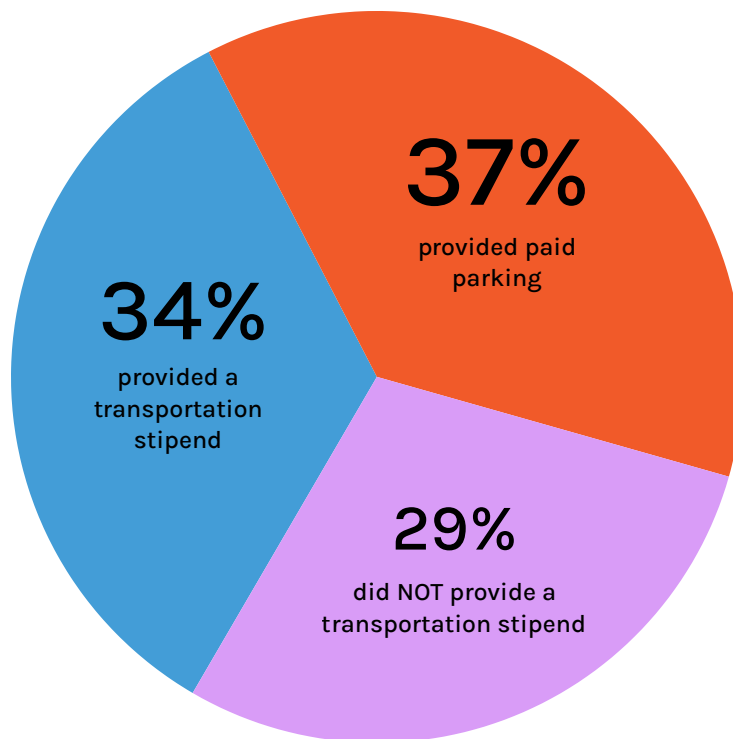


PERKS & BENEFIT TRENDS

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 worked with in 2025 offered paid time off, exceeding Oregon's required sick time standards for organizations with 10 or more full-time employees (six or more in Portland). For job seekers, that means PTO is a baseline expectation – not a bonus.

Looking to assess competitiveness? Benefits packages offering 20 or more days of PTO continue to stand out as especially generous, while three weeks remains the most common starting point across the market.



COMBINED VS. SEPARATE VS. UNLIMITED PTO

In 2025, how employers structured time off mattered just as much as how much they offered.

Combined PTO banks are simple, with one catch-all bucket, but they can unintentionally encourage people to work through sick days. Separate banks protect true downtime and comply with Oregon's sick-leave rules, but they can create a "use it or lose it" pressure and make vacation feel less generous.

Unlimited PTO sounds attractive, but without clear norms, employees often take less time off than they would with a defined balance.

For candidates, the takeaway is clarity: look for policies with reasonable carryovers, consistent expectations, and leadership that models taking time off. That's where PTO becomes a real signal of a supportive workplace, not just a line on a benefits sheet.



ASK an EXPERT

CORBIN C.
Career Advisor

Q **How are employers actually using AI in hiring?**

A When you apply for a job, it can feel like an invisible system is deciding your fate. In reality, AI is rarely making the final call. Most of the work is still done by recruiters and hiring managers, with AI used mainly to keep the process organized and efficient.

Applicant tracking systems might rank resumes, but it's largely keyword matching – think search engine, not robot gatekeeper. Even generative AI in recruiting is usually behind-the-scenes, drafting job descriptions, emails, or taking notes during interviews. Video analysis tools do exist, but they're rare, expensive, and often raise more questions than answers.

The real decisions are still human. Recruiters and hiring managers evaluate resumes, assess culture fit and add, and weigh experience – all things AI can't fully capture. Where AI shines is reducing repetitive work, letting humans focus on understanding candidates.

Stop worrying about beating the bots. Focus on helping a real person see why you make sense for the role. Clear communication, thoughtful applications, and showcasing your experience is still what moves the needle.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR PORTLAND

Navigating Your Career in a Shifting Market

FOCUS ON THE BIG PICTURE (NOT THE NOISE)

Economic swings, policy changes, and sudden market shifts can make the job search feel chaotic. The smartest candidates focus on the long game: zoom out, set clear priorities, and pace your actions around real opportunities, not day-to-day fluctuations. This makes it easier to spot roles that truly fit and invest your energy where it counts.

STAY FLEXIBLE, WITHOUT LOSING YOUR FOOTING

Career agility isn't about chasing every opening. It's about building skills, nurturing relationships, and being ready to move confidently when the right role appears. Proactive learning and thoughtful networking can provide steady ground, even when the market feels unpredictable.

GO AFTER ROLES THAT BUILD REAL EXPERIENCE

As AI takes on more entry-level tasks, some traditional pathways to advancement are shifting. Look for opportunities that offer real learning, hands-on experience, and mentorship – the kinds of experiences that set you up for the next stage of your career.

USE THIS MARKET TO GET AHEAD

In 2026, candidates have an advantage if they approach this quieter market strategically. Reassess your skills, nurture your community, and track compensation trends – positioning yourself for when demand picks up and the best roles open.

The job market may be cooler, but it's not frozen. Job seekers who stay steady, invest in community, and focus on long-term growth rather than short-term fluctuations will be best positioned to move quickly when opportunities pick up.

ASK the EXPERTS



CHRISTINA HOLTOM
Sr. Recruiter



ALISHA MURDOCK
Sr. Recruiter

Q I'm starting my first in-office job and I feel nervous. It seems like there are rules no one tells you about. How do I avoid messing up?

A You're not behind – and what you're feeling is normal. Many early-career professionals started work remotely or missed out on internships, so they didn't get the informal lessons older generations learned by watching coworkers. Office norms – from feedback to deadlines to "client-ready" attire – are often unspoken.

Add in a backdrop of economic uncertainty, burnout culture, and highly visible workplace mistakes online, it's easy to feel cautious or unsure. That doesn't mean you're failing. It means you're learning in real time.

A few things that can help as you transition into office life:

- Assume feedback is information, not a verdict. Most managers see feedback as part of development, not a sign you're in trouble.
- Set expectations early – especially in your first 90 days. Ask your supervisor what success looks like, how they like to communicate, and where they expect you to take initiative vs. ask for guidance. Having a shared roadmap reduces anxiety and prevents avoidable missteps.
- Treat deadlines as immovable unless you communicate ahead of time. If something's slipping, flag it early – that's often more important than the delay itself.
- Notice the norms before pushing against them. You'll earn more flexibility once people trust your judgment and follow-through.
- Build resilience, not just boundaries. Both matter – and both come with experience.

You don't need to have it all figured out. The goal is to learn, adapt, and show up consistently. That's how you find your footing.

WHAT DID EMPLOYEES MAKE IN 2025?

Portland Paychecks Unpacked: What Job
Seekers 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 tell the full story. They miss key factors like bonuses, equity, and perks – all the pieces that make a compensation package truly competitive.

That's why Portland-specific benchmarks matter for job seekers: they show real data on base pay plus the full mix of compensation in our local market, giving you clarity to evaluate offers and negotiate with confidence.

ACCOUNTING

Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- Controller
- Staff Accountant
- Accounting Manager
- CFO

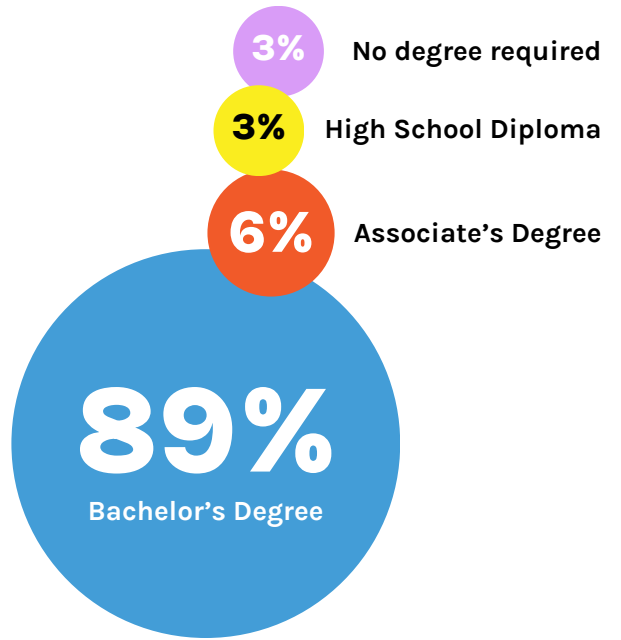
Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

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 takeaways for candidates in today's talent market:

Higher Expectations Mean You'll Need to Show Your Expertise: This year, roles that once focused on transactional work now expect firm GAAP fluency, sharper analytical thinking, and real ERP know-how. Many employers are leaning on degree requirements as a quick screen – even though many successful candidates proved themselves through hands-on experience. The takeaway for you: be ready to demonstrate the technical and compliance expertise your target roles require, whether on your resume, in interviews, or through practical examples.

Tech Skills Are More Important Than Ever: ERP overhauls and automation are reshaping accounting teams. Candidates with formal training in systems, data analysis, and process improvement were in high demand – especially for analysis-focused roles. This trend also pushed salaries up for mid- to senior-level talent, making compliance-savvy and system-adept candidates even more valuable.

Leadership Changes Are Creating Opportunities: Retirements and leadership transitions are reshaping accounting teams, driving demand for senior-level candidates. Employers are targeting professionals with deep compliance knowledge, ERP experience, and credentials like CPAs. With accounting and audit unemployment hovering around 1.9% or lower, these transitions create openings for candidates ready to step into higher-impact roles.



CHRISTINA HOLTOM
Sr. Recruiter



ALISHA MURDOCK
Sr. Recruiter

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

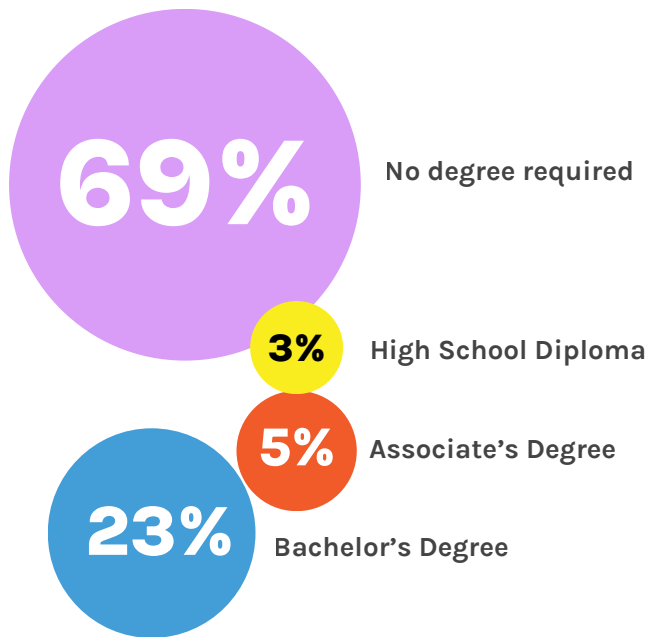
Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- 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.

Highest Level of Education Required



Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

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

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 was precise. Employers focused on mid- and senior-level roles, leaving fewer entry-level opportunities. They're looking for industry experience, years in role, and software skills – leaving little room for guesswork. The key here is clarity: show exactly how your experience aligns, highlight transferrable skills, and make it easy for employers to see you as a strong fit.

Full-Time, In-Person & Thoughtful: Office-first work dominates, and hiring timelines are longer than usual. Expect multiple panel interviews, skills checks, and careful vetting of your motivations and cultural fit. Authenticity matters: be ready to explain why this role, why this company, and how any career pauses or pivots have shaped your path. Candidates who communicate confidently, transparently, and strategically will stand out – even in a cautious, competitive market.



SALLY WILLIAMS
Sr. Recruiter



JEN LIND
Sr. Recruiter

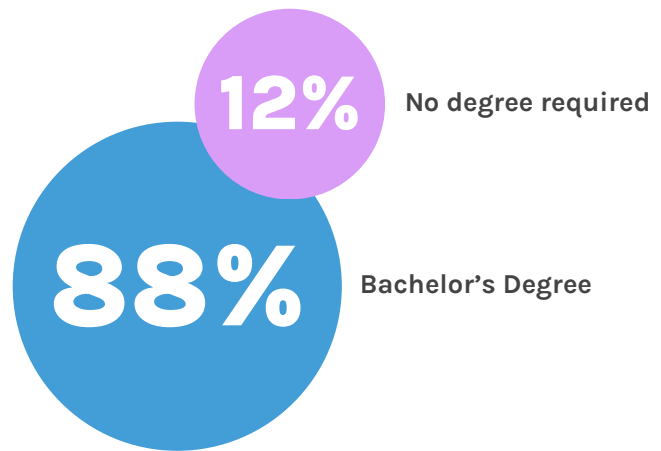
FINANCIAL SERVICES

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

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.



Salary Ranges for Roles in 2025

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

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 normal, but uncertainty has professionals holding tight to their roles. Even as firms post openings, top-tier talent is scarce, creating a "job hugging" environment. For candidates, this means skilled professionals are in demand, and salaries are likely to rise 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 acquired. Portland once drew talent from Seattle and the Bay Area, but the city's reputation is recovering slowly – keeping the candidate pipeline competitive and selective.

Expertise That Commands Premium Pay: Niche roles, like Institutional Investment Advisors with fixed income or consulting expertise, are commanding top-dollar compensation, often approaching \$200K. Specialized skills are more valuable than ever, so highlighting your expertise can position you for higher-paying opportunities.

Creative Relocation Support: With competition high, firms are offering relocation perks and other incentives to attract talent back to Portland. For job seekers, these programs can expand your options and signal that employers are strategically investing in the talent they want most.

ROXANNE ROTTICCI
Chief Revenue Officer



CHRISTINA HOLTOM
Sr. Recruiter



CORY MLADY
Sr. Recruiter



ALISHA MURDOCK
Sr. Recruiter



HUMAN RESOURCES

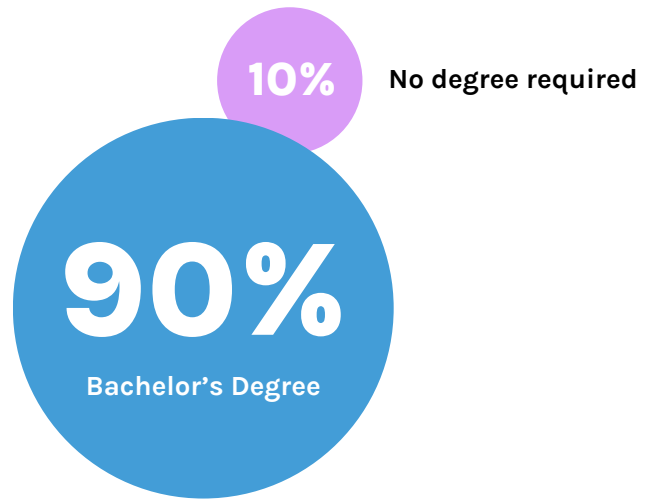
Portland Employers Hired Most for:

- 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	■														
\$60K-\$80K				■											
\$80K-\$150K							■								
\$120K-\$180K										■					

Human Resources Industry Trends

Leadership Takes Center Stage: HR hiring is quieter in volume, but sharper in focus. For job seekers, this means the real momentum is at the senior level. Director- and VP-level roles are where employers are investing their time, budget, and attention – and they're looking for leaders who can make an immediate visible impact.

Exclusive, Targeted Searches: Many senior HR roles are filled through exclusive, relationship-driven searches. Hiring teams are deeply involved, and referrals and recruiter partnerships matter. For candidates, this is a signal to be intentional about visibility, networking, and clearly articulating the kind of impact you're ready to make.

Smaller Pools, Bigger Stakes: Director- and VP-level roles draw from a small, specialized pool. Every hire counts, which means searches move deliberately and expectations are high. Candidates who can clearly connect their experiences to business outcomes, culture-building, and long-term strategy are the ones who stand out in a cautious market.



CORY MLADY
Sr. Recruiter

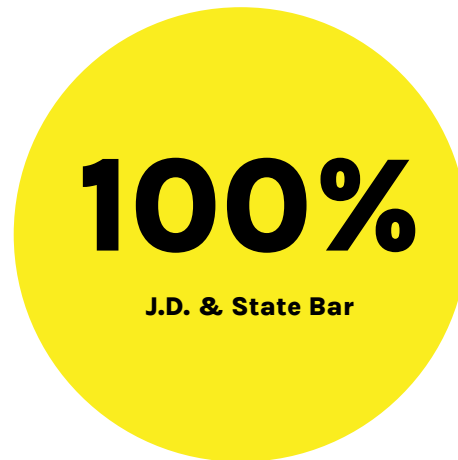
ATTORNEYS

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

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.



Salary Ranges for Roles in 2024

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

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 Attorneys Are in High Demand: Firms are feeling the pinch in the middle – and that works in your favor. There's no shortage of junior attorneys or highly seasoned partners, but true mid-level attorneys are increasingly hard to find, especially as retirements accelerate. Add evolving expectations around career movement, and firms are reassessing what commitment and longevity really look like today.

Growth is Strategic, Not Aggressive: Firms aren't expanding broadly. Hiring is selective and deliberate, with a clear preference for attorneys who bring specialized experience rather than generalist skill sets. Recent firm closures and unfilled retirements have only sharpened the focus on niche expertise.

AI is Expanding, but Legal Judgment Leads: AI is becoming more visible in day-to-day workflows (especially in estate planning and document drafting) but it isn't replacing advocacy or legal analysis. Firms are testing new tools while remaining cautious about cybersecurity, ethics, and where automation stops and professional judgment begins.

Hot Practice Areas to Watch:

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

KELSEY WILLIAMS, J.D.
Recruiter



JON PRITCHARD, J.D.
Recruiter



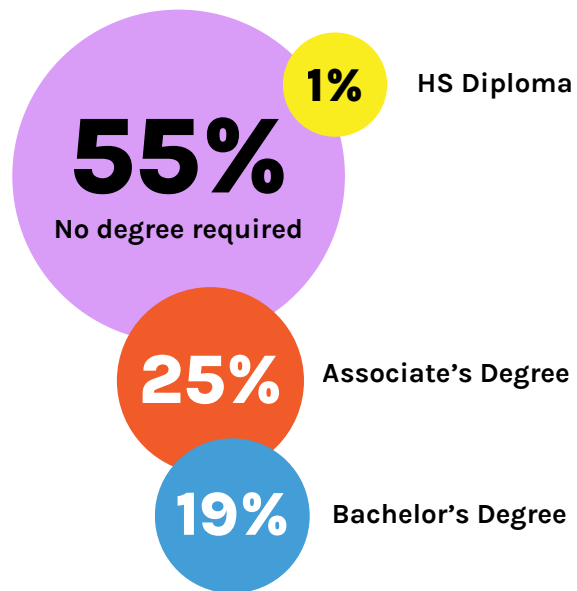
LEGAL SUPPORT

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

Experienced Legal Support Talent Has Leverage: If you're established in your role, you're not imagining it – firms know experienced legal support professionals are hard to replace. A potential move today should clear a higher bar than salary alone. Pay attention to benefit start dates, PTO accrual, onboarding expectations, and workload realities. A strong opportunity should make the transition feel worth the disruption.

Culture Isn't a "Nice to Have" – It's the Signal: Titles matter less than how teams actually function. In interviews, listen for specifics: How is work distributed? How do attorneys support their staff? What does growth look like in practice, not just on paper? Firms that invest in collaboration, morale, and professional development tend to retain support staff longer – and burn them out less.

Technology Will Shape Your Role (For Better or Worse): AI is increasingly part of legal support work, from drafting and document review to scheduling and correspondence. Ask how tools are used, what's off-limits, and how training is handled. A firm's approach to technology – and cybersecurity – can tell you a lot about how thoughtfully they operate and whether workflows are set up to support you.

Where Opportunities are Concentrated

Hiring demand – and competition – remains strongest in these practice areas:

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

BRITTNEY RERECICH
Sr. Recruiter



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Sr. Recruiter





WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR 2026?

As Portland moves through a cooler, more cautious labor market, 2025 was 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 many professionals moving thoughtfully – and only when an opportunity clearly advances their career or quality of life.

COMPENSATION IS STABILIZING – AND ALIGNMENT MATTERS

Raises have normalized around 3.5%, and total compensation matters more than base pay alone. For job seekers, this is the moment to look closely at role scope, growth potential, benefits, and flexibility – not just the salary number.

HIGHER SKILL EXPECTATIONS ACROSS ROLES

Across Industries, technical skills, systems fluency, and compliance knowledge carry more weight. The bar is higher, especially for mid- and senior-level roles, but candidates who can clearly articulate their hands-on experience and impact continue to stand out.

LEADERSHIP HIRING IS HIGH STAKES

Senior HR, accounting, and operations roles are moving through deliberate, targeted searches. For experienced professionals, preparation matters: clear career narratives, readiness to step into scope quickly, and comfort navigating longer hiring timelines.

Portland's market may be cooler, but it's far from stalled. Job seekers who stay focused, position themselves clearly, and pursue opportunities with intention will be well placed to move when the right opening appears.

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 with the Pacific Northwest's top employers.

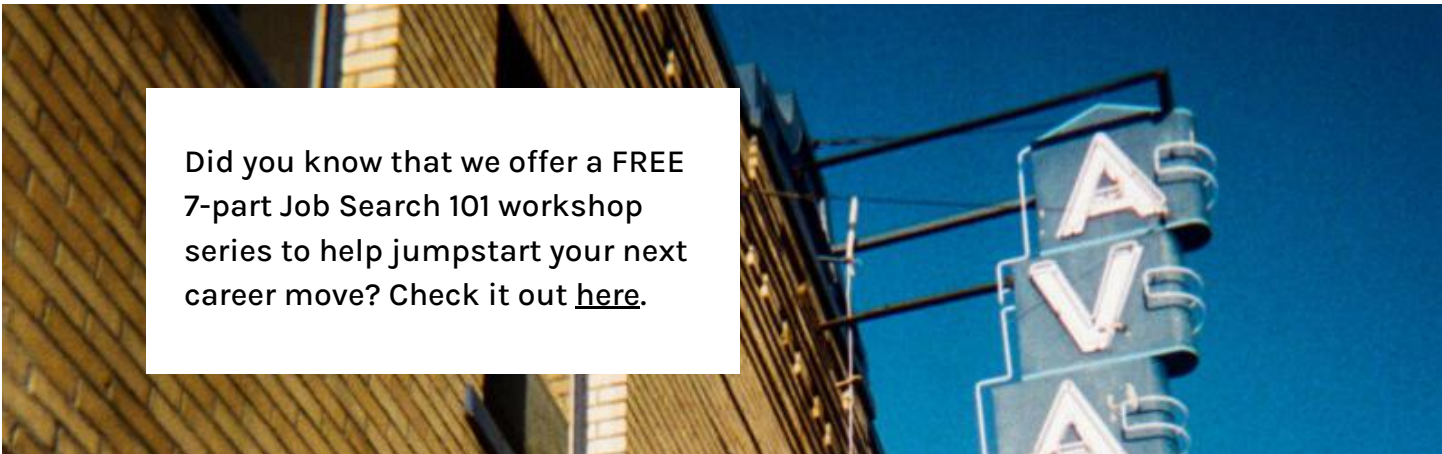
People know us as “recruiters” or a “staffing agency,” but that doesn't really cover who we are. We're one-part guidance counselor, one-part therapist, and potentially your career's new best friend.

We've been recognized for 40 years for the great work we do: **putting people front and center in the hiring process.**

DIRECT HIRE & CONTRACT STAFFING

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

EXECUTIVE SEARCH HR CONSULTING



Did you know that we offer a FREE 7-part Job Search 101 workshop series to help jumpstart your next career move? Check it out [here](#).



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