

2026 Value of Jobs STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Report at a Glance

The Portland region is at an inflection point.

Longstanding strengths of inbound migration and housing affordability that once powered growth are no longer producing the same results, and the data show a region adjusting to slower population growth, weaker job performance, and mounting structural pressures.

Outmigration has eased, but natural population growth has nearly stalled, leaving future growth increasingly dependent on international migration.

At the same time, employment has continued to contract even as the national economy expands, marking a stark departure from Portland's historical role as an economic outperformer.

Housing production has slowed sharply and affordability remains out of reach for many households.

These trends comprise a new reality. The region needs clear-eyed perspective and decisive action.

This Value of Jobs report is presented to you by:

BANK OF AMERICA 

View the full report with interactive charts at: PortlandMetroChamber.com



3,400

more births than deaths in the Portland metro in 2024, which is down from 13,900 in 2001

-8,800

number of jobs lost in the region in 2025, fourth last of all metro regions in the nation

80th

Portland continues to rank second-to-last in national real estate attractiveness rating

656

number of multi-family housing units in Portland's pipeline, lowest since 2011

\$6.4 billion

quarterly value of exports, down from \$10B in Q3 of 2024



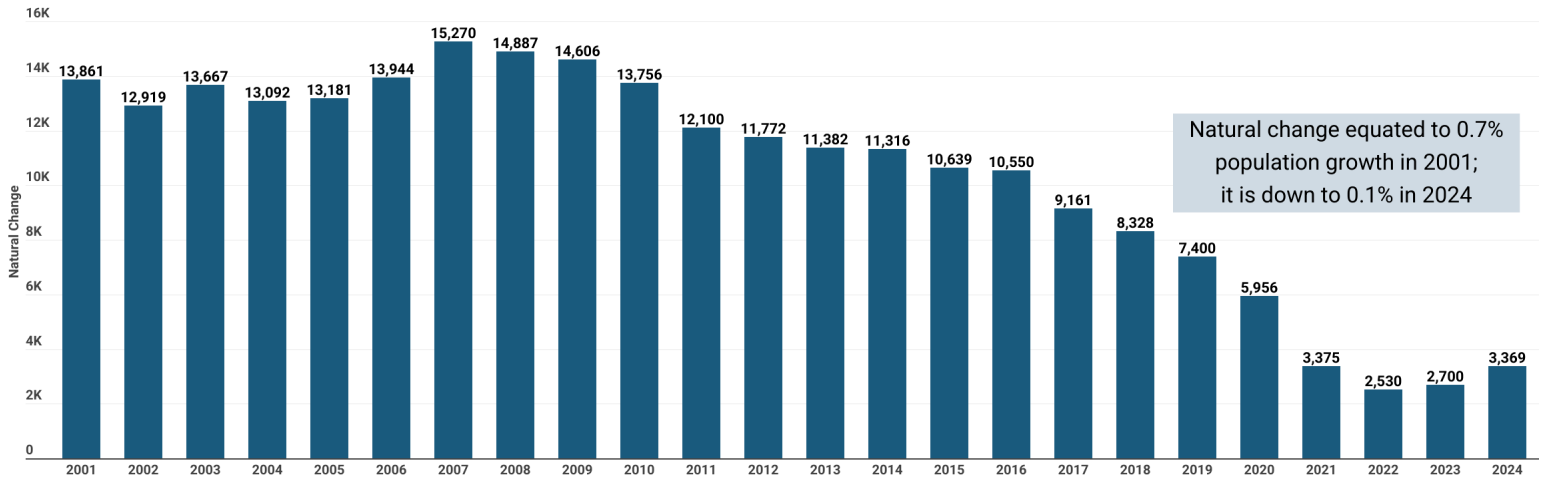
Portland's natural growth falls to historic lows

Natural population change (births minus deaths) in the Portland metro region peaked in 2007 and has declined steadily over the past 25 years. Today, natural change accounts for just 0.1% of population growth, down from 0.7% in 2001. While birth rates are declining nationwide, the trend is especially pronounced in the Portland region, where approximately **3,400 more births than deaths occurred in 2024**.

In recent years, Multnomah County has averaged only about 500 more births than deaths, while Clackamas County now experiences more deaths than births. Washington and Clark counties continue to have positive natural change, but both have declined since the early 2000s, with 1,872 and 1,258 more births than deaths in 2024, respectively. **See Figure 2.**

Figure 2: Portland metro natural population change

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



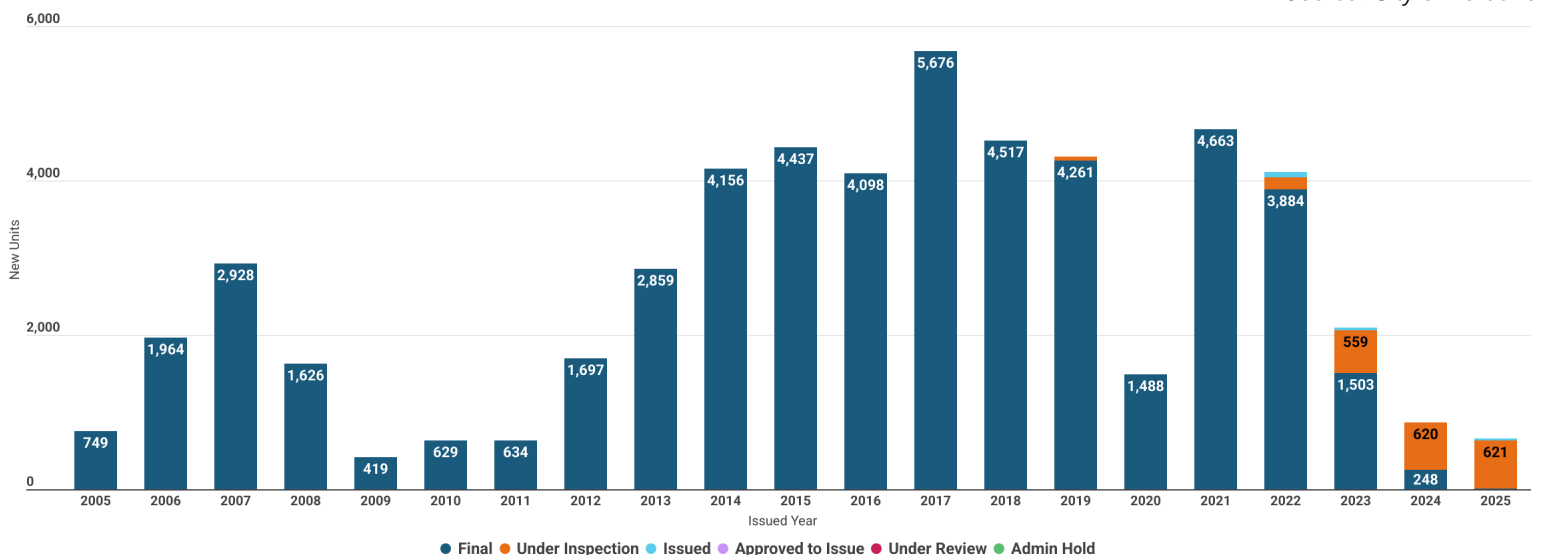
Housing pipeline weakens as permit activity plummets

In 2025, multi-family housing permitting remained subdued, reflecting the continued effects of high interest rates and constrained capital markets. By the end of December, **only 656 new multi-family units had been issued**, with most still under inspection. This represents a significant decline from 2,092 units in 2023 and a further drop from 868 units in 2024.

Because permits are a leading indicator of future construction activity, the sustained slowdown points to ongoing weakness in the housing pipeline and growing challenges to meeting Portland's current and future housing needs. **See Figure 7.**

Figure 7: Multi-family housing permit activity, City of Portland

Source: City of Portland



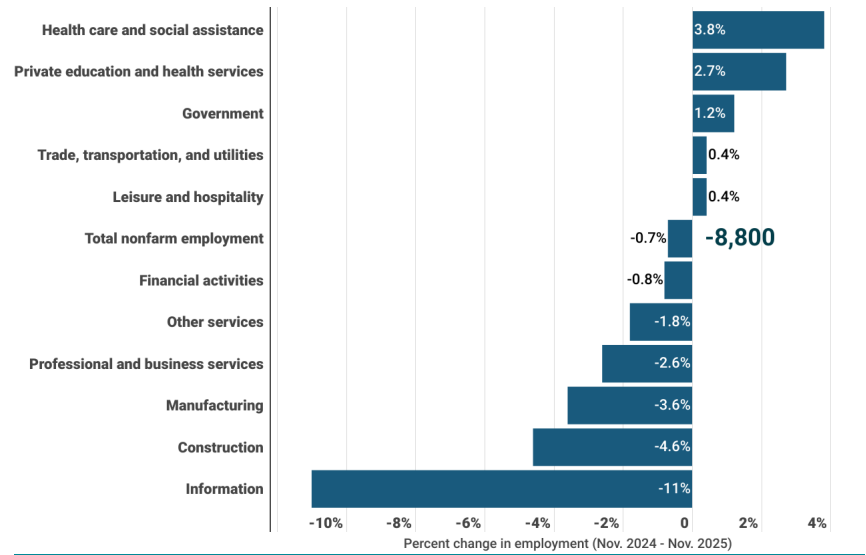
Job losses impact trade-oriented sectors hardest

Employment declines were broad-based across the Portland region, with job losses in nearly every major sector. The largest reductions were in professional services, manufacturing, construction, and information. By contrast, employment gains were concentrated in health care, education, and government sectors oriented toward local demand.

Taken together, trade-sector industries continued to contract. Overall, the region **lost 8,800 jobs over the past year**, more than any other metro in the U.S., except Milwaukee, WI, Virginia Beach, VA, and Washington, D.C. **See Figure 5.**

Figure 5: Portland metro employment change by industry

Source: Oregon Employment Department



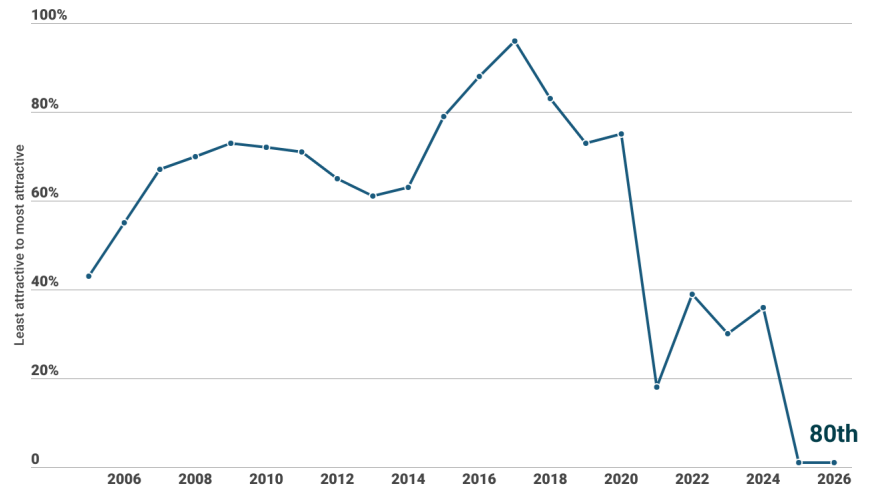
Portland ranks second-to-last in national real estate outlook

Portland continues to rank near the bottom of national real estate market outlooks, **placing second-to-last for the second year in a row** and ahead of only Hartford, CT.

This marks a substantial shift from Portland's position in 2017, when the region ranked among the top markets nationally. In less than a decade, Portland has fallen from third place to eightieth in overall real estate prospects. **See Figure 6.**

Figure 6: Attractiveness of Portland's real estate market

Source: Urban Land Institute



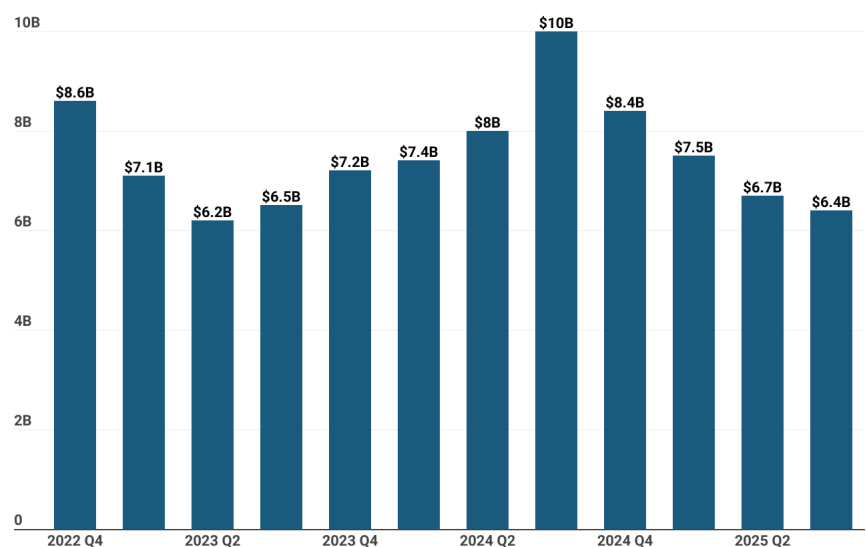
Trade headwinds hit Portland harder than peer metros

Exports in the Portland metro area have declined for four consecutive quarters since peaking at \$10 billion in Q4 2024, **falling to \$6.4 billion**. Among 40 selected U.S. metropolitan areas, Portland experienced the largest percentage decline in export value in 2025.

This contraction reflects the region's high exposure to international trade, particularly along the Pacific Rim, where export-oriented industries have been affected by tariffs, trade policy uncertainty, and reduced trade flows with China. **See Figure 15.**

Figure 15: Quarterly value of exports, Portland metro

Source: U.S. Census Bureau





The trends outlined in this year's State of the Economy report point to a region with economic indicators flashing clear warnings.

Slower population growth, job recovery concentrated in SW Washington, declining competitiveness in traded-sector industries, and a sharply constrained housing pipeline together represent more than a cyclical slowdown; they signal structural challenges that will shape Portland's trajectory for years to come.

At the same time, these pressures underscore what is at stake: the region's ability to attract and retain talent, support broad-based prosperity, and sustain the public investments that underpin long-term economic vitality.

Portland's next chapter will depend on whether leaders can respond with the urgency, coordination, and clarity needed to restore confidence, expand housing and employment opportunities, and reposition the region for durable growth.



Value of Jobs Coalition:



This annual update on the state of our economy is led by the Portland Metro Chamber and the Value of Jobs Coalition, with support from Bank of America. With gratitude to ECONorthwest, our State of the Economy partner since 2010.