

The following is courtesy of the Oregon City Chamber of Commerce:

Following the Recession, Job Growth Strongest in Industries Paying \$50,000+

Amy Vander Vliet, Oregon Employment Department

December 9, 2014

The greater Portland metro area lost more than 80,000 jobs during the Great Recession. We made a full recovery late last year and have added about 30,000 jobs since. Many broad industries have fully recovered (leisure and hospitality, professional and business services) while a few others are still thousands below pre-recession employment levels (construction, financial activities).

What does this mean in terms of wages? Where do these new job gains fall on the income scale, and how does this compare with the jobs that were lost?

There's no official - or straightforward - definition of low, medium, and high wage jobs. For this analysis, lower-wage is under \$30,000 annually, higher-wage is \$50,000 or more, and mid-wage makes up the rest (\$30,000 to \$50,000).

A High-Wage Recovery

While it's true that the metro area has added many lower-paying jobs since the end of the recession, nearly half of all jobs created over the past five years (49,300) are in industries paying more than \$50,000. This is one-and-a-half times the number of jobs gained in lower-paying industries.

Topping the list of higher-paying gainers are components of professional and technical services (e.g., management, scientific, and technical consulting services), company headquarters, ambulatory health care services (i.e., doctor offices), and specialty trade contractors. About 20 higher-paying industries haven't fully recovered, including finance, merchant wholesalers, and specialty trade contractors (despite strong post-recession gains).

About one-third of post-recession gains, or 33,200 jobs, are in industries paying less than \$30,000. The largest gainers in this category include limited service eating places (e.g., fast-food), social assistance, and nursing and residential care facilities.

Industries paying between \$30,000 and \$50,000 have added the fewest jobs post-recession (22,300). Top gainers in this category include residential building construction, state education, and car dealerships.

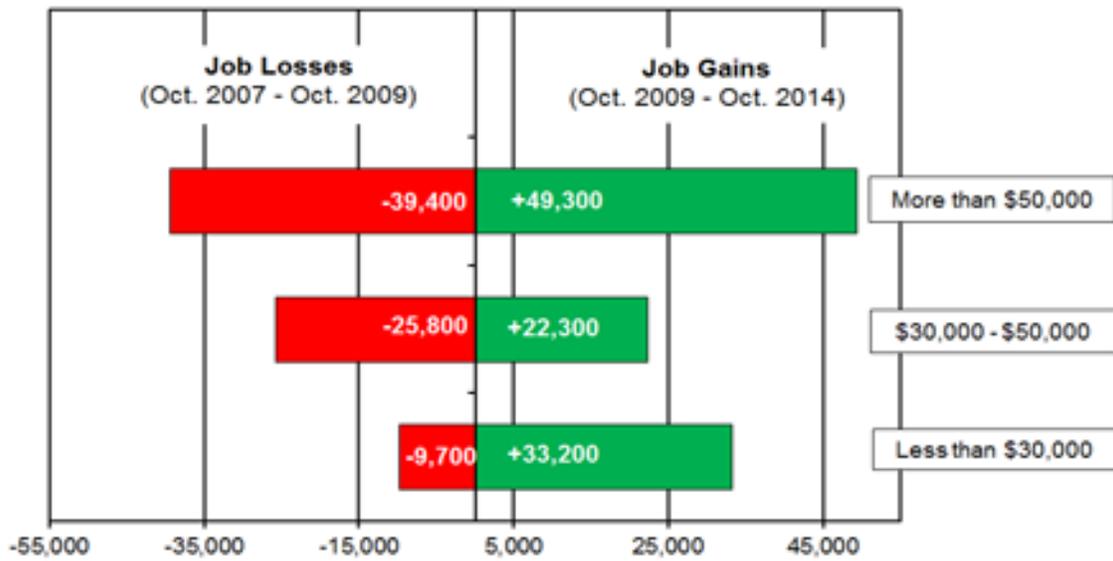
A Complete Recovery in Lower- and Higher-Paying Jobs, Mid-Range Growth Lags

Solid gains in lower- and higher-wage industries have more than offset recessionary losses. Today the metro area has about 10,000 more jobs in industries paying over \$50,000 than when the recession hit. We have 23,000 additional jobs in industries paying less than \$30,000.

The number of jobs paying between \$30,000 and \$50,000 is about 3,500 short of pre-recession peaks. While temp help, food manufacturing, and membership associations have added thousands of jobs since the recession ended, car dealerships, residential building construction, and local education (e.g., K-12) are still thousands in the red.

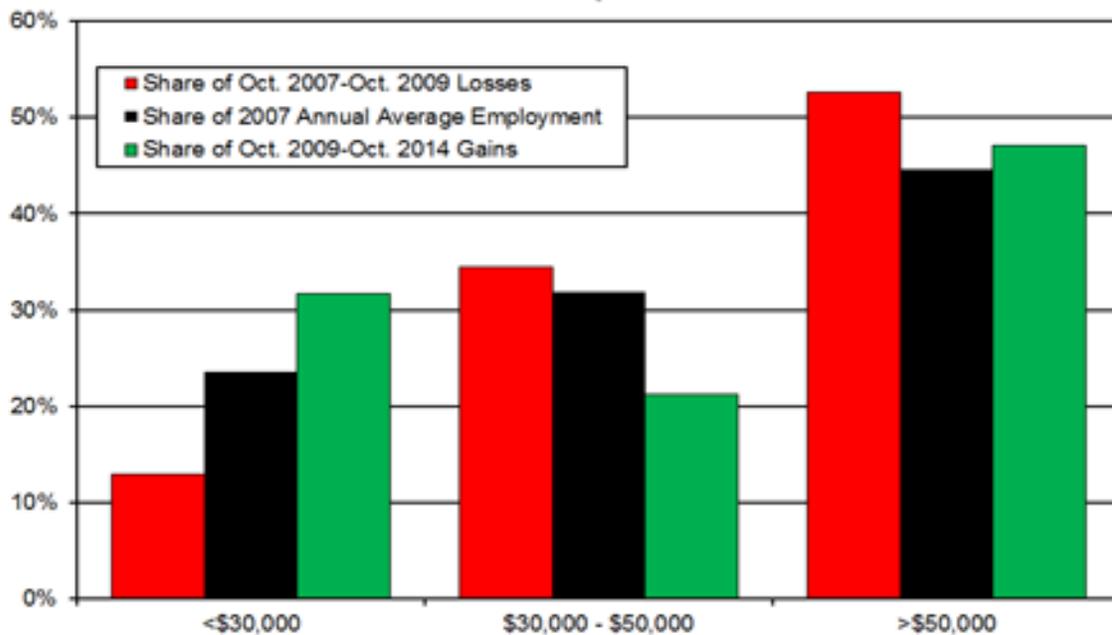
This trend of slower growth in the middle-range jobs is nothing new. In the years leading up to the recession, lower- and higher-wage industries contributed relatively more than the mid-wage cluster.

Job Losses and Gains by Wage Range* Portland Metro Area



*2013 Annual Average Covered Wage by Industry, Oregon portion of the Portland Metro Area

Share of Job Losses, Gains, and Employment by Wage* Portland Metropolitan Area



*2013 Annual Average Covered Wage by Industry, Oregon portion of the Portland Metro Area