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Careers in Seattle and Portland: Working in the Pacific Northwest

BY [MAC PRICHARD](#)



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From Mt. Rainier to Mt. Hood, working in the Pacific Northwest is a dream for many. With Seattle and Portland leading the pack, residents along the I-5 corridor have a bevy of professional opportunities to choose from. As observed in recent job market trends, Pacific Northwest careers will continue to see great growth moving forward.

So, which of these two great cities is your top choice for career growth? In Portland, telecommute work is becoming the norm, while Seattle is seeing an "all-out war" for experienced talent. By all indications, Pacific Northwest careers are indeed thriving. Here at Mac's List, we've seen a number of changes in the region's job market over the years, whether working in Seattle or working in Portland. Here are a few more key trends you should know about working in the Pacific Northwest.

TREND: More Portland residents are working remotely.

According to [Oregon Live](#), Portland ranks 4th in the nation for the number of professionals who work from home. Designers, developers, technical/customer support representatives, and virtual assistants can all expect to find a bounty of telecommute opportunities in the area. Portland job market trends indicate that skilled "[knowledge workers](#)" may even secure work-from-home positions with companies based outside of the Portland metropolitan area, including Bend, San Francisco, and New York. Working in Portland – even from home – seems to be as desirable as the mountain and river views.

TIP: Tired of the typical 9-to-5 with a commute? If you want to work remotely, [negotiate a more flexible schedule](#) from your future or current boss.

TREND: Technology continues to grow in Seattle.

Best known for behemoths like Amazon and Microsoft, Seattle has long been a fertile ground for tech companies. Startups thrive [both downtown and across the water](#) to the Eastside, expanding into Bellevue, Redmond, and Issaquah. Seattle job market trends show that video games companies, such as Nintendo and Big Fish, are regularly hiring for tech workers.

Amazon itself continues to grow beyond the boundaries of Seattle proper, expanding to suburbs in every direction. The need for skilled technology workers doesn't seem to be waning in Seattle, and as technology continues to evolve and become essential within our daily lives, the Seattle job market doesn't seem like it will slow down anytime soon. For the past two years, Seattle has led the nation [in technology hiring](#).

TIP: With such a technology-focused environment, it may be a bit intimidating to explore the professional opportunities Seattle has to offer. Leverage your [already-robust skill set](#) to start working in Seattle.

TREND: Entrepreneurs are headed to Portland.

The Pacific Northwest is a top region for entrepreneurs. But Portland, often thought of as Seattle's smaller sibling, continues to grow in leaps and bounds when it comes to startups. A favorite destination for foodies, restaurants, bars, and food carts continue to spring up around the Rose City. Fancy yourself a skilled baker or chef looking to start your own business? Portland Community College [offers a 14-week, intensive course](#) titled "Getting Your Recipe to Market" for entrepreneurial food lovers.

Tech entrepreneurs will also find a robust community of founders and funders in Stumptown. Dubbed [the Silicon Forest by many](#), local groups and events, like Portland Startup Week, offer networking opportunities to tech-minded locals and new residents working in Portland. Portland job market trends show that we can only expect more entrepreneurial growth in the years to come.

TIP: With a tight job market, employment opportunities are available citywide from downtown Portland to Vancouver and beyond. But if you're looking to grow even further [by changing career paths](#) or opening your own small business, this is the place to be.

TREND: Seattle's job market continues to grow rapidly in key industries.

Over the last few years, the Seattle job market trend shows that companies continue to hire at an incredible pace. Seattle job market trends show that leadership, business management, and computer networking skills are [in high demand](#). Retail and construction are also at the front of the hiring pack when it comes to working in Seattle.

TIP: Set your resume apart from other candidates by [adapting it for Applicant Tracking Systems](#). Standard operations for both companies and recruiting firms, having your resume technology-ready can advance your job search exponentially.

TREND: In Portland, nurses, truck drivers, and sales reps are in high demand.

Portland job market trends also indicate that there's more to working in Portland than just a rising tech scene. According to [employment projections](#), healthcare (23%), advanced manufacturing (16%), and construction (25%), are also expected to experience major expansions through 2024.

TIP: Don't assume that the Portland job market is only friendly to younger workers. Build on the skills you've gained over the years by developing [a second act career](#) at any age.

TREND: No sales tax in Portland means potentially lower relocation costs.

While Washington offers Pacific Northwest careers without income tax, the state of Oregon features a winning caveat for professionals – no sales tax. Whether dining and drinking or buying a home or vehicle, this added benefit to working in Portland can often be the decision maker when choosing a place to live. A robust transportation system and plenty of rose gardens to walk through [doesn't hurt either](#).

TIP: A state of hikers, bikers, and community organizations, Oregon has one of the largest affiliations of B Corporations in the country. Focused on both social and environmental impacts, B Corporation businesses have pledged to maintain values that support their employees and the business community overall. Consider the benefits of a [B Corp career](#).

TREND: Seattle's lack of income tax can lead to larger paychecks.

Unique to only seven states in the country, working in Seattle presents [an additional benefit](#) for new employees moving to the Emerald City – namely, its lack of income state tax, equating to a larger paycheck at the end of the day. With a cost of living similar to Portland, this is often a key factor for many professionals making the move.

TIP: Salaries can vary wildly from city to city. When applying for a role in Seattle, be sure to research the compensation details [for your job title and expertise level](#).

Still can't decide? Explore our resources for [Working in Portland](#), and check out our expanding library on [Working in Seattle](#).

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