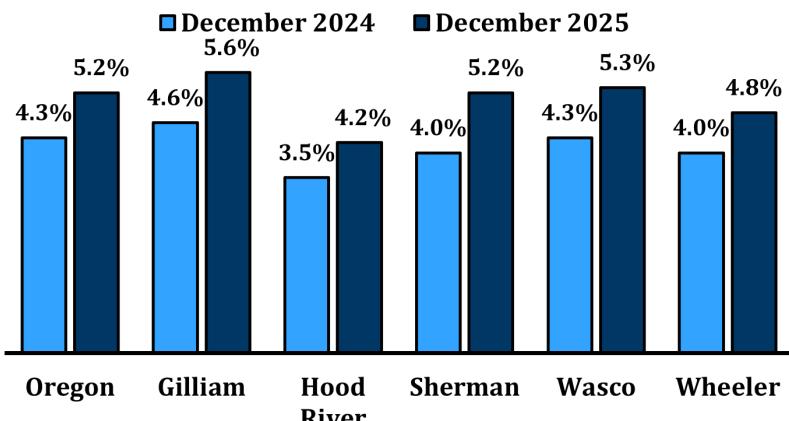


Columbia Gorge Economic Indicators

February 2026

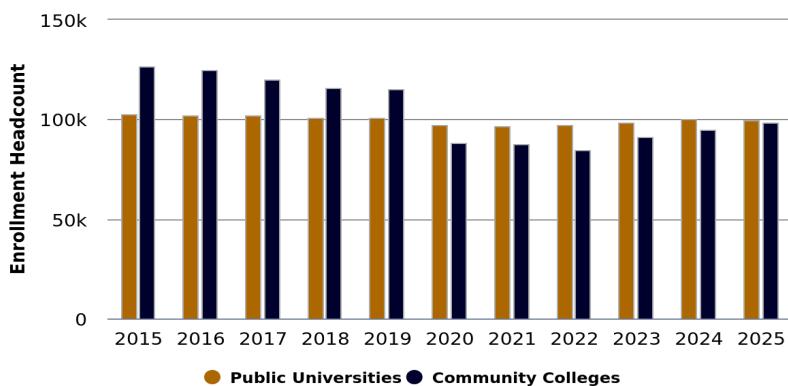
Local Area Unemployment Rates (Seasonally adjusted)



Graph of the Month

Enrollment in Oregon's Public Higher Ed Institutions

Source: Oregon Employment Department, Higher Education Coordinating Commission



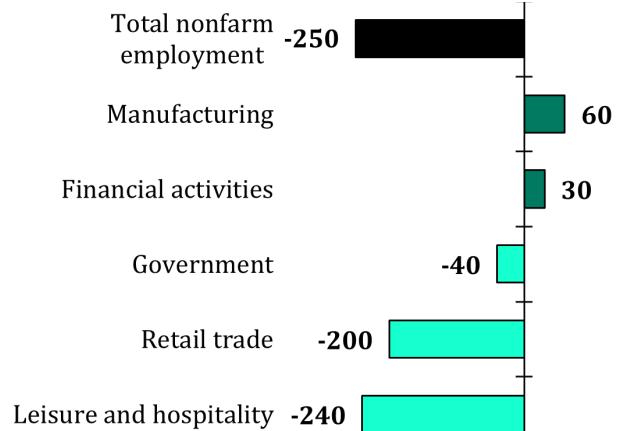
Public universities and community colleges benefit Oregon's economy by creating a more skilled and productive workforce, generating state and local tax revenue, driving local spending, and contributing to research and innovation. Enrollment in Oregon's public community colleges and universities rose by 1.5% overall between 2024 and 2025, according to a new report by the Higher Education Coordination Commission. Community college enrollment increased by 3.7%, while public university enrollment fell slightly by 0.6%.

Statewide enrollment in higher education was bolstered by community colleges, which continued the strong growth in enrollment beginning in 2023. Linn-Benton saw the fastest growth, rising by 23.7%. Oregon Coast (18.0%), Blue Mountain (16.0%), and Tillamook Bay (15.3%) also saw double digit growth. The highest numeric increase came from Portland Community College, Oregon's largest, which added 1,926 students (6.7%), growing its sizeable student population to 30,548.

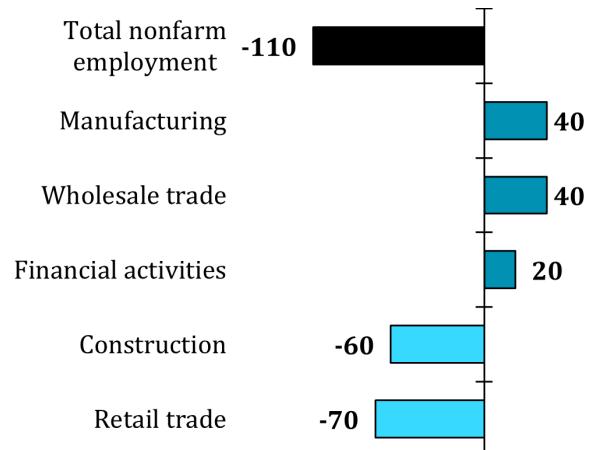
Not all community colleges gained students over the year. Clatsop saw a steep decline of -35%. Although less extreme, Columbia Gorge (-13.9%), Umpqua (-9.2%), Southwestern (-7.7%), Central Oregon (-2.3%), Clackamas (-1.5%), and Chemeketa (-0.6%) also saw enrollment declines.

Select Industry Gains and Losses (Year-over-year net employment change, December 2025)

Hood River County



Wasco County



Notable Over-the-Year Changes

Gilliam

Total nonfarm employment (-100)
Professional and business services (+10)
Government (+10)

Sherman

Total nonfarm employment (-30)
Federal government (+20)
Retail trade (-15)

Wheeler

Total nonfarm employment (+20)
Local government (+10)
Leisure and hospitality (-5)

Want to join the distribution list? Contact:
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