

Portland's Activewear Study: A Collaborative Effort to Facilitate Industry Growth

Activewear/outdoor gear is a strong industry cluster and major source of future job creation in both the Portland metropolitan region and the state of Oregon. Leading economic development organizations agree that helping these firms succeed is essential to the region's success. To know how to best help firms in the activewear industry, these organizations are engaging in a series of conversations with industry leaders, whose specific knowledge and perceptions will inform any future steps taken to advance the cluster's growth. In addition to identifying specific opportunities for partnership and action, this collaboration will benefit the industry by producing:

- A report outlining key trends, challenges, opportunities and potential initiatives for the industry
- An online directory of local activewear and apparel companies.
- A graphic representation of how the local industry has grown and relationships between firms.
- An action plan to guide industry leaders' collaboration.

While the industry's own innovation holds the key to this cluster's growth, economic developers and elected officials can facilitate that growth by convening industry groups, identifying issues, developing policy and creating the underlying conditions that support industry health. Because their resources are limited and must be targeted effectively, the partners in this effort will encourage connections and communication with additional individuals and organizations who can help address the needs identified.

What's a cluster?

A cluster is a geographic concentration of inter-related firms. Activewear, apparel, and outdoor gear make up one of the Portland region's strongest clusters.

Companies that locate in a cluster benefit from:

- ✓ A highly skilled labor force
- ✓ Knowledge spillover
- ✓ Increased innovation
- ✓ High-quality supply chains
- ✓ Coordinated advocacy efforts

Project Partners

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) is the City of Portland's economic development and urban renewal agency and is responsible for implementing the city's Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, which identifies activewear/outdoor gear as a priority.

Greenlight Greater Portland (GGP) is the Portland region's only privately-funded economic development organization, which focuses on researching and marketing the region's assets. By better understanding the industry and its needs, Greenlight Greater Portland will be able to improve its marketing efforts in the activewear/outdoor gear space.

Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD) is the State of Oregon's economic development agency. OBDD provides direct services such as access to capital, lean manufacturing consulting, and assistance with international markets. OBDD is interested in more clearly targeting its resources in the activewear/outdoor gear industry cluster.

Oregon Business Plan is an economic strategy and policy agenda to create more quality jobs in Oregon. The Plan is developed by identifying and assessing the needs of Oregon's key industries, and developing a set of policy initiatives to address those needs. Like the other partners, the Plan has identified activewear/outdoor gear as a key traded-sector industry.

Portland State University is conducting research through its Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies to produce a "genealogy map" (similar to its Silicon Universe poster) of the activewear/outdoor gear cluster to show how the relationship between companies has led to cluster growth.