
Docket Item:

Increased funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)

Summary:

A total of **\$28.8 million** in additional OOG funding (beyond the current service level budget of \$171.2 million, for a total 2021-23 biennial budget of \$200 million) is available to the HECC's Office of Student Access and Completion for expansion of the program. Preliminary estimates indicate that approximately 11,000 additional awards will result in 2021-23 from this investment.

Projected OOG Expenditure Schedule

\$96M (48%) = 2021-22 academic year
\$104M (52%) = 2022-23 academic year
\$200M = 2021-23 total biennial budget

2021-22 OOG Award maximums

\$3,612: Public & Eligible Private Universities
\$2,778: Community Colleges
*maximum awards are set at 13% of the prior year cost of attendance
**based on Full-Time attendance (pro-rated Half-Time awards are also available)

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Limit

The Oregon Opportunity Grant prioritizes awards to the highest-need students. For the last several years, the EFC cutoff for OOG eligibility has been set at 3,500. The high demand for the program (especially among the highest-need students) and funding limitations combined to prevent an increase in the EFC cutoff. These additional funds will allow OSAC to raise the 2021-22 OOG EFC limit to 6,000, placing it slightly higher than the federal Pell grant EFC limit of 5,846.

FAFSA/ORSAA filing and Enrollment Deadlines

Since the funding limitations imposed on the program during the Great Recession, high levels of student need in Oregon and corresponding demand for the OOG resulted in awarding deadlines as early as late winter or spring for students seeking to enroll in the fall. Awarding deadlines are determined by the number of qualifying students who filed a FAFSA/ORSAA by the awarding deadline. OSAC awards until the money allocated for the academic year is exhausted. Examples of how this plays out include the 2018-2019 academic year when a student had to file a FAFSA/ORSAA by April 30th to qualify for the OOG and the 2019-2020 academic year where the student had to file by June 1st to qualify for the OOG.

Key New Practices in 2021-22:

- A final deadline for FAFSA/ORSAA filing has not yet been set for determining eligibility for OOG funds; OSAC will continue making awards into the fall until funds are forecasted to be exhausted
- Students starting school after fall term during winter or spring terms will be considered for OOG and awarded until funds are forecasted to be exhausted for the academic year
- University and college partners will provide OSAC with an early fall "snap shot" report on disbursements and OOG awardee fall enrollment to facilitate forecasting for mid-year OOG awards, traditional reconciliation reports will occur as usual towards the end of the term

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION

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Communications & Outreach Efforts

OSAC increased its public communications this spring and summer to address the impact of COVID-19. A special effort was undertaken to boost FAFSA/ORSAA completion, which lagged during the pandemic. An existing program, Summer Bridge, reaches out to 2020 and 2021 high school graduates seeking to encourage and inform them as they transition from high school to college. Recently HECC coordinated a press release to make stakeholders aware of the OOG funding increase, to highlight the amounts and availability of the 2021-22 awards, and to encourage students of all ages to apply by completing their FAFSA/ORSAA. In addition, OSAC will be reaching out directly via email to thousands of prior applicants, who qualified for the OOG in previous years but who did not enroll, to encourage them to get back on track with their college and career goals. Students can apply for the Oregon Opportunity Grant by completing their FAFSA/ORSAA.

Additional details about the OOG can be found at:

<https://oregonstudentaid.gov/oregon-opportunity-grant.aspx>

Staff Recommendation:

For discussion and informational purposes only.