

Docket Item:

Future Ready Oregon 2022 SB 1545 (2022)

Summary:

Oregon entered the decade with a declared need of 300,000 additional postsecondary credentials to prepare adult workers for a future of increasingly complex work. The disruption created by the pandemic has exacerbated the workforce crisis, as well as highlighted significant disparities in how our workforce system serves Oregon's communities of color. As in prior recessions, Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, and other people of color (BIPOC), people with low incomes, and rural Oregonians were hit hardest. Barriers to job readiness and career advancement persist, which is made more difficult by a workforce system that is often siloed, inefficient, and difficult to navigate.

Governor Brown's workforce package – Future Ready Oregon – proposes a \$200 million investment that advances Oregon's economic competitiveness and ensures equitable opportunities for a diverse workforce. In particular, Future Ready Oregon will advance opportunities for historically underserved communities, including adult learners, dislocated workers, and disconnected youth. Investments emphasize recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities, while prioritizing key populations, including people of color, women, people with low incomes, rural communities, veterans, and Oregonians who are incarcerated and formerly incarcerated.

Investments will focus on three key sectors: healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. With increased investments in infrastructure and housing, an aging workforce, and record retirements, workforce needs in these skilled trades sectors are projected to grow. These key sectors provide short-term pathways to meaningful employment, higher earning potential, and opportunities for economic mobility. Using a multifaceted approach through inclusive, culturally specific, and linguistically appropriate career-connected learning, employment services, and related initiatives, Future Ready Oregon 2022 will create equitable prosperity.

Future Ready Oregon includes the following investments:

- *Leveraging Existing Successes* (\$92.5M) – Expanding investments in programs that are successfully providing career-connected learning opportunities for historically underserved communities, including local workforce boards (\$35M), community college career pathways programs (\$17M), registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs (\$20M), credit for prior learning (\$10M), and youth workforce readiness and reengagement initiatives (\$10.5M).
- *Competitive Workforce Readiness Grants* (\$95M) – Providing individuals, organizations, and service providers resources and supports to remove barriers and improve access to the workforce system, and connecting key populations to job training, employment, and career advancement opportunities through:
 - Direct financial benefits to individuals, including stipends for earn-and-learn models and funds to pay for education, training, and wraparound services (e.g., tuition, fees, supplies, transportation, housing, and childcare);
 - Resources for workforce service providers to develop education and training Pathways, including culturally and linguistically appropriate credential pathways, career-connected learning opportunities, physical infrastructure, supplies, and technology; and
 - Opportunities to build organizational capacity, including investing in staffing, organizational and structural processes, planning, and other administrative expenses.
- *Benefits Navigators Pilot Program* (\$10M) – Providing local workforce boards with the opportunity to apply for Benefits Navigators, to be located at one-stop WorkSource Centers or community-based organizations.

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- *Industry Consortia Pilots* (\$1M) — Investing in consortia for key industry sectors (construction, healthcare, and manufacturing), which will be co-led by a representative from the business community and a relevant community-based organization, and that will make investment recommendations to policy makers.
- *Assessment, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement* (\$1.5M) — An investment to ensure that the criteria for funding all activities serve the priority populations identified in the Future Ready Oregon proposal.

Material:

Future Ready Oregon Presentation

Staff Recommendation:

For discussion and informational purposes only.