

EQUITY ACHIEVEMENT INVESTMENTS

2023–25 OREGON PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES' CONSOLIDATED FUNDING REQUEST

First-generation, Pell-eligible, and traditionally underserved students face new and different challenges. Many face profoundly disruptive housing and food insecurity that threatens their education. Additionally, COVID-19 disproportionality impacted the physical, social, and financial well-being of communities of color. Numerous studies show that persistent equity gaps exacerbate broader social inequities, and these populations are more likely to be at a disadvantage before they even step onto postsecondary campus. Empowering the new generation of Oregon university-bound students will uplift communities and help address systemic inequities that have pervaded Oregon since its founding.

Increasing diversity in Oregon is reflected in the 130,000 students that enroll at Oregon's public universities. As of 2019:

- 1 in 3 identify as students of color
- 1 in 5 are first-generation students
- 2 in 5 receive need-based grants
- 3 in 5 are unable to meet expenses

Robust student services and affordable tuition are critical to student success. The universities are proposing a \$50 million Equity Achievement Investment to sustain and grow existing successful student service programs for traditionally underrepresented students. For some universities, this involves scaling existing programs, while others intend to start new programs modeled after best practices on other campuses nationwide.

The public universities' [2023–25 Consolidated Funding Request](#) articulates each university's plan to:

- Help students get enrolled and started on a path toward a degree,
- Make sure that students have what they need to stay and persist toward getting a degree, and
- Provide students support and pathways to careers following successful completion.

A college degree is a proven tool toward financial mobility. Oregon's public universities are committed partners in reimagining a better tomorrow and addressing persistent equity gaps. The willingness of policymakers to commit resources to protect the state's fragile cradle-to-career public education system may determine if the impact of COVID-19 is measured in years or in generations, and is remembered primarily as a public health crisis or a driver of further systemic inequity. Through the transformative power of learning, we can emerge from the pandemic a stronger more resilient state.

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Investments at Oregon's Public Universities**