



Future Ready Oregon (Senate Bill 1545, 2022)

Updated February 26, 2026

*In 2022, the Oregon State Legislature passed [Senate Bill 1545](#), also known as *Future Ready Oregon*, providing a comprehensive \$200 million package of investments that worked together to advance a more equitable and racially just workforce system.*

Future Ready Oregon consists of grant programs and strategic initiatives that:

- center the education and employment needs of historically underserved and underrepresented Oregonians;
- expand partnerships between communities, educators, and employers to advance innovation in talent development;
- connect businesses to a diverse, skilled workforce; and
- remove barriers to education and employment by connecting individuals to the training and supports they need for well-paying jobs and meaningful careers.

The investments strategically leverage state General Fund and federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) resources to promote collaboration and innovation in workforce and talent development. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), and Youth Development Oregon (YDO) began administering this one-time funding in 2022. All state General Funds were required to be spent by June 30, 2023. ARPA funds must be fully used by June 30, 2026.

Background: Advancing a More Diverse Workforce

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 exacerbated the workforce crisis and highlighted significant disparities in how our workforce system serves Oregon's communities of color and other marginalized populations.

The legislation emphasizes ten specific groups that have faced marginalization in employment, as well as in education and training programs. These priority populations are communities of color, women, low-income households, rural and frontier regions, veterans, individuals with disabilities, those who are currently or formerly incarcerated, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, individuals who face disproportionate discrimination based on age in the workplace, and members of LGBTQ+ communities.

Future Ready Oregon expands equitable opportunities for a diverse workforce and advances Oregon's economic competitiveness. Investments focus on key sectors of Oregon's economy – healthcare, manufacturing, and technology – that provide short-term pathways to meaningful employment, higher earning potential, and opportunities for economic mobility in communities across Oregon. Future Ready Oregon emphasizes a comprehensive approach, providing diverse jobseekers with culturally and linguistically relevant career-connected learning and employment services, and connecting businesses to the skilled labor they need for growth.

Grant Programs: Investing in Innovative Workforce and Talent Development

Workforce Ready Grants (\$95 million)

Competitive grants supported community-based and culturally specific organizations and workforce service providers in their efforts to create and expand education and training programs in the key sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, and technology; expand organizational capacity to provide workforce development services; and provide direct benefits to training participants. These benefits include stipends for earn-and-learn experiences and funding to pay for education, training costs, job readiness supplies, and wraparound supports and services.

The HECC awarded 124 Workforce Ready Grants across three funding cycles from 2022 to 2024. The first round focused on capacity building, expanding organizational capacity, and engaging new partners in workforce education and training. The second round advanced innovation in workforce programs, incentivizing partnerships and collaboration between employers, education and training providers, and community-based and culturally specific organizations. The third and final round funded initiatives that offer direct workforce development services and that integrated recommendations from the industry consortia in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology for workforce development in each sector.

Prosperity 10,000 (\$35 million)

Oregon's nine local workforce development boards distributed funds to nonprofit community-based organizations, educational institutions, labor organizations, and other workforce service providers to offer services. These services include career coaching, paid training opportunities, scholarships, stipends, and wraparound supports. The local workforce development boards have invested in innovative approaches to addressing regionally significant workforce needs, expanding existing relationships, and advancing new partnerships. All nine boards received their first allocation of \$15 million in General Funds based on a formula funding model in May 2022. They received their second and final allocation of \$20 million in ARPA funding in early 2023.

Community College Career Pathways Programs (\$14.9 million)

Community College Career Pathways are education and training programs connected to student support services that enable individuals, particularly from priority populations, to secure a job or advance in a high-wage, high-demand industry. In 2022, the Future Ready investment enhanced and expanded pre-existing Career Pathways efforts and was administered through HECC's Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. Grant funding went to each of Oregon's 17 community colleges, including support for purchasing equipment, providing student support services, aligning with other programs, developing or expanding certificate programs, and conducting a variety of recruitment and re-engagement strategies.

Credit for Prior Learning (\$10 million)

This investment enabled Oregonians to receive credit for knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience, including military training, significant work experience, and formal and informal education and training from higher education institutions in the U.S. and in other countries. In 2022, the HECC awarded competitive grants to all institutions that applied (14 of 17 community colleges and five of seven public universities) to scale-up pre-existing and continuing Credit for Prior Learning systems across all academic areas.

Youth Programs (\$10.5 million)

Administered by YDO, this investment provided youth ages 14-24 from priority populations with increased access to workforce readiness and academic programs, including diploma and GED completion, mentoring and coaching, career exploration, and paid work experience. YDO disbursed grants to 55 organizations across two rounds of funding, allocating \$3.5 million in state General Funds to be spent by June 30, 2023, and \$10 million in federal ARPA funds to be used by June 30, 2025.

Registered Apprenticeship (\$20 million)

Administered by BOLI, this investment developed, expands, and implements registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training programs in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology, and pre-apprenticeship programs in construction. From May 2022 to December 2023, BOLI conducted four rounds of grant funding designed to accelerate the development and implementation of apprenticeships in healthcare and manufacturing and to support pre-apprenticeship training in these fields and construction.

Strategic Initiatives: Informing an Equitable Workforce System

Workforce Benefits Navigators (\$10 million)

Funded by ARPA, this investment placed benefits navigators at WorkSource Oregon one-stop centers and community-based organizations across the state. Navigators provide a single point of contact to help individuals efficiently access the resources that match their unique needs and navigate the different programs and benefits available for workforce education and training. Local workforce development boards implemented pilot projects in 2024.

Industry Consortia (\$1 million)

This investment launched three separate, statewide Industry Consortia representing the healthcare, manufacturing, and technology sectors. The purpose of each Consortium is to establish strategic partnerships between employers, education and training providers, and community partners; identify statewide industry-specific workforce needs and high-value credentials; and advance recruitment and retention strategies that increase diversity in industry-specific job opportunities and career pathways.

Reporting and Assessment: Evaluating Impact and Accountability

The HECC's Office of Research and Data fulfills the reporting requirements of the Future Ready Oregon legislation across the state enterprise annually, 2022-26. Reporting requirements are organized to answer the following questions:

- Does Future Ready Oregon lead to greater economic prosperity?
- Does Future Ready Oregon lead to greater equity, especially racial equity?
- Is Future Ready Oregon effective?

Leading with these questions, the HECC's annual report examines equitable access to the funding and workforce training programs, how these investments are put into practice, completion of different services, and what the outcomes reveal about the economic and equity impacts of Future Ready Oregon. The outcomes include service completion, use of support services, degree completion, credential attainment, and job placement rates compared to statewide educational attainment goals and long-term employment projections, and are disaggregated by race and ethnicity, age, gender, and geographical area.

In addition to documenting the impact of Future Ready Oregon, ongoing assessment also informs the HECC's efforts to continuously improve the grantmaking process by making funding opportunities more inclusive and accessible as well as workforce development strategies.

Administering the Investment: Inclusive Engagement and Grantmaking

The HECC has taken steps through the implementation of Future Ready Oregon to ensure an inclusive, low-barrier grantmaking process that advances access to opportunities for organizations serving priority populations and those who are new to the workforce system. Steps included:

- Providing supports for applicants, including technical assistance, language translation, and accessible application materials;
- Emphasizing the direct, intentional support for and engagement of priority populations and cultural competency demonstrated via lived experience, and specific knowledge of community strengths, the impacts of discrimination, and disparities in access;
- Prioritizing partnerships and collaboration to engage historically underserved and marginalized populations, advancing innovation, and building capacity;
- Expanding efforts to connect with and engage organizations new to providing workforce services; and
- Leading with learning by building communities of practice and providing ongoing technical assistance and training to support grant recipients.

For more information, visit the [HECC website](#).