

The Case for Equity

Our state's collective future depends on the talents and contributions of each and every Oregonian. Individuals within a community and communities within a larger society need the ability to shape their own present and future, and we believe that equitable education and training is fundamental to sustaining the ability for Oregon communities to thrive. We believe that one of our most critical responsibilities is to implement a set of concrete system changes and policies to deliver a truly student and learner-centric education and training system that improves outcomes and opportunities for Oregonians statewide.

Oregon communities are changing and diversifying in race/ethnicity, culture, language, and other factors, and youth in our educational system are increasingly diverse. These changes create great opportunity, but also intensify the urgent need for systemic change to equitably serve all Oregonians. Oregon continues to have serious opportunity and systemic gaps that threaten the ability for individuals and diverse communities to shape their own futures and succeed. Our education and training systems have collectively failed to meet the needs and recognize the strengths of learners of color, emerging bilingual Oregonians, members of Indigenous communities, rural learners, immigrants, Oregonians experiencing poverty, and others from diverse backgrounds. As our diversity grows, and our systems to serve these learners continue to fall short, we limit the opportunity, economic mobility, innovation, and contributions of all Oregonians and imperil our ability to foster a collective future of thriving communities statewide.

Postsecondary education and training is a demonstrated pathway to higher lifetime incomes, family-wage careers, and economic mobility, among numerous other civic, health, and family benefits. We aim to expand postsecondary education and training opportunity in order to foster the understandings, habits, and skills that enable Oregonians and their communities to flourish in a changing society and evolving workplace. For far too long, longstanding systemic barriers built into government, institution, and education systems have failed to sufficiently support communities of color, students experiencing poverty, and other underserved communities in accessing, completing, and benefitting from postsecondary education and training. Unfortunately, by continuing our current trajectory, postsecondary education in Oregon will continue to widen the state's racial/ethnic, economic, and urban-rural divides. Oregon has one of the most ambitious educational attainment goals for young adults in the nation, the 40-40-20 goal, as well an adult educational attainment goal tied to workforce needs; however, we will only reach these goals if our education system transforms to eliminate systemic barriers for historically underserved and marginalized Oregonians. We must make intentional changes in postsecondary education and training to make it accessible to and supportive of all Oregonians, and to eliminate serious longstanding racial, ethnic and other disparities that we continue to see today.

Equity is both the means to educational success and an end that benefits us all, fostering a future of economic prosperity, flourishing communities and cultures, innovation, justice, and opportunity. We work towards equitable outcomes by addressing the root historical causes of systemic racism and inequities, not just their manifestation. Equity requires the intentional examination and elimination of systemic policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may in effect serve to marginalize some and perpetuate stark disparities in educational opportunity and outcomes. Creating a culture of equity requires active investment in changing social structures and practice over time, including monitoring, encouragement, resources, data, and opportunity. As Oregon changes and diversifies, we must formulate new governmental and educational policies, practices, and approaches to eliminate racial and other inequities and to ensure all residents can thrive and realize their full potential.

Higher Education Coordinating Commission: Vision Statement

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future in which all Oregonians—and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized—benefit from the transformational power of high-quality postsecondary education and training. It is a future where innovative public and private colleges, universities, and training providers help Oregonians to reach their highest potentials, build trajectories to family-wage careers, foster a more just society, and break patterns of intergenerational poverty. It is a future where postsecondary education fuels a resilient economy by anticipating workforce needs and by fostering innovation, research, and knowledge. In the future we envision, all Oregonians enjoy well-lived lives thanks to the myriad benefits of postsecondary education and training: higher earnings, lower unemployment rates, self-sufficiency, civic involvement, better health, and more. Our communities thrive as a result. —from HECC [Strategic Framework](#)

Oregon HECC Equity Lens: Focus and Purpose

The HECC utilizes and embeds the Equity Lens as a cornerstone to the State’s approach to education policy and funding. Achieving the universal goal of educational equity requires targeted strategies to eliminate racial disparities and other identity-based disparities. The HECC is committed to intentional action as an anti-racist, equity-centered agency and Commission. The purpose of the Equity Lens is to:

- Clearly articulate the shared goals we have for our state of an equitable education and training system, and explicitly identify persistent and severe disparities in outcomes;
- Assess how current and proposed policies, programs and practices benefit and/or burden underserved learners and communities to identify where policies, programs, and practices need to be strengthened or changed;
- Make intentional equity-informed decisions, actions, targeted interventions, investments and enact systemic change to improve equitable educational outcomes and access to services, programs, and resources;
- Strengthen public involvement through transformational community engagement, access to information, and decision-making opportunities; and
- Create clear accountability structures to ensure that we are actively making progress and correcting where there is not progress.

The Equity Lens confirms the importance of recognizing institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that have limited access and success for many learners in the Oregon education and training system. By utilizing the Equity Lens, we aim to provide a common vocabulary and protocol to assess how programs benefit and/or burden underserved students and communities, and to make decisions on resource allocation, partnership, engagement, and strategic initiatives to support equitable educational outcomes. We are committed to explicitly identifying disparities in education and training outcomes for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention and investment. We are simultaneously committed to identifying strengths in communities and promising practices in our educational and workforce systems.

Oregon HECC Equity Lens: Focus and Purpose (continued)

We focus the HECC Equity Lens on Oregonians who are currently and historically underserved in access to and success in postsecondary education and training, and in the programs and services impacting these measures. We intentionally place racial equity at the forefront to counterbalance and dismantle racist policies and practices that perpetuate inequities. We are committed to explicitly identifying and urgently addressing the most severe and persistent disparities for learners, while shifting to a more equitable education and training system for all Oregonians.

In addition to race and ethnicity, we recognize that numerous other areas of identity-based inequities, such as socioeconomic status, are inextricably linked. The definitions of historically and currently underserved groups in the context of postsecondary education and training may vary according to the specific outcome under attention, and may include racial/ethnic identity, socio-economic background, dis/ability status, gender, sexual orientation, parental status, veteran status, geographic origin or location, and other characteristics. It is important to recognize also that many Oregonians identify with numerous communities or intersecting identities, and may be limited by compounding systems of barriers, exclusion or marginalization. We must formulate new approaches to ensure all residents can live and thrive in our state, across their identities. While we focus on educational equity and center the urgency of improving racial equity in education, we recognize that racial disparities persist across numerous key indicators of success including health, education, housing, and economic opportunity amongst others. Advancing racial equity in Oregon will take foundational reform. Furthermore, while the HECC Equity Lens focuses on postsecondary education and training, we affirm our longstanding commitment to partnership on urgently addressing inequities across the education systems in Oregon.

- **Underserved Communities in Oregon:** For the State of Oregon as a whole (not education specifically), a recent (2021) definition of historically and currently underserved communities includes Oregonians who are: Native Americans, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives; Black, Africans, African Americans; Latino/a/x, Hispanic; Asian, Pacific Islanders; Arab/Middle Eastern/North Africans; immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers; undocumented persons, DACA recipients, “Dreamers”; linguistically diverse; people with disabilities; LGBTQ+; aging/older adults; economically disadvantaged; farm-workers, and migrant workers.
- **Underserved Students and Learners in Oregon:** For postsecondary education and training, while we center racial equity, the broader set of identities of historically and currently underserved learners may vary according to the specific outcome under consideration. For example, the characteristics of underserved Oregonians in a particular county who are accessing workforce training may be different from characteristics of underserved groups for high school seniors applying for financial aid. It is important to center racial equity and to identify the most severe and persistent disparities for students and learners. For the HECC, postsecondary education equity will be achieved once one’s community or characteristic—including but not limited to racial/ethnic identity, socio-economic background, dis/ability status, gender, parental status, veteran status, sexual orientation, and geographic origin or location—no longer predict inequitable access to and success in postsecondary education and training.

¹ [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging for the State of Oregon](https://www.oregon.gov/das/Docs/DEI_Action_Plan_2021.pdf), September, 2021, Office of the Governor, page 7. https://www.oregon.gov/das/Docs/DEI_Action_Plan_2021.pdf. Accessed November 2021.

Oregon HECC Equity Lens: Beliefs

We believe that everyone has the ability to learn and that we have an ethical and moral responsibility to ensure an education system that provides optimal learning environments that prepare students and learners for their individual futures.

We believe that our community colleges, university, and workforce training systems have a critical role in serving our communities of color, learners experiencing poverty, and other underserved populations.

We believe that the students and learners from currently and historically underserved communities represent Oregon's best opportunity to improve overall educational outcomes. We have many counties in rural and urban communities that already have populations of color that make up the majority. Our ability to meet the needs of this increasingly diverse population is critical to successfully reach our State education goals.

We believe that resource allocation demonstrates our priorities and our values and that we demonstrate our priorities and our commitment to communities of color, learners experiencing poverty, and other underserved communities, in the ways we allocate resources and make educational investments. We believe in focusing postsecondary education and training resources to serve Oregonians where they are and who they are, with a priority on communities and populations that have been historically underserved.

We believe that communities, students, parents, educators, and community-based organizations have unique and important solutions to improving outcomes for our students and educational systems. Our work will only be successful if we are able to truly partner with these stakeholders, engage with respect, authentically listen, and have the courage to share decision-making, control, and resources.

We believe every learner should have access to a full range of education and training options beyond high school, including apprenticeships, career certificates, and college degrees. These will show them multiple paths to employment yielding family-wage incomes without diminishing the responsibility to ensure that each learner is prepared with the requisite skills to make choices for their future.

We believe quality postsecondary education and training should be accessible and affordable for Oregonians, and students should not have to struggle with basic needs including, homelessness, housing insecurity, and food insecurity.

We believe in supporting education and training institutions in continuing to transform, expand, and redesign their outreach and delivery models to engage today's learners, including: communities of color; adults, parents, and other non-traditional learners; low-income populations; and other marginalized communities.

We believe the rich history and culture of learners and multi-lingual Oregonians are a source of pride and an asset to embrace and celebrate. We believe that speaking a language other than English is an asset and that our education system must celebrate and enhance this ability.

We believe in the critical importance of culturally responsive teaching and workforce diversification. An equitable education system requires providing educators with the tools and support to meet the needs of each student, and a dedicated effort to increase the culturally and linguistically diverse educators who reflect Oregon's rapidly changing student population. Our institutions of postsecondary education and training, and the P-20 system, will truly offer the best educational experience when their faculty, staff and students reflect this state, its growing diversity, and the ability for all of these populations to be successful in their educations and ultimately in their careers.

Oregon HECC Equity Lens: Guiding Questions

The Equity Lens will be applied to funding and policy recommendations, as well as to internal, and external practices in education. The following questions will be considered for resource allocation and evaluating strategic investments, policies, and practices:

1. Who are the racial/ethnic and underserved groups affected? What groups show the most persistent or severe disparities?
2. What is the potential impact of the resource allocation, strategic investment, policy, practice, or program to these groups? If this is a decision or strategy related to budget, revenue, procurement, or contracting, have you analyzed the racial equity impact and the impact on other identified underserved groups?
3. Does the decision or strategy under consideration ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
4. How does the decision or strategy advance opportunities for current and historically underserved learners and communities? What is the impact on eliminating the opportunity gap?
5. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)
6. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the strategic investment or resource allocation to inform decision-making? How do you validate your assessment in the questions above?
7. Do you have a plan for inclusive communications and engagement, to communicate the process of this work and opportunities for learners in compelling, clear, accessible, and transparent ways?
8. What is your commitment to diversification of the workforce and professional learning for equity? What resources are you allocating for educator/employee diversity and training in cultural responsive instruction and practices?
9. How will you intentionally modify or enhance your decisions or strategies to ensure each learner and communities' individual and cultural needs are meaningfully met?
10. How will you evaluate your progress and stay accountable to equity goals? How are you collecting and analyzing disaggregated data on race, ethnicity, income, and other demographics or identities?

The [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging for the State of Oregon](#) has additional guiding equity questions and worksheets in the Racial Equity Toolkit (p. 35) to consider for implementation by employees of public agencies.

Appendix: Definitions

Below is a list of current definitions of common terms in diversity, equity, and inclusion and in higher education communities to support a common understanding, many of which are drawn from the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging for the State of Oregon](#).

ACCESSIBILITY: The extent to which a space is readily approachable and usable by people with disabilities. A space can be described as: physical or literal space, such as a facility, website, conference room, office, or bathroom; figurative space, such as a conversation or activity; or digital space, such as a website.

ASSET-BASED THINKING: Asset-based thinking and teaching seeks to unlock learners' potential by focusing on their talents. Also known as strengths-based teaching and communication, this approach contrasts with deficit-based practices which highlight learners' inadequacies.²

ANTI-BLACK RACISM: Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that Black people are inferior to another racial group. Anti-Black racism is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels of racism.

ANTI-RACISM: Active process of identifying and challenging racism, by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, to redistribute power in an equitable manner.

COLONIALISM: Colonialism is a practice of subjugation and economic exploitation of one people over another, through political and economic control, often involving extraction of resources and/or removal of people from an existing place.

COLOR-BLIND RACIAL IDEOLOGY: The belief that people should be regarded and treated as equally as possible, without regard to race or ethnicity. While a color-blind racial ideology may seem to be a pathway to achieve equity, it leaves out the manifestations of racist and discriminatory laws and policies which preserve the ongoing processes that maintain racial and ethnic stratification in social institutions.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT): An intellectual and social movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of color. Critical race theorists hold that racism is inherent in the law and legal institutions of the U.S. insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between whites and nonwhites, especially African Americans.³

CULTURAL HUMILITY: When one maintains an interpersonal stance that is open to individuals and communities of varying cultures, in relation to aspects of the cultural identity most important to the person. Cultural humility can include a life-long commitment to self-critique about differences in culture and a commitment to be aware of and actively mitigate power imbalances between cultures.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE: Recognizing the diverse cultural characteristics of learners as assets. Culturally responsive teaching empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.

DISCRIMINATION: The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, citizenship status, a combination of those identified, and/or other categories. Also refer to Racism.

DEFICIT THINKING: The practice of having lower expectations for certain groups of people based on demographics or characteristics that they share. In doing so, an "at-risk" narrative is formed, in which learners nav-

² ACRL Instruction, Five Things You Should Read About Asset-Based Teaching, American Library Association: Association of College & Research Libraries, May 22, 2018, <https://acrl.ala.org/IS/five-things-you-should-read-about-asset-based-teaching/>, Accessed 4 November 2021

³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "critical race theory". Encyclopedia Britannica, 21 Sep. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory>. Accessed 4 November 2021.

igating poverty, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and/or historically underserved groups and their families are pathologized and marginalized. This includes students who are treated differently because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and geographic origin or location.

DIVERSITY: Honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals. Diversity emphasizes the need for sharing power and increasing representation of communities that are systemically underrepresented and underresourced. These differences are strengths that maximize the state's competitive advantage through innovation, effectiveness, and adaptability.

EMBEDDED RACIAL INEQUALITY: Embedded racial inequalities are inequalities that can be easily produced and reproduced—usually without the intention of doing so and without even a reference to race. These can be policies and practices that intentionally and unintentionally enable white privilege to be reinforced.

EQUALITY: The effort to treat everyone the same or to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities. However, only working to achieve equality ignores historical and structural factors that benefit some social groups and disadvantages other social groups in ways that create differential starting points. Also refer to Racial Equity; Justice.

EQUITY: Equity acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.

EQUITY IN EDUCATION: Equity in education is the notion that each and every learner will receive the necessary resources they need individually to thrive in Oregon's schools, colleges, universities, and training organizations no matter what their race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability status, parental status, veteran status, first language, geographic location/origin, or other distinguishing characteristic.

GENDER PRONOUN: The term one uses to identify themselves in place of their name (i.e. ze/hir/hirs,ey/em/eirs, they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/ his, etc.).

INCLUSION: A state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues. Ultimately, inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.

IMPLICIT BIAS: A belief or attitude that affects our understanding, decision, and actions, and that exists without our conscious awareness.

INDIVIDUAL RACISM: This type of racism, often unknowingly, rests within individuals and comprises our private beliefs and biases about race and racism. Such ideas are influenced and shaped by the larger culture that surrounds us and can take many different forms including: prejudice towards others of a different race; internalized oppression — the negative beliefs about oneself by people of color; or internalized privilege — beliefs about superiority or entitlement by white people.

INTERPERSONAL RACISM: This is the form of racism that people most often think of — a set of intentionally harmful, extremist actions and behaviors executed by specific persons against other individual people. This is the bias that occurs when individuals interact with others and their personal racial beliefs affect their public interactions.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM: As the name suggests, this form of racism occurs within institutions and reinforces systems of power. It is often more difficult to name or witness because it is more deeply embedded in practices and policies, often presenting as a norm. Institutional racism refers to the discriminatory policies and practices of particular institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.) that routinely cause racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.

INTERSECTIONALITY: Coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, this term describes the ways in which race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identity, “intersect” with one of another, overlap, intersect, and interact, informing the way in which individuals simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives interpersonally and systemically. Intersectionality promotes the idea that aspects of our identity do not work in a silo. Intersectionality, then, provides a basis for understanding how these individual identity markers work with one another.

JUSTICE: The process required to move us from an unfair, unequal, or inequitable state to one which is fair,

equal, or equitable, depending on the specific content. Justice is a transformative practice that relies on the entire community to respond to past and current harm when it occurs in society. Through justice, we seek a proactive enforcement of policies, practices, and attitudes that produce equitable access, opportunities, treatment, and outcomes for all regardless of the various identities that one holds.

OPPRESSION: A system of supremacy and discrimination for the benefit of a limited dominant class that perpetuates itself through differential treatment, ideological domination, and institutional control. Oppression reflects the inequitable distribution of current and historical structural and institutional power, where a socially constructed binary of a “dominant group” horde power, wealth, and resources at the detriment of the many. This creates a lack of access, opportunity, safety, security, and resources for non-dominant populations.

OPPORTUNITY GAP: The unequal or inequitable distribution of educational resources and opportunities on the basis of race and/or ethnicity; resources may include staffing, academic supports, social and emotional supports, high-quality curriculum, and other programs. This gap can contribute to or intensify lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for members of affected groups.⁴

PREJUDICE: A preconceived opinion or assumption about something or someone rooted in stereotypes, rather than reason or fact, leading to unfavorable bias or hostility toward another person or group of people. Literally a “prejudgment.”

PRIVILEGE: Societally granted, unearned advantages accorded to some people and not others. Privilege refers to systemic or structural advantages that impact people based on identity factors such as race (white privilege), gender, sex, religion, nationality, dis/ability, sexuality, class, and body type. It can also include level of education and other factors of social capital.

RACIAL DISPARITY: An unequal outcome one racial group experiences as compared to the outcome for another racial group.

RACIAL EQUITY: Closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person’s success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive. This commitment requires a paradigm shift on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.

RACIAL JUSTICE: The proactive process of reinforcing and establishing the cementing of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all individuals and groups impacted by racism. The goal, however, is not only the eradication of racism, but also the presence of deliberate social systems and structures that sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. Also refer to Social Justice; Anti-Racism.

RACIAL MICROAGGRESSION: Commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate or imply hostile or derogatory racial slights and insults toward people of color (e.g. asking a person of color “How did you get your job?” to imply they are not qualified).

RACE: Race is a social —not biological—construct. We understand the term “race” to mean a racial or ethnic group that is generally recognized in society and often by government. When referring to those groups, we often use the terminology “people of color” or “communities of color” (or a name of the specific racial and/or ethnic group) and “white.” We also understand that racial and ethnic categories differ internationally, and that many local communities are international communities. In some societies, ethnic, religious and caste groups are oppressed and racialized. These dynamics can occur even when the oppressed group is numerically in the majority.

RACISM: The systematic subjugation of members of targeted racial groups, who hold less sociopolitical power and/or are racialized as non-white, as means to uphold white supremacy. Racism differs from prejudice, hatred, or discrimination because it requires one racial group to have systematic power and superiority over other groups in society. Often, racism is supported and maintained, both implicitly and explicitly, by institutional structures and policies, cultural norms and values, and individual behaviors.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing harm by having the parties decide together in order to cause fundamental changes in people, relationships, and communities.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: A process, not an outcome, which (1) seeks fair (re)distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities; (2) challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; (3) empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; (4) and builds social solidarity and community capacity for

⁴ LawInsider, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/opportunity-gap>. Accessed 4 November 2021.

collaborative action.

STRUCTURAL RACISM: Distinct but related to institutional racism, structural racism refers to how racial bias among institutions work together — intentionally or not — to disenfranchise people of color and create disparate outcomes. This involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. The effects of structural racism are hard to pinpoint because they are cumulative and pervasive.

SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION: The ways in which history, culture, ideology, public policies, institutional practices, and personal behaviors and beliefs interact to maintain a hierarchy — based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and/or other group identities — that allows the privileges associated with the dominant group and the disadvantages associated with the targeted group to endure and adapt over time.

SYSTEMS REFORM OR SYSTEMS CHANGE: A process designed to address the root causes of social problems and fundamentally alter the components and structures that perpetuate them in public systems (i.e. education system, child welfare system, etc.).

TARGETED UNIVERSALISM: Setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal.

UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN OREGON: For the State of Oregon as a whole (not education-specifically), a 2021 definition of historically and currently underserved communities includes Oregonians who are: Native Americans, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives; Black, Africans, African Americans; Latino/a/x, Hispanic; Asian, Pacific Islanders; Arab/Middle Eastern/North Africans; immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers; undocumented persons, DACA recipients, “Dreamers”; linguistically diverse; people with disabilities; LGBTQ+; aging/older adults; economically disadvantaged; farmworkers, and migrant workers.⁵

UNDERSERVED STUDENTS AND LEARNERS: Students and learners whom education systems have historically failed to support or are currently failing to support sufficiently in the achievement of equitable outcomes. The specific categories of historically and currently underserved groups in the context of postsecondary education and training may vary by the specific outcome measure (for example, the disparities for college access differ from the disparities for college completion). For the HECC, postsecondary education equity will be achieved once one’s identity/identities or demographic group/s—including but not limited to racial/ethnic identity, socio-economic background, dis/ability status, gender, sexual orientation, parental status, veteran status, and geographic origin or location—no longer predict inequitable access to and success in postsecondary education and training.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: The unearned power and advantages that benefit people just by virtue of being white or being perceived as white.

XENOPHOBIA: Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and is a function of white supremacy.

40-40-20 AND ADULT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT GOAL: In 2011, the State of Oregon enacted legislation (ORS 350.014) creating the 40-40-20 educational attainment goal: that by 2025 all Oregonians will hold a high school diploma or equivalent, 40 percent of them will have an associates degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and 40 percent will hold a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree. 40-40-20 means representation of every student in Oregon, including students of color. With legislation effective in 2018, Oregon clarified the 40-40-20 educational goal to focus it strategically on young Oregonians rising through the education system. In 2018, Oregon established a separate goal for the education and training of working adults. Learn more about the [state education goals here](#).

⁵ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging for the State of Oregon, September, 2021, Office of the Governor, page 7. https://www.oregon.gov/das/Docs/DEI_Action_Plan_2021.pdf. Accessed November 2021.