



# HECC STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

**Reporting Period:** Q1, 2026

**Date:** February 9, 2026

Strategies that have been activated since the last Commission report (Nov. 2025), or are in the process of being activated, are **highlighted**.

## Goal 1: Relevance

**Goal Sponsor:** Amy Cox

### Strategy 1: Foster Equitable Workforce Outcomes

**Description:** Prioritize programs and experiences that connect underserved learners with sustainable wages, in-demand careers, and equitable advancement opportunities.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/ Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
1.1	Identify connections and gaps between HECC programs that connect underserved learners to strong employment outcomes and recommendations of the Joint Legislative Task Force for Underrepresented Students Success in Higher Education (JTUSSHE).	Background work complete.	Summary report delayed but underway.	Many JTUSSHE recommendations lack HECC work to support them and implementing them would be costly.	Nearly on track
1.2	Develop graphical reports that show employment/earnings outcomes by major/institution. Develop an approach for sharing	Draft reports for all universities complete.	Community college reports underway.	Compiling reports that show majors, earnings, and group representation concisely and clearly is a good challenge.	Nearly on track



	these reports with institutional leaders.				
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## Strategy 2: Connect Postsecondary Education and Training to Workforce Needs

**Description:** Facilitate and streamline partnerships between employers and postsecondary education and training, prioritizing essential employability and in-demand technical skills.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/ Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
2.1	Establish a common approach to Talent Assessments, including common research questions and framework.	Framework drafted and presented to agency leadership.	Finalization by agency leadership.	Challenge has been identifying questions that are specific enough to be comprehensive but general enough to be useful.	On track
2.2	Create, update, and/or significantly expand access for 1-5 industry-related credentials.	Work is being completed through the three Industry Consortia (IC).	IC Workplans still underway and planned for adoption in Q2 2026 (originally planned for Q1 2026). Each plan will include creating, updating, and/or significantly expanding access to one or more industry-related credentials by Dec. 31, 2026.	Working through the ICs maximizes relevance, buy-in, & probably implementation, as necessary parties are at the table.  These same factors also make decisions & implementation take longer than staff-only work.	Delayed but underway

**Strategy 3: Contribute to Solving Community Problems.**

**Description:** Increase the proportion of postsecondary learners who work to solve public problems and can collaborate across different perspectives and experiences.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/ Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
3.1	A statewide Civic Engagement Hub and Training initiative that connects Oregon’s postsecondary learners to meaningful opportunities for participation in civic life while equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage effectively. The initiative integrates a centralized online resource platform with practical, accessible civic training, ensuring learners can easily find, understand, and take part in civic and community problem-solving activities.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing implications.	Agency leadership decision pending.		
3.2	Developing a statewide series of practical, accessible civic engagement training modules that prepare Oregon’s postsecondary learners to participate meaningfully in public life. Trainings will cover topics such as testifying at public meetings, understanding state and local decision-making processes, participating in elections, and serving on boards and commissions.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing implications.	Agency leadership decision pending.		



## Goal 2: Alignment

**Goal Sponsor:** Jim Pinkard

### Strategy 5: Support Transitions for High School Students, GED Completers, and Adults into Postsecondary Education and Training.

**Description:** In collaboration with partners, establish a shared goal for postsecondary participation and implement practices, programs, and policies to achieve it.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/ Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
5.1	Hold monthly, cross-office learning sessions for HECC staff who work on programs and initiatives that serve adult learners.	Workgroup charter complete.	Workgroup has met three times including yesterday.	Exploring connection between education and workforce to inform attainment goals	On track
5.2	By mid-2026, report on (a) existing ASPIRE activities and impact; (b) steps that ASPIRE has taken during 2025-26 to increase impact on learners despite resource constraints; and (c) 5 year goals for the development of the program. Development of a related 2027-29 POP.	A summary report is complete for sections a and b. Staff have developed a possible POP for 2027-29, that could be considered as part of the Commission's ARB development process.	ASPIRE is completing a strategic plan as part of section c.	None identified.	On track
5.3	A proposal for a state FAFSA completion requirement for high school seniors.	Workgroup member nominations received.	Workgroup to refine options and approach.	None reported.	On track



5.4	A plan for a broad public information campaign that increases awareness about and engagement in postsecondary education. Should include options for a sustained effort, and should emphasize lower-cost, high-visibility campaign options.	Several spring term classes have been identified as potential leads for this work.	Engage college students in collaborative activity.	None reported.	On track
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**Strategy 6: Connect Learning Across the Education Continuum.**

**Description:** Partner with K-12 and postsecondary education and training providers to align standards in support of straightforward transitions, including simplified transfer pathways.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
6.1	Establishment of a transferable lower division block, likely organized around learning outcomes, that satisfies general education requirements at all 24 public institutions.	HECC adopted a succinct transfer vision statement in December.  Transfer Council has reviewed and extensively discussed the proposed work plan for a common	Transfer Council is continuing to meet and provide input on the proposal/charge.	Some Transfer Council members and others have expressed strong concerns about the direction, noting the wide variety in existing university degree requirements including the increasing frequency of upper-division general education.	Somewhat delayed

		general education transfer block.			
6.2	Analysis of HECC outreach efforts, with particular attention to gaps and opportunities.	A workplan was created. Staff have connected internally to review previous agency efforts to avoid duplication.	Next steps are to connect with office directors and others to being collecting data to assess office outreach activity.	A current challenge is defining outreach consistently offices and activities.	On track

### Strategy 7: Strengthen Postsecondary to Employment Transitions.

**Description:** Identify, encourage, and incentivize programs that support education to career transitions.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
7.1	Expand state funding support for community colleges to offer the “Integrated Education and Training” (IET) model that supports adult learners, including those who have not completed high school, with a CTE pathway closely linked to specific occupations/careers.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing needs.	Agency leadership decision pending.		
7.2	<b>Support learners through transition.</b> The WTDB creates a “Best Practices” guide and approach to developing and training college career center	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing needs.	Agency leadership decision pending.		

	staff and students on navigating the public workforce system.				
<b>7.3</b>	<b><i>Create a learner experience, employer training fund.</i></b> Create a fund to provide grants for learners or to reimburse employers for unpaid internships.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing needs.	Agency leadership decision pending.		



## Goal 3: Affordable Access

**Goal Sponsor:** Vacant

### Strategy 8: Grow State Investment in Learners and Institutions.

**Description:** By increasing financial aid for students and support for institutions, target state investments to ensure that low- and middle-income Oregon residents can afford postsecondary education and training.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
8.1	Establish a statutory set-aside from state financial aid appropriations to support emergency aid to students.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing needs.	Agency leadership decision pending.		
8.2	Concentrate state financial aid resources on the Oregon Opportunity Grant in order to help it realize its promise of supporting all students with financial need.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Likely has significant resource and staffing needs.	Agency leadership decision pending.		
8.3	Advocate for the level of state funding that would be required to maintain current services at community colleges and public universities.	Information requests have been sent to colleges/universities as part of 2027-29 budget development process.	Through its F&A Subcommittee, the HECC will determine and prioritize 2027-29 Policy Option Packages (POPs).	Governor's budget instructions may limit the HECC's ability to request new funding.	
8.4	Advocate for increased funding for state financial aid.		Through its F&A Subcommittee, the HECC will determine and prioritize 2027-29 Policy Option Packages (POPs).	Governor's budget instructions may limit the HECC's ability to request new funding.	

**Strategy 9: Help Learners Meet Their Basic Needs.**

**Description:** Increase public investment and coordination of services such as advising, counseling, housing, dependent care, mental health, and food security.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
8.1	Sustain and expand the benefits navigator system at public institutions. Benefits navigators connect learners with basic needs resources to support them in their education and training activities.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Could be considered as part of 2027-29 budget development.	Agency leadership decision pending.		
8.2	Increase funding for the OSAC Student Child Care Grant to the level required to meet or exceed current demand.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Could be considered as part of 2027-29 budget development.	Agency leadership decision pending.		



## Strategy 10: Support Institutional Efficiency

**Description:** Provide incentives and support for public education and training institutions to lower costs and increase quality through innovative models such as shared services and collaborative program delivery.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/ Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
10.1	By June 30, 2026, prepare detailed recommendations to agency leadership for using existing HECC authorities – or proposing new ones – that can expand the utilization of shared administrative services at public universities and community colleges.	Community college shared services project findings were presented to the Commission in December.	Awaiting completion of public university contracts for analyses of options for shared services. Continuing to explore models.	Shared administrative services have potential for modest long-term savings, but likely incur up-front costs and significant institutional friction.	On track
10.2	Prepare detailed recommendations to agency leadership for policy incentives HECC could create (or ask the Legislature to create) for public institutions to work towards shared academic programs.	Options presented to agency leadership in late 2025 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a collaboration innovation fund</li> <li>• Incentivize collaboration via funding formulas</li> <li>• Implement program curtailment notification and coordination</li> <li>• Leverage the program approval process to promote collaboration</li> <li>• Develop a statewide course-sharing platform</li> </ul>	Options will be considered by agency leadership and the Commission, including in connection with the process for developing 2027-29 legislative concepts and policy option packages.	State funding policy is not well-aligned with this goal. Additionally, shared programs require significant institutional time and energy to develop.	On track



## Goal 4: Belonging

**Goal Sponsor:** Julia Pontoni

### Strategy 11: Empower Students

**Description:** Gather and utilize student feedback at the institutional level and the HECC to understand and shape institutional and state policies and initiatives that support belonging.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
11.1	Through partnership with PSU's Oregon Kitchen Table, an analysis of rural, minority, and adult learners' perspectives on belonging, generating actionable insights to strengthen inclusivity and belonging across all Oregon institutions.	Contract with OKT signed in December, staff steering committee is meeting biweekly with OKT, OKT has conducted more than 20 community connector interviews/small group conversations conducted, and drafted engagement survey.	Survey finalized, translated, and launched. OKT coordinates culturally and regionally specific organizing and activities to encourage participation, including participant stipends, outreach materials, etc. OKT drafts mid-project memo with survey and outreach results.	Getting all steering committee members to the meetings (sickness, vacations, conflicts, etc.)	Delayed – analysis to be completed September 30, 2026



**Strategy 13: Connect Learners to College and Career Pathways.**

**Description:** Build learners’ awareness and connection through clearly communicated pathways and career opportunities that are linked to their interests.

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Work Completed</b>	<b>Work Underway/Next Steps</b>	<b>Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>13.1</b>	HECC should lead development of a statewide 'Belonging through Pathways' Hub, comprising: (1) a digital platform that centralizes college and career pathway information and allows learners to explore options and next steps, and (2) a human navigation infrastructure that connects learners to knowledgeable advisors, counselors, and community connectors.	Proposed. Under evaluation. Could be considered as part of 2027-29 budget development.	Agency leadership decision pending.		



## Goal 5: Leadership

**Goal Sponsor:** Tom Riel

### Strategy 16: Identify and Respond to Partner Needs

**Description:** Work with industry, education, labor, and community partners to identify barriers to equitable access and completion of postsecondary education and to inform recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies that are equitable and supportive of a diverse workforce.

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
16.1	Develop the policy framework for a “Workforce Innovation Support Fund” to be reflected in a potential 2027 POP/LC that would allow the State of Oregon, through its partners, to rapidly respond to specific workforce training needs. Consider lessons from Workforce Readiness Grants, OWI / LWDB funding, and the Governor’s continuing workforce priorities.	Staff team has been established.  Staff have developed a possible 2027-29 POP to be considered as part of the Commission’s ARB development process.	Through its F&A Subcommittee, the HECC will determine and prioritize 2027-29 Policy Option Packages (POPs).	The POP would help to fund a review of existing workforce funds, grants, and programs.	On track..

### Strategy 17: Support Business Recruitment and Retention

**Description:** Collaborate with federal, state, and local economic development agencies to ensure postsecondary education and training are contributing to business recruitment and retention.

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Work Completed</b>	<b>Work Underway/Next Steps</b>	<b>Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs</b>	<b>Status</b>
17.1	Establish a HECC position that will serve as the agency’s liaison to Business Oregon and other economic development agencies.	<p>Celia Nunez has been tapped to initially define this role.</p> <p>We have clarified the purpose, scope, and value proposition for an Economic &amp; Workforce Alignment function at HECC, articulating how the agency can leverage its statutory authority, coordinating role, and existing policy and funding levers to equitably connect postsecondary education and training with statewide and regional economic development in support of talent pipelines, business recruitment and retention, and industry-aligned workforce needs.</p>	<p>Completion of an initial landscape and alignment review across HECC, workforce partners, state agencies, economic development organizations, and regional and institutional partners, documenting current activities and key point of contact.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with workforce and economic development partners continues, including direct coordination with Business Oregon.</p>	<p>Early success includes strengthened coordination and renewed engagement with workforce and economic development partners, along with improved clarity around where postsecondary education and training intersect with statewide and regional economic development priorities. Key learning highlights the value of a centralized, statewide coordination function to align partners and respond effectively to business and industry needs. A primary challenge is the current budget environment which may not allow for the creation of a new position. Ongoing needs to include sustained partners engagement, clear role definition, and identification of resources to support this work overtime.</p>	On track.



## Other New Strategic Activity (Cross-Goal, Cross-Strategy)

**Sponsor:** Ben Cannon

Action Item	Description	Work Completed	Work Underway/Next Steps	Successes/Learnings Challenges/Needs	Status
0.1	Develop and advance new state statutory goals for postsecondary education and training.	A steering committee that includes legislators, community leaders, college/university presidents, and employer representatives has met twice and provided direction about the purpose for an update state goal(s).	Planning is underway for the committee's third meeting later this month. The committee will begin to review options for how an updated goal.	Methodological challenges are likely to emerge as we attempt to develop a goal that is also measurable. "Value" of credentials is likely to be a focus. How to measure this, outside of wages?	On track.
0.2	Determine which short-term credential programs will qualify for the new Workforce Pell Grant	<p>Intra-agency working group established and monthly meetings occurring.</p> <p>Analysis of draft federal regulations completed.</p> <p>Orientation presentations delivered to HECC and WTDB Executive Committee.</p> <p>Talent Assessment project initiated (will include key definitions for WF Pell).</p>	<p>First meeting with community college liaisons group.</p> <p>Draft definitions for eligibility criteria presented to WTDB at 3/13/2026 meeting</p> <p>Ongoing work to develop program approval portal</p> <p>Analysis of final regulations (still waiting for ED to</p>	<p>Lack of final regulations from ED.</p> <p>Undefined process for states to submit state approved programs to ED.</p> <p>Undefined reporting requirements for state to ED.</p> <p>Poor completion data for private career schools will make it difficult in the short-term for these schools to participate.</p>	On track.

		<p>Accepted into National Governor’s Association Policy Academy on Workforce Pell.</p> <p>Initiated IT:OWI staff workgroup to begin development of program approval portal.</p> <p>Identified participants in community college liaisons group.</p> <p>R&amp;D, OWI, and PCS met to discuss challenges with PCS data and opportunities for improvement.</p>	<p>post final draft regs for public comment).</p>	<p>In a few years we will need to know the occupation of program completers and do not currently have these data.</p>	
<b>0.3</b>	<p>Consider potential realignment of HECC agency structure to better support Strategic Plan implementation and cross-sector activity.</p>	<p>Exec. Dir. and Deputy have shared a preliminary concept for realignment with Executive Team.</p>	<p>Executive Team is providing feedback; potential announcement in early March; implementation steps to follow over next 6-12 months.</p>	<p>Strong buy-in from agency leadership for this re-evaluation of structure. Culture matters more than structure.</p>	<p>On track.</p>