

Questions and Answers for Students and Families - Federal Lawsuit on Tuition Equity and State Financial Aid

Last updated September 17, 2026

What is happening?

In August 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit challenging the eligibility of students who are not “lawfully present” under Oregon’s tuition equity law. Oregon law allows certain students, including non-citizens who meet program requirements, to pay in-state tuition and access state financial aid.

Will this affect my tuition or financial aid this year?

No. Nothing changes for now. Oregon’s law remains in effect, and students currently benefitting from in-state tuition or state aid, including the Oregon Opportunity Grant and Oregon Promise Grant, will not have these benefits interrupted as a result of this lawsuit.

Who does the lawsuit challenge?

The lawsuit challenges Oregon’s tuition equity law itself. It does not challenge in-state tuition or grants for noncitizens who are lawfully present in the United States. It does not name or target individual students or families.

Am I as a student personally being investigated?

No. This lawsuit challenges a state policy. It is not a case against individual students. Being a recipient of in-state tuition or financial aid does not mean you are personally involved in this litigation in any way. No student’s individual status is being reviewed as part of this case.

As a student, do I need a lawyer to defend me in this lawsuit?

No. No students are named as defendants. The Oregon Department of Justice will vigorously defend the law on behalf of the state and the HECC. The universities and colleges named as defendants will also have to defend the case.

What happens next?

The Oregon Department of Justice will defend this law in court. Legal cases like this take time before the Court makes a decision – typically many months or even years. Nothing changes until a court actually rules and any ruling takes effect. The HECC and the Oregon Department of Justice will share updates as the case develops.

What should I do right now?

Keep doing what you're already doing: enroll, apply for financial aid, and continue your education as planned.

If you have questions about your specific tuition or aid status, contact your school's financial aid office directly. If you have questions about applying for state grant programs such as the OOG or Oregon Promise, see the OregonStudentAid.gov website or contact the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion at HECC.OSAC@hecc.oregon.gov.