

Government to Government Tribal Education Update

August 2025

Higher Education Coordinating Commission - Quarter Three Updates

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) honors the sovereignty of Oregon's Tribes and seeks to collaborate on all postsecondary initiatives that may have an impact on their communities. In this quarterly agency report to the Government to Government Tribal Education Cluster, we report on our ongoing work and new initiatives to support Oregon learners and communities. Tribal partners can find previous quarterly updates, as well as other information on work and initiatives, in the [Coordination with Tribes section](#) of our website.

MONITORING FEDERAL CHANGES

Many of our partners have questions about the federal administration changes and the postsecondary landscape. While we assess the potential impact of federal directives, HECC remains committed to our mission to advance equitable access and success in postsecondary education and training, meet workforce needs, and strengthen Oregon's collective future. We have a web page where partners can keep informed on [HECC's work in relation to federal changes](#).

OREGON STUDENT TRIBAL GRANT APPLICATION - APPLY NOW

Please note that due to record-breaking applicant numbers, the 2025-26 application for the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant](#) will be closing on Monday, September 29. The application is currently open, and **HECC encourages students who plan to attend anytime in the 2025-2026 academic year to apply now**. See more updates on this program on page three.

About the Higher Education Coordinating Commission

About Our Work: *The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is a state commission and agency working to drive postsecondary access and success for all Oregonians, meet workforce needs, and strengthen Oregon's collective future. The HECC envisions a future where all people benefit from the economic, civic, and cultural impact of high-quality postsecondary education, training, and workforce development. Learn more at www.oregon.gov/highered.*

Contacts: **Ben Cannon**, Executive Director; **Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom**, Tribal Liaison, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access, rudyane.rivera-lindstrom@hecc.oregon.gov, 503-689-4309. To sign up for other updates and newsletters, [join our mailing list](#).

Upcoming Meetings: Higher Education Coordinating Commission Public Meeting: October 8-9, 2025. For other upcoming public meetings of the HECC and affiliated boards (WTDB, others), [see our website here](#). For email notices of upcoming public meetings, [join our mailing list](#).

Funding Opportunities: See [Grant and Contract Opportunities](#).

HECC LAUNCHES ACTIVITIES DRIVEN BY ITS NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The HECC's [Strategic Plan, adopted in October 2024](#), describes the vision, mission, goals, and strategies that the Commission intends to guide its work over the next three to five years. At its August public meeting, the Commission reviewed [an initial set of new activity that the agency plans to initiate in 2025-2026 toward these goals](#). In addition to the work on goals, the HECC will consider embarking on a collaborative process to develop new state goals for postsecondary education and training that could be recommended to the Legislature in 2027. This initial list of actions focuses on new or changed activity, and it is intended to build upon activities already underway at HECC that are aligned with the HECC's strategic goals.

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION OUTCOMES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

Oregon maintained a largely Current Service Level (CSL) postsecondary budget for 2025-27, while featured bills expanded access to some postsecondary programs. Thank you to all who engaged with the HECC on the needs of Oregon learners during the 2025 legislative session. We are pleased to share summaries of key budget and policy outcomes from the recently concluded legislative session.

- The [Fact Sheet on the HECC 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget \(LAB\)](#) provides a short overview of budget outcomes.
- The [2025 Legislative Session Summary](#) summarizes the budget in more detail and describes outcomes of 26 legislative bills pertaining to the postsecondary education and workforce system, as well as some upcoming implementation steps.

The HECC 2025-27 Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB)—which includes funding for Oregon's public institutions, local workforce development boards, student financial aid programs, and more—totals \$4.4 billion; this is an increase of 5.5 percent from the 2023-25 Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB). The largest funds in the HECC budget are the operating funds for the institutions and the state's largest financial aid program.

- The Community College and Public University Support Funds are funded at CSL, or \$870.4 million and \$1,079.9 million (\$1.08 billion), respectively.
- The state's need-based financial aid program, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, is funded at CSL, or \$329.4 million.
- The Oregon Tribal Student Grant is also funded at CSL, which is \$26 million.

In addition to the institution support funds, the 2025-27 LAB retains dedicated funding for institution benefit navigators at the 17 community colleges and seven public universities at CSL, which is \$5.6 million.

The LAB also includes \$449.4 million in bonding authority for public university capital construction projects, including projects at PSU, UO, SOU, and WOU, in addition to \$35.9 million for community college capital projects. This includes new projects at Clackamas CC, Klamath CC, and Mt. Hood CC, and reauthorized projects at Clatsop CC and Southwestern Oregon CC.

Among other legislative outcomes, the following policy developments expanded access to financial aid and college admissions programs in Oregon.

- [Oregon Opportunity Grant](#): For the first time, learners enrolled in certificate programs at Oregon public institutions and eligible private, nonprofit institutions will be able to receive an Oregon Opportunity Grant, following agency rulemaking to conclude no later than in time for 2027-2028 academic year awards. Those enrolled at $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ time may also be eligible to receive the grant, allowing more flexibility for learners ([HB 3025](#)).
- [Direct Admissions Program](#): The [Direct Admissions program](#) was expanded to include eligible private, nonprofit institutions. Oregon high schoolers who meet specific academic standards will now be automatically notified of their admission to many Oregon-based private, nonprofit institutions in addition to Oregon's public colleges and universities ([HB 2421](#)).

Supporting Affordable Access

OREGON TRIBAL STUDENT GRANT UPDATES

Apply Now for 2025-2026. The 2025-26 application for the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant](#) (OTSG) is currently open, and HECC encourages students who plan to attend anytime in the 2025-2026 academic year to apply now. The 2025-26 application is closing on Monday, September 29. This is due to another year of record-breaking applicant numbers for its fourth year in a row, with almost 900 students applying by the end of August 2025.

The HECC has seen growing participation in the OTSG in its first three years, and we are very glad to see the growth trend continue into future academic years. The OTSG, first launched in 2022 and codified in statute in 2023, bolsters the opportunity for tribal members to achieve their postsecondary education goals, whether they have just graduated from high school or are adults wanting to start or return to college. In the first two years alone, 215 grantees earned credentials at community colleges and public universities. For the 2023-24 school year, the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) awarded 501 OTSG recipients, compared to 412 students for the 2022-2023 academic year (the pilot year). For the 2024-25 aid year, OSAC has advanced funds to 616 OTSG recipients enrolled at Oregon institutions.

To date, the OTSG has served students pursuing all levels of postsecondary education, including certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's, masters, PhDs, MDs and JDs. To be eligible for the program, students must be an enrolled member in one of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon. Students must also be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an Oregon-based college or university and complete a valid FAFSA or ORSAA. Additional eligibility information can be found on the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant web page](#).

OTHER STATE FINANCIAL AID AND AFFORDABILITY UPDATES

FAFSA/ORSAA: To be eligible for most types of financial aid, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA). Resources on financial aid form completion can be found using the links below.

- [OSAC: Introducing FAFSA/ORSAA](#)
- [OSAC: FAFSA and ORSAA Information](#)
- [Federal Student Aid FAFSA page](#)

OSAC Scholarships: Students can explore more than 600 scholarships through the [OSAC Scholarship Application](#). The application is open November to March each year.

Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program: The 2025-2026 Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program application is now open. Visit our application eligibility requirements and submit an application.

Oregon Promise Grant: Visit the [Oregon Promise Grant here](#) for all information on eligibility and applications, including an FAQ. For new applicants this year (Class of 2025), OSAC has set a Student Aid Index (SAI) limit of 18,000 for eligibility due to available funds and high numbers of eligible applicants.

Tribal Access to Oregon Tuition and Fee Waiver: HECC-OSAC continues to be available to ensure eligible tribal foster youth and youth experiencing houselessness have access to the Oregon Tuition and Fee Waiver program. The Tuition and Fee Waiver ensures remaining tuition and fees are waived after other public grants and any school aid are applied. Eligible students can start receiving the waiver for the equivalent of four years of undergraduate studies

until they turn 25. Learn more about eligibility at www.oregonstudentaid.gov. OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any tribal staff help eligible young people receive the waiver. Please contact Anne.Shearer@hecc.oregon.gov.

OSAC OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

OSAC offers the FAFSA Plus+ program for schools, community-based organizations, and other sites that work with a specific student population. Becoming a FAFSA Plus+ site allows an organization to upload a roster of students and then be able to see the FAFSA filing status for those students. Learn more and [sign up to become a FAFSA Plus+ site for free](#).

OSAC continues our outreach and presentations across the state. Go online to [request support](#) from OSAC at an upcoming event or in a classroom, or to provide training to your students and communities. OSAC outreach is available to students, families, and career/college access staff across Oregon to provide support and guidance. [You can also sign up to receive our e-newsletters here](#).

- Free Publications and Posters: Order or download free posters and brochures here, including the OSAC Poster—a quick reminder for students to apply for financial aid, including the FAFSA/ORSAA, grants, and scholarships. English and Spanish versions are available.
- Webinars: OSAC hosts a variety of webinars throughout the year for students, parents, and career/college practitioners. Our webinars provide up-to-date information about programs we administer.

ASPIRE PROGRAM, ASPIRE FALL CONFERENCE

ASPIRE Program: The ASPIRE program helps educate Oregon students to become career and college ready. ASPIRE offers education, resources, and mentoring opportunities for all students. Student supports include 1:1 and group mentoring, activities that focus on career exploration, career and college research, admissions applications, scholarships, and financial aid. Tribes are welcome to join ASPIRE. [Learn more here](#).

ASPIRE Fall Conference: We are excited to announce that the ASPIRE Fall Conference will take place on October 3, 2025, at Chemeketa Community College's main campus in Salem, Oregon. This year's conference will feature a dynamic lineup of workshops addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities in the field of Career and College Readiness (CCR). Topics include: the changing CCR landscape in Oregon, supporting trade pathways and career exploration, strategies for serving underserved student populations, and more. [Registration is open here](#).

Fostering Learner Pathways and Equitable Opportunity

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ACTIONS

At recent public meetings (June 12, 2025, August 14, 2025), the HECC **approved the following new academic programs** and/or new program locations at the public community colleges and universities. View details in Commission materials [here](#).

Community College Program Approvals:

- Blue Mountain CC: Medical Assisting, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC0)
- Central Oregon CC: Behavioral Health and Early Learning Less Than One Year Certificate (CC)
- Chemeketa CC Fire Prevention Community Risk Reduction, Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

- Clackamas CC: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technology, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC0); Emergency Management Professional, AAS
- Lane CC: Behavioral Health, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC0)
- Southwestern Oregon CC: Diesel Technology, AAS; CIS Digital Design, AAS; Emergency Services, AAS
- Treasure Valley CC: Practical Nurse, One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC1); Surgical Technologist, AAS
- Umpqua CC: Emergency Services, AAS; Fire Science, AAS; Paramedicine, One Year Certificate of Completion (CC1)

Public University Programs:

- Eastern Oregon University: Master of Arts in Educational Leadership (MA)
- Oregon Institute of Technology: Bachelor of Science in Allied Health (BS)
- Portland State University: BS in Linguistics and Computer Science

At a recent public meeting (June 12, 2025), the HECC commission also reviewed **Notifications of Statements of Need for the following Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) programs** at the Oregon community colleges. **This submission is Phase One of a three phase process.** View details in the [Commission materials here.](#)

- Notifications of Statements of Need: Chemeketa CC: Education, Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS); Columbia Gorge CC: Education, BAS; Klamath CC: Business Management – Salon Emphasis, BAS; Linn-Benton CC: Education, BAS; Rogue CC: Education, BAS; Treasure Valley CC: Education, BAS

DIRECT ADMISSIONS

The HECC is working with K-12, community college and university partners on direct admissions, a recent state initiative to make the college admissions process more accessible for students. In 2024, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 1552 requiring HECC to establish a direct admissions program with all Oregon public higher education institutions. In addition to the ongoing planning for this program, HECC has worked with a communications contractor and partners to establish the name and design branding identity for this statewide program. [Learn more about the initiative status here.](#)

RESOURCES RELATED TO PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The HECC Office of Academic Policy and Authorization would like to share several resources related to private postsecondary education. Please note that HECC has a [consumer alerts page here](#) where we announce any school closures or regulatory changes with regard to licensed and authorized schools. We also have webpages where we [list all authorized private degree granting institutions](#) and [all licensed private career schools](#). [list all authorized private degree granting institutions](#) and [all licensed private career schools](#).

Both offices are regulatory in nature but also have a focus on consumer protection. If students have complaints, more information can be found at our [student complaints webpage here](#). They can also reach out to: 503-400-4759 or HECC.Complaints@hecc.oregon.gov. If students have any questions about private institutions in Oregon, they can reach out to: 503-947-5716 or info.pps@hecc.oregon.gov.

TRANSFER UPDATE

Major Transfer Maps (MTM) and Common Course Numbering (CCN) Approvals: The HECC and public institutions, through the Transfer Council, are working together to [streamline the transfer of credits](#) between Oregon's 17 community colleges and seven public universities. We are pleased to announce the recent approval of **two new Major Transfer Maps** in Elementary Education and Psychology. We are also pleased to announce **three new courses approved for Common Course Numbering** in History. With the recent approvals, Oregon now has 8 major-specific transfer degrees and 40 lower division courses that are aligned and approved for Common Course Numbering to help students transfer credits.

- Institutions can find details on all these agreements, including effective dates and catalog requirements, on our [MTM web page](#) and [CCN web page](#).
- Students can learn how to take advantage of active agreements under [Tools for Transfer here](#). Students can easily identify available CCN courses in catalogs because they all end in a Z.

Transfer Initiative Director: Making the Oregon transfer system simpler for students is a top priority for the agency. We are pleased to report that the HECC hired Dr. Leigh Graziano to serve as the new Transfer Initiatives Director, reporting to the executive director of the HECC. Dr. Graziano, who previously served as a transfer policy specialist for the agency, began leading the transfer team in July 2025 and will be working to ensure that Oregon's policies and the Transfer Council are focused on making systemic changes that benefit students.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CORPS

OregonServes, in the HECC Office of Workforce Investments, has received a 30-month, \$500,000 grant for work to help strengthen Oregon's mental health workforce by creating clear entry points into behavioral health careers. It will provide young adults with practical experience and certifications, preparing them to serve and support underserved communities facing behavioral and mental health challenges across the state. Tribal leaders who are interested to learn more about this innovative initiative can contact OregonServes' Youth Mental Health Corps coordinator, Madeline Seghers, at madeline.seghers@hecc.oregon.gov

OREGON CAMPUS SEXUAL MISCONDUCT SURVEY

We are pleased to announce that the Sexual Misconduct Survey Council has completed its legislative charge to develop [the base 2025 Oregon Campus Sexual Misconduct Survey](#) and [implementation recommendations](#), which will be distributed to Oregon colleges and universities in September. Oregon institutions will have two years to administer the survey to their students for the first time. Students who have experienced sexual misconduct—sexual and gender-based harassment, relationship abuse, sexual violence, and other forms of sexual exploitation—often struggle to continue their academic careers. To learn about their experiences, Oregon passed legislation in 2023 that requires institutions of higher education to biennially conduct a campus sexual misconduct climate survey. [Read more in our recent newsletter.](#)

Responding to Workforce and Community Needs

OREGON AWARDED \$5.8 MILLION IN FEDERAL GRANTS TO SUPPORT REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

The HECC announced recently that Oregon has been awarded a total of approximately \$5.8 million in federal grants from the United States Department of Labor (DOL) through the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula 3 (SAEF 3) Grant. With this funding, the HECC will support expanding registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in early learning and care, K-12 education, and behavioral health careers. [Read our press release here.](#)

INDUSTRY CONSORTIA

The HECC's Industry Consortia are gearing up for their fourth-quarter public meetings of 2025. These meetings will be held in person in the Portland/Salem area with the option to listen online. Everyone is welcome to attend, as all quarterly meetings are open to the public. Subscribe to HECC's [Industry Consortia public meeting notices](#) for the latest updates on meeting materials, times, and locations. Beginning last fall, Industry Consortia have participated in informing the development of occupation and wage profiles for high-skill, high-wage, high-demand jobs in Oregon's healthcare, manufacturing, and technology sectors. Prepared by HECC staff in collaboration with the Oregon Employment Department, the profiles fulfill expectations of HECC's Industry Consortia detailed in [House Bill 3306 \(2023\)](#). The final versions will be posted on the HECC's [Industry Consortia web page](#) later this fall.

OREGON'S MARITIME WORKFORCE GRANT

In 2023, Oregon's maritime industry gained momentum with the launch of the Maritime Workforce Grant, funded through House Bill 3410 (2023). The initiative, implemented by the HECC Office of Workforce Investments, supports grantees that provide hands-on training, expand awareness of maritime careers, and invest in infrastructure to strengthen local coastal economies. Since its inception in 2023, this biennial grant has awarded over \$1.8 million in funding to six local workforce development areas with the highest percentage of maritime jobs. [Read more in our recent newsletter.](#)

PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENTS FOR REENGAGEMENT/WORKFORCE TRAINING

Oregon Youth Works, housed in the HECC, and Youth Development Oregon (YDO) recently announced the official Partnership for Tribal Workforce and Reengagement. The partnership is coordinated through an Interagency Agreement, which established a path for HECC/YDO to partner with Tribal Sovereign Nations. Tribes opting to partner will be able to access over one million dollars invested across the nine Federally Recognized Tribal Nations in Oregon for the 2025-2027 biennium. Staff at HECC/YDO continue to work directly with contacts to develop agreements and support the partnership. Tribes interested that are not yet in conversations are welcome to connect. Primary Contact: Jeremy Ahola. Call or Text: 503-689-6662. Work email: Jeremy.w.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov.

YOUTH CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES ON PUBLIC LANDS

HECC's Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) funding was extended for the 2025-2027 biennium. HECC will continue working with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and will be expanding OCC work to partnerships with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and Burns Paiute Tribe. Tribes will use these funds to reduce fire fuels mitigation, create fire-adapted communities, and train the land managers of tomorrow (ages 16-26 years old). This partnership enables Tribes to provide additional wraparound supports to their youth, eliminate costly barriers around protective equipment and

transportation, and build up their own internal workforce by hiring young people directly from their communities. Primary Contact: Hillary Blackstone. Email: Hillary.BLACKSTONE@hecc.oregon.gov.

New Reports and Other Updates

NEW STUDY EXAMINES OREGON'S TEACHER WORKFORCE

The Oregon Longitudinal Data Collaborative (OLDC) is pleased to publish the [Oregon Teacher Workforce Study](#), a new research study that explores preparation, hiring, and retention of teachers in Oregon public K-12 schools. Connecting disparate sources of Oregon data on educators for the first time--from the Oregon Department of Education, the HECC, and the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission--this study examines data related to geography, training, and demographics in relation to transition points in educators' careers. This new analysis of the teacher workforce describes the educator pathway from high school, through college educator preparation programs (EPPs), and on to public school employment in Oregon.

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY EVALUATIONS

The HECC has released its [public university evaluations for 2024](#). You can find the reports for each of the evaluated institutions linked here: [University of Oregon](#), [Oregon State University](#), and [Portland State University](#). Under ORS 352.061, the HECC is required to evaluate each public university every two years. This year's evaluations highlight the significant contributions UO, OSU, and PSU make to the State of Oregon and to their communities. They explore recent trends in student enrollment, completion, access, and affordability, and measure the universities' performance against a set of established financial metrics.

FORESTRY WORKFORCE STUDY

The HECC has released the [study on Oregon's Forest Operations and Management Workforce](#) required by SB 1552 (2024). The report explores the community benefits of forest operations and management for Oregon, provides data on the composition of, and challenges facing, the forestry workforce today, and describes current workforce and training pathways into the forestry sector from K-12 schools through Career Technical Education (CTE), apprenticeship programs, undergraduate and graduate training programs.

COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT

The HECC has released its [annual report on Competency Based Education, available here](#). Competency Based Education prioritizes postsecondary students' mastery of essential skills, allowing learners to progress through academic programs by demonstrating competency of specific, workforce-relevant skills. Though implementation in Oregon has been limited so far, targeted work has shown promise that this approach can provide flexible pathways to certificates and degrees in high-demand fields, particularly for adult learners, who bring significant prior learning and job experience into the classroom.

OTHER HECC NEWS

- [HECC Collaborations, August 2025 - 2025 Legislative Outcomes and New Strategies to Drive Opportunity](#)
- [Future Ready Oregon Update - July 2025](#)
- [Subscribe to other HECC newsletters or update your subscription preferences here.](#)