



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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May Agency Update:

May 2025 | Tribal partners can find previous quarterly Government-to-Government updates as well as other information on work and initiatives in the [Coordination with Tribes](#) section of our website. We are pleased to report on our ongoing work and new initiatives to support Oregon learners and communities.

Affirming the Values and Principles of Postsecondary Education: In a recent agency newsletter, Executive Director Ben Cannon spoke to the enduring principles undergirding higher education and workforce training. [Read his full message here.](#)

Monitoring Federal Changes: Our mission at the HECC is anchored in the belief that every learner matters and deserves access to a wide range of postsecondary opportunities through community colleges, universities, career schools, apprenticeships, and workforce training programs. Many of our partners have questions about the federal administration changes and the postsecondary landscape. We now have a web page where you can keep informed on [HECC's work in relation to federal changes](#).

Our Commission

OUR VISION:

The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (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 about our vision here.](#) The HECC's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan charts a path forward toward this vision through goals and strategies.

The HECC is the State of Oregon's Commission and agency working to advance equitable access and success in postsecondary education and training, meet workforce needs, and strengthen Oregon's collective future. Established in 2013, the HECC is a volunteer commission responsible for advising the Oregon Legislature and the Governor on higher education policy. The Commission is supported by an executive director who oversees eight offices of the agency. To learn more about the HECC, go to: <https://www.oregon.gov/highered>
[Sign up for newsletters and updates here.](#)

Upcoming Meetings

Higher Education Coordinating Commission,

June 11: HECC Funding and Achievement Subcommittee meeting.

June 12: Full HECC Commission meeting.

For other [upcoming public meetings of the HECC, see our website here.](#) For [Affiliated Boards \(WTDB, others, see here\)](#). For email notices of upcoming public meetings, or to sign up for our newsletter, go to www.oregon.gov/HigherEd.

Funding Opportunities

Explore HECC [Grants and Contracting Opportunities here.](#)

- We are steadfast in our focus on better serving underrepresented populations, driven by longstanding state education goals. The HECC's commitment to equitable opportunity in postsecondary education and training has been woven into the agency's policies, programs, and processes since the founding of HECC as a state agency in 2013. Our agency work is driven by Oregon's state educational and training goals that commit us to better serving underrepresented populations.
- We serve Oregon. As we navigate federal changes, Oregon, as a state with specific rights, responsibilities, and values expressed in our laws, must continue to serve Oregonians with empathy and care. We are committed to fostering belonging and wellbeing for all students and learners.
- We will communicate what we know. Our assessment of each executive order or directive impacting our programs is ongoing. As we have factual information that we can present with clarity, we share it in a timely manner on our website page focused on federal monitoring, and in other communications.

Oregon Tribal Student Grant Communications: Three Years in, Oregon's historic investment in the Oregon Tribal Student Grant is changing lives. Many thanks to all who have been working with HECC to share stories about the positive impact of the OTSG. In a recent press release, the HECC reported growing participation in the Oregon Tribal Student Grant (OTSG) since the historic launch of this new state program three years ago. It was an honor to interview tribal students and community members for this release and we appreciate all who shared their stories and insights. Launched in 2022, the Tribal Grant is opening doors to postsecondary degrees and certificates for hundreds of students from Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. We are proud to have shared with the public these powerful stories and information about the positive outcomes and we look forward to continuing to tell this story. Please feel free to share HECC news:

- Read the HECC press release | Read the HECC release on the State of Oregon My Oregon News website (a more easily sharable format)
- Read the full expanded student stories of the grantees featured on the HECC website: Alexa Burgess, Jacob Olson, Jaylin Hardin, and Mark Petrie

Other reporting on the Tribal Grant:

- Read the recent OPB article on the Tribal Grant
- Read the OSU interview with Jacob Olson, one of the student grantees that HECC also interviewed for the release

2025 Legislative Session: The HECC is actively involved in the legislative session. You can keep informed about the HECC's legislative engagement, including agency testimony and presentations, on our legislative resources web page here. The HECC is responsible for providing factual, up-to-date information to help legislators make well-informed decisions about higher education and workforce development policy and funding.

HECC Budget Presentations Emphasize the Return on Investment for Higher Education and Workforce Training: One key role of the HECC is to present on the comprehensive funding needs for the postsecondary education and workforce system and the impact of the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) for this system. **We are pleased to share materials from the HECC presentation to the Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education on the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) for higher education and training in Oregon.** Over six hearings, HECC agency leaders shared data and findings about the benefits to Oregon and Oregonians of investing in postsecondary education, and these were followed by numerous hearings for partner presentations and public testimony. We thank our many partners, students, and learners who joined us in engaging legislators on the funding needs of the many types of higher education and workforce programs statewide, including those who joined for public testimony. Among the many who shared powerful stories about the impact of state programs during public testimony, we recognize and thank

the students from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who traveled to Salem and testified in support of the state's investment in the Oregon Tribal Student Grant.

The [HECC presentations](#) emphasized the critical importance of state investment in ensuring equitable opportunity for Oregonians and thriving communities for Oregon. You can view the full set of HECC slides below:

- [HECC Budget Presentations, Days 1-3](#) (March 31, April 1, and April 2)
- [HECC Budget Presentations, Days 4-7](#) (April 3, April 7, April 8, and April 23)

The budget presentations emphasized ways in which **state investments drive equitable access and success for all Oregonians, foster economic mobility and a strong economy, support college affordability, and support core operating funds for Oregon's public institutions.**

Legislative Updates: In addition to presenting on funding for 2025-2027, HECC employees also track and analyze hundreds of bills that pertain to the postsecondary education and workforce system so that we can serve as a resource to inform decisions. Bills we are actively tracking include [HB 3025](#), a HECC-sponsored bill modifying certain aspects of the Oregon Opportunity Grant; [HB 3634](#), creating a new Water Workforce Program at HECC; [SB 772](#), establishing the Indian Health Scholarship Program at Oregon Health Sciences University; [HB 3528](#), appropriating funds for water-related research at Portland State University's Institute for Tribal Government; and [HB 2069](#), establishing a statewide taskforce on tribal consultation, among many others.

The HECC also submits numerous statutorily required reports to the Legislature, available on our website here. HECC representatives are regularly invited to present to legislative committees on numerous topics. In Oregon, legislative hearings are available to watch by video, and recordings are also made available afterward. Key links:

- [HECC's Legislative Resources Page](#)
- [State of Oregon Links: Oregon Legislature | Oregon Legislative Information System | Legislative Audio and Video](#)

Affordability and Financial Aid News

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

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](#)
 - [OSAC: Updates on Recent FAFSA and ORSAA Changes](#)
- [Federal Student Aid FAFSA page](#)

Oregon Tribal Student Grant: The 2025-26 application opened on February 26, 2025. By opening the application much earlier than prior years, eligible applicants have an earlier window to apply, OSAC will begin reviewing awards earlier guiding institutions with information to process aid packages to students for 2025-26.

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. 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. For the 2023-24 school year the 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. An annual increase by about 100 recipients each year will keep compounding costs and demand in future years.

Given the growth rate in OTSG this biennium, OSAC forecasted that the OTSG would have a funding shortfall and the HECC has requested \$2.5M from the Oregon Legislature so that the program can continue to operate and not impact authorized applicants and recipients during the 2024-25 school year. To date, the OTSG has served students pursuing all levels of postsecondary education, including certificates, associate degrees, bachelors, masters, PHDs, MDs and JDs. To be eligible for the program students must be an enrolled member of one of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon. Students must also be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an Oregon college or university and complete a valid FAFSA or ORSAA. Additional eligibility information can be found on the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant web page](#). For the 2025-27 biennium, the Governor's recommended budget includes \$28.5 million for the OTSG, which represents an increase of \$2.5 million above our current 2023-25 service level. Because of the steadily rising costs and enrollment, however, we expect that at this funding level HECC/OSAC will need to plan for and establish cost control measures for the first time in the program's history for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 aid years. HECC has informed the legislative leadership that at such funding level, we may need to restrict or eliminate graduate level awards as the first cost control step.

Oregon Promise Grant: Learn about the [Oregon Promise Grant here](#). Deadline varies by graduation date for new students. OSAC has started awarding Oregon Promise grants with tentative eligibility criteria for new applicants due to a high volume of applications. Visit the Oregon Promise webpage for all information on eligibility and applications, including a FAQ. For new applicants (Class of 2025), OSAC has set a tentative Student Aid Index (SAI) limit of 18,000 for eligibility. This means eligible students below the SAI limit are receiving notifications of awards. Students who have an SAI at or above 18,000 are in a PENDING status. In July 2025, a final decision will be made if the SAI limit will be adjusted or finalized, based on total applicants and available funds.

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 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 serve.

Tribal Access to Oregon Tuition and Fee Waiver: HECC-OSAC continues to be available to ensure eligible tribal foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness 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.

ASPIRE Program: The ASPIRE (Access to Student Assistance Programs in Reach of Everyone) 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.](#)

Supporting Learner Pathways, Economic and Community Development, and Student Success

Collaborative Effort Underway to Design a Statewide Direct Admissions Program: 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 been working with a communications contractor and partners to establish the name and design branding identity for this statewide program, including engagement sessions to inform this work. Mariana Zaragoza, staff lead on this initiative, visited La Grande High School recently to get input from students, and HECC has met with direct admissions earl-adopter programs. [Learn more about the initiative status here.](#)

HECC Commission Approves Five Major Transfer Maps: The HECC, community colleges, and public universities continue to work together to expand Major Transfer Maps (MTMs) across Oregon public institutions. MTMs are major-specific transfer degrees that allow students to transfer credits from Oregon community colleges to Oregon public universities if the participating institutions offer programs in the MTM subject area. At its April 10 public meeting, the HECC Commission approved five Major Transfer Maps (MTMs) in Human Development and Family Services, English, Sociology, Biology, and Business. MTMs are one component of the statewide transfer work that HECC leads, catalyzed by the Oregon Legislature in 2017 and 2021 and made possible through faculty collaboration. Oregon's statewide transfer work is helping to save students time and money, reduce barriers to completion, and improve equitable pathways to graduation.

Partnership Investments for Reengagement/Workforce Training: HECC (Oregon Youth Works) and Youth Development Oregon are pleased to announce the official Partnership for Tribal Workforce and Reengagement. This partnership has been established through an Interagency Agreement, which now establishes 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 in the 2025-2027 biennium. Benefits include, reducing processes, aligning multiple strategies, and creating a flexible environment with opportunities to serve an extensive network of youth and young adults within a single agreement. Staff from HECC/YDO are working directly with contacts at each Tribe to provide information specific to agreement development, partnership alignment, and strategies to share information securely and efficiently. Primary Contact: Jeremy Ahola. Call or Text: 503-689-6662. Work email: Jeremy.w.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov.

Participation in Oregon Indian Education Conference: Staff from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission at the start of May attended the annual Oregon Indian Education Association Conference, providing a show of interagency partnership support for the release of the new AI/AN Student Success State Plan. Jeremy Ahola from HECC Office of Workforce Investment contributed to the breakout session (specifically Goal 4, Cultivate Systems of Support), led by Renee Roman Nose, and hosted by the Office of Indian Education. Mariana Zaragoza from HECC Office of Academic Policy and Authorization also represented HECC at the conference, engaging with tribal educators, community leaders, and high-school students on how, once implemented, direct admissions can reduce barriers for Native American students to go to a college and university.

Youth Conservation Opportunities on Public Lands: The “Youth Conservation Opportunities on Public Lands” cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Oregon HECC enables Oregon Youth Works (OYW) to build stronger cooperative Tribal relationships and increase partnerships that center around youth and Tribal-serving organizations in the Burns and Lakeview BLM Districts. HECC will be working with Burns Paiute Tribe, Lake County School District, and Northwest Youth Corps to build meaningful local relationships with the BLM. This collaboration provides work opportunities and education for young participants ages 16-30, inclusive of veterans aged 35 or younger. Project-based work aims to give participants a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education, and training related to the stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Initial projects will focus on improving public recreation sites. Participants receive support services and access to near-peer and adult mentors to keep them engaged in the work; they also develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States. Primary Contact: Hillary Blackstone Email: Hillary.BLACKSTONE@hecc.oregon.gov

Youth Mental Health Corps: OregonServes, in the HECC Office of Workforce Investments, has received a 30-month, \$500,000 grant to 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' YMHC coordinator Madeline Seghers at madeline.seghers@hecc.oregon.gov

Implementation of Future Ready Oregon: The HECC Office of Research and Data has prepared the [third annual report](#) on Future Ready Oregon. This report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the ongoing implementation and impact of all eight Future Ready Oregon programs. The overall findings are positive. In its first two years, Future Ready Oregon served 14,251 participants and offered more than 45,000 services, including workforce education and training and wraparound supports and services. [Learn more about the report and other key findings here.](#)

Future Ready Oregon Industry Consortia: This January, the Healthcare Industry Consortium heard from Advocates for Human Potential (AHP) on key findings from the new [Oregon Behavioral Health Talent Assessment](#) and corresponding [career pathways map](#). Developed by AHP for the HECC, the assessment analyzes behavioral health workforce needs, informs program options that prioritize critical-shortage occupations, and shares recommendations for growing and diversifying the supply and distribution of the behavioral health workforce. In addition, the Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Technology Consortia have reviewed and approved initial sets of sector-specific occupational profiles. The profiles provide a snapshot of typical education pathways, wage data, projected job openings, and key skills for high-wage, in-demand jobs in key industry sectors. Compiled by the HECC using Oregon Employment Department data, the profiles will be published online later this spring. Click here to learn more about HECC’s Industry Consortia and see the upcoming schedule of public meetings.

Modernized Platform for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Opened in May: The HECC is pleased to announce that the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) system, a resource for workforce partners and job seekers, has been launched on a user-friendly, modernized platform. Oregon's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) is a tool for Oregon job-seekers and the WorkSource Oregon partners who support them.

Oregon Selected for National Cohort focused on Advancing Dual Credit: In a recent [announcement from the College in High School Alliance](#), Oregon is one of seven states selected to be part of a national Dual Enrollment Policy Cohort to advance opportunities for Oregon high school students to earn college coursework while in high school. Along with Minnesota, New Mexico, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington, Oregon will work to advance dual enrollment policies that maximize the benefits to students of taking college courses in high school.

Update on GED® Credential Pricing in Oregon: Oregon GED® graduates will see a small update in credential pricing. While the first digital credential will still be emailed free of charge, new rates will apply to printed and duplicate copies. Here’s what to expect: Initial printed copy: \$10 + shipping;

duplicate printed or e-copy: \$18 + shipping (for print) or \$18 flat (for e-copy). This change helps support ongoing processing and delivery services while keeping access to essential documents affordable and flexible for graduates.

Reminder on 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 where we announce any school closures or regulatory changes with regard to licensed and authorized schools: [Higher Education Coordinating Commission : Updates and Consumer Alerts : Institution Authorization and Licensing : State of Oregon](#). We list all authorized private degree granting institutions here: [Higher Education Coordinating Commission : Explore Private Degree-granting Colleges and Universities : Access College & Training : State of Oregon](#). We list all license private career schools here: [Higher Education Coordinating Commission : Explore Private Career Schools : Access College & Training : State of Oregon](#). Both offices are regulatory in nature but also have a focus on [consumer protection](#). If students have complaints more information can be found here: [Higher Education Coordinating Commission : Student Complaints : Access College & Training : State of Oregon](#). Or they can 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 info.pps@hecc.oregon.gov

Academic Program Approvals: At recent public meetings (February 13, April 10, and May 8, 2025), the Higher Education Coordinating Commission 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 Colleges (CCs):

Central Oregon CC - Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN); Photography/Videography, Less Than One Year Certificate (CC0);

User Experience and Interface Design, Less Than One Year Certificate (CC0). Chemeketa CC: Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN).

Clackamas CC - Child Care Specialist Apprenticeship, Less Than One Year Certificate (CC0); Medical Assistant, Less Than One Year Certificate (CC0).

Klamath CC - Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN). Lane CC - Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN); Respiratory Care, Associate of Applied Science (AAS).

Linn-Benton CC - Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN). Mt. Hood CC - Physical Therapist Aide, Less Than One Year Certificate (CC0); Integrated Metals: Advanced Welding Technology, Less Than One-Year Certificate (CC0). Oregon Coast CC - Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN).

Portland CC - Associate Addiction Counselor, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Honda PACT, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Airplane with Flight Instructor, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Airplane without Flight Instructor, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Animation and Motion Graphics, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Cisco Networking Less Than One-Year Certificate (CC0). Treasure Valley CC - Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN).

Public Universities:

Oregon State University - Healthcare Administration, Bachelor of Science (BS); Wood Innovation and Sustainability, Professional Science Master's (PSM); Accountancy, Bachelor of Science (BS); Supply Chain and Logistics Management, Master of Science (MS). Portland State University - Semiconductor Technology, Master of Science (MS). University of Oregon - Material Science and Technology, Bachelor of Science (BS); Historic Preservation, Master of Science (MS) (New Location); School Psychology, Education Specialist Degree (EdS) (New Location, New Program).

New Reports and Other Updates

Oregon Opportunity Grant Improves College Affordability and is Linked to Academic Success, According to Annual Evaluation Report: The HECC annual report evaluating the impact of the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), recently submitted to the Oregon Legislature, illustrates the consistently positive impacts of this need-based grant program. The OOG is Oregon's largest financial aid grant, serving students with demonstrated

financial need. In 2022-2023, more than 36,000 students received an OOG, and a budgetary increase allowed the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) to expand the grant's reach and impact.

New Study Reveals Gaps and Opportunities in Oregon's Behavioral Health Workforce: The HECC has released a new report that identifies pathways for Oregonians to behavioral health careers and evaluates barriers and opportunities for recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse behavioral health workforce. The Oregon Behavioral Health Talent Assessment and corresponding career pathways map were developed for the HECC by Advocates for Human Potential (AHP) and were presented at the Healthcare Industry Consortium's first-quarter public meeting on January 28th.

Open Oregon Educational Resources program: The HECC has released its biennial report on the Open Oregon Educational Resources program (ORS 348.756). Open Oregon Educational Resources (OER) promotes textbook affordability for community college and university students, and facilitates widespread adoption of open, low-cost, high-quality materials.

Oregon Promise Report: The HECC has released its legislative report on the Oregon Promise Grant program (ORS 341.522). The Oregon Promise Grant program covers the average cost tuition for recent Oregon high school graduates and GED® completers.

Reappointed HECC Commissioner: Please join us in welcoming back Helen Edwards, who previously served on the HECC from October 2, 2020, to February 15, 2024. Her new term of service began March 1, 2025. Commissioner Edwards was nominated by Governor Kotek in August and confirmed by the Oregon Senate in February.

Other HECC Newsletters and Publications - Recent Issues

- [HECC Collaborations, May 2025 – Graduates' Successes are Multiplied in Oregon Communities](#)
- [HECC Collaborations, April 2025 - Affirming the Values and Principles of Postsecondary Education](#)
- [Updates from the Oregon High School Equivalency Program](#)
- [OSAC Oregon Promise Update, May 2025](#)

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