

Government to Government Tribal Education Update

September 2026

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.

Featured Updates

SAVE THE DATE FOR TRIBAL STUDENT SUPPORT EVENT - NOVEMBER 2, 2026

We are pleased to invite tribal partners to the HECC Tribal Student Support Event on November 2, 2026. The HECC staff have joined efforts with tribal and institutional partners to plan this event, which is the third such event the agency has organized. This year, Western Oregon University will be the venue, and the summit theme is Rooted and Rising: Tribal Community Voices in Higher Education and Career Pathways. The purpose of the Summit is to:

- Increase understanding and knowledge of the various programs and systems that help create wraparound supports and transition services for Native American and indigenous learners in Oregon.
- Create solutions and partnerships that assist learners with meeting their higher education and workforce development goals.
- Sustain a network of support and community of practice that learns from another and advocates on behalf of and with American Indian and indigenous learners.

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: September 21, 2026. For other upcoming public meetings of the HECC and affiliated boards, [see our website here](#). For email notices of upcoming public meetings, [join our mailing list](#).

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

Ways to get involved:

- Attend,
- Host a resource table,
- Share the event info with others who may wish to attend.

Additional details:

- Accommodations, such as captioning, ASL interpretation, and quiet spaces will be available.
- Lodging at government rates will be coordinated.
- If funds for travel are needed, please reach out to Rebecca Arce Rebecca.Arce@hecc.oregon.gov and/or Jeremy Ahola Jeremy.Ahola@hecc.oregon.gov to explore options.

We look forward to seeing you!

UPDATES ON THE OREGON TRIBAL STUDENT GRANT

We thank the tribes for their hard work and cooperation in making the Oregon Tribal Student Grant available to students. The application for 2026-27 is still open, with a priority deadline of September 30, 2026. **Additional financial aid program updates for applicants are available in the Supporting Affordable Access section of this document.**

Oregon Tribal Student Grant (OTSG) – 2026-27: The Oregon Tribal Student Grant application is still open. OSAC is currently reviewing/approving applications for all student levels. To date, OSAC has received a little over a thousand applications for the 2026-27 academic year, with over 600 2026-2027 applications approved by OSAC as of August 31, 2026.

The 2026-27 OTSG application will have a priority deadline of September 30, 2026. Students must have all application materials in by the priority deadline for full OTSG consideration. This includes:

- The 2026-27 Oregon Tribal Student Grant application
- The 2026-27 FAFSA/ORSAA completed
- The Tribal Enrollment Verification form

On September 1, 2026, OSAC identified an error preventing students from submitting the 2026-2027 OTSG application that was resolved early morning September 2, 2026. Students should now be able to complete the application in their OSAC student profiles. If students see any other errors, please email hecc.osac@hecc.oregon.gov for additional support.

School access to the 2026-27 OTSG opened early June 2026 for colleges and universities to award 2026-27 approved applicants. If students have been approved by OSAC but have not been awarded the OTSG in their actual financial aid package from their school, students are advised to follow up directly with their school's financial aid office to see if they have any outstanding requirements with financial aid.

OTSG Funding: As noted in an April 16 letter from HECC to Tribal Chairs, OTSG anticipates a budget shortfall for 2026-27. Based on subsequent direction from the Governor, HECC has begun to process 2026-27 OTSG awards without imposing any non-statutory eligibility restrictions. Qualifying applicants,

including new and returning undergraduate and graduate students, are being notified that they will receive the full grant for which they are eligible upon enrollment in 2026-27 as long as they apply by September 30, 2026. The Governor recognizes that HECC should prepare to return to the Legislature in late 2026 with a supplemental funding request. That direction was conveyed to Tribal Chairs in a May 4 letter/email, and via testimony to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services on May 26. HECC reiterated that plan by email to Tribal leaders on August 27.

About the OTSG: 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. To date, the OTSG has served students pursuing all levels of postsecondary education, including certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's, master's, 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](#).

ENGAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS IS UNDERWAY FOR THE HOUSE BILL 4124 HIGHER EDUCATION REVITALIZATION STUDY

Numerous processes of engagement, analysis, and collaboration are underway as HECC works toward the [higher education revitalization study called for by HB 4124 \(2026\)](#). This legislation directs the HECC to study the condition of Oregon's postsecondary education system and develop recommendations for a viable and improved institutional framework for public higher education in Oregon by April 2027.

The HECC invites tribal partner engagement as we work on [implementing House Bill 4124](#). Each tribe was invited to designate an individual to serve on the Advisory Group that is providing project leadership. HECC will also continue to use Government-to-Government to keep Tribes updated and receive their feedback.

To ensure a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative process for the study, the HECC engaged the support of [Oregon Consensus](#) to conduct an initial assessment that has guided the process that is now underway. One key component of this collaborative process is the establishment of a House Bill 4124 Advisory Group representing public institutions, faculty, staff, unions, philanthropy, workforce, K-12, and underrepresented communities. The HECC appreciates the participation of the Advisory Group members who will bring important deliberation on this project from multiple perspectives, and advise staff who report to the Commission.

Following a competitive bid process, HECC is now working with [EY-Parthenon](#) as the lead consulting firm for the study called for in House Bill 4124, and the firm is beginning the first phase of their work. EY-Parthenon's role is to serve as an independent, evidence-based technical advisor to HECC leadership through this legislatively-driven process. EY-Parthenon's approach to the project contains three phases, including: 1) a first phase focused on foundation-building, including a preliminary assessment of the post-secondary conditions in the system related to the missions of each sector, demographic and financial trends, and alignment with workforce needs; 2) a second phase focused on developing options; and 3) a third phase focused on translating options into recommendations as well as a written report. EY-Parthenon will appear regularly before the Advisory Group and engage in forums, conversations, and interviews with higher education, workforce, and industry leaders. [Oregon Consensus](#) has also been retained to provide third-party facilitation, documentation, convening, and other process support.

The Advisory Group has held numerous meetings this summer, with a preliminary focus on framing the project and engaging with partners at a regional meeting held in August in La Grande. The August convening marked the beginning of the Advisory Group's place-based sessions across Oregon, which are also scheduled for Klamath Falls, Ashland, Monmouth, and Portland. These sessions include regional panels, on which tribal leaders will be invited to participate. In addition to the advisory group convenings, HECC is also leading regular briefings with legislators and other partner groups. More information is available on HECC's [HB 4124 implementation web page](#).

IMPLEMENTING WORKFORCE PELL IN OREGON

The HECC has launched processes for implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant in Oregon. Partners can learn more on our web page at [Workforce Pell Implementation in Oregon](#). Workforce Pell—established through Congress's passage of H.R. 1 in 2025—expands Pell Grant eligibility to support learners enrolled in short-term, career-focused training programs that meet defined standards and lead to industry-recognized credentials. The HECC has developed an online program approval portal through which institutions of higher education may submit programs to be approved by the state to accept Workforce Pell Grants. Institutions can also find the final Oregon Workforce Pell Policy and the list of eligible occupations—by local workforce region and statewide—as they consider proposing new instructional programs for Workforce Pell in Oregon.

HECC CONTINUES ACTIVITIES DRIVEN BY ITS 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. In recent months, the agency has initiated numerous activities to advance toward these goals. Updates on implementation of the strategic plan are provided at [public meetings of the HECC](#). The most recent public documents on the strategic plan implementation, presented at the August 2026 public HECC meeting, are also available here: [Quarterly Strategic Plan Update, Q3, 2026](#).

BELONGING - INPUT THROUGH OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE

Among other priorities in HECC's [current strategic plan](#), we have prioritized a goal of **belonging**, focused on elevating learner voices and supporting inclusivity and belonging in postsecondary education settings. This past spring, HECC partnered with [Oregon's Kitchen Table](#) to invite Oregonians across the state to share what helps create a sense of belonging for them and learners in their community, with a focus on students and learners. We are pleased to share that approximately 1,100 people participated! Thank you to all who shared their input. In the coming months, OKT will share a preliminary summary report about what people shared along with a set of factors that influence student belonging. Drawing on this input, OKT and partner Izora Arts & Sciences plan to work with partners this fall to determine factors that have the greatest potential to influence students' sense of belonging statewide. The final findings will be released in early 2027. For more information, contact [Sarah Giles](#) (sagiles@pdx.edu) at OKT or Anthony Medina (Anthony.D.MEDINA@hecc.oregon.gov) at HECC.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Planning for the 2027 Legislative Session – Budget Recommendations

Every two years, the HECC is responsible for preparing recommendations to the Governor on the comprehensive biennial budget needs of the higher education and workforce system through the Agency Request Budget (ARB) process. After reviewing information and developing recommendations over the

course of numerous public meetings, and after receiving considerable public input from April through June, the Commission reviewed and approved the final 2027-29 Agency Request Budget (ARB) funding levels at its [August 13, 2026 public meeting](#). The agency has since submitted the final ARB to the Department of Administrative Services and it is [available on our website](#).

The HECC's ARB for each biennium includes recommended funding levels for the operation of Oregon's community college and public university support funds, student financial aid, workforce programs, capital construction, debt service, and HECC agency support. The ARB is an early step in the state's [multi-phased biennial budget-making process](#). The ARB is considered in the preparation of the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB), which must be balanced to projected revenues, and which serves as a starting point for the Legislature's development of the Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB). The HECC's ARB adheres to budget instructions developed by the Governor and Chief Financial Office (CFO), which **limits most requests for new resources this budget cycle**, unless they are paid for with reductions from within the agency's budget. Pursuant to guidelines, most recommendations on funding this year were at the Current Service Level, a calculation designed to adjust to inflation and maintain service at the status quo. The ARB funds total \$4.7 billion for 2027-2029. The CSL amounts for the three largest funds in the ARB are as follows:

- Public University Support Fund, \$1.15 Billion
- Community College Support Fund, \$972 Million
- Oregon Opportunity Grant, \$360 Million

While the Commission voted to advance the ARB that meets the state guidelines, there was considerable discussion at the Commission meeting and input from numerous partners describing the insufficiency of CSL in relation to the higher education system's needs. HECC [Commission Chair Hamann expressed in a letter to the Governor](#) concern about the impact of these funding levels.

Planning for 2027 – Other Updates

New Interim House Committee on Higher Education

The Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives recently announced the creation of an Interim House Committee on Higher Education, and HECC anticipates that this interim committee will likely carry over into the 2027 legislative session.

Update on Legislative Concepts Underway: Transfer Concept

HECC staff have been engaging with key partners in recent months to refine the legislative concepts that the agency will pursue in the 2027 legislative session. At the August 13, 2026, HECC meeting, staff provided an [update to the Commission about a legislative concept related to student transfer](#). The concept seeks to add flexibility to required HECC roles related to Major Transfer Map development and Transfer Council membership, improve general education credit transfer processes, and better align AP/IB exams with statewide transfer tools. The HECC will continue to present on 2027 legislative concepts underway at future public HECC meetings.

MONITORING FEDERAL CHANGES

While we assess the potential impact of federal directives, the 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](#).

Supporting Affordable Access

OTHER STATE FINANCIAL AID AND AFFORDABILITY UPDATES

Oregon Tribal Student Grant updates are at the beginning of this document.

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](#)

Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program: The 2026-2027 Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program application is open. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) – 2026-27 Awarding: The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) is Oregon's largest need-based financial aid program, and students apply by completing either the FAFSA or ORSAA. The Oregon Opportunity Grant has a tentative FAFSA/ORSAA filing cutoff date of **May 15, 2026** with a Student Aid Index (SAI) limit of **\$8,000**. OSAC started sending award notifications at the beginning of March 2026 and has been notifying students regularly since then. We currently have over 60,000 students who have been authorized; this is a slightly larger volume of students than last year (2025-26). Oregon Opportunity Grant eligibility recently expanded, pursuant to the passage of House Bill 3025 (2025), adding flexibility to award students who attend less than half-time. Please visit the OOG webpage for additional information and eligibility requirements. Historically, students have needed to be enrolled at least half-time (6+ credits) to be eligible to receive the OOG. Now, awards will be prorated by credit hours ranging from 1 to 12 (full time) credit hours.

Oregon Promise Grant (OPG) – 2026-27 Awarding: [Visit the Oregon Promise Grant webpage here](#) for all information on eligibility and applications, including frequently asked questions. OSAC began awarding the Oregon Promise Grant for Class of 2026 students the week of May 18, 2026, and awarding for renewal students began the week of June 22, 2026. The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) **finalized** an SAI limit of \$27,000 that applies only to new students (Class of 2026). Renewal students are not impacted by the new SAI limit. Oregon Promise Grant 2026-27 award amounts are \$2,280–\$4,716 (for full-time enrollment, for the full-year). OSAC has been notifying students regarding their award status.

Oregon National Guard State Tuition Assistance (ONGSTA): OSAC extended the Oregon National Guard State Tuition Assistance (ONGSTA) Fall 2026 application deadline to September 9, 2026. Please keep in mind the upcoming term deadlines (for student service members enrolling in classes mid-year):

- Winter 2027 Quarter/Spring 2027 Semester: December 1, 2026
- Spring 2027 Quarter: March 1, 2027

ONGSTA awards **will** include a **book allowance** for Fall 2026, Winter 2027, and Spring 2027 terms. The book allowance is a per credit allowance and has been set based on budgetary projections and average credit loads, excluding summer terms.

- Quarter schools (including 4-year public universities, OHSU, and community colleges): \$25/credit, \$1,000 maximum per student for the 2026-27 academic year (excluding summers).

- Semester schools (most eligible private institutions): \$35/credit, \$1,000 maximum per student for the 2026-27 academic year (excluding summers).

Looking ahead: The 2027-28 ONGSTA Application will cover the Summer 2027 term. Any student service member who plans to attend in Summer 2027 will need to complete the 2027-28 ONGSTA Application.

Oregon Teachers Scholars Program (OTSP): The 2026–27 OTSP application has closed. OSAC closed the application due to eligible applications exceeding the allotted OTSP funding for the 2026-27 academic year. As a result, not all Fall 2026 eligible applicants will receive an award, and we will not have capacity to make awards for Winter or Spring 2027 applicants. 2026–27 OTSP awarding has begun. Students whose applications have been reviewed, accepted, and verified for enrollment by their institution are now being notified of their authorized OTSP award. Awarding will continue as class/term enrollment verifications are completed by each student’s institution.

OSAC Scholarships: Students can explore more than 600 scholarships through the [OSAC Scholarship Application](#). The scholarship application for 2026-27 is now closed. The 2027-28 application will open November 1, 2026.

Oregon Student Child Care Grant: The deadline for 2026-27 academic year passed on June 1, 2026, with an additional deadline for supporting documentation that occurred on June 20, 2026. We started awarding in July 2026 up to \$10,000 based on eligible childcare costs and applicable childcare rates. OSAC will open the Oregon Student Child Care Grant application for 2027-28 academic year mid-January 2027.

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 Selena.Galindo@hecc.oregon.gov.

OUTREACH AND COLLEGE/CAREER PLANNING 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 OSAC 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.
- **[OSAC 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 the programs we administer.

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 about ASPIRE here.](#)

College Credit in High School Advising Toolkit: The Oregon Department of Education (ODE), in partnership with HECC, will soon introduce a new Advising Toolkit designed to support college credit opportunities for high school students. This resource brings together easy-to-understand guidance for students and families, helpful tools for K–12 educators, and information for postsecondary partners. The Advising Toolkit helps learners get started, make informed choices, and plan confidently for life after graduation. The Advising Toolkit will be available on ODE’s [Accelerated College Credit Programs](#) webpage beginning October 5.

Fostering Learner Pathways and Equitable Opportunity

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ACTIONS

Academic Program Approvals

At its [June 11 Commission meeting](#), the HECC approved the following new academic program.

- Clackamas Community College, Cybersecurity Operations Support, Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

At its August 13 Commission meeting, the HECC took action on numerous academic programs. The Commission also received an [informational overview of the academic approval process](#). At its August 13 Commission meeting, the HECC approved the following new academic programs.

- Oregon State University (OSU):
 - Agricultural and Natural Resources Communication, Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Science (BA/BS)
 - Early Childhood Leadership, Policy, and Practice, Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Science (BA/BS)

Notifications

Also at its August 13 Commission meeting, the HECC received notification of a statement of need for a community college Bachelor of Applied Science program. These types of programs undergo [a multi-phased review process described on our website here](#).

- NOTIFICATION OF STATEMENT OF NEED: Southwestern Oregon Community College Behavioral Health, Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS)

BENEFIT NAVIGATORS

Benefit Navigators at Oregon’s public community colleges and universities help students apply for resources that reduce basic needs insecurity. We are pleased to report that over the past year (2025-26), benefit navigators provided direct support to 30,180 students, nearly doubling the average number of students served each month compared to the previous year. They also more than doubled the number of referrals to campus and community supports, providing 45,858 referrals in total. Read more in our [August issue of HECC Collaborations newsletter](#).

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION REDESIGN PROCESS

For over a decade, Oregon's community colleges have been working together to address the significant gaps in student outcomes for students who begin in developmental education math and writing courses. In 2024, the Legislature required HECC to convene a workgroup to study evidence-based corequisite student support models. Corequisite support means students enroll directly into college-level math and English courses and concurrently receive academic support in a paired college-level course in the same academic term. The workgroup recommended implementing corequisite student support models across Oregon's community colleges, and staff provided an [update to the commission about progress](#) toward this goal at the August 13 HECC meeting.

As part of the consideration of developmental education redesign, CCWD has convened a team of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and mathematics faculty experts to advance alignment between math pathways and workforce programs. Discussions and recommendations are in process. The CTE math courses and an FAQ have been shared with colleges, and more information will be shared as the project advances.

DIRECT ADMISSIONS UPDATES

The HECC was charged by the Oregon Legislature with launching a statewide direct admissions program, and agency staff are [working closely with partners to design and ultimately implement the direct admissions program statewide](#). **Open Doors Oregon** (and in Spanish, **Abriendo Puertas Oregon**) will ultimately be the program names that students and families see when they receive news of Oregon's direct admissions opportunity.

TRANSFER COUNCIL BEGINS WORK TO DEVELOP A NEW GENERAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

The Oregon Transfer Council and Oregon institution partners are working to [ensure that transferring between colleges is simple, clear, and fair for every student](#). As part of this ongoing work, we are pleased to announce that the Council is convening a faculty subcommittee to develop an updated Transfer General Education (TGE) framework for Oregon public institutions. Updating the general education framework is intended to help ensure students do not lose credits or have them misapplied when they transfer. This also helps lower costs by preventing transfer students from having to retake classes. [View the General Education Charge and Timeline here](#). A draft of the framework is expected to be reviewed by the Council in September, followed by feedback on the draft in October through December. A final Transfer General Education framework is expected to be considered by the Transfer Council in February 2027.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The HECC Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) has released the [Oregon IET Toolkit](#), a comprehensive resource for community colleges that are developing or refining Integrated Education and Training programs. Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs are career-aligned pathways that pair basic skills instruction with occupational training and workforce readiness skills.

FAIR CHANCE TO ADVANCE - EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Oregon is one of four states in the Fair Chance to Advance State Action Network, a Jobs for the Future initiative that aims to expand education and workforce pathways for justice-system-impacted individuals. Oregon agencies are working together with Jobs for the Future to increase access to education and training in correctional facilities. The HECC has launched several committees to advance this work in four workstreams: Applied Data Analytics training, vision setting, technical scoping, and data sharing agreement development.

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING UPDATES

The Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee, convened under ORS 350.110, has made the transferability of CPL credit its focus for the coming year. Over the coming months, the committee will examine how CPL credit is currently received at Oregon's public universities, including what role Common Course Numbering under SB 233 (2021) might play. Staff welcome input from colleges. This work will inform the report to the Legislature due December 31, 2026.

Responding to Workforce and Community Needs

OREGON TO EXPAND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS

[In an August 17 press release](#), the HECC announced that Oregon will invest approximately \$1.7 million in federal funding to expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) aimed at strengthening the state's apprenticeship system and addressing urgent workforce shortages in healthcare, and emerging needs in information technology (IT) and manufacturing. This initiative addresses critical workforce shortages, especially in rural and frontier communities, by increasing access to paid, high-quality training pathways.

TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENTS FOR REENGAGEMENT/WORKFORCE TRAINING

Oregon Youth Works, which is housed in the HECC, and Youth Development Oregon (YDO) continue to advance the Partnership for Tribal Workforce and Reengagement through an interagency agreement that established a pathway for collaboration with Tribal Sovereign Nations. For the 2025-2027 biennium, over one million dollars is available for tribes opting to participate. **We are pleased to report that many tribes are now engaged, and this opportunity will remain open.** HECC/YDO staff are currently meeting with tribes to connect with staff around allowable costs, upcoming trainings, and to share feedback on this agreement model. We also welcome input on whether a shared communication platform for resources, such as studies, trainings, and grant opportunities would be of value. **HECC/YDO staff are available for conversational reports this September and in-person programming visits this fall, winter, and spring and look forward to spending time with partners.** Primary Contact: Jeremy Ahola, call or text: 503-689-6662, or email Jeremy.w.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov

OREGON CONSERVATION CORPS GRANT PROGRAM/TRIBAL SET-ASIDE

Oregon Conservation Corps, a program of Oregon Youth Works, is preparing to launch a Request for Applications this fall. **Tribal Sovereign Governments are eligible for competitive funding requests under this grant program**, with funding announcements made in spring of 2027 with awards up to \$600,000. The primary goals of this grant program are: 1. Reduce the risk wildfire poses to communities and critical infrastructure; 2. Help to create fire-adapted communities (defined as, "Communities located in a fire-prone area that require little assistance from firefighters during a wildfire"); and 3. Engage youth and young adults (ages 16 through 26) in workforce training. Primary Contact: Hillary Blackstone, call: (503) 507-6916, or email Hillary.Blackstone@HECC.OREGON.GOV.

Oregon Conservation Corps is **also committed to providing interested Tribes with \$60,000 in flexible and dedicated set-aside funds** to add into Tribal Workforce and Reengagement Agreements. Funds are expected to be available for the 2027-2029 biennium through Intergovernmental Agreements. For more information about this opportunity, contact Jeremy Ahola, call or text: 503-689-6662, or email Jeremy.w.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov.

OREGON YOUTH CORPS GRANT PROGRAM

Oregon Youth Corps, a program of Oregon Youth Works serving individuals between the ages of 13-24, is preparing to launch a Request for Applications this fall. **Tribal Sovereign Governments are eligible for competitive funding requests under this grant program.** Funding announcements will be made in spring of 2027 with awards ranging between \$30,000-\$60,000. There are two grant opportunities available: 1. Service Learning Education Grants, which emphasize an educational blend of academic engagement with workforce experiences. 2. On-the-Job Training Grants, which are paid work experience opportunities for youth and young adults. Primary Contact: Mike Norman, call 971-372-5655, or email mike.norman@hecc.oregon.gov.

INDUSTRY CONSORTIA: RECENT ACTIVITIES

The HECC, in partnership with the [Workforce and Talent Development Board](#), continues to convene statewide Consortia in three of our state's key industry sectors—healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. Each Consortium convenes quarterly for public meetings. You can find more information, including public meeting materials and occupation profiles and wage data, [on our Industry Consortia web page](#).

New Reports

LEGISLATIVE REPORTS:

Competency Based Education Report: The HECC has submitted to the Oregon Legislature its [annual report on Competency Based Education](#). Competency Based Education (CBE) is a system of instruction, grading, assessment, and reporting where success is defined based on students demonstrating mastery of specific skills. CBE can help shorten the path to a credential, especially for adult learners, who bring significant prior knowledge and experience to the postsecondary classroom. This year's report examines promising practices from other states, continues reporting on the competency-based assessment program in Emergency Medical Services education led by the Oregon Health Authority in collaboration with HECC, and explores the relationship between proficiency-based grading in Oregon high schools and competency-based assessment in community college courses, including courses students take through accelerated learning and dual credit. The report also describes barriers that continue to limit expansion.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting: The HECC has submitted to the Oregon Legislature its [annual report on Sexual Misconduct Reporting](#). The HECC annually collects information on Oregon colleges' and universities' compliance with provisions of the law aimed at supporting students and employees who have been affected by sexual misconduct (ORS 350.335-346 and OAR 715-030).

Other HECC News and Events

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY WEEK - SEPTEMBER 14-18, 2026

Governor Tina Kotek has proclaimed September 14–18, 2026, as Oregon's Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, recognizing the essential role education plays in the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Oregonians. The week coincides with the national Adult Education and Family Literacy Week and National GED® Day on September 18. Through the HECC's Adult Basic Skills programs, Oregon supports adult learners in developing foundational and English language skills, earning high school equivalency credentials, and preparing for postsecondary education and employment. These opportunities are particularly important in supporting educational attainment, economic mobility, and stronger families and communities, including Oregon's Tribal

communities. HECC recognizes the importance of ensuring adult education and family literacy resources are accessible and responsive to the unique needs, priorities, and strengths of Tribal Nations. Partners and communities are encouraged to recognize adult learners and educators, share learner success stories, and help elevate the value of adult education and family literacy across Oregon.

SAVE THE DATE: 2026 OREGON ADULT BASIC SKILLS CONFERENCE - OCTOBER 16, 2026

Mark your calendars! The 2026 Oregon Adult Basic Skills Conference will take place virtually on Friday, October 16, 2026. We're excited to once again host this event in a virtual format to ensure broad access and meaningful participation from adult education professionals across the state. Registration details can be found on the [conference website](#). Agenda coming soon!

SAVE THE DATE: 2026 ASPIRE CONFERENCE - OCTOBER 2, 2026

The [2026 ASPIRE Fall Conference](#) will be held on October 2 at Oregon State University–Cascades campus in Bend, Oregon. ASPIRE supports students, families, and communities across Oregon by providing timely career and college readiness training and professional development opportunities, and this annual conference brings together ASPIRE staff and college access partners from across the state.

HECC AGENCY UPDATES ITS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The HECC is undergoing a realignment to our organizational structure to better promote the agency's cross-sector collaboration, innovation, and efficiency as we work to achieve state goals. Our work increasingly calls for stronger connections across our functional areas, including integrated strategies, innovation, and sharing of ideas that center the needs of Oregon learners and to intentionally address the linkages between education and workforce needs. Starting in July 2026, HECC began the first phase of a realignment process to update the organizational structure. As we make these changes internally, external partners may see some changes in titles and office names, but our key [authorities and responsibilities](#)—defined in rule and statute—remain the same.

OTHER HECC PUBLICATIONS

[HECC Collaborations newsletter, August issue](#)

[Oregon High School Equivalency Program Newsletter](#)- August 28, 2026

[Transfer Hub, July 2026](#)

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