

OREGON GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF (GEER) FUNDS OVERVIEW

Oregon Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funds Overview

Updated: January 2025

The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund was initially created in March 2020 as part of the first federal pandemic relief bill.

All the Oregon GEER investments are dedicated to education programs that remove systemic barriers to equitable education and prioritize supporting historically excluded communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. ODE projects utilizing the funds for initiatives are designed for all students. They are specifically centered on equitably serving Oregon's Black, Latino, Latina, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Tribal students; students with disabilities, students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+; emerging bilingual students; and those navigating foster care, houselessness, and poverty, and those with limited access to resources due to rural location.

This packet is intended to provide an overview of these initiatives.

GEER Funding Timeline

The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, passed in March 2020, provided governors with emergency resources to address the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on early learning, K-12 education, higher education, and the workforce. Another round of GEER funding (GEER II) came from the second federal pandemic relief bill, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), in December 2021. In Oregon, former Governor Kate Brown directed that GEER funds support a number of key actions to immediately respond to the pandemic, such as expanding broadband access in remote and rural areas, launching computer science initiatives at all 13 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Hubs, and providing emergency funding for early learning, including Early Intervention/Early Childhood Education regional services.

Oregon received \$32.5 million of direct GEER funding through the CARES Act (GEER I) and \$14.2 million through the CRRSA Act (GEER II). In addition to the funds going directly to the Governor's office in each state, unobligated funds from the Emergency Assistance to Non-public Schools (EANS) program under CRRSA and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) moved into the GEER fund, totaling an additional \$22.9 million. CRRSA EANS obligated was \$24.8 million and the ARP EANS obligated \$8.2 million. **In all, Oregon received \$102.6 million to use for GEER allowable expenditures.**

- » **GEER I ended on 9/30/22**
- » **EANS I reverted to GEER uses ended on 9/30/23**
- » **GEER II ended on 9/30/23**
- » **EANS II reverted to GEER uses ended on 9/30/24**
- » **All grants ended on 9/30/24**

State Agency Coordination

Following the passage of each federal relief act and upon the reversion of EANS dollars to GEER uses, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) staff worked together with the ODE team to support the Governor's staff in identifying opportunities to support education. Between ODE, DELIC, and the HECC, there were five initiatives supported by GEER I, and a dozen current initiatives under GEER II and EANS funds reverted to GEER uses. In the early stages of the pandemic, these funds were used to assist students in transitioning to remote/distance learning by supporting access to technology; funding was also used to cover healthcare needs such as providing PPE and expanding childcare services through Relief Nurseries.

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For more information, go to oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/GEER.aspx

COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT GRANTS AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

\$7.3 million

What is this initiative?

In May of 2022, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was directed by former Governor Brown to lead two initiatives pertaining to computer science education:

1. Distribute \$6 Million in GEER Funds through grants to increase computer science opportunities for students during the 2022-2023 school year, particularly for girls/women and students of color. ODE distributed these funds to Oregon's 13 STEM Hubs through newly created STEM Hub Computer Science Grants to amplify and support regional projects between October 2022 and September 2023.
2. Develop a statewide Computer Science Education Implementation Plan, in collaboration with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, to provide computer science accessibility to all of Oregon's public school students by the 2027-28 school year. The implementation plan was officially released in November 2023.

The remaining funds are being used for programmatic support of the two initiatives above, including limited-duration staff at ODE.

Benefits

- » Increase Access: Increase the number of computer science education opportunities and increase the capacity for existing opportunities.
- » Support Equity-Based Systemic Change: Align projects with other current and future computer science opportunities grounded in equity at the building or district level, including work with Career and Technical Education (CTE) Regional Coordinators and CTE programs to support strong, inclusive CTE programs in computer science.
- » Strengthen Engagement and Sense of Belonging in Computer Science: Retain historically and systemically

underrepresented students in computer science opportunities using equity-based strategies and integration of career-connected learning.

- » Engage Community-Based Organizations: Connect communities to the planning and implementation of computer science education to build culturally relevant instruction and sustainable programs.
- » Diversify Participation through Equity and Inclusion: Increase the diversity of students participating in computer science opportunities with a focus on students historically and systemically underrepresented in computer science.

Computer Science Education Statewide Implementation Plan

The Computer Science Education Statewide Implementation Plan was released in December 2023 through a robust community engagement process which included 34 public sessions, an on-line survey, and the support of a Consult Group of students, educators, administrators, industry professionals, and higher education representatives. The plan identifies seven key Outcomes for Oregon:

- » Outcome #1: Every Public School Offers Opportunities to Learn Computer Science
- » Outcome #2: Systems are Established to Recruit, Prepare, Support and Retain Computer Science Teachers
- » Outcome #3: Computer Science Education has Stable, Long-Term Funding
- » Outcome #4: Computer Science is Recognized as a Content Area in Rule and Statute
- » Outcome #5: High School Computer Science Education Aligns with Postsecondary Requirements
- » Outcome #6: Computer Science Learning is Current, Relevant, and Connected to Career Opportunities
- » Outcome #7: Progress on Expanding Participation in and Access to Computer Science Education is Monitored and Reported

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oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Computer-Science-Implementation-Plan.aspx

These Outcomes are supported by strategies, considerations, measures of progress, a potential timeline, and funding estimates in the full version of the plan available on the [CS Initiative website](#).

Accomplishments

Oregon's Regional STEM Hub Network, consisting of 13 Hubs across the state, sponsored more than 775 events that reached over 100,000 students and 3,100 educators between October 2022 and September 2024.

All activities targeted at least one of the grant goals, such as increased access and diversified participation.

A few of the many student-facing activities are listed below:

PreK – Grade 5

- » After-school Lego Robotics classes and clubs
- » Sphero, Bee-Bot, Vex GO, and Ozobots Coding Robots
- » Makey-Makey invention events
- » Drumming & Coding events in collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (K-8)
- » CS Unplugged Kits for engaging K-8 students
- » Hello Ruby activities
- » Amazon Future Engineer program
- » Code Can Dance events

Middle School

- » Robotics and Drones clubs and competitions
- » Video Game Design
- » Vex Robotics competitions
- » Other support for current/ongoing CS courses
- » CS Unplugged Kits for engaging K-8 students
- » Amazon Future Engineer program
- » Code Can Dance events

High School

- » E-sports competitions
- » Industry tours
- » 3-D printing
- » Other support for current/ongoing CS courses
- » Women in Science Panel to build a network of mentors and youth
- » Amazon Future Engineer program
- » Hackers, Hipsters, and Hustlers CS/Tech Summer Camp

Out-of-School, Family and Community Events include:

- » Family STEM Nights
- » Computer Science Unplugged Community Events
- » Robotics through a variety of products and challenges
- » Migrant Education Program engagement with CS
- » Wide variety of summer camps and out-of-school offerings similar to the school offerings above
- » Mobile Maker Spaces and Lending Libraries in rural areas to provide access
- » Coder-in-Residence programs
- » Partnerships with Community-Based and Cultural Organizations to implement culturally relevant computer science activities and camps outside of the school day

Professional Development for educators has been an essential and impactful target for attaining the goals of the CS GEER Grant programs. A few highlights from the many professional development activities include:

- » PK-2 Bee-Bot trainings that integrate coding with science, math, and social science activities have been offered with great success throughout most regions in Oregon
- » Code Fellows training for K-12 educators
- » Exploring Computer Science training to diversify recruitment and demographics
- » Computer Science Professional Learning
- » Computational Thinking and Modeling
- » Elementary School CS Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- » Middle School CS PLC
- » Mentoring trainings and events
- » Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association (OCSTA) trainings



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oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Computer-Science-Implementation-Plan.aspx

EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS SUPPORTING SMALL AND RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

\$4.63 million

What is this initiative?

\$4.63 million dollars were provided to all 19 Education Service Districts (ESDs) to provide responsive and intensive administrative support for small and rural school districts. ESDs used the funds, following allowable use guidelines, to provide support, coordination, and alignment related to any of the over 130 state or federal programs ODE administers and for which districts in the region need to manage or report.

Oregon is home to many small school districts with limited personnel capacity providing support to move through the administrative and reporting requirements for various federal programs and initiatives from which the districts are eligible to receive funds. In addition to the funding being disbursed to the ESD regions, a portion of funding also initially supported a staff position at ODE. This initiative also contributed to a part-time position at the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD) to provide coordination for these efforts.

How could ESDs use the funding?

The small and rural school support funds were used to support any state and federal programs districts may participate in or be eligible for. Allowable costs included:

- » Identifying and coordinating ESD staff, adding as much as 1.0 FTE, to maintain continuity of instruction and access to resources for small school districts during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- » Coordinating with districts and agencies to support districts in completing planning, engagement, application, implementation, or reporting processes across state or federal programs.

- » Arranging ESD staffing to enhance focal support for districts most needing additional assistance.
- » Coordinating regional conversation and knowledge exchange to improve processes or systems that reduce administrative burden and increase program alignment and effectiveness.

Benefits

The additional support from ODE to ESDs focused on assistance to smaller and more rural schools in Oregon helped streamline the processes necessary to ensure grant money and state and federal relief funds were reported and expended appropriately. District staff could then focus their attention on supporting schools and students. This program also developed district plans and technical expertise by providing district coaching. District utilization of existing best practices and resources resulted in a reduction in redundant processes and more meaningful and sustainable policies and procedures and better alignment with optimal learning and safety in school environments.

In the 2023 legislative session, funding was secured to sustain the ODE staff member, OAESD staff coordination role, and funding distributed to all 19 ESD regions.

Contact information

[Section 7 of Integrated Guidance](#) provides the most external documentation about our partnership with ESDs.

oregon.gov/ode/StudentSuccess/Pages/Innovation-and-Improvement.aspx

SCHOOL SAFETY AND PREVENTION SYSTEMS

\$3.3 million

What is this initiative?

The School Safety and Prevention System (SSPS) was created as part of the Student Success Act in 2019. The SSPS provides a comprehensive school safety and prevention model that addresses suicide prevention, intervention, and post-event support; bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying prevention; behavioral safety assessment supports and promotion of the SafeOregon tip line. The SSPS model provides school safety supports that center equity, racial equity, and access to culturally responsive mental health services within behavioral safety and prevention models that foster learning environments where all students thrive because they belong.

GEER funds allow for a 1.0 FTE School Safety and Prevention Specialist at each Education Service District (ESD) for a total of 19 SSPS Specialists across Oregon who are attentive to the region that their ESD serves. Before the addition of GEER funds, there were 11 School Safety and Prevention Specialist positions ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 FTE across various Education Service Districts in the state.

Accomplishments

The statewide team of School Safety and Prevention Specialists, supported by the Safe and Inclusive Schools team at ODE, will provide all school districts throughout Oregon with ongoing support, resources, and technical assistance in the following areas:

- » Behavioral safety assessment
- » Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, and sexual violence
- » Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- » SafeOregon Tip Line

Benefits

The SSPS Specialists work with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and through their designated ESD to provide equity-based training and technical assistance to school districts to develop, implement, and maintain the statewide SSPS. This staffing and training will provide more equitable outcomes for historically and currently underserved students and youth in our schools by supporting the ongoing development of safe and inclusive learning environments statewide.



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HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION (HECC) INITIATIVES

\$11.4 million GEER I

\$7.5 million GEER II

\$9.8 million Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Funds (EANS) reverted to GEER uses

Last Updated: January 2025

Synopsis of HECC initiatives:

GEER I

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission focused GEER I funding on three areas:

Higher Education Assistance Grants \$6 million

These grants to Oregon's community colleges and public universities 1) promoted student resiliency during an extended period of remote learning, 2) helped students persist in their education, and 3) helped students complete their post-secondary degree or credential.

Higher Education Distance Learning Initiative \$4 million

Subawards were granted to support distance learning during the pandemic. Specifically, funds were directed towards: 1) helping students overcome systemic barriers exacerbated by COVID-19 impacts, 2) developing equitable and innovative approaches to distance learning, 3) pilot an online platform that enables students to enroll in online courses offered by other institutions; and 4) supporting the professional development of instructors for more effective online learning.

Start Strong \$1.4 million

COVID-19 caused high school and community college instruction disruptions, with long-term impacts on academic and developmental growth affecting incoming university students. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature appropriated federal and state funds for a Start Strong program at public universities to reduce this preparation gap. Each university tailored its Start Strong program to meet the unique needs of its students and its current capacity to offer a new program, with common elements including:

- » focusing on serving BIPOC students and students from underserved communities,
- » summer bridge kickoff and continuing wrap-around services throughout the school year,

- » academic skill-building focus,
- » provision of other student success skills, and
- » creation of a community of support for the students.

The Start Strong program showed early success, with participants being retained at higher rates than students who did not participate.

GEER II

For the second wave of GEER funding, spending focused on ensuring the continuity of services and investments to increase equity and access as part of the recovery process.

Oregon Youth Corps Summer Programs \$500,000

The Oregon Youth Corps engages youth—particularly those who are underserved or disconnected—in paid, community-based stewardship experiences that build and improve social, emotional, and workplace skills. Historically, the program has been unable to serve all interested youth. Program participants primarily include youth of color, youth from rural communities, tribal youth, and youth who have dropped out of high school. Falling Lottery Amusement Tax Device revenues related to the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardized the program. These funds enabled 18 different youth-serving organizations to provide paid summer work in 2021:

Benefits:

- » 146 youth employed throughout Oregon.
- » \$349,300.85 of GEER Funds went to youth and crew leader wages (~85.6%)

This summer, our intern group was composed of low income, first generation high school students, some of whom were not on track to graduate and some with documented social emotional challenges. This program provided a safe space for teens to interact with others, connect to career paths that do not require a college degree, and learn essential workplace and life skills...This summer, crew members developed workplace skills including effective communication, teamwork, time management, budgeting, interviewing, tool safety, and

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more...The partnership between the OYC Program and The Club's Health and Dental Services Center was an important opportunity for teens to learn valuable job skills. Teens had the opportunity to participate in a community backpack giveaway event where they helped distribute over 2,000 backpacks. After the event, the teens received positive feedback from the director of the event. The success of this event demonstrates the impact the teens had in the community, as they learned to be reliable and follow instructions. They also became more aware of the economic gap experienced by many families in the Marion Polk County area and saw the need for this event. From the 2021 Report: Boys and Girls Club of Salem, Marion and Polk Counties, Salem – Oregon.

The impact with regards to community and community partners cannot be understated. This program is a community collaboration and could not be possible without the expertise, time, and willingness of community partners in helping to apprentice these youth in their fields. Community partners have recounted time and time again that they love participating and see it as a needed function to help train up the next workforce that will be necessary to keep the work going forward. This is especially true given the high rate of generational poverty in our small community. Our kids need every possible advantage so they can grow to successfully enter the workforce. Families have struggled over the last 2 years; youth are striving to work and help their families. This year we saw a 4-fold increase in applications for our paid summer internship, beyond program recognition, I believe this is partly due to the continued strain families are feeling. WE also had some big successes in connecting with specific teachers and schools to help with recruitment, with one school principal going into individual classrooms to pitch the program. Since much of our student population come from poverty, it places an even greater importance on teaching transferable, employment skills to students while in our care. Skills they can then use to help them be successful in future endeavors. This runs the gambit from simply learning to work in an office setting, working on resume building and hiring skills, to the less tangible skills such as professionalism and communication skills. We even work on public speaking and presentation building. Kids work as part of a team and, gradually over the course of the internship, they go from being heavily guided to working together independently, solving problems in real time in the field. This practice builds confidence in their abilities and helps them enter future work environments having had this experience to help inform future challenges that arise. These employable skills are enhanced with team building and community building within our program. Youth engage in fun activities, eating out and learning about different cultural and educational points of interest. Helping them enjoy their work setting and experience while also building relationships with each other and their adult mentors. 3 of our 4 interns from this year are pursuing careers and employment in the natural resource sector, with all of them requesting references and 2 students applying for specific forestry and trail crew positions

next summer. From the 2021 Report: Wallowa Resources, Enterprise – Oregon.

Accomplishments:

GEER Funding played a critical role in reopening summer work employment opportunities within Oregon Youth Corps. The previous summer, program funding was completely shut down and was unable to provide any funds to programming due to the COVID pandemic's impact. GEER Investments immediately went out to fund programs in the summer of 2021 and 18 organizations received this investment, helping bring critical employment opportunities to 146 youth and young people in Oregon.

Open Educational Resources (OER) Support \$1.2 million

HECC partnered with public universities and community colleges to develop Open Educational Resources (OER), including digital resources that expand access. Activities funded include 1) translating OER student resources (Blueprint for Success in College & Career) into languages other than English; 2) developing licensed courses that are accessible and address various learning styles; 3) expanding Statewide Equity and Open Education Faculty Cohorts (professional development/training); and 4) developing Criminal Justice and Human Development/Family Studies pathway materials.

Reengagement and Retention Initiative \$2.35 million

The Reengagement and Retention Initiative provided grants to support student re-engagement and postsecondary completion. Grants also focused on identifying promising strategies to remove barriers to re-engagement and targeted strategies to serve and reengage under-represented students.

Talent Innovation Equity (TIE) Grant Expansion \$200,000

HECC expended up to \$200,000 to expand the funding for the Lumina TIE Initiative. This Initiative supported partnerships of educational institutions and community-based organizations that work on eliminating growing disparities in completion rates between the overall population and African American, Latino, and American Indian students.

Facility for Agricultural Resource Management (FARM II) Blue Mountain CC \$3.5 million

The FARM II project is a community partnership between Blue Mountain Community College, the City of Pendleton, Pendleton Round-Up, Umatilla County, InterMountain Education Service District, and the Port of Umatilla that will construct an educational facility and indoor arena in Pendleton to support regional workforce and agricultural training needs. Examples include training as a veterinary technician or with unmanned aerial systems and other agriculture education.

EANS II Reverted to GEER Uses

Moonshot for Equity Initiative Eastern Oregon College Students \$1.6 million

Eastern Oregon University (EOU), Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC), and Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) have partnered on a five-year, student-centered, comprehensive strategic plan launched in 2022 to identify and remove systemic barriers that are preventing access and attainment to a post-secondary education degree. This partnership aims to close equity gaps for Eastern Oregon students at two- and four-year colleges and universities by 2030.

Additional Student Child Care Grant \$1.1 million

The Oregon Student Child Care Grant Program helped parents enrolled in postsecondary education to obtain safe, dependable care that supports their children's development while allowing completion of the parent's academic programs. 255 students received grant funding during the 2023-25 biennium.

Oregon Youth Conservation Program \$2.6 million

Oregon Youth Corps utilized \$2.6 million of EANS reverted to GEER funds to engage youth, particularly disadvantaged or at-risk, in community-based stewardship work experiences. To maintain stability in Oregon Youth Corps Community Stewardship Corps' grant program and sustain participant services level in 2023, GEER funds were identified as a path to efficiently get grant funding into community programs that serve youth and students.

Benefits:

Between July 2023 and June 2024, 30 unique organizations all throughout Oregon employed or provided educationally centered work experiences:

- » 1,279 Youth Served
- » 949 High School Credits Earned
- » 1575 Certifications Earned
- » 271,228.5 Hours of Work-Based Learning experience
- » \$1.69 Million went directly to paid wages for youth and their crew leaders.

[A student] was referred to Riverfront from another alternative school. He was very credit deficient and felt graduation was not in his future. His estranged father never graduated from high school, and he thought he'd go down the same path. His enrollment in the Lane-Metro Youth Corps helped him turn around! After three years at Riverfront, he achieved his goal of attaining a high school diploma. He made it known without the opportunity to focus his attention on conservation and community involvement projects he would not have achieved this milestone. He also realized over the last couple of years

that he wanted to continue a career in the outdoors. After graduation, he was placed on a subsidized work experience at a local non-profit community farm which supplies fresh produce to community members facing food scarcity. He is thriving at the job! Once his work experience ends, staff will assist him to find employment. From the 2023-2024 Annual Report: Looking Glass Community Services, Eugene – Oregon.

Service Learning-Students involved in the school year OYC program were identified as disengaged youth at the beginning of the year who had poor attendance. Our hope was that the relationships created through work in the OYC program (including with both staff and the community) would help students want to attend school leading to improved attendance. This was in fact the case. 100% of the 19 students involved in OYC over the school year demonstrated improved attendance after their involvement with the program. Additionally, all fourth-year seniors (there were 6) graduated on time. From the 2023-2024 Annual Report: Tillamook School District/Wilson River High School, Tillamook – Oregon.

Accomplishments:

Oregon Youth Corps was able to utilize GEER funding to provide grant awards to 30 different organizations to deliver introductory work opportunities to youth and young adults across 4 Tribal Sovereign Nations and 31 Counties. Organizations receiving funds helped deliver and teach the foundational work skills necessary in business and industry. Over 63% of the participants in this GEER funded grant program were identified as individuals with no prior work experience. Having Oregon Youth Corps grant program available to high school participants, allowed many participants the opportunity to earn much needed academic credit towards their high school diploma, while also earning critically important wages.

Supplement Oregon Opportunity Grant to Promote Degree Completion \$2 million

Oregon Opportunity Grants are awarded first to students with the greatest financial need based on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The purpose of funding is to ensure that students are fully informed of options and resources to assist them in returning to school and completing their studies. HECC provided grants to colleges and university financial aid to hire work-study students to conduct student outreach or otherwise defray costs related to enrollment trend analysis. Outreach focused on determining root causes and offering both existing financial aid resources and emergency financial aid to students depending on their needs.

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