



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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February Agency Update:

February 2024 | Our 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.

Featured Updates: We are pleased to report on our ongoing work to support Oregon learners and communities, participation in the 2024 Legislative Session, implementation of actions taken during the 2023 Legislative Session, a new website, and new initiatives. Starting in fall 2023, the Commission has launched a public process to update its [Strategic Plan](#). These planning discussions are held at [public meetings](#), and tribal engagement as well as public comment is welcomed. The updated Strategic Plan should be complete by Fall, 2024.

HECC Launches a Redesigned Agency Website at www.oregon.gov/highered: The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is pleased to announce the launch of our redesigned agency website at www.oregon.gov/highered. The new website is designed to be more accessible, mobile responsive, and user-friendly as we aim to engage the public on the work we do to support higher education and training statewide. [Read more about the redesign here](#). If you currently link to pages or documents on our site, we recommend you update your links to the new addresses at your convenience. [Explore the new site here](#).

Our Commission

OUR VISION:

The State of Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future in which all Oregonians—and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized—benefit from the transformational power of high-quality postsecondary education and training. [Learn more about our vision here](#). Oregon's [Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training](#) sets an ambitious path forward by describing how postsecondary systems, policies, and practices need to change in order to achieve Oregon's goals for educational attainment and equity.

The HECC is the State of Oregon's Commission and agency working to improve equitable access to and success in higher education and workforce training for Oregonians statewide. 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, April 11, 2024 (tentative).
Funding and Achievement Subcommittee meeting: April 10, 2024 (tentative)
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](#)

A few pages that may be of particular interest include:

- [Coordination with Tribes in Oregon](#) – including all our recent reports to the Government to Government education cluster, and additional resources
- [Accessing College and Training](#), including key resources for college affordability and links to the wide range of postsecondary opportunities available in Oregon
- [Public Meetings and Engagement](#), including the work of our Commission and numerous advisory boards
- [Strategy, Research and Data](#), including a page on [Recent Initiatives](#) and a new platform of [Interactive Data Dashboards on Students and Outcomes Interactive Data Dashboards on Students and Outcomes](#)
- [The HECC Agency Offices and its Programs](#) detailing the work we do to serve Oregonians, including expanded sections on [Streamlining Transfer](#) and [Future Ready Oregon](#)
- [News and Updates](#)

Participation in the 2024 Legislative Session: During each legislative session, the HECC presents to legislative committees and advises the Oregon Legislature and the Governor on topics of critical concern to Oregon postsecondary education and training. [On this page you can find recent HECC presentations and testimony in the 2024 legislative session](#) designed to inform decisions on legislative decisions.

The previous short legislative session saw the creation of the Tribal Student Grant, as well as the establishment of the Future Ready Oregon workforce development and grant program. This year, HECC-related ambitions are smaller, but a few bills are still working through the Capitol hallways that offer opportunities for students and trainees. HECC is monitoring the following bills.

- HB 4162 – Establishes a pool of funds for HECC to grant to campuses for the purpose of building up systems to support student basic needs.
- HB 4163 – Creates a grantmaking program within HECC to support college access and mentorship opportunities offered at institutions or in the community.
- HB 4082 – Establishes a Summer Learning program at the Oregon Department of Education. Staff are monitoring the legislation for the potential of passthrough dollars that may be available for youth programming operated by the Office of Workforce Investments.
- HB 4154 – Establishes a semiconductor industry consortium within HECC with an investment fund intended to support education and training for the semiconductor industry, somewhat modeled after the Future Ready Oregon structure.

Staff are also in the early stage of 2025 legislative session planning. Discussion on the development of budget proposals is expected to occur at May and June Commission meetings.

Continued Implementation of 2023 Investments: Current and future learners benefit from funding and policy approved by the 2023 Oregon Legislature. We are grateful to Governor Kotek and legislators for prioritizing college affordability, student success, and workforce training for Oregonians.

Oregon Tribal Student Grant: The Oregon Tribal Student Grant (OTSG) program was continued and funded at \$24 million for the 2023-2025 biennium. The HECC proposed related legislation and it was passed in HB 3565. As a result, the Oregon Tribal Student Grant (OTSG) is now part of Oregon law. The OTSG is expected to pay for most or all public undergraduate college-related expenses—including tuition, housing, books, and other costs not covered by other grants—for eligible students who are enrolled members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Tribes. Current and prospective students can learn more and apply here. We thank Government-to-Government tribal partners for the close consultation and partnership with launching the grant and supporting applicants. Based on the funding this biennium, HECC will fully award students this year, and return to the Legislature if further appropriations are needed. We are very pleased to see the OTSG continue, now formally part of Oregon law, and we look forward to seeing it grow into the future serving more students at the undergraduate and graduate level. Current and prospective students can [learn more and apply here](#).

In addition, we are implementing the 2023 [increase to the Oregon Opportunity Grant \(OOG\)](#). Oregon’s need-based financial aid program serving Oregonians with grants toward postsecondary expenses received a \$100 million increase for 2023-25, bringing the funding to \$308 million. With the added funding, the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) increased maximum awards for the lowest income Oregonians. These need-based grants follow the students. For the first time, HECC is able to award 75 percent of average cost of tuition to the highest need Oregonians whether or not these students attend a community college or a public university.

[Implementation of Future Ready Oregon](#): With the Legislature’s reauthorization of \$111.8 million Other Funds in ARPA funding, HECC is continuing our implementation of Future Ready Oregon, an investment package passed in 2022 that supports education and training Oregonians need for good-paying jobs and meaningful careers, with a focus on historically underserved and underrepresented communities.

Future Ready Oregon investments support grants and strategies that center the education and employment needs of historically underserved and underrepresented Oregonians, and expand partnerships between communities, educators, and employers to advance innovation in talent development. The next (and final) rounds of competitive Workforce Ready Grant funding will be sector specific, advancing workforce and talent development in the healthcare, technology, and manufacturing sectors. The priorities for this funding will be informed by our [Industry Consortia](#). We expect the funding opportunities to be available in spring 2024. The HECC anticipates having technical assistance contractors available in spring to begin supporting prospective applicants. For additional information, see [Future Ready Oregon Grant Resources](#).

Prepared by the HECC Office of Research and Data, the second annual [Future Ready Oregon report is now available in full here](#). This Year Two Report describes the continued implementation of Future Ready Oregon between March 2022 and fall 2023, includes initial participation and completion rates through June 2023, and considers how these initial outcomes relate to the statewide labor force and education trends. All eight Future Ready Oregon programs are reviewed in the report, including those administered by the HECC’s agency partners, the Bureau of Labor and Industries and Youth Development Oregon.

[We are also implementing ongoing investments in the higher education and workforce system](#), including: state funds supporting the public community colleges, universities, regional workforce development activities, other financial aid programs such as the Oregon Promise and the Oregon Student Child Care Grant, and National Guard State Tuition Assistance (ONGSTA) Program, a new investment in fiscal sustainability for the regional universities and Portland State University, the HECC IT Modernization project, and more.

Other Affordability and Financial Aid News

[Oregon Student Aid Website](#): The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) continues to encourage visiting the Oregon Student Aid website at OregonStudentAid.gov, the state website where Oregonians can go to apply for state-administered grants and scholarships to help afford their college goals, and to get help planning for college, training, or careers.

[Application Open for Oregon Tribal Student Grant for 2023-24](#): As noted above, the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant application](#) is still open for the 2023-24 school year for students planning to attend this academic year. Current and continuing students who are members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Tribes are eligible and encouraged to apply: <https://oregonstudentaid.gov/grants/oregon-tribal-student-grant/>. **The deadline to apply for the 2023-24 academic year is April 5, 2024. The Oregon Tribal Student Grant application for the 2024-25 school year will open in April 2024.**

[Financial Aid Applications](#): **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)**. These applications compile financial information and other details about students and families, which the U.S. Department of Education and the State of Oregon use to determine financial need and eligibility for various financial aid opportunities. **The federal government has launched the simplified FAFSA** and HECC has opened the ORSAA. To get the latest information on the new applications, information on

how to complete the forms, and/or guide students through the process, please check the dedicated [HECC Office of Student Access and Completion \(OSAC\) webpage on the changes](#). Additional resources can also be found at the links below.

HECC- Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) Resources

- [OSAC Webpage introducing FAFSA/ORSAA](#)
- [OSAC Webpage on FAFSA and ORSAA changes](#)
- [Upcoming webinars on '24-25 FAFSA/ORSAA](#)

Federal Student Aid info:

- [Complete the FAFSA](#)
- [Federal Student Aid: FAFSA Simplification Information](#)

[Oregon Promise Grant](#): Learn about applying for the [Oregon Promise Grant here](#). The application for students who graduate between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024 opened in September 2023. Deadline varies by graduation date for new students. Renewal students must submit the 2024-25 FAFSA or ORSAA by June 1, 2024.

[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, which waives tuition and fees for the equivalent of four years of undergraduate studies after other public grants and any school aid are applied for eligible students under age 25. Learn more about eligibility at www.oregonstudentaid.gov. OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any tribal staff. Please contact Anne.Shearer@hecc.oregon.gov.

[ASPIRE Program](#): The ASPIRE (Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement) 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 and Student Success

[Future Ready Oregon Industry Consortia](#): The HECC, in partnership with the Workforce and Talent Development Board, has convened the Industry Consortia, a component of the Future Ready Oregon investment package. Three separate, statewide Industry Consortia represent the healthcare, manufacturing, and

technology industry sectors. Each Consortium is comprised of representatives from industry, education, labor, and community-based organizations. These Consortia were envisioned as a forum for building partnerships that more deeply engage partners across Oregon's workforce landscape in identifying opportunities and addressing statewide sector-specific workforce development challenges.

Each consortium convenes for quarterly public meetings for the purpose of informing strategic policies and Future Ready Oregon funding opportunities, and [details can be found here](#). Questions may also be directed to Jennifer Purcell, HECC's director of Future Ready Oregon, at Jennifer.Purcell@hecc.oregon.gov. The purpose of each Consortium is to establish strategic partnerships, develop structured processes to address mutual industry goals, identify industry-specific workforce needs in this state, develop recruitment strategies to increase equitable participation, and promote workforce development programs and activities in the priority industry sectors.

[Oregon Youth Corps has funding currently available for the development and support of Tribal Workforce Partnerships](#): Funds are available for each of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. Partnerships include the co-development and support of mutual goals and responsibilities that complement each other's work. Through partnership agreements, youth and young adults connect with work opportunities that support learning and growth, skill development, and community engagement. For more information, please contact Jeremy.w.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov.

[More Oregon Youth Works opportunities coming soon](#): Oregon Youth Works is currently developing a workforce training opportunity to support programs that lead youth crews. The anticipated training will launch late spring, early summer and focus on fundamentals for leading young people in a crew-based setting. Look for further information in future announcements.

[Academic Program Approvals](#): At its December and February Commission meetings, the HECC approved the following new academic programs at Oregon's colleges and universities. Read more about these programs in the [meeting materials here](#).

- Lane Community College - Culinary Arts, Certificate of Complet. Baking and Pastry, One-Year Certificate.
- Linn-Benton Community College - Associate of Applied Science in Electric Vehicle/Hybrid Vehicle Technician, AAS. Electric Vehicle/Hybrid Vehicle Technician, One-Year Certificate. Professional Business Certificate, Certificate. Community Health, One-Year Certificate.
- Oregon Institute of Technology, Masters of Science in Natural Resources. Masters of Science in Natural Resources.
- University of Oregon – Educational Leadership, Ed.S.

New Reports and Other Updates

[New Study on the Semiconductor Workforce Landscape Calls for Closer Coordination Among Education and Industry Partners](#): In a [recent press release](#), the HECC announced Oregon's first [Semiconductor Workforce and Talent Assessment](#) providing an overview of the semiconductor industry and workforce landscape. This study recommends significant changes focused on strengthening education pathways and diversifying the workforce in order to address the talent needs of Oregon's growing semiconductor industry. The assessment, developed for the HECC by ECONorthwest and Dr. Wilfred Pinfeld, arrives as the sector prepares for \$40 billion in capital investment expected to result from historic incentives and support in the federal CHIPS and Science (CHIPS) Act and in Oregon's own CHIPS Act passed last year. Oregon officials anticipate the new investments will create 6,300 direct new jobs and 1,000 construction jobs in the state.

[2024-2025 AmeriCorps Formula Grant Information Sessions March 5 and 6, Notice of Intent to Apply](#): The OregonServes State Commission (OSC) will be hosting informational sessions on March 5 and 6 for organizations interested in applying for the 2024-25 AmeriCorps Oregon Formula Funding Grant Opportunity. New programs that are interested in applying are required to attend this informational session, and attendance for ongoing programs is encouraged, but not required. Please [register here](#) and OSC will follow-up with the appropriate session link.

- New Applicants – Tuesday, March 5, 2PM-3PM
- Continuing and Recompete Applicants – Wednesday, March 6, 10AM-11AM

All applicants must also submit a Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA) to OSC by March 8, 2024, by 11:59 pm PST. [Continuation programs can submit their NOIA here](#) and [new programs can submit here](#). The Request for Applications will be announced soon, and the applications will be due Sunday, April 14, 2024. Please continue checking the [OSC Funding Opportunities webpage](#) for updates. For more information, contact oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov.

[OregonServes Announces Software System to Connect Volunteers During Disasters](#): As a partner in the Oregon’s Emergency Support Function for Volunteers and Donations, OregonServes hosts Oregon Volunteers in Disaster (ORVID), an innovative online system for disaster volunteer management. ORVID streamlines the volunteer process by matching volunteers to organizations in times of disaster, providing a seamless experience for volunteers and organizations alike. ORVID is suited for emergency managers and various organizations active in disaster including government agencies, non-profits, and tribal organizations. [Learn more.](#)

[Announcing Two New Members of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Jennifer Procter Andrews and Theresa Martinez](#): On February 8, 2024, the Oregon Senate confirmed Governor Tina Kotek’s appointments of two new Higher Education Coordinating Commission members, Jennifer Procter Andrews and Theresa Martinez, for terms starting February 16, 2024, and running through June 30, 2027. Jennifer Procter Andrews is Vice-Chair of the Coquille Indian Tribe and previously served as the Coquille Higher Education Coordinator. Theresa Martinez is Coordinator for Eastern Oregon Child Care Resources, serving Baker, Malheur, and Wallowa Counties, and previously served as a classroom teacher in Special Education and Alternative Education. They will serve in positions previously held by Dr. Terry Cross and Helen Edwards.

[Other HECC Newsletters and Publications - Recent Issues](#)

- [Updates from the Oregon High School Equivalency Program, February 2024](#)
- [Future Ready Oregon Update, January 2024](#)
- [Equity Update, February 2024](#)
- [Subscribe to other HECC newsletters or update your subscription preferences here.](#)