



# Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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## June Agency Update:

June 2024 | 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.

### Featured Updates:

We are pleased to report on our ongoing work and new initiatives to support Oregon learners and communities, including strategic planning, development of 2025-27 budget recommendations, outcomes of the 2024 Legislative Session, Workforce Ready Grant opportunities, and more.

Strategic Planning Advances with Insights from Public Survey and Engagement: Many thanks to all who have shared their valuable perspectives with us to inform the development of a new [strategic plan for Oregon higher education and workforce training](#). At its May public meeting, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) reviewed and discussed the results of a wide array of public input summarized in an [Insight Report](#) by Coraggio Group, the firm that is facilitating the planning process. The Insight Report summarizes public input collected from January through April of this year, including 408 responses to a statewide survey and five focus group sessions. Through this process, partners gave their perspectives on the HECC's vision, mission,

### 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**, June 12, 2024  
Funding and Achievement Subcommittee meeting: June 13, 2024  
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](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd).  
**Funding Opportunities**  
[Community Partners Encouraged to Apply for Future Ready Oregon Grants to Advance Workforce Training and Education in Key Industry Sectors](#)  
Explore HECC [Grants and Contracting Opportunities here](#)

organizational attributes, top priorities and challenges, and the inherent tradeoffs the HECC faces as it works to improve outcomes within Oregon's higher education and training landscape. The HECC is continuing development of the Strategic Plan, to be completed by Fall, 2024.

HECC Welcomes Input in the 2025-27 Higher Education and Workforce Budget Development Process: Because Oregon state government works on a biennial budget, the Oregon Legislature makes key decisions on higher education and workforce funding every other year. The HECC is charged by statute with developing and recommending to the Governor a comprehensive and integrated postsecondary education and training Agency Request Budget (ARB) for 2025-27. The ARB is just one step in a multi-phased state budget development process. You can learn more about the [typical budget timeline here.](#)

The primary categories in the HECC budget are:

- institution and program support (including funding for [Oregon's 17 community colleges](#); [Oregon's seven public universities](#) and Oregon Health & Science University, and statewide service programs);
- [student financial aid and access programs](#) (including the Oregon Opportunity Grant, Oregon Promise, and others);
- [workforce programs](#) (including for Oregon's nine workforce investment boards);
- [financing of capital construction](#) and deferred maintenance projects at the institutions; and
- [HECC agency operations.](#)

The ARB is intended to be a resource to support the Governor in her development of a statewide budget that is balanced with projected revenue for the biennium. In April, the HECC and other executive agencies received direction from Governor Kotek's administration that the projected growth in state revenue is likely only enough to cover the standard inflationary increase in costs for current programs, so all agencies were given a maximum on the amount of *new* state funding they could request in their ARBs. In May, the Commission's Funding and Achievement Subcommittee hosted invited testimony from partners about funding priorities in the higher education and workforce system. The Commission additionally welcomes public comment at its [June public meetings](#). The 2025-27 ARB development is a months-long public process that culminates in the Commission's consideration of the draft ARB for approval at its August 2024 meeting.

Oregon Tribal Student Grant: The application is open for the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant \(OTSG\)](#) for the upcoming academic year, and we encourage members of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon to apply! 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. The HECC has seen growing participation in the OTSG in its first two years. The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) awarded 501 OTSG recipients for 2023-24, compared to 412 students for the 2022-2023 academic year (the pilot year). The OTSG to date has served students pursuing all levels of postsecondary education, including certificates, associate degrees, bachelors, masters, PHDs, MDs and JDs. The current 2024-2025 application will remain open until April 2025, as long as funds are available. 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 for the 2024-2025 academic year. Additional eligibility information can be found on the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant web page.](#)

Workforce Ready Grant Opportunities: The HECC is now accepting applications for the next round of Future Ready Oregon Workforce Ready Grants. The HECC will award a combined total of approximately \$40 million to recruit and retain a diverse workforce in key sectors of Oregon's economy—healthcare, manufacturing, and technology—through three sector-focused Requests for Applications (RFAs). Workforce service providers and community-based organizations are invited to apply by July 31, 2024, and may submit multiple applications.

The available funding includes approximately:

- \$18 million for healthcare projects—specifically, \$9 million for projects that advance nursing career pathways, and \$9 million for projects that address community-identified healthcare workforce needs,
- \$12 million for manufacturing projects that focus on outreach, awareness, and career exploration, and/or on earn -and-learn education and training opportunities, and
- \$10 million for technology projects that focus on upskilling and retraining incumbent workers (adult learners, dislocated workers, and individuals employed in high-tech and other industries), and/or on transferrable technology skills, training, and career awareness.

Building on the foundational principles of Future Ready Oregon, the sector-specific priorities of the RFAs were informed by the Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Technology Industry Consortia. [Industry Consortia](#) were established by Future Ready Oregon; they convene industry, education, labor, and community partners to identify and address sector-specific workforce development challenges and opportunities.

To view the RFAs, apply, and access free resources for support, visit the [HECC's Grant and Contract Opportunities web page](#). You can also read the HECC press release in English and Spanish here. This is the final round of competitive grant funding available through the Oregon Legislature's 2022 investment known as Future Ready Oregon. [Learn more about Future Ready Oregon here](#). Please direct any questions to [FutureReadyOregon@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:FutureReadyOregon@hecc.oregon.gov).

2024 Legislative Session Outcomes: Bills Pass Supporting Numerous Workforce and Student Support-Related Initiatives: We are pleased to publish the [2024 Summary of Legislative Outcomes Related to Postsecondary Education and Training](#). The Legislative Assembly this short session made several strategic investments and policy changes in education and workforce programs and initiatives including the following.

- Semiconductor Investments: Through Senate Bill 5701, the Legislature made investments totaling \$10M supporting semiconductor-related programming at four Oregon public universities and two community colleges. Separately, (though not yet funded) the Legislature established the Semiconductor Talent Sustaining Fund at HECC (House Bill 4154) for the purpose of funding education, training, and research opportunities to assist in growing Oregon's semiconductor industry.
- Behavioral Health: Through Senate Bill 1592, the Legislature funded \$4M in grants to Oregon public universities to expand the behavioral health workforce in Oregon. This is part of a broad effort to increase resources available for mental health and substance abuse services.
- Direct Admission: Senate Bill 1552 requires HECC to establish a mandatory direct admissions system to all Oregon public higher education institutions. Under this system, academically qualified high school seniors will be directly informed of their admission to certain institutions, and the process will become simpler for the student than the usual college application process. ODE and HECC are required to coordinate to make student data available to support the system.
- Co-requisite Education: Through Senate Bill 1552, HECC and public institutions are directed to examine improving developmental education delivery through co-requisite education. Unlike traditional developmental education, where students take developmental math and writing courses before taking college level courses, corequisite systems place students in the college course and provide additional academic support to students at the same time. HECC will convene a workgroup to study and create recommendations on a potential transition to this model.
- Rules Pertaining to Oregon Opportunity Grant Award Process: Through Senate Bill 1552, HECC is required to develop rules specifying the way the student awards are determined for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, starting with awards issued for the 2025-2026 academic year.

- Funding for Applied Baccalaureate Programs: Senate Bill 1552 requires HECC to include in the Community College Support Fund distribution model payments for activity related to applied baccalaureate degrees and Nursing BS degrees, beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year.

In addition, HECC or higher education participants are directed to participate in new collaborative initiatives, including a Subcommittee on the Youth Behavioral Health Workforce (HB 4151) and the development of a Statewide Education Plans for Immigrant and Refugee Students (SB 1532). Policy changes were approved related to Campus Climate and the Sexual Misconduct Survey (HB 4164), public meeting law related to the Transfer Council (SB 1552), and numerous other areas of work. Investments were also made in Forestry Workforce Study (SB 1552) as well as other specific line-item appropriations to state or institutional programs (SB 5701).

### **Other Affordability and Financial Aid News**

Oregon Student Aid Website: The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) encourages visiting the Oregon Student Aid website at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://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.

Please Continue Efforts to Close the FAFSA Completion Gap: 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). With the late roll-out and challenges introduced by the new federal form, the number of FAFSAs completed in Oregon in our latest numbers were 12 percent lower than last year at this time. Please continue to support students in completing the FAFSA or ORSAA—it's not too late for students to complete these forms and pursue their college goals at Oregon public and private colleges and universities. Please remind students and their parents to not just start but to complete their FAFSA or ORSAA. For the FAFSA, this means making sure it is completed, signed, and submitted by all contributors. Resources on financial aid form completion can be found at 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](#)
- [Federal Student Aid Update on Access to the 2024-25 FAFSA Form for Individuals Without a Social Security Number](#)

Application Open for Oregon Tribal Student Grant for 2024-25: As noted above, the Oregon Tribal Student Grant application is open for the 2024-25 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/>.

Oregon Promise Grant: Learn about applying for the [Oregon Promise Grant here](#). Deadline varies by graduation date for new students.

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](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov). OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any tribal staff. Please contact Anne.Shearer@hecc.oregon.gov.[mailto:](mailto: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, Economic and Community Development, and Student Success**

With a National Grant, Oregon Partners are Developing Recommendations to Improve Campus Supports for Student Mental Health: With the support of a national grant, Oregon partners are working on strategies to address inadequate campus support for student mental health in our state, such as student isolation and difficulty accessing care, as well as long wait times, understaffing, and underfunding. These barriers to care disproportionately impact students of color and underserved or marginalized students. In 2023, Oregon was selected as one of five state teams to receive a \$25,000 planning grant to participate in the inaugural Student Mental Health and Wellness Learning Community. The grant was awarded to the University of Oregon by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) and the JED Foundation, and numerous partners are collaborating on the work. If you have questions on the initiative, contact Veronica Dujon, HECC director of the Office of Academic Policy and Authorization, at [veronica.dujon@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:veronica.dujon@hecc.oregon.gov).

Implementation of Future Ready Oregon: 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. [Learn more here.](#)

Future Ready Oregon Industry Consortia: The HECC, in partnership with the Workforce and Talent Development Board, has convened three statewide Industry Consortia representing the healthcare, manufacturing, and technology industry sectors. Each Consortium is comprised of representatives from industry, education, labor, and community-based organizations. These Consortia are envisioned as a forum for building partnerships 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 funding priorities. [Learn more here.](#)

The 2024 Talent Assessment, released at the Talent Summit in May, Focuses on Industry Sector Opportunity: [In a recent press release](#), Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and the Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) presented the [Oregon Talent Assessment 2024](#). To achieve equitable prosperity for all Oregonians and drive economic development by equipping Oregon's businesses and communities with the talent they need for success, the HECC and WTDB collaborated with SRI to develop the Assessment. The Assessment, released and presented at the Oregon Talent Summit in

Salem on May 14-15, presents analysis and findings on Oregon’s economic and workforce landscape; skills supply and demand for target occupations; and the competitive position of Oregon’s talent pool and workforce development system.

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

- Community College New Approved Programs: Central Oregon Community College: Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair One-Year Certificate of Completion; Construction Trades and Apprenticeship Readiness Certificate of Completion; Foundations of Licensure in Education Certificate of Completion. Clackamas Community College Healthcare Careers Certificate of Completion (CC). Klamath Community College Surgical Technology Associate of Applied Science (AAS). Mt. Hood Community College Machine Tool Technology AAS. Portland Community College Dental Assisting Certificate of Completion 1 year (CC1); Dental Hygiene AAS; Eye Technician CC1; Maritime Welding Certificate of Completion 2 year (CC2); Python Application Programming CC. Umpqua Community College Automotive AAS. Southwestern Oregon Community College Paramedicine AAS
- University New Approved Programs: Oregon State University - Master of Engineering in Engineering Management; Master of Fine Arts in Writing. Portland State University - B.A., B.S. in Elementary Education; B.A., B.S. in Social Justice and the Arts.

### **New Reports and Other Updates**

SHEF Report Shows Oregon Higher Education Funding Trends in Comparison to National Trends : The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), of which HECC is a member, released its annual [State Higher Education Finance \(SHEF\) report](#) on May 8. This report provides interstate comparisons of higher education finance, examining the trends, context, and consequences of state higher education funding decisions through fiscal year 2023 (the 2022-23 year). Read [highlights for Oregon in or latest HECC Collaborations newsletter](#).

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](#).

Reminder: Redesigned Agency Website at [www.oregon.gov/highered](http://www.oregon.gov/highered): The Higher Education Coordinating Commission this year launched a redesigned agency website at [www.oregon.gov/highered](http://www.oregon.gov/highered). If you currently link to pages or documents on our site, we recommend you update your links to the new addresses at your convenience. <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/Pages/default.aspx>

### Other HECC Newsletters and Publications - Recent Issues

- [HECC Collaborations, May 2024: Partners are Essential to Strategic Planning, Funding Priorities, and FAFSA Completion](#)
- [ACTION NEEDED - Supporting Applicants with the FAFSA and ORSAA](#)
- [Oregon High School Equivalency Program Update](#)
- [HECC Collaborations, April 2024: Legislative Outcomes, and Looking to the Future for Oregon Students and Workers](#)
- [Future Ready Oregon Update, May 2024](#)