



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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September Agency Update:

September 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, 2025-27 budget recommendations, upcoming conferences, 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. One of the key responsibilities of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), established by statute, is to adopt a strategic plan to achieve state postsecondary and training goals. This fall, the Commission expects to adopt a new plan that builds on and replaces the [current planning documents](#). This foundational document will guide the agency strategies and actions to serve Oregonians for the next five years. At its August meeting, the HECC provided input to refine the first draft of this new strategic

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, October 9-10, 2024 (tentative)
Funding and Achievement Subcommittee meeting: October 9, 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](#)
[Oregon Youth Works](#) has funding currently available – see page 2

plan, which has been the culmination of broad statewide partner engagement this year. [View the August draft of the HECC Strategic Plan here.](#) The new strategic plan in development builds on the prior roadmap and framework, but focuses more particularly on how the HECC will exercise its leadership and statutory authorities to advance State objectives for postsecondary education and workforce development. Coraggio Group has provided facilitation to the Commission and staff on the strategic planning process and has led the discussion with Commissioners. View Coraggio Group's [presentation on the HECC strategic plan here.](#)

HECC Approves 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Higher Education and Workforce: At its August public meeting, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) approved the postsecondary education and training Agency Request Budget (ARB) amounts for 2025-27. The proposed \$4.75 billion budget represents the agency's recommendations to the Governor, and with this approval, the full ARB document will be submitted to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) by August 30, an early step in a [multi-phased state budget development process described here.](#) The next step in the budget process will be the Governor's Recommended Budget which generally comes out in December and becomes a starting point for deliberations during the 2025 Legislative Session. To support a shared and realistic understanding at this point in the budgetary environment, Governor Kotek and DAS instructed HECC this year to keep its ARB request for new proposals or for increased state spending under a set limit to align with the realities outlined in the most recent state economic forecast. To meet these expectations, most [funding levels in the HECC ARB](#) are at Current Service Level amounts; these amounts are determined by applying inflationary increases to the previous biennial budget, as well as by the phasing out of one-time funding. [New funding proposals summarized here](#) were limited to one percent of General Fund and Lottery Fund dollars, which for HECC is about \$31 million. The majority of these new funds (\$25 million) in the ARB are proposed for need-based financial aid through the Oregon Opportunity Grant. In addition to reviewing the ARB amounts, Commissioners reviewed a draft [letter from HECC Chair Sandy Rowe to the Governor](#) which expresses the Commission's concerns about the potential impact of these funding levels, and provides input for the Governor's Office to consider if the state economic conditions change.

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 and we are very glad to see that the growth trend continues into 2024-25. For the 2024-25 school year, the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) has already received 755 submitted applications and 417 of those applicants have been fully approved, others are pending due to one or more of the following: needing to submit a Tribal Enrollment Verification form, need to complete the 2024-25 FAFSA/ORSAA, or they might seek to enroll in a non-eligible school. For the 2023-24 school year the OSAC awarded 501 OTSG recipients, compared to 412 students for the 2022-2023 academic year (the pilot year). 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.](#)

Oregon Youth Works has a direct investment opportunity to cooperatively partner in Tribal Workforce Partnerships that emphasize youth workforce & development experiences. In collaboration with each of Oregon's 9 Federally Recognized Tribal Sovereign Nations, Oregon Youth Corps has an initial investment of \$540,000 of funding available through Intergovernmental Agreements (\$60,000 of per agreement). Intergovernmental Agreements intend to start in 2025 and span over four years, with an opportunity to add new funding as it becomes available. Oregon Youth Corps invites you to schedule an initial meeting with the contact below to learn and share about partnering and building a framework to support mutually shared goals. Primary Contact: Jeremy Ahola. Call or Text: 503-689-6662. Work email: Jeremy.w.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov.

Affordability and Financial Aid News

Oregon is Closing the Gap in FAFSA/ORSAA Completion, but We Continue to Encourage Student Support: 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, there has been serious concern in Oregon and nationally about FAFSA completion being far behind previous years. We are pleased to report that our [latest Oregon data on financial aid form completion](#) shows considerable progress. While there is still work to be done, Oregon high school senior completion rates are only 1.7 percent behind where they were at last year at this time in completion of the FAFSA or ORSAA. We congratulate all students who have completed the form, and thank all who support them, including our tribal partners. Students who have not yet applied should know it's not too late. Resources on financial aid form completion can be found using the links below.

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

Oregon Student Aid Website: The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) encourages 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 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 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. 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.](#)

Register Now: 2024 ASPIRE Conferences, October 16 and 18: Registration is open for the [ASPIRE Fall Conference](#), an annual event organized by the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) that brings together professionals committed to advancing college and career mentoring and access. In 2024, we will hold two ASPIRE conference events—one in Eugene and one in Bend. Among many exciting workshops, sessions will focus on financial aid and scholarships, supporting students with the FAFSA or ORSAA, supporting students interested in apprenticeships and trades, supporting middle school programs, and exploring the role of artificial intelligence in career and college readiness.

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

Register Now: The "Point of View" Oregon Adult Basic Skills Conference on November 4-5 Will Focus on Diverse Perspectives: We invite partners to join us for the [Oregon Adult Basic Skills \(ABS\) Conference on November 4-5, 2024](#), in Salem, Oregon. The theme of this year's conference is "Point of View," emphasizing the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives of adult learners and those pursuing high school equivalency. The conference aims to prepare educators and leaders with strategies to understand how these varied backgrounds influence learning processes and outcomes. The [Oregon Adult Basic Skills Conference](#) is an annual event organized by the HECC Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development that brings together professionals committed to advancing Adult Basic Skills and high school equivalency education.

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.](#)

Academic Program Approvals: At its summer Commission meetings, the HECC approved the following new academic programs at Oregon's colleges and universities. Read more about these programs its Jun and August [meeting materials here.](#) Community College Programs— [Blue Mountain Community College](#): Veterinary Assistant, One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC1). [Central Oregon Community College](#): STEM in Early Learning, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC0). [Clackamas Community College](#): Energy System Maintenance, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC); Music Technology, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Wildland Fire Management, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Wildland Fire Science, One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC1). [Lane Community College](#): Paraprofessional, Education Assistant and Community Educator, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC); CTE Educator, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC). [Portland Community College](#): Maritime Welding, Two-Year Certificate of Completion (CC2). [Umpqua Community College](#): Business, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Civil Engineering and Surveying Technology, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Water Quality Technology, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Phlebotomy, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC); Umpqua Healthcare

Careers Pathway, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC); Medical Assisting, One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC). [Rogue Community College](#): Advanced Emergency Care, One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC1); Manufacturing Technology, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Medical Assisting Administrator, Associate of Applied Science (AAS); Pharmacy Technician, Less Than One-Year Certificate of Completion (CC); Emergency Services, Associate of Applied Science (AAS). [Southwestern Oregon Community College](#): Human Services, Associate of Applied Science (AAS). [University Programs—Portland State University](#): Master of Science in Applied Economics and Data Analytics (MS); Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science in Human Services (BA, BS); Bachelor of Applied Science in Management Leadership (BAS). [Oregon Institute of Technology](#): Bachelor of Science in Construction Management (BS). [Southern Oregon University](#): Ecology & Conservation, Bachelor of Science (BS); Biomedical Science, Bachelor of Science (BS).

[Community College, Notifications of Statement of Need: Bachelor of Science: Nursing \(BSN\)](#) —The review and approval of Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN) degrees is a three-step submission process, with notification of statement of need being the first step. The Commission in June received notifications of Statement of Need for Bachelor of Science: Nursing degrees from the following institutions; [Central Oregon Community College](#); [Chemeketa Community College](#); [Klamath Community College](#); [Linn-Benton Community College](#); [Oregon Coast Community College](#); and [Treasure Valley Community College](#)

New Reports and Other Updates

[Public University Educator Equity Plans Focus on Increasing Diversity](#): Oregon is working intentionally to increase diversity in K-12 educators. Since 2016, each public university has regularly updated the unique two-year plans that describe how colleges of education are implementing culturally sustaining practices for better student retention and, over time, increasing the share of diverse graduates. The [Southern Oregon University plan has an intentional focus on tribal engagement](#). Pursuant to ORS 342.447, the six institutions providing updates on their plans are: Eastern Oregon University, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University. [View all the 2024-2026 Educator Equity plans here.](#)

[HECC Completes Institutional Evaluations for Regional and Technical Universities](#): While Oregon's seven public universities are governed by independent governing boards, the Oregon Legislature requires a regular evaluation of each university. The HECC is charged by statute (ORS 352.002) to [regularly evaluate public universities](#) with a focus on their contributions related to meeting state higher education goals. At its April Commission meeting, the HECC approved evaluations of: [Eastern Oregon University \(EOU\)](#), [Oregon Institute of Technology \(Oregon Tech\)](#), [Southern Oregon University \(SOU\)](#), and [Western Oregon University \(WOU\)](#).

[Jennifer Smith Appointed to Higher Education Coordinating Commission](#): In May, the Oregon Senate confirmed Governor Tina Kotek's appointment of Jennifer Smith to the public institution staff member position on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Jennifer Smith is project coordinator with the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon (UO), and the current President of the UO's classified employee union, SEIU 503 Local 085. View the current list of Commissioners here.

[National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week September 16-20 is a Time to Thank Oregon's Adult Education Partners](#): We invite tribal partners to join us in observing [National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week](#) on September 16-20, 2024. This week highlights the critical role of adult education, celebrates the achievements of adult learners, and promotes greater participation and support for adult education programs statewide. As we strive to meet [Oregon's adult education and training goal](#), we recognize that adult education is crucial for the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the state. Partners may join us in September, and throughout the year, in celebrating adult learners and adult education educators. You can find [social media content to help celebrate adult learners here.](#)

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

- [HECC Collaborations, August 2024: Convenings and Collaborative Strategies Make a Difference for Oregon Learners](#)
- [Transfer Hub newsletter, July 2024](#)
- [Summer Bridge: Number Eight: Starting College](#)
- [Future Ready Oregon Update, July 2024: Prosperity 10,000 Highlight](#)