



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Ben Cannon, Executive Director
Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, Director of DEIA and Tribal Liaison
rudyane.rivera-lindstrom@hecc.oregon.gov

Phone: 503-378-5690
3225 25th Street SE | Salem, OR 97302
www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

November Agency Update:

November 2023 | 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, implementation of actions taken during the 2023 Legislative Session, 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.

Affordability Improves in Oregon's Colleges and Universities: The HECC Office of Research and Data recently published a new research brief on improvements in affordability at public colleges and universities in Oregon from 2019-20 to 2021-21, and the underlying reasons behind these improvements. Through a combination of expanded financial aid, reduced enrollment, and relatively stable tuition in recent years, more Oregon students at public colleges and universities had resources to cover the cost of attendance in the last two years than at any time in recent history. [Read the issue brief 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](#), finalized in 2021, 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: www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Pages/hecc.aspx. [Sign up for newsletters and updates here.](#)

Upcoming Meetings

Higher Education Coordinating Commission, December 14, 2023 (tentative).

For other [upcoming public meetings of the HECC, see our website here.](#) For [Affiliated Boas \(WTDB, others, see here\)](#). 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.](#) The Request for Applications is Open for 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Competitive Grants.

Oregon Youth Corps has funding currently available for the development and support of Tribal Workforce Partnerships. Contact: Jeremy.h.ahola@hecc.oregon.gov

Fall Enrollment is Up Overall: We recently shared a [summary of the fall 4th week enrollment data for the public institutions](#) on our website. Across all public institutions, enrollment rose 4.3 percent this fall, compared to 2022. This is the largest increase since the pandemic began; however, enrollment has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The number of learners at community college is higher in 2023 than in 2022 (84,740), rising 7.3 percent. Enrollment rose at 12 of the 17 colleges. The number of public university learners is slightly higher in 2023 than in 2022 (96,950), rising 1.6 percent. Enrollment rose at some universities and fell at others.

Implementation of 2023 Investments: Current and future learners will benefit from historic investments in financial aid and other critical postsecondary funding 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 is 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 a major 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) is increasing awards for the lowest income Oregonians. These need-based grants follow the students. For the first time, HECC is able to award the new 75 percent of average 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.

The HECC announced in a [recent press release](#) that it has offered Future Ready Oregon Workforce Ready Grant awards to 30 community-based organizations and workforce service providers to advance innovative and collaborative workforce development programs and partnerships. A combined total of approximately \$35 million has been preliminarily awarded, making this the largest round of Future Ready Oregon grant funding to date. “Workforce Ready Grants, Round Two: Innovation in Workforce Programs” support education and training programs that center the needs of Oregon’s underserved and marginalized communities and connect individuals to the resources they need for good-paying jobs and meaningful careers in key sectors of Oregon’s economy—healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. A number of projects directly serve tribal members; for more information, please see the [table of preliminary project descriptions](#).

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](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.

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.

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. OSAC encourages Oregonians to [complete the FAFSA or ORSAA](#) and to apply for state grant programs at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://oregonstudentaid.gov). The 2024-25 FAFSA and ORSAA applications usually open on October 1 but are delayed this year due to the federal changes to the FAFSA. **Both applications will open by December 31, 2023**, and students are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, once the applications are available, for their best chances at financial aid opportunities for the 2024-25 academic year.

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 simply 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 houselessness 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@state.or.us.

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 started convening 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 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.

OregonServes 2024-25 AmeriCorps Competitive Grant Request for Applications (RFA) to operate an AmeriCorps State program in Oregon is open. AmeriCorps offers people-power and funding to organizations seeking to make an impact in their communities, while focusing on key funding areas. **Applications are due December 10, 11:59 PM.** New and continuing applicants can learn more by visiting the [AmeriCorps Competitive Grants page here.](#) For more information, contact oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov.

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 October and November 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.](#)

Community Colleges:

- Chemeketa Community College— Corrections, AAS; Law Enforcement, AAS; Behavioral Health, AAS; Medical Assisting, AAS; Paramedic Bridge Certificate, Two-year Certificate
- Lane Community College — Accounting One-year Certificate; Business Management, One-year Certificate
- Portland Community College — Counselor in Training, Certificate

Public Universities:

- Oregon Institute of Technology, Masters of Science in Biomedical Sciences, MS-BMS

New Reports and Other Updates

OregonServes Announces Software System to Connect Volunteers During Disasters: As a partner in the Oregon's Emergency Support Function for Volunteers and Donations, [OregonServes](#) proudly introduces [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. Explore and sign up for [ORVID](#) or watch our [volunteer video](#). Organizations interested in utilizing ORVID, [watch this video](#) or learn how to [sign up for an account here](#).

HECC Elects Sandy Rowe as Chair, and Greg Hamann as Vice Chair: At its November 9 public meeting, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission unanimously elected Sandy Rowe as the incoming Chair of the Commission, and Greg Hamann as incoming Vice Chair, to be effective January 1, 2024. Chair Terry Cross will conclude his position as Chair in December, and will be recognized for his service at the December 14 public meeting. Learn more about [Commission membership here](#).

Three New Members Confirmed, and Two Members Nominated for service on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission: We are pleased to welcome three new commissioners to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. On September 29, the Oregon Senate confirmed Governor Tina Kotek's nominations for appointments of Rachel Biscoe, Evelyn Kocher, and Gayle Yamasaki. Their service formally began on October 5, 2023. Rachel Biscoe is serving in the community college student position, Evelyn Kocher is serving in a position at large, and Gayle Yamasaki is serving in the second congressional district position. [Governor Kotek also recently announced nominations](#) for appointments of two new HECC members: Jennifer Procter Andrews, a Coquille Tribal Council member, and Theresa Martinez. Jennifer Procter Andrews is nominated for the position currently held by Terry Cross. Theresa Martinez is nominated for the position currently held by Helen Edwards. The Senate is expected to consider the nominations for confirmation in early 2024.

HECC is Seeking Members for the Private Career School (PCS) Advisory Committee: HECC is seeking new members for the Private Career School Advisory Committee, whose role is to advise HECC staff regarding education provided by the private career school sector. The Committee meets four times a year and provides staff with feedback on policy, procedures and laws. Members include PCS, public and PCS graduate representatives. If you are interested in serving or would like additional information, please contact Kia Sorensen at kia.sorensen@hecc.oregon.gov.

Other HECC Newsletters and Publications - Recent Issues

- [OregonServes newsletter, October 2023](#)
- [Equity Resources, October 2023](#)
- [Future Ready Oregon Update, October 2023](#)
- [Subscribe to other HECC newsletters or update your subscription preferences here.](#)