

**HB 4043 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development**

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**Prepared By:** Laura Kentnesse, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 2/8

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Requires community colleges to jointly conduct study to determine best methods for helping community college students learn about and apply for state or federal benefits. Requires community colleges submit report detailing study findings to the interim legislative committees on higher education by February 1, 2019. Sunsets study January 2, 2020. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

Many community college students experience basic needs insecurity. Nationally, approximately 14% of community college students are homeless, 50% are housing insecure, and 67% experience food insecurity, according to the 2017 Wisconsin HOPE Lab study. The Oregon Community College Association reports that these types of significant life challenges often impede academic persistence and completion in Oregon.

Access to public benefits such as food, cash, housing, energy, and transportation assistance, subsidized health insurance, and child care support, is currently limited on Oregon's community college campuses. Many students who are eligible for these benefits are unaware that they qualify or do not know how to apply. For those students who are aware of their eligibility, many report confusion when attempting to navigate federal, state, and local benefits, or face social or cultural barriers to receiving assistance.

House Bill 4043 would require community colleges to investigate best practices for integration of benefits and to ensure student access to available financial supports.