

Enrolled
House Bill 2835

Sponsored by Representative REARDON, Senators GORSEK, GELSER, Representatives ALONSO LEON, MCLAIN, Senators DEMBROW, WAGNER; Representatives CAMPOS, DEXTER, EVANS, GRAYBER, HOLVEY, HUDSON, KROPF, MEEK, NERON, NOSSE, PHAM, POWER, PRUSAK, REYNOLDS, RUIZ, SCHOUTEN, SOLLMAN, WILDE, WILLIAMS, WITT, Senators FREDERICK, LIEBER (Presession filed.)

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to benefits programs for students at institutions of higher education; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section:

(a) “Benefits navigator” means an individual who is employed by a public institution of higher education for the purpose of helping students at the institution apply for and receive assistance from benefits programs.

(b) “Benefits program” means any federal, state or local program that provides assistance or benefits to individuals with financial need.

(c) “Public institution of higher education” has the meaning given that term in ORS 350.350.

(2) Each public institution of higher education shall:

(a) Employ a benefits navigator who has a detailed understanding of eligibility requirements for benefits programs and how to apply for assistance under benefits programs;

(b) Provide training for the benefits navigator employed by the institution, with training guidance and support provided by the Department of Human Services to the institution; and

(c) Participate in a statewide consortium with other public institutions of higher education for the purpose of facilitating communication between benefits navigators at different institutions and developing best practices for benefits navigators.

(3) Each benefits navigator hired under this section shall:

(a) Assist students at the public institution of higher education in determining eligibility for benefits programs and applying for assistance under benefits programs;

(b) Use the consortium developed under subsection (2) of this section to coordinate with benefits navigators at other public institutions of higher education for the purpose of collecting data and developing best practices for helping students apply for and receive assistance from benefits programs; and

(c) Coordinate and provide culturally specific resources, including resources for non-English speakers, to support students at the institution.

(4) Each public institution of higher education, in consultation with the benefits navigator hired by that institution, shall develop an internal process to enable students at

the institution to provide feedback and recommendations on how the institution can better assist students in determining eligibility for benefits programs and applying for assistance under benefits programs.

SECTION 2. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$4,999,150, for distribution to community colleges operated under ORS chapter 341 and public universities listed in ORS 352.002, for the purpose of hiring benefits navigators under section 1 of this 2021 Act.

SECTION 3. This 2021 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2021 Act takes effect on its passage.

Passed by House June 17, 2021

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Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Passed by Senate June 23, 2021

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Received by Governor:

.....M,....., 2021

Approved:

.....M,....., 2021

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Kate Brown, Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M,....., 2021

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Shemia Fagan, Secretary of State