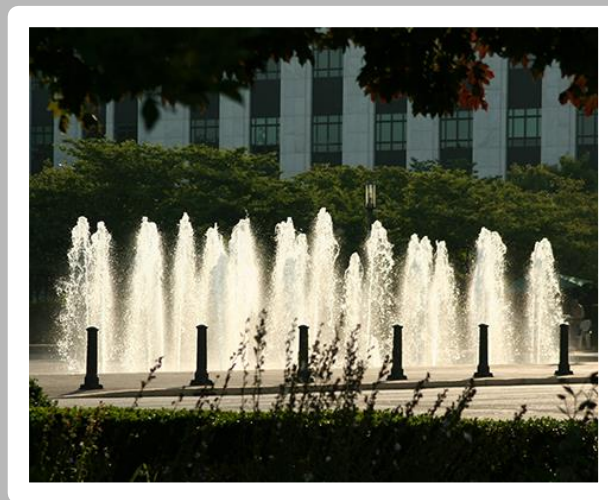


SENATE BILL 1545 (2022):
Future Ready Oregon
Year One Report



This report was prepared by Shanda Haluapo, Amy G. Cox, and Daniel Urban of the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission. December 2022.

PREFACE

Senate Bill (SB) 1545 (2022), known as Future Ready Oregon, is a \$200 million package of investments for workforce development in Oregon. The aims of the legislation are to advance a more equitable workforce system, through expanded and more innovative workforce training, and to raise economic prosperity, through connecting individuals to the training they need to obtain well-paying jobs and connecting businesses to the skilled labor they need to grow.

Oregon entered the decade with a projected need of over 300,000 adults with postsecondary credentials. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these workforce needs with an economic crisis that laid bare significant disparities in Oregon's workforce across communities that earlier economic crises had hurt and education and training had marginalized: communities of color, with low incomes, and living in rural areas, among others. These communities experience long-standing barriers to the job readiness and career advancement that enable economic stability. Future Ready Oregon addresses these barriers with a suite of programs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

The programs include means to build on existing successful approaches and means to develop transformational change. At a state level, Future Ready Oregon aims to strengthen Oregon's economic competitiveness by removing barriers to workers, developing a diverse workforce, and supporting businesses' needs for employees today and into the future. It focuses on sectors with high workforce needs that offer pathways to economic stability: healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and construction. It also prioritizes opportunities for underserved communities, including adult learners, dislocated workers, disconnected youth, people of color, women, people with low incomes, rural communities, veterans, individuals with disabilities, Oregonians who are incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, and members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes.

The legislation requires an evaluative annual report to the Legislature. The multifaceted and comprehensive nature of Future Ready Oregon mean that its impacts will be tracked and assessed for several years. This first annual report describes and assesses the initial work undertaken to implement the investments at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), the Bureau of Labor and Industries, and the Youth Development Division of the Oregon Department of Education. These agencies are tasked with administering Future Ready Oregon programs in connection with the Oregon Employment Department, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the Workforce Talent Development Board, and numerous local organizations.

The report is prepared by staff in HECC's Office of Research and Data in coordination with these organizations and HECC's Office of Future Ready Oregon. As the single state entity responsible for ensuring pathways to postsecondary success for Oregonians, the HECC sets state policy and funding strategies, administers numerous programs and over \$1.7 billion of funding annually, and convenes partners working across the public and private postsecondary education and training to achieve state goals. More information about HECC can be found at www.oregon.gov/highered. Questions about the HECC should be directed to info.HECC@state.or.us, and questions about this report should be directed to the Director of the Office of Research and Data, Amy Cox, at amy.cox@state.or.us.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In spring 2022, the Oregon Legislature passed Future Ready Oregon, a comprehensive and multifaceted suite of investments in workforce development¹. The \$200 million package aims to develop a more equitable workforce system by expanding and innovating workforce training, and to advance equitable economic prosperity by connecting individuals to the education and training they need for well-paying jobs and businesses to the skilled labor they need to grow and prosper. This report examines the initial implementation of these investments, covering the first eight months since the law's enactment, and provides baseline data for tracking the legislation's impacts in future reports.

Future Ready Oregon invests in Oregon's workforce development system broadly, to include an array of providers of postsecondary education and training in addition to the core components of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014). In Oregon, this core workforce development system serves more than 300,000 job seekers and 11,000 employers annually, and it includes the State Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB), nine local workforce development boards, 39 WorkSource Oregon (WSO) Centers, 18 publicly funded programs, and numerous service providers. More broadly, workforce development in Oregon includes programs and services coordinated or administered by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and 17 community colleges and seven public universities; the Oregon Employment Department (OED); the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS); the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), and numerous community-based organizations that deliver career-connected education and training services under contractual agreements. The HECC plays a central role in this work in its coordination of community colleges and public universities, its coordination of local workforce development boards, its staff support for the WTDB, and its allocation of WIOA funds.

Workforce training in Oregon has expanded in breadth and depth for decades, as the state and federal government work to strengthen the economy by addressing gaps between workers' skills and employers' needs for skilled staff. The latest of these expansions, Future Ready Oregon, offers additional resources, advances innovation, and prioritizes those who have been underserved by the workforce system. Future Ready Oregon consists of eight component programs, administered by the HECC, BOLI, and ODE's Youth Development Division (YDD), in coordination with multiple other state agencies, governing boards, and local organizations. Using the descriptions provided by the Governor's Office to describe the legislation shortly after its passing, these programs are:²

¹ Future Ready Oregon, S.B. 1545, 81st Oregon Legislative Assembly, 2022 Regular Session.

² Office of the Governor, Kate Brown, (2022).

Prosperity 10,000 (Section 3 of SB 1545, 2022)

Oregon's nine local workforce boards convene civic, business, and workforce development leaders to identify regionally significant sector strategies that leverage funding and resources within their communities to match the skills of workers with the workforce demands of businesses. This investment establishes the Prosperity 10,000 Program at the HECC and incorporates Prosperity 10,000 into the statewide plan for the SNAP Employment and Training Program. \$35 million will be distributed directly to local workforce boards to increase local service capacity to provide career coaching, referrals to training opportunities and wraparound services; support earn and learn opportunities, including paid internships, scholarships, and stipends; and scale-up wrap-around services and supports, including childcare, housing, transportation, and technology.

Community College Career Pathways Programs (Section 4 of SB 1545, 2022)

A Career Pathway is a series of connected education and training programs and student support services enabling individuals to secure a job or advance in an in-demand industry or occupation. This \$14.9 million investment continues and expands Career Pathways efforts at each of Oregon's 17 community colleges to support an increasing demand for student support services, particularly for priority populations. This investment funds a full-time Coordinator at each college, recruitment and re-engagement efforts, and student support services.

Registered Apprenticeship (Section 6 of SB 1545, 2022)

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway by which employers can develop and prepare their future workforce. Individuals obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and an apprentice credential. Oregon uses state and federal funds to support registered apprenticeship programs approved by the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council. BOLI manages apprenticeship and coordinates with the HECC to administer grants to expand, diversify, and strengthen apprenticeship in Oregon. This \$20 million investment increases BOLI's capacity to recruit new programs and facilitate innovation, provide grants to organizations that offer training resources and direct benefits to individual apprentices, and support increased participation in and completion of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

Youth Programs (Section 7 of SB 1545, 2022)

The Youth Development Division's Workforce Readiness and Reengagement grant programs support high quality, community-based workforce readiness programs for youth ages 14-24 who are disconnected from education and employment. This \$10.5 million investment expands YDD's existing grant programs, providing for expanded workforce readiness and reengagement services, including outreach, academic remediation, diploma, and GED completion, mentoring and coaching, career exploration, and paid work experience.

Credit for Prior Learning (Section 8 of SB 1545, 2022)

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience, through military training and experience, and through formal and informal education and training. Statewide CPL standards were adopted in 2017, but there has not been additional investment for implementation. This \$10 million investment will be used to scale-up CPL, supporting public institutions to develop methods and refine processes for awarding and reporting CPL efforts.

Workforce Ready Grants (Section 9 of SB 1545, 2022)

This \$95 million investment funds new and innovative education and training programs in the key sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, and technology; organizational capacity-building; and direct benefits to individuals, including stipends for earn and learn experiences and funding to pay for education, training costs, and wraparound services. Competitive Workforce Ready Grants will be administered by HECC, in consultation with the WTDB, Industry Consortia, and local workforce boards. The commission will establish criteria and standards to award competitive grants to community-based organizations and workforce service providers.

Industry Consortia (Section 10 of SB 1545, 2022)

This \$1 million investment funds the creation of statewide industry consortia in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology to identify industry-specific statewide workforce needs and high-value credentials, improve systems alignment, and develop recruitment and retention strategies. Statewide industry consortia will be advisory to the WTDB, informing strategic planning, policy, and investments.

Workforce Benefits Navigators (Section 11 of SB 1545, 2022)

This \$10 million investment places benefits navigators at WorkSource Oregon one stop centers and CBOs across the state. Navigators provide a single point of contact to efficiently help individuals access the resources that match their unique needs and navigate the different programs and benefits.

FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY OF REPORT

Each of the component programs of Future Ready Oregon seeks to improve the capacity, equity, and effectiveness of Oregon's workforce system. Together, they represent a significant investment in a range of programs and organizations to create a more comprehensive system that improve outcomes for individuals, employers, and the State. In the years to come, we will be tracking the impacts of this new investment on the State, on industries and businesses, communities, and individuals. In the near term, these future impacts depend partly on how the programs are put into place and whether that implementation is timely and true to the requirements and the spirit of the legislation. Therefore, the central focus of this report is a description and assessment of the process of implementation, combined with a description of baseline labor force and education data for future comparison. The focus on implementation is intentional, not only because this early period of Future Ready Oregon

precludes any assessment of impact; the impact and efficacy of any program also depends on how it was implemented.

To this end, we examined the extent and the effectiveness of Future Ready Oregon implementation in these first eight months by asking several intertwined questions:

- How timely was the implementation?
- How closely is the implemented program adhering to requirements, either as laid out in the legislation or as laid out by the administering agency?
- How closely is the implemented program adhering to priorities laid out in the legislation?
- How is the program, as implemented, creating the foundation for improved economic prosperity for participants, businesses, and the state?
- How is the program, as implemented, creating the foundation for improved equity for participants, businesses, and the state?

We operationalized these questions with more detailed queries from each program, soliciting descriptions of both aspects that worked smoothly and aspects that will need additional attention next year to effect continuous improvement. We gathered this qualitative data from relevant staff and leadership of each program.

We reviewed the answers we received for themes, and we followed up with program staff to fill holes and answer remaining questions. We then combined the qualitative data with administrative grant data on timelines to describe and assess the implementation of each program, vetting these across multiple staff. We also confirmed the findings with external partners to check for errors.

FINDINGS

Implementation of Prosperity 10,000. Oregon's nine local workforce boards implemented this year's Prosperity 10,000 Program in a very tight timeline. Each one used a unique approach, but nearly all awarded grants, conducted community engagement, and began serving participants. Contracted providers are offering workforce development program support, expanded access to community-based career counseling and wraparound supports and services, and opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and degrees through work-based learning experiences. Many local workforce boards established new partnerships and reported learning new strategies to improve their services after community outreach. The diversity in approaches can serve as a strength in the coming year if boards learn from each other.

Implementation of Career Pathways. HECC designed an efficient application process in a short time for the Postsecondary Career Pathways Program. Community colleges are implementing the Future Ready Oregon investment to expand and build capacity in existing Career Pathways programs, create new programming (e.g., new careers), collaborate with community partners, and expand or create

intentional student support services to students. Colleges have also invested funds in programming, services, and infrastructure that support priority populations and have collaborated with community-based organizations and workforce agencies to serve priority populations better. Contract execution took longer than some colleges planned when designing their programs, but implementation is underway. Additionally, HECC was delayed in getting data specifications to the colleges but then provided technical support for colleges to implement the specifications.

Implementation of Registered Apprenticeships. BOLI built a new team and a new grants program at an accelerated speed that implemented the Registered Apprenticeship Program in innovative ways. They developed effective processes to ensure adherence to the requirements and goals of Future Ready Oregon, conducting extensive outreach to encourage wide-ranging applications and providing technical assistance to applicants. Their award decisions accounted for program goals and service to all priority populations and all regions of the state. They launched new and expanded apprenticeships in the healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and construction (pre-apprenticeship only) sectors with the first two rounds of funding and improved their processes along the way in response to constituent feedback and their own assessment to ensure representation of all regions and priority populations.

Youth Programs. YDD implemented Youth Programs with extensive efforts to be expansive and innovative. They engaged community partners, created a streamlined application, and evaluated applications in alignment with the goals of Future Ready Oregon. They received many more applications than they could fund and awarded grants to organizations that could serve youth from priority populations and that came from across the state. They continue to refine their processes with plans to engage Tribal nations and the eastern Oregon region in the second round.

Credit for Prior Learning. In a short timeframe, HECC administered grants for public institutions to expand student opportunities to earn credit for their previous learning. HECC was efficient in the awarding of funds to enable institutions as much time as possible to build their programs. Perhaps because of the narrow timeline, six of the public colleges and universities did not apply for funds, which raises some concern about whether students will have fewer opportunities at those institutions. HECC plans to share successful tools and strategies developed out of Future Ready Oregon across all institutions, which may help mitigate differences in opportunities.

Workforce Ready Grants. HECC implemented the first round of Workforce Ready Grants in a narrow window of time with substantial engagement of external partners and a high priority on equity and inclusivity. HECC worked to balance the time needed to engage partners, provide technical assistance and supports to grant applicants, and develop community review with the time grantees would need to provide services to participants. The result was the receipt of many more applications than could be funded. The HECC maximized the number of grants awarded by instituting a funding ceiling given the short time frame grantees would have to expend the general funds. The HECC also convened advisory committees to inform and employ inclusive, low-barrier strategies for accessing government funding that would bring new organizations to the work. The first round of grants have

been awarded, and the HECC is continuing to engage external communities to refine its processes for the second round.

Industry Consortia. The HECC and the WTDB contracted with The Woolsey Group to assess the workforce landscape of each industry (healthcare, manufacturing, technology) and inform the framework for establishing statewide Industry Consortia. In a short timeframe, they completed extensive consultation with a wide range of business, education, and community leaders to understand workforce training needs and determine how the statewide Industry Consortia could fill those needs. They laid out a framework for the consortia from their findings that creates a clearer and more specific plan than would have occurred without it. The HECC and WTDB, in partnership with The Woolsey Group, have effectively positioned Future Ready Oregon's Industry Consortia to be productive leaders in the coming year. The plan is for the three Industry Consortia to become the credible authority of industry and workforce development information that shapes workforce strategies for recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities in these industries.

Workforce Benefits Navigator. Because the Workforce Benefits Navigator program is funded by federal ARPA funds (which have a longer timeline for expenditures), HECC prioritized implementing the other programs funded with the shorter-term general funds. HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff plans to send out the Request for Applications (RFA) to Oregon's nine local workforce development boards to apply for Workforce Benefits Navigators funding in the second quarter of 2023. Local workforce development boards interested in participating in the program will need to apply and describe how they will deploy Workforce Benefits Navigators at comprehensive one-stop centers and community-based organizations across their region. They will also need to demonstrate how they will intentionally engage with and support priority populations. HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff reported they will make every effort to ensure Workforce Benefits Navigators are available in all parts of the state.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, implementation of Future Ready Oregon programs has been timely and has adhered to the legislation's focus on community engagement, equity, and innovation. The two programs in initial stages of implementation are Industry Consortia and Workforce Benefits Navigators. While the Industry Consortia are not convened yet, implementation is well underway by laying significant groundwork to set the Consortia up for success. The Workforce Benefits Navigator Program relies on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds with a longer timeframe for expending funds. Six of Future Ready Oregon's program investments have awarded grants, and grantees have begun their work. Though organizations uniformly reported that the tight time frame made the work challenging, they released RFAs, awarded grants, and implemented work, nonetheless. This is a testament to the priority that the administering agencies and nearly all related organizations placed on Future Ready Oregon, a priority which we heard repeatedly in their reports to us.

At the same time, organizations had to make tradeoffs as they balanced expediting funds with the legislation's emphasis on innovation and engagement. Organizations balanced these competing goals

differently, depending on their other obligations, the availability of other funding, and their previous experience with innovation and engagement. Some participating organizations innovated little if at all or engaged the community little if at all. This was more often the case in the earlier programs.

However, most organizations did use Future Ready Oregon as an impetus to be innovative. Agencies developed new processes to bring new partners to the table, to consult with communities, to draw wide and diverse pools of applicants, and to be responsive to potential new partners. Across the board, partners who conducted community engagement and consultation saw increased applications for grants, worked with new partners, and heard feedback that improved their processes.

Serving priority populations was a consistent emphasis in implementation as well. Agencies and almost all partner organizations used it as criterion for grant awarding. Even in the case of capacity-building grants, organizations often planned use of the funds to build capacity for better serving and including priority populations than they had done previously. Partners in different regions and serving different communities understandably focused on priority populations in their area. However, across the programs, we observed that one result of this was that Oregon's federally recognized Tribal communities appeared less represented in among grant applicants and awardees, though they were identified represented in project proposals as participants to serve.

Multiple partners expressed apprehension about participant-level data submissions, because of the short time window to develop processes, problems with related data collected prior to Future Ready Oregon, concern about asking participants for personal information, and not having all data specifications and processes in place prior to implementation. This stage of implementation and plans for data alignment will unfold further in the coming year.

Baseline data from the broader labor force show the need for more people in the labor force broadly and for more postsecondary credentials to meet the labor requirements of businesses and industries. Statewide labor force and education data also illustrate the equity gaps in both arena that limit economic growth at regional, state, business and industry, and individual levels and contribute to continued inequities. Such data make clear the need for greater investment in and for new approaches to workforce training in order to connect individuals to career building skills development. In the coming years, we will compare these statewide data to the participant-level data collected in Future Ready Oregon programs to understand better whether individuals, especially those from priority populations, are earning new credentials and obtaining new employment opportunities, and experiencing upward economic mobility.

Taken together, Future Ready Oregon is well situated for the coming year after the implementation work conducted this year. Most processes are in place, programs are off the ground, and the investment is positioned to make the impacts organizations hope to make. Looking to 2023, the agencies and partner organizations are now generally in a state of continuous improvement that allows for learning from the first year and sharing best practices.

The first of these is around community engagement. Across these many programs and organizations, the practices employed in this first year make clear that deliberate outreach is necessary to engage

communities. This is especially true for communities who have not been engaged with government funding mechanisms and/or with the workforce development system, and it is especially true for underserved communities identified as priority populations. Deliberate engagement can take many forms, including listening sessions, advisory committees, individual outreach, and travel. Engagement yielded consistent benefits to serving communities, bringing in new service providers, and creating the innovation needed to develop the diverse workforce Oregon needs. We strongly recommend that organizations who have not begun this work do so in 2023 in order to serve priority populations effectively. We also recommend that all organizations approach community engagement with a learning lens to continue to develop their processes.

The second lesson that is clear from a wholistic view of the many implementation processes is the need to increase focus on some priority populations. Tribal communities, women, and LGBTQ+ communities were identified less frequently as priority populations served and, for Tribal and LGBTQ+ communities, less frequently among applicant organizations. This may be related to community engagement if engagement is uneven. We recommend all organizations increase attention to these populations in outreach, RFAs, awarding criteria, and participants served to ensure they are being served equitably.

The third lesson has to do with serving participants and comes from combining implementation stories with labor force data. Unemployment is low and workers who can already work likely are. This means that workforce training likely needs to address basic infrastructure needs for those who are not currently employed, such as childcare, housing and food insecurity, and language interpretation. To that end, benefits navigators who can connect people with these and other resources are essential. For individuals who are currently employed, workforce training may have more to do with career advancement, e.g., through stacking credentials. We recommend that service providers plan for both levels of workforce development, acknowledging the full career pipeline.

Finally, we observed organizations that expected continuous improvement or practiced “leading with learning” from themselves and their partners were most likely to be innovative and to engage new partners. With long-term labor force participation declines and rising need for economic growth, creating a more economically viable and equitable workforce system depends in part on doing things differently. We therefore recommend all organizations adopt an expectation for continuous improvement and lead with learning.

Oregon is not alone in the workforce challenges that prompted Future Ready Oregon. These are national challenges being faced across the country. However, Oregon is unique in its response to these challenges with the investment of Future Ready Oregon and its goals of greater alignment, innovation, and equity. After eight months of unusually rapid implementation of large-scale programs, Oregon’s workforce training system is already more able to address these challenges than it was a year ago. It is better resourced, expanding and coordinating efforts more cohesively, and engaging with communities and underserved groups in new and innovative ways. We look forward to the coming year of continued work to see how these efforts are supporting Oregonians.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the contributions of many people. In particular, we wish to thank Oregon’s local workforce development boards, Workforce Talent Development Board, Bureau of Labor and Industry—Apprenticeship and Training Department, Oregon Department of Education—Youth Development Division, community partners, and the HECC offices of Future Ready Oregon; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Workforce Investments; and Community College and Workforce Development who work with Oregonians to administer the Future Ready Oregon programs.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
ATD	Apprenticeship and Training Division
AYA	Alternate Youth Activities
BOLI	Bureau of Labor and Industries
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCWD	HECC's Office of Community College and Workforce Development
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CPCC	Career Pathway Certificate of Completion
CPL	Credit for Prior Learning
CWP	Clackamas Workforce Partnership
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECWIB	East Cascades Works Investment Board
ELL	English Language Learners
EOWB	Eastern Oregon Workforce Board
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Educational Development
HB	House Bill
HECC	Higher Education Coordinating Commission
IRCO	Immigrant Refugee Community Organization
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Others
LTOY	Less Than One Year
LWP	Lane Workforce Partnership
MDTA	Manpower Development Training Act
NAFY	New Avenues for Youth
NOW	Northwest Oregon Works
NOWIA	Natives of One Wind Indigenous Alliance
ODE	Oregon Department of Education
ODHS	Oregon Department of Human Services
OEA	Oregon's Office of Economic Analysis
OED	Oregon Employment Department

OHSU	Oregon Health Sciences University
OJT	On-the-Job-Training
OMEP	Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership
ORS	Oregon Revised Statutes
OSATC	Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council
PIC	Private Industry Council
POIC	Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center
PSE	Public-Service Employment
RFA	Request for Applications
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
RFQQ	Request for Quotes and Qualifications
RWP	Rogue Workforce Partnership
SCBEC	South Coast Business Corporation
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SOWIB	Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board
STEP	SNAP Training and Education Program
TAC	HECC's Technical Advisory Committee
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TAO	Technology Association of Oregon
TEC	Training and Employment Consortium
WFSP	Workforce Service Providers
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Boards
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WSO	WorkSource Oregon
WTDB	State Workforce and Talent Development Board
WWP	Willamette Workforce Partnership
YDC	Youth Development Council
YDD	Youth Development Division

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCING FUTURE READY OREGON

Future Ready Oregon ([Senate Bill \(SB\) 1545, 2022](#)) is a \$200 million investment in Oregon’s workforce system³. The overall objective of Future Ready Oregon is to advance an equitable workforce system and support people and communities who have been long-term unemployed or underemployed in finding work that meets the self-sufficiency standard. With eight component programs, the legislation provides funding for workforce development activities that aim to increase access for all Oregonians, especially those who have been underserved by education and training, by advancing innovation and expanding capacity in the current system. See Figure 1.1.

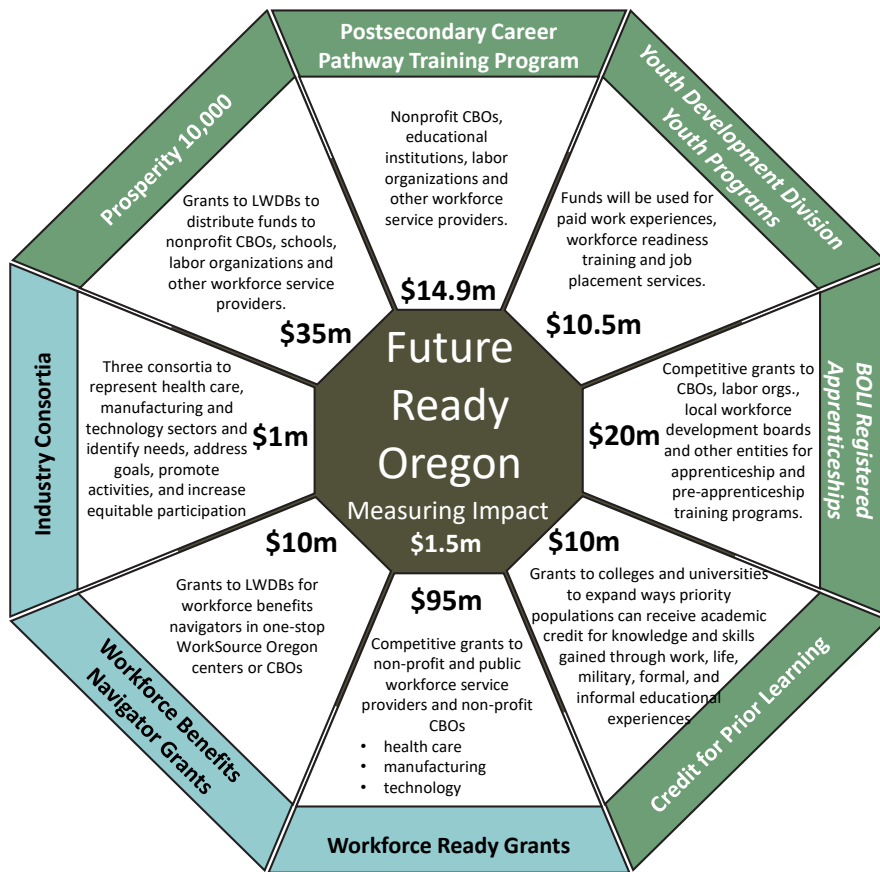


Figure 1. 1: Future Ready Oregon’s Eight Component Programs

³ Future Ready Oregon, S.B. 1545, 81st Oregon Legislative Assembly, 2022 Regular Session.

Investments emphasize recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities for the current and future economy, while prioritizing key populations. The legislation defines priority populations as people of color, women, people with low incomes, rural communities, veterans, individuals with disabilities, Oregonians who are incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes, individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Future Ready Oregon emphasizes a multifaceted approach to equitable prosperity through inclusive, culturally specific, and linguistically appropriate career-connected learning, employment services, and related initiatives.

SB 1545 (2022) requires that the HECC submit an annual report to the governor and legislature assessing the performance and evaluating the outcomes of the various programs. This report fulfills that requirement. As this first annual report is being written during the implementation process, outcomes are not yet available for evaluation, and this first report focuses on baseline data for later comparison and the progress toward implementation made to date. In this introductory chapter, we define the contexts warranting this significant investment, describe the existing workforce training system in Oregon, and explain how Future Ready Oregon will expand this system.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEDERAL WORKFORCE POLICIES & SYSTEMS

The purposes of workforce development systems are to ensure that workers have access to employment and training opportunities, and that businesses can find the skilled workers they need. Workforce training can be broadly defined to include all postsecondary education and training but is typically defined with a focus on non-degree credentials. The core of the system is provisioned under federal policy with origins in the Great Depression and with a goal that remains true today: connecting workers and employers with a bridge of skills development.⁴

A nationwide employment system was first created by the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 in the years following the onset of the Great Depression. The law established public employment offices charged with connecting individuals seeking employment and employers seeking workers. In 1935, the Social Security Act created an unemployment compensation system and funded state Unemployment Insurance programs.

In the decades that followed, several influential federal workforce system laws were passed that created job training opportunities for unemployed, underemployed, and displaced workers; low-income and youth populations; and people with disabilities. The first of these, the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) of 1962, began a recurring theme in workforce development: retraining displaced workers due to technological change. The focus of this theme shifted over time

⁴ Kentnesse, Laura (2017).

toward prioritizing low-income individuals and those receiving social services and cash assistance. The majority of MDTA funding went to classroom and on-the-job training (OJT).⁵

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 continued classroom and OJT, while adding an emphasis on public-service employment (PSE). The CETA also marked a shift in organization, transferring more authority to local governments and establishing private industry councils (PIC) to include representatives from labor, education, business, and other groups. Later, the 1982 Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) shifted focus toward targeted training and reemployment, while largely prohibiting public service employment.⁶

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) replaced the JTPA and moved closer to the system we have today. The WIA established a system of One-Stop centers collocating employment activities, WIA training, and partner programs into shared locations. The WIA also established Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) in the place of PICs. Under WIA, these WIBs were required to have a majority of their membership come from representatives of business, emphasizing a demand-driven system more responsive to local employers. WIA also marked a shift toward universal access to services (regardless of employment status) but also emphasized a work-first approach where job placement was the primary goal.⁷

In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) updated & replaced the WIA, establishing the system in place today. WIOA is intended to comprise a federally funded, locally controlled, and demand driven workforce development system. WIOA continues the One-Stop system for coordinating and delivering workforce service activities. While WIOA again provides universal access, it also prioritizes services to participants with low incomes and employment skills deficiencies, and it is onto this work that Future Ready Oregon builds.

OREGON'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Future Ready Oregon invests in Oregon's workforce development system broadly, to include an array of providers of postsecondary education and training in addition to the core WIOA components. In Oregon, this core workforce development system serves more than 300,000 job seekers and 11,000 employers annually, and includes 39 WorkSource Oregon (WSO) Centers, 18 publicly funded programs, and numerous service providers⁸. However, the larger landscape of workforce development in the state also encompasses a variety of organizations that provide publicly funded education and training with different but overlapping roles. This broader system includes the public elementary and secondary education system under the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), institutions of postsecondary education (community colleges and public universities), other state agencies (including the Oregon Employment Department; the Oregon Department of Human

⁵ Congressional Research Service (2022).

⁶ Congressional Research Service (2022).

⁷ Congressional Research Service (2022).

⁸ Kentnesse, Laura (2017).

Services; and the Bureau of Labor and Industries), and again, the WIOA-established organizations specifically focused on workforce training and development (State Workforce and Talent Development Board, local workforce development boards). In addition, numerous community-based organizations (CBOs) deliver career and training services under contractual agreements. The HECC plays a central role in this work in its coordination of community colleges and public universities, its coordination of local workforce development boards, its staff support for the WTDB, and its allocation of WIOA funds.

In most states, this array of organizations is independent and separately governed, which scholarship on workforce policy identifies as a fundamental structural problem.⁹ Oregon, in contrast, houses academic-focused higher education, career and technical education, and most workforce training (including but not limited to WIOA-funded work) all within the HECC. Indeed, the current era of workforce training in Oregon, has been defined by increasing alignment and integration in the administration, partnerships, planning, and service delivery of workforce training. As a result, Oregon is in a special position to develop and implement innovative workforce policy. Future Ready Oregon extends this alignment and integration further by coordinating workforce training across multiple agencies.

The WTDB is the primary state entity responsible for workforce system oversight and planning. The board develops the State's strategic plan for the workforce system, and it reviews and approves local workforce plans. The board also convenes state workforce agencies, local workforce development boards, and other stakeholders to align strategies and resources, and to hold providers accountable for meeting performance goals and system outcomes.

Local workforce development boards are public-private partnerships responsible for coordinating regional workforce systems and are required by law to have a majority of business representatives on their boards. Local workforce development boards are responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating a local/regional workforce strategic plan. These boards serve as a local convener of employers, labor groups, government, community colleges, high schools, and community-based and economic development organizations. Together, these groups work to develop a skilled workforce to meet business needs and strengthen the local economy. Local workforce development boards are neutral, independent funders of training and education services for WSO Centers, investing in adults, youth, and businesses. They also work with state partners to develop the WSO Operational Standards framework for service delivery.

The 39 WSO Centers are spread across the state throughout the various local workforce areas. These Centers are "One-Stop" locations where customers can access a full range of workforce services under one roof. As per the federal legislation, they are collocated within Oregon Employment Department (OED) facilities, with the OED as administrator of state unemployment programs. WSO Centers provide four types of services:

⁹ Bonvillain, W. & Sarma, S. (2021).

1. Exploratory Services: to determine the customer's short-term career goals;
2. Career Services: to assess a person's readiness to work, provide information on how the individual's skills match the labor market, and assist in job search and placement;
3. Training Services: to provide adult education and literacy, talent development, vocational skill development, and work-based learning to customers in need of training to obtain or retain employment; and
4. Business Services: to connect employers to qualified candidates, provide customized trainings, provide employer incentives, and assist in Rapid Response activities, including layoff aversion.

Each WSO Center offers workers and employers access to a consistent array of services, as prescribed by the WorkSource Operational Standards.¹⁰

One-Stop Centers are organized and staffed to meet local needs. In addition to workforce development, these Centers also connect people to other related services, such as the OED-administered unemployment programs administered by OED and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered by ODHS. As important resources for people out of a paid job, these programs illustrate the importance of wrap-around services that support the regular needs of life which do not wait patiently while someone looks for a job.

Local workforce development boards also work with and through various CBOs that are nonprofits engaged in workforce development and social assistance. These nonprofit organizations are often representative of particular communities or specific segments of the population and are located within or in close proximity to the community served. This includes culturally specific organizations that serve a particular cultural community, are primarily staffed and led by members of that community, and that can thereby demonstrate intimate knowledge of the lived experience of that community. They are tailored to understand local and community issues, such as the impact of discrimination or specific disparities in access to services and resources experienced by the community. By understanding cultural practices, experiences, and barriers, CBOs can leverage community strengths in ways the larger state agencies cannot. Thus, CBOs are well-situated to provide local, person-oriented, culturally literate, and individualized care. However, they are typically small organizations and reliant on grant funding.

Beyond the core workforce system prescribed under WIOA, there are additional providers of workforce services and postsecondary education and training. ODE and the K-12 system provide the foundation for later vocational or higher education, and ODE also houses special youth programs in the Youth Development Division (YDD) that are tailored to help youth who have not been well served by formal education and those who have disengaged from school. YDD administers

¹⁰ WorkSource Oregon (2015).

programs, works with community partners, and allocates grant funding to support the educational and career success of youth, focus on crime prevention, and reduce high-risk behaviors.

BOLI protects workers' rights and enforces labor laws (e.g., discrimination, hours, and wages) and administers the important workforce training niche of apprenticeships. A crucial combination of education and on-the-job training, apprenticeships offer a bridge between training and employment. In particular, BOLI is tasked to “promote the development of a highly skilled, competitive workforce in Oregon through the apprenticeship program and through partnerships with government, labor, business, and educational institutions.”¹¹

Community colleges straddle the line between workforce training and higher education, providing local, accessible options for both. Oregon's 17 community colleges offer individual courses, short-term programs, and credential opportunities, along with traditional academic coursework and degrees. Community colleges also house and provide workforce services under WIOA, with the HECC administering the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs. As a result, community colleges are well practiced in assisting displaced, unemployed, and underemployed, and otherwise marginalized persons.

This array of workforce service providers are the recipients of Future Ready Oregon funding. They are in a prime position to provide the services, training, and credentials needed to support the state's workforce in ways that advance skill building, credential attainment, and economic self-sufficiency. Future Ready Oregon builds on the existing work of these organizations to innovate and further align workforce development.

FUTURE READY OREGON

Future Ready Oregon develops the existing workforce training system to improve economic outcomes for the State, for businesses, and for individuals and communities. It does so in three distinct ways: (1) It invests new resources into workforce training; (2) it advances innovation by building on existing infrastructure in the near term and creating new partnerships and new approaches in the long term; and (3) it aims to increase equity in the labor market by prioritizing populations that are underserved. Moreover, the legislation funds a suite of investments, providing multiple opportunities to enhance workforce development in Oregon. These eight component programs draw together local workforce development boards, community colleges, BOLI, YDD, and the HECC to implement and assess the investment. We describe each of these programs in turn with the descriptions created by the Governor's Office to describe the legislation shortly after its passing.¹²

Prosperity 10,000 (Section 3 of SB 1545, 2022)

Oregon's nine local workforce boards convene civic, business, and workforce development leaders to identify regionally significant sector strategies that leverage funding and resources within their

¹¹ Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (2022).

¹² Office of the Governor, Kate Brown, “Future Ready Oregon 2022: SB 1545,” May 17, 2022.

communities to match the skills of workers with the workforce demands of businesses. This investment establishes the Prosperity 10,000 Program at the HECC and incorporates Prosperity 10,000 into the statewide plan for the SNAP Employment and Training Program. \$35 million will be distributed directly to local workforce boards to increase local service capacity to provide career coaching, referrals to training opportunities and wraparound services; support earn and learn opportunities, including paid internships, scholarships, and stipends; and scale-up wrap-around services and supports, including childcare, housing, transportation, and technology.

Community College Career Pathways Programs (Section 4 of SB 1545, 2022)

A Career Pathway is a series of connected education and training programs and student support services enabling individuals to secure a job or advance in an in-demand industry or occupation. This \$14.9 million investment continues and expands Career Pathways efforts at each of Oregon's 17 community colleges to support an increasing demand for student support services, particularly for priority populations. This investment funds a full-time Coordinator at each college, recruitment and re-engagement efforts, and student support services.

Registered Apprenticeship (Section 6 of SB 1545, 2022)

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway by which employers can develop and prepare their future workforce. Individuals obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and an apprentice credential. Oregon uses state and federal funds to support registered apprenticeship programs approved by the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council. BOLI manages apprenticeship and coordinates with the HECC to administer grants to expand, diversify, and strengthen apprenticeship in Oregon. This \$20 million investment increases BOLI's capacity to recruit new programs and facilitate innovation, provide grants to organizations that offer training resources and direct benefits to individual apprentices, and support increased participation in and completion of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

Youth Programs (Section 7 of SB 1545, 2022)

The Youth Development Division's Workforce Readiness and Reengagement grant programs support high quality, community-based workforce readiness programs for youth ages 14-24 who are disconnected from education and employment. This \$10.5 million investment expands YDD's existing grant programs, providing for expanded workforce readiness and reengagement services, including outreach, academic remediation, diploma, and GED completion, mentoring and coaching, career exploration, and paid work experience.

Credit for Prior Learning (Section 8 of SB 1545, 2022)

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience, through military training and experience, and through formal and informal education and training. Statewide CPL standards were adopted in 2017, but there has not been additional investment for implementation. This \$10 million investment will be used to scale-up CPL, supporting public institutions to develop methods and refine processes for awarding and reporting CPL efforts.

Workforce Ready Grants (Section 9 of SB 1545, 2022)

This \$95 million investment funds new and innovative education and training programs in the key sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, and technology; organizational capacity-building; and direct benefits to individuals, including stipends for earn and learn experiences and funding to pay for education, training costs, and wraparound services. Competitive Workforce Ready Grants will be administered by HECC, in consultation with the WTDB, Industry Consortia, and local workforce boards. The commission will establish criteria and standards to award competitive grants to community-based organizations and workforce service providers.

Industry Consortia (Section 10 of SB 1545, 2022)

This \$1 million investment funds the creation of statewide industry consortia in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology to identify industry-specific statewide workforce needs and high-value credentials, improve systems alignment, and develop recruitment and retention strategies. Statewide industry consortia will be advisory to the WTDB, informing strategic planning, policy, and investments.

Workforce Benefits Navigators (Section 11 of SB 1545, 2022)

This \$10 million investment places benefits navigators at WorkSource Oregon one stop centers and CBOs across the state. Navigators provide a single point of contact to efficiently help individuals access the resources that match their unique needs and navigate the different programs and benefits.

Each of these component programs seeks to improve the capacity and effectiveness of Oregon's workforce system. Together, they represent a significant investment in a range of programs and organizations to create a more comprehensive system that improve outcomes for individuals, employers, and the State.

Conclusions

Workforce training in Oregon has expanded in breadth and depth for decades, as the State and federal government work to expand the economy by strengthening gaps between workers' skills and employers' needs for skilled staff. The latest of these expansions, Future Ready Oregon, offers additional resources, advances innovation, and prioritizes those who have been underserved. In the years to come, we will be tracking the impacts of this new investment on the State, on industries and businesses, on communities, and on individuals. In the near term, these future impacts depend partly on how the programs are put into place and whether that implementation is timely and true to the requirements and the spirit of the legislation.

Therefore, remainder of this report addresses both these economic indicators and the process of implementation. Chapter Two describes the implementation of programs to date and identifies progress made and lessons learned. Chapter Three describes current labor market challenges that Future Ready Oregon addresses and provides baseline data for future comparison. We conclude with a summary of findings and recommendations for the coming year.

CHAPTER TWO: FUTURE READY OREGON PROGRAM REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and assesses the initial work undertaken at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), the Bureau of Labor and Industries, and the Youth Development Division of the Oregon Department of Education to implement the programs of Future Ready Oregon. These agencies are tasked with administering the programs in connection with the Oregon Employment Department, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the Workforce Talent Development Board, local workforce boards, community colleges and public universities, and other organizations. The work described and assessed here covers the eight-month period from the bill’s enactment into law on March 17, 2022, to early November 2022. See Figure 2.1 below.

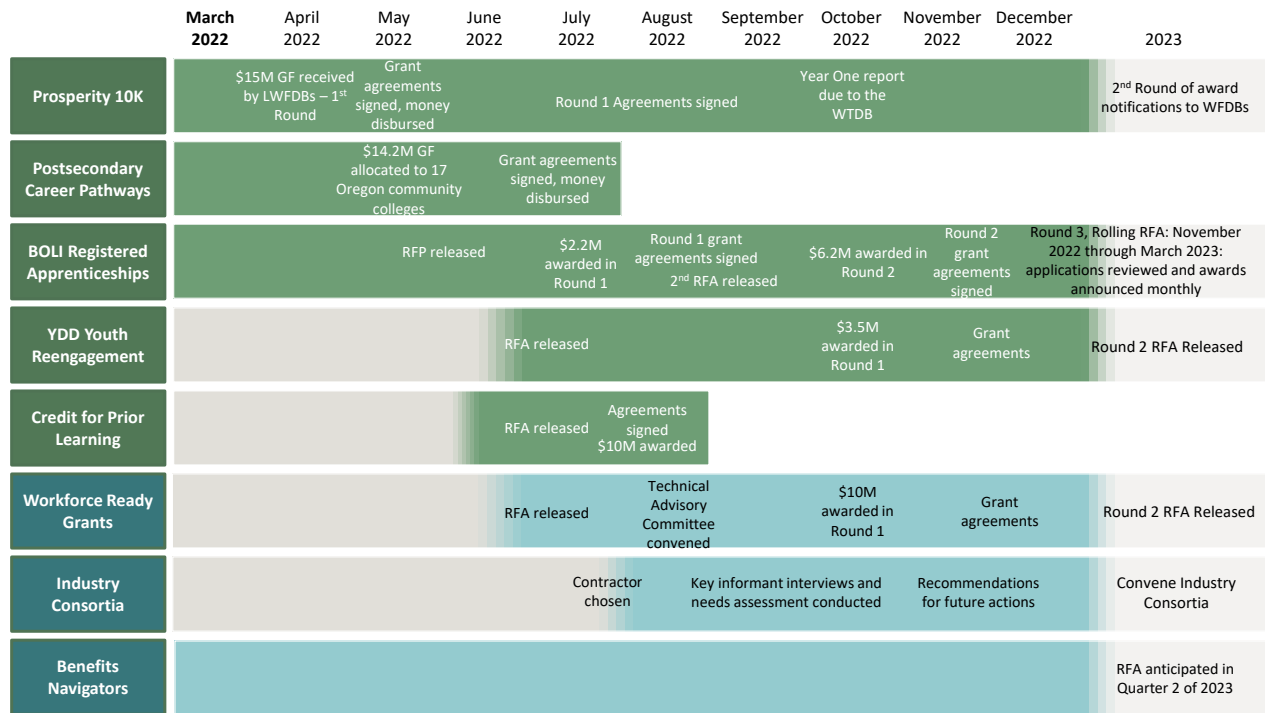


Figure 2. 1: Future Ready Oregon Implementation in Eight Investment Categories, 2022.

The focus on implementation is intentional and not only because this early period of Future Ready Oregon precludes any assessment of impact at this time. This is because the impact of any program is dependent on both the program’s effectiveness and on how it was implemented. For example, the ability of a medical intervention to heal a sick community depends on both the effectiveness of the treatment protocol and on its availability in the community. Thus, while the primary assessment of Future Ready Oregon will concentrate on its impacts on economic prosperity and equity, the focus in this first-year report is how Future Ready Oregon programs have been implemented. This necessary step highlights areas that may need additional attention in the coming year as well as facilitates more accurate interpretation of impacts (or the lack of impacts) in the future.

We describe implementation for each of the eight programs in Future Ready Oregon separately, as the programs have different approaches, requirements, administrators, and funding. The administrators and funding are listed in Table 2.1 below, and other program specifics are included in each program section.

Table 2. 1: Future Ready Oregon programs, with administering agency and funding sources.

Investment Category	Agency	General funds	ARPA funds	Total funds
Prosperity 10,000 (Local Workforce Boards)	HECC	\$17,100,000	\$20,000,000	\$37,100,000
Community college Career Pathways	HECC	\$14,900,000		\$14,900,000
Registered Apprenticeships	BOLI	\$18,900,000	\$1,100,000	\$20,000,000
Youth Programs	YDD	\$3,500,000	\$7,000,000	\$10,500,000
Credit for Prior Learning	HECC	\$10,000,000		\$10,000,000
Workforce Ready Grants	HECC	\$10,000,000	\$85,000,000	\$95,000,000
Industry Consortia	HECC	\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000
Benefits Navigators	HECC	\$10,000,000		\$10,000,000

METHODOLOGY

To this end, we examined the extent and the effectiveness of Future Ready Oregon implementation in this first year. This analysis asks whether and how the implementation of each program sets the groundwork for that program to have the impacts intended. We assessed this for each of the eight component programs by asking several intertwined questions:

- How timely was the implementation?
- How closely is the implemented program adhering to requirements, either as laid out in the legislation or as laid out by the administering agency?
- How closely is the implemented program adhering to priorities laid out in the legislation?
- How is the program, as implemented, creating the foundation for improved economic prosperity for participants, businesses, and the state?
- How is the program, as implemented, creating the foundation for improved equity for participants, businesses, and the state?

In each of these areas, we ask what aspects worked smoothly and what aspects will need additional attention next year to effect continuous learning. We examined implementation by gathering

qualitative data from relevant staff and leadership of each program. For the programs implemented first, we asked the following questions:

1. Please answer the following questions regarding your funding strategy for scaling up the program:
 - Please provide the rationale and focus for the RFA round(s)
 - Were there any lessons learned while facilitating the RFA rounds, including what went well?
 - Are there lessons learned related to the unfunded proposals? If yes, what are those lessons learned?

2. Please answer the following questions for each of the subawards issued, including the organization name and priority populations to be served: (These descriptions can be brief.)
 - Was this funding for a new program? Or an existing program that has shown success in your region?
 - Briefly describe how the program activities for each the award.
 - The number of participants expected to be served by race, gender, and geography, if applicable.
 - The number of participants who completed the workforce development program by race, gender, and geography, if applicable.
 - Share any noteworthy strategies that subgrantees are employing to engage with priority populations.
 - Share any noteworthy strategies that subgrantees are using in support of registered apprenticeships.
 - Share any strategies that have been employed by subgrantees that have not been as successful. What are the lessons learned?

3. Please answer the following questions regarding your reflection on the implementation process:
 - In what ways did the awarding process work well? What were the challenges? And what were the lessons learned?
 - What is the organization most proud of related to the implementation of the program in the state?

- Please describe any gaps in priority populations in your region that have not yet been served; services that are needed but are not available; or other reflections on the implementation process.
4. Please answer the following questions related to the upcoming year:
- What are you most excited about in the upcoming year related to the implementation of the Future Ready Oregon program?
 - What challenges do you anticipate in the upcoming year as you consider the implementation of the Future Ready Oregon program?
 - Share any projections you may have related to the anticipated services to be provided in the state under the Future Ready Oregon program.

For programs implemented later, we asked the following questions:

1. Please describe the process you used to plan for the Future Ready Oregon plan.
2. Please list the findings or themes you are considering that emerged from your planning process.
3. What is your timeline for implementation?

We reviewed the answers we received for themes, and we followed up with program staff to fill holes and answer remaining questions. We then combined the qualitative data with administrative grant data on timelines to describe and assess the implementation of each program, vetting these across multiple staff. We also confirmed the findings with external partners to check for errors. For larger programs (e.g., Prosperity 10,000), this process involved multiple rounds. Though the local workforce boards had planned to compile their own report for year one of the Prosperity 10,000 program, this was not realized, and we employed the same strategy for the Prosperity 10,000 program as for the other programs. Because the programs differ in size, scope, and calendar, comparisons across them are not relevant at this stage.

PROSPERITY 10,000

In this section, we describe the Prosperity 10,000 program, how it was implemented across the state, and what these implementation practices mean for 2023 and for Future Ready Oregon in general. The Prosperity 10,000 Program was the first of the eight Future Ready Oregon programs to allocate funding under Senate Bill 1545 (2022). The Prosperity 10,000 funds were appropriated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to be distributed to local workforce development boards to administer the Prosperity 10,000 Program. As noted in the legislation, the same funding formula used to allocate funds under Title I of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was used to allocate the Prosperity 10,000 funds to local workforce development boards. Each local workforce development board is required by legislation to compile data on the progress made toward carrying out the Prosperity 10,000 Program, work with other boards to prepare a joint report, and submit the joint report to the Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB).

The legislation designates Prosperity 10,000 funds as investments that provide opportunities for Oregonians to jumpstart and advance their careers in high-demand industries and occupations that put them on a pathway to self-sufficiency. The Prosperity 10,000 Program was designed to provide a series of workforce development opportunities and supports especially for priority populations through Oregon's nine local workforce development boards. These priority population include the following:

- Communities of color
- Women
- Low-income communities
- Rural and frontier communities
- Veterans
- Persons with disabilities
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes
- Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment based on age
- Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Specifically, these workforce development opportunities aim to improve the capacity and responsiveness of the public workforce system in this state by helping job seekers navigate workforce development programs, expanding access to community-based career counseling and wraparound

supports and services, and providing opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and degrees through work-based learning experiences.

The Prosperity 10,000 Program is funded both with state general fund dollars (\$15,000,000) and federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars (\$20,000,000). As required by the legislation, the HECC distributed the general fund dollars to the nine local workforce boards within 60 days of the legislation taking effect, March 17, 2022. These general funds were required to be distributed to nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs), educational institutions, labor organizations, and other workforce service providers to facilitate the provision of workforce development services and wraparound supports to individuals from priority populations. The second round of Prosperity 10,000 funding, the \$20 million of ARPA funds, is expected to be distributed in early 2023.

Collectively, both rounds of funding are expected to achieve the eight goals of the Prosperity 10,000 Program identified in the legislation. The Prosperity 10,000 goals are listed below:

- Include at least 10,000 total individuals who participate in the program;
- Improve the capacity and responsiveness of the public workforce system in this state by providing assistance for workforce development program navigation, expanding access to community-based career counseling and wraparound supports and services, and providing opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and degrees through work-based learning experiences;
- Ensure that services and benefits available through workforce programs are provided to individuals from priority populations;
- Provide increased access for priority populations to services and benefits available through workforce programs;
- Ensure that at least 50 percent of the individuals who participate in the program are women;
- Ensure that at least 80 percent of the individuals who participate successfully complete the program;
- Ensure that at least 75 percent of the individuals who participate in the program successfully obtain employment; and
- Ensure that at least 75 percent of the individuals who participate in the program earn at least \$17 per hour.

Oregon's nine local workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to carry out the goals of the Prosperity 10,000 Program. Local workforce development boards convene local partners – including elected officials, employers, CBOs, economic development organizations, public agencies, education, and labor – to plan, invest in, and oversee workforce service delivery at the regional level.

Through these established partnerships, and utilizing their existing contracting mechanisms, local workforce development boards can get funds out to the communities they serve rapidly.

Per legislation, the WTDB, in consultation with its Continuous Improvement Committee and the HECC, oversees implementation and assessment of the Prosperity 10,000 Program. Specifically, the WTDB assesses and reviews the program's progress, ensures that program goals are met, and identifies areas for program improvement.

The WTDB's oversight role for Prosperity 10,000 fits well with the board's overall charge and function. The WTDB advises the Governor on workforce matters and sets the direction for workforce development in Oregon through the creation of a strategic plan for Oregon's workforce development system. The board also oversees the public workforce system, ensuring alignment and holding the system accountable for results, and offers guidance to state agencies and local workforce development boards as they implement the WTDB's vision for the system.

The Prosperity 10,000 Program is also aligned with the work of the WTDB's Continuous Improvement Committee. The \$200 million Future Ready Oregon investment is, at least in part, a strategy to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of new and innovative approaches to workforce development, prioritizing key populations. It provides the opportunity to innovate and take risks in piloting different workforce development strategies that result in equitable labor force participation and increase labor force participation overall. Coordination between the Future Ready Oregon programs, especially Prosperity 10,000, and the WTDB's Continuous Improvement Committee will provide a much better picture of what is working well to improve strategies to advance an equitable workforce system.

Implementation of Prosperity 10,000

Each of the nine local workforce boards took a different approach to invest the first round of Future Ready Oregon funding in workforce development opportunities, aimed especially to advance opportunities for ten priority populations defined in Senate Bill 1545 (2022).

The difference in implementation across the state reflects the varied regional needs, strategies, and challenges. Some of the local workforce boards solicited requests for proposals or qualifications (RFP, RFQ) to identify service providers to carry out their investments; some boards invested in existing partnerships and providers that demonstrated effectiveness in delivering workforce services and reaching the priority populations, and some employed a combination of both. The rationale that influenced the allocation strategies included the speed at which the funding must be allocated and spent, capacity within each local workforce board to allocate the funding, regional need, and identification of regional workforce development organizations that were already doing the Prosperity 10,000 work as outlined in the Future Ready Oregon legislation.

Northwest Oregon Works

Northwest Oregon Works (NOW) is the local board that serves a five-county region including Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, and Tillamook counties.

NOW invested the first round of Prosperity 10,000 funding to bolster their region's targeted sectors, which include advanced manufacturing, healthcare, leisure, and hospitality, and maritime. NOW leveraged its existing subgrantees for the first round of Prosperity 10,000 funding to expedite the process of getting these funds into the communities they are intended to serve. NOW also chose to contract with their existing providers due to the local board's desire to use subcontractors that had consistently met or exceeded performance targets. NOW did employ a competitive process among the board's current service providers, issuing an RFP open only to existing subcontractors.

With the first round of funding, NOW aimed to serve individuals with local career opportunities that lead to living wage jobs, focusing on the underserved rural priority population. Through an RFP, NOW asked their existing subgrantees to develop proposals to demonstrate how they would serve the underserved rural populations. They met individually with those who submitted a proposal to discuss the proposed project, the goals of the funds, the term limits for expenditure of funds, and the desired outcomes. NOW reported that each subcontractor was excited for the opportunity to participate in the use of these historic funds and was familiar with all aspects of service delivery that these funds entailed.

Based on the responses to the RFP, NOW chose two organizations that had previously demonstrated success in serving underserved, rural Oregon populations and had consistently increased career readiness, delivery of wraparound services, and on-the-job training. Through these awards, NOW anticipates assisting priority populations with shorter term training for healthcare positions, such as in-home care for individuals with disabilities, as well as positions in the construction trades through heavy equipment operators training.

The Prosperity 10,000 funding will provide paid work experience opportunities and support career exploration as participants learn on the job about expectations and their own interests. Wraparound supports will remove barriers to participation in training and employment activities. Industry and post-secondary education tours will expose participants to new training and employment opportunities and develop interest in a variety of fields, including regionally identified priority industry sectors of manufacturing, healthcare, maritime, and hospitality.

To ensure its Prosperity 10,000 investments are reaching priority populations, NOW worked closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to achieve seamless cross-referrals with the populations they serve – in particular, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients.

NOW acknowledges the gap in their reach to the LGBTQIA+ community, one of the Future Ready Oregon priority populations. To address this gap and to better serve other priority populations, NOW plans to increase its communication regarding opportunities with local Community Based Organizations (CBO) and Community Action Teams who serve individuals from systemically disadvantaged groups in the region. NOW found a lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in some of the counties in its region and is working to fill that gap, a factor that intersects with Future Ready Oregon priority populations. Additionally, NOW anticipates that childcare, housing,

and other supportive services will remain at the forefront as barriers to training and placing a skilled workforce with the local businesses.

NOW plans to use the second round of Prosperity 10,000 to procure services via an RFQ to local CBOs that are on the ground providing workforce training and wraparound support services in rural areas, specifically working with people of color and other underserved populations. The second round of Prosperity 10,000 funding (ARPA funds) will be open to all organizations regardless of whether the organization has had a previous award from NOW.

Overall, NOW allocated the Prosperity 10,000 funds to current subcontractors and began serving people. It focused on high-demand sectors, prioritized rural Oregonians, and planned expanded communication to reach more priority populations. Over the next year, NOW reports that the allocation process for deciding which CBOs to fund with the second round of Prosperity 10,000 funding will be challenging due to the many CBOs in the five-county region that are serving priority populations. Additionally, new contracts require more time and resources to train subrecipient staff to ensure proper tracking and data entry, the use of relevant forms, proper expenditure accounting, and reporting processes, etc.

WorkSystems, Inc.

WorkSystems, Inc. is the local workforce development board serving the City of Portland and Multnomah and Washington counties, through a comprehensive workforce development system that supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness.

WorkSystems, Inc. invested the first round of Prosperity 10,000 funding with existing workforce development service providers to expand and augment workforce development services in the region. The board-based funding decisions on which providers were currently operating education and training programs for SNAP recipients and those providers' ability to increase services. They allocated funds to programs and providers in WorkSystems, Inc.'s provider network with proven success in delivering employment and training services for priority populations.

WorkSystems, Inc. focused initial Prosperity 10,000 resources on expanding proven activities to serve and support the most vulnerable residents. Investments will expand access to registered pre-apprenticeship services, rapid re-careering programs, subsidized work experience, community-based career coaching services, and needed supports such as rent assistance and stipend payments for participants in training. WorkSystems, Inc. anticipates 927 customers will receive services in these program areas with 65% of intended participants representing communities of color and others most impacted by COVID. Three in four participants are expected to obtain employment with an average wage of \$17/hr. WorkSystems, Inc. leveraged the Prosperity 10,000 funds to reach more participants by receiving a federal match of Prosperity 10,000 dollars to serve SNAP participants that will be allocated in the next year.

WorkSystems, Inc reports that combined, the funded programs listed below are expected to serve the ten priority populations in the Future Ready Oregon legislation (SB 1545, 2022).

- Central City Concern received funding for three programs that offer career coaching and supports to help stabilize participants and prepare them to enter the workforce.
- Foundation for California Community Colleges received funding for one program to offer stipends for Oregon participants in training, as well as wages for paid work experience.
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization received funding for six programs that offer career coaching and supports to help stabilize immigrants and refugees and prepare them to enter the workforce. WorkSource Portland Metro offers one of the programs funded—providing career coaching, training services, and other support services to prepare jobseekers for stable, family-wage jobs.
- Latino Network received funding for the Rent Assistance Housing Hub, which delivers housing supports through rent assistance to Latinx/o/a communities, helping participants to engage in occupational training and find (and keep) meaningful employment.
- Mt. Hood Community College received funding for WorkSource Portland Metro – Gresham to offer career coaching, training services, and other support services to prepare jobseekers for stable, and family-wage jobs.
- New Avenues for Youth (NAFY) received funding for the PDX Youth@Work Coaching program to offer career coaching and supports to help stabilize participants and prepare them to enter the workforce.
- Our Just Future (formerly known as Human Solutions) received funding for three programs. Two of the programs, Economic Opportunity Program—Portland and Economic Opportunity—Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, offer career coaching and supports to help stabilize participants and prepare them to enter the workforce. Occupational training (if needed) may be accessed through WorkSource Centers to assist the participant with landing long-term, career-track employment. The third program, Rent Assistance Coordination, delivers housing supports through rent assistance and helps those participants to engage in occupational training and find, and keep, meaningful employment.
- Portland Community College received funding to offer three programs: WorkSource Portland Metro – Beaverton/Hillsboro, Tech Career Coaching, Training Stipend Administration.
- WorkSource Portland Metro – Beaverton/Hillsboro. These programs offer career coaching, training services, and other support services to prepare jobseekers for stable, family-wage jobs. Tech Career Coaching supports participants to access occupational skills training and prepares them for jobs in the technology sector.
- Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC) received funding to offer three programs. These programs offer career coaching and supports to help stabilize participants

and prepare them to enter the workforce. Occupational training (if needed) may be accessed through WorkSource Centers to assist the participant with landing long-term, career-track employment.

- SE Works received funding to offer three programs: Economic Opportunity Program - Portland Re-entry Employment Services, Economic Opportunity Program – Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, and WorkSource Portland Metro – SE. These programs use career coaching and supports to help stabilize participants and prepare them to enter the workforce. Occupational training (if needed) may be accessed through WorkSource Centers to assist the participant with landing long-term, career-track employment.
- WorkSource Portland Metro – SE offers career coaching, training services, and other support services to prepare jobseekers for stable, family-wage jobs.

WorkSystems, Inc. invested \$2.66 million of Prosperity 10,000 funds in services for SNAP recipients. This amount was included in WorkSystems, Inc.'s SNAP Training and Education Program (STEP) proposal to ODHS and will generate \$1.3 million in federal match. This match will be reinvested in next year's services for SNAP recipients, resulting in extending the Prosperity 10,000 investment. WorkSystems, Inc. worked closely with ODHS to refine their STEP proposal and collaborates with ODHS throughout the SNAP program year to make connections between ODHS customers and WorkSystems, Inc.'s network of service providers.

WorkSystems, Inc. is excited to distribute this State investment into Multnomah and Washington counties to expand proven and effective services that move underrepresented Oregonians, and those most impacted by the pandemic, into quality jobs.

Overall, WorkSystems, Inc. allocated funds quickly to proven workforce training providers, included all priority populations in their service provision, and collaborated with ODHS on support services. They also began to plan for next year with a federal match for SNAP recipients.

Clackamas Workforce Partnership

Clackamas Workforce Partnership (CWP), the local workforce board for Clackamas County, addresses critical workforce, educational and training challenges to develop a skilled workforce that meets the needs of area businesses. CWP develops strategies to best serve the sectors that have the most need and potential for workforce development in Clackamas County, especially in construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. CWP provides services to both job seekers and businesses of all sizes. They fund key community agencies at WorkSource Clackamas that provide employment and training for job seekers and support businesses seeking solutions for their workforce and training related challenges.

Through a competitive RFP process, CWP used the Prosperity 10,000 funding to expand existing targeted sector strategies. CWP chose to expand existing sector strategies, rather than developing new sector strategies to implement the program without delay. They reported that developing new sector partnerships and relationships would have taken substantially longer.

CWP held listening sessions with key partner groups prior to opening the RFP process to allocate Prosperity 10,000 funds. These sessions were held with labor, education and public organizations, private industry, and CBOs, and they were open to anyone who wanted to attend. The sessions gave CWP an opportunity to ask the community to identify service gaps and opportunities for Prosperity 10,000 investments. CWP used the information gathered in these sessions to develop the RFP, score proposals, and award funds.

CWP strove to make the RFP process simple to solicit as many proposals as possible. The RFP had a 1000-word limit and did not require a budget narrative. However, the limited space to describe the proposed grant activities and no budget narrative resulted in additional follow-up questions and some initial misunderstandings that took time to resolve.

CWP funded six programs under Prosperity 10,000 that are designed to expand and create new services in career exploration and employability skills workshops, wraparound support services, and training and support services to systemically disadvantaged communities. CWP awarded Prosperity 10,000 funds to the following organizations to provide direct service:

- Clackamas Community College's (CCC's) Workforce Development Department received \$150,000 to reengage students who have "stopped-out" of college enrollment (in other words, stopped enrolling). This funding includes up to \$2,000 in incentives for approximately 25 reengaged students from priority populations enrolled in training. CCC believes that these funds will mitigate barriers to enrollment, such as the cost of housing, transportation, etc.
- Immigrant Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) was funded \$365,000 to offer new and expanded services, including career exploration, employability skills workshops, job search training, occupation skills training, pre-apprenticeships, career coaching, and job placement services with Prosperity 10,000 funds. The priority population served are low income, and IRCO will also serve immigrants, refugees, and English language learners (ELL).
- AntFarm Youth Services, located in rural Clackamas County, was awarded \$44,000 to expand their outreach to and engage with youth in rural Clackamas County as well as provide career and education services including job search support, career coaching, paid work-based learning opportunities, and occupational skills training. The expanded program focuses on Spanish-speakers, migrant and seasonal farmworker communities, and individuals from rural communities.
- Children and Family Community Connections was granted \$150,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to develop a new program that provides training, support, and job placement services.

The workforce development and wraparound services are intended to remove barriers for individuals in priority populations.

- Children and Family Community Connections—Clean Slate was granted \$30,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to expand the program’s reach of their expungement clinics. These services help individuals living in the region to remove qualifying charges from their criminal records to become more employable.
- EnGen Technologies will receive \$15,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to provide a language upskill platform that supports Clackamas area employers and their ELL employees with English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Local employers will nominate employees to take part in this pilot program that will support employees' professional and personal growth and facilitate advancement opportunities with their employer. The initial pilot will support up to 40 employees throughout the county, primarily in the manufacturing and healthcare industries.

CWP made three additional Prosperity 10,000 awards to develop and expand partnerships, specifically in manufacturing, technology, and childcare. Both manufacturing and technology sector partnerships are at critical stages of development and rapidly moving beyond what current staff capacity and resources can bolster. Expanding CWP’s sector partnership work in the manufacturing and technology sectors is expected to dramatically increase industry engagement by leveraging expertise and business connections.

- Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP) was granted \$40,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to develop and expand partnerships with employers within the manufacturing industry. In cooperation with CWP Business Services manager, OMEP will bring government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations together to support the partnership to meet the workforce and other needs of the manufacturing industry.
- Technology Association of Oregon (TAO) was granted \$35,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to develop and expand partnerships with employers within the technology industry. In cooperation with CWP Business Services manager, TAO will bring government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations together to support the partnership to meet the workforce and other needs of the technology industry.
- Morant McLeod was granted \$29,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to develop and expand partnership and outreach to the business community in support the "Child Care for All" initiative. As an independent consultant, Morant McLeod will develop a blueprint to increase access to and provide more affordable options for childcare in Clackamas County.

CWP reported that many of the communities they serve experience systemic barriers to services for a variety of reasons, including, geographic location, access to transportation, language accessibility,

awareness and understanding of available resources, and sense of belonging. To address gaps in services experienced by priority populations, CWP plans to coordinate with representatives of the communities to establish relationships for increased engagement, information sharing, and the provision of culturally and community responsive services. Currently, CWP is working to address gaps in participation among individuals who identify as non-binary gender, genderqueer, and transgendered people in the Clackamas County.

CWP serves as a SNAP STEP provider after competitive selection by ODHS. CWP provides job search training, vocational training, and pre-apprenticeship training to STEP eligible SNAP recipients. This relationship allows CWP to serve individuals with Prosperity 10,000 funding who also receive SNAP benefits.

We are also excited to be bringing online programing to support essential workplace skills such as communication, adaptability, accountability, and self-awareness. – Clackamas Workforce Partnership

CWP reported that the short timeline for expending the Prosperity 10,000 award complicates relationship building with employers, especially in expanding paid-work experience options. The inability to carry over funds after the end of the biennium and the lack of a reliable, ongoing funding stream necessitated their moving some focus away from capacity and relationship building and turning it toward speedy implementation.

Overall, CWP used the Prosperity 10,000 funds to expand services to the more rural parts of Clackamas County and award funds to providers that have developed specific programing geared toward the identified priority populations within the Future Ready Oregon legislation. CWP shared they brought online programing to support essential workplace skills such as communication, adaptability, accountability, and self-awareness in direct response to community feedback. Moreover, CWP reported developing and expanding partnerships with employers in manufacturing, tech, and other identified sectors to generate increased employment opportunities for participants while meeting the workforce development needs of the local employers.

Willamette Workforce Partnership

Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP) is the local workforce board for Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties. WWP brings together a myriad of employment, training, and educational services which comprise a comprehensive system that supports the development of the area's workforce. WWP leads local workforce development by identifying local labor market needs, trends, and priorities and works with the community to address these issues through developing policy, overseeing workforce fund investments, coordinating workforce development strategies, and providing local residents with workforce services that help them succeed.

WWP used the first round of Prosperity 10,000 funding to fund workforce development services in three industries: 1) healthcare, 2) transportation, warehousing, and distribution, and 3) construction. They made awards to organizations as a direct result of the WWP's competitive Request for Quotes and Qualifications (RFQQ).

The RFQQ process built a strong pool of training providers in the Willamette Valley region with which WWP could work during the Prosperity 10,000 contract period to deliver training focused on skills needed for occupations that earn \$17.00/hour or more. WWP made investments with organizations that could provide the following services:

- Employer-driven, rapid reskill-upskill training delivered to cohorts of participants. The training must result in participants receiving industry-recognized certificates and credentials and entering key positions within one of the following targeted sectors: healthcare, manufacturing, construction, transportation, warehousing, distribution, technology, hospitality; and/or
- Employer-driven, rapid reskill-upskill training that is delivered to cohorts of participants with identified barriers to employment (e.g., Prosperity 10,000 priority populations). The activity must result in participants receiving industry-recognized certificates and credentials and entering key positions identified within the application.

WWP awarded \$1,336,706 in training contracts using the RFQQ model, funding only seven of the twenty applications received due to limited funding. Organizations that received an award identified that they could provide occupational skills training within their designated sectors and focus on serving the priority populations. The following is a breakdown of the organizations that were awarded funding through the first round of Prosperity 10,000 investments:

- Chemeketa Community College, located in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties, received \$180,957 to train 30 individuals in Commercial Truck Driving, including communities of color, low-income individuals, and those living in rural communities.
- Interface Network, located in Marion County, received \$244,588 to train 24 bilingual individuals as Emergency Medical Technicians, including communities of color, women, low-income, individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, and those living in rural communities.
- Interface Network, located in Marion County, received \$211,798 to train 40 individuals as Community Health Workers, including communities of color, women, low-income, individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, and those living in rural communities.
- Knife River Training Center, located in Linn County, received \$249,999 to train 64 individuals in Civil Construction, including members of Oregon's nine federally recognized

tribes, those who live in rural communities, women, individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals who have been recently incarcerated.

- McMinnville School District, located in Yamhill County, received \$164,000 to train 12 individuals in Heavy Equipment Operator training and 30 in Traffic Control/Flagger training, including individuals from communities of color, women, and those living in rural communities.
- Salem for Refugees, located in Marion County, received \$203,364 to train eight individuals as airline pilots, including women and individuals from communities of color.
- Willamina School District, located in Yamhill County, received \$82,000 to train 60 individuals in Commercial Truck Driving, including individuals from communities of color, Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, those who live in rural communities, women, individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals with disabilities.

WWP partnered with ODHS for the Prosperity 10,000 Program in two ways. First, WWP had an ODHS local manager serve on the RFQQ scoring committee. WWP also uses ODHS as a partner in the Prosperity 10,000 funded training programs. As each training provider begins enrolling participants, WWP ensures that ODHS managers receive up-to-date referral information to distribute amongst their teams. The other method of a partnership between WWP and ODHS for this program is that WWP intends to use the funding from Prosperity 10,000 to request a match from ODHS for any Prosperity 10,000 participants who received SNAP benefits during their enrollment. The contract with the ODHS is set to begin in early October, and WWP does not have any reporting information regarding the partnership at the time of this report.

WWP reported that the RFQQ awarding process is a source of pride for multiple reasons. First, this method widened WWP's knowledge of new training opportunities and training providers in the region. Second, they were able to finalize the award-contracts by July 1, 2022, allowing the sub-awardees the time to implement their work. In addition, the RFQQ process was administered by an electronic application system—built with logic and flow models to improve efficiency and effectiveness as well as allowing for a wider audience of applicants for the first round of Prosperity 10,000 funding. A wider audience of applicants also brought the biggest challenge for WWP; they received more applications than they could fund, resulting in many smaller CBOs losing out on awards.

WWP shared excitement about the Prosperity 10,000 program to the community and broadened how they invest funding. Additionally, Prosperity 10,000 has created the ability to find new ways to expand and bridge the workforce delivery system between K-12 and the workforce delivery system funded under the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Many youth programs slowly disengaged with the K-12 system because many of the in-school youth were not eligible for WIOA programs due to the increasingly tight regulations. With the Future Ready Oregon funds, WWP contracted with two school districts allowing for the creation of

workforce training programs for in-school youth and re-ignite some of the disconnections between the workforce system and K-12 public schools in their region.

Overall, WWP invested in innovation and expansion of existing services. They created a new competitive funding process that broadened their reach and ensured fairness, and they awarded grants to partners who could reach all priority populations. Finally, WWP focused on high-demand sectors and partnered with ODHS to provide supportive services to SNAP recipients. WWP plans to examine the sub-awardees' projects for their effectiveness in meeting the Prosperity 10,000 goals in the coming year.

Lane Workforce Partnership

Lane Workforce Partnership (LWP) is the local workforce board that serves Lane County. LWP is charged with making targeted investments in the community to meet the workforce needs of employers and individuals.

LWP chose to invest the Prosperity 10,000 funding in existing strategies and providers because it allowed them to start work quickly to serve the priority populations. LWP's existing WIOA Youth and Adult Services providers regularly exceed performance goals and are integral workforce solutions partners in Lane County. The existing providers are already in operation, have the knowledge of workforce development regulations and expectations, and skill to carry out the work. The sectors identified for Prosperity 10,000 investment included construction/agriculture, transportation, food and beverage, technology, wood products, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.

To allocate the Prosperity 10,000 funding, LWP used a Request for Application (RFA) process with two parts: one for Customized Training Solutions for Employers and one for Industry-Wide Employer Trainings. Fourteen agencies were chosen for awards. At the time of reporting, the funding amounts have not been released because the awards have not been fully executed, and final award amounts are still being negotiated. Some of the delay has occurred due to the process of the sub-awardees obtaining the insurance required to carry out the proposed activities.

Rather than focusing on the priority populations as outlined in the Future Ready Oregon legislation, LWP used their WIOA Priority of Service Policy, which has some overlap with the Future Ready Oregon priority populations, including low-income, Veteran, communities of color, and people with disabilities. The following list identifies the businesses awarded the Prosperity 10,000 funding to offer training, job placement, wraparound supports, and career advancement; in addition to building the capacity of the organizations funded.

- Babb Construction Co.
- Catholic Community Services/Lanz Cabinets
- Gheen Irrigation Works
- Lane Education Service District

- Onward Eugene
- Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- Pearl Buck Center
- RiverBend Materials
- Season to Taste/Eugene's Table
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Staff Systems
- Technology Association of Oregon
- Trip N Transport
- Tyree Oil

LWP invested in an existing Lane County SNAP services provider who is also the WIOA Adult Services provider – Lane County Health and Human Services. The funds will be used to provide wraparound support services for SNAP recipients in accordance with the SNAP support services guidelines.

LWP's Prosperity 10,000 investments into the business community aim to have a far-reaching impact, not just in terms of the number of individuals that will receive training, employment, and career advancement, but also in building the capacity of the organizations funded. Additionally, LWP identified the magnitude of the investment and unique reportable outcomes as a challenge for investing the Prosperity 10,000 funds.

Our Board of Directors is most proud of the fact that staff was able to deploy these funds quickly out to our current subcontractors, which in turn, gets the funds out into the community.
~Lane Workforce Partnership

Overall, LWP worked with proven existing partners to deliver services quickly, worked with partners when insurance requirements caused delays, and focused on several in-demand sectors. They used their WIOA Priority of Service Policy to identify priority participants, and many of these groups overlap with the priority populations in Future Ready Oregon.

Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board

Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB) serves the businesses and residents of Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties through competitively contracted workforce development services. SOWIB continues to invest in its current sector strategies in the healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, hospitality, leisure, childcare, construction, and maritime industry sectors. Two of SOWIB's top priorities are transportation and childcare.

In SOWIB's preparation of their Prosperity 10,000 allocation, the local board issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for new providers using a blend of available funding, including Prosperity 10,000 funds. Their RFP used many of the elements of the Prosperity 10,000 draft legislation around goals and priority populations. As a result, SOWIB contracted with seven new service providers and one existing provider. Two of the providers, South Coast Business Corporation and Alternative Youth Activities, were awarded the Prosperity 10,000 funds due to their experience and interest in serving Latino/a/x, women, and low-income communities—measured by housing insecurity and homelessness, and identified as priority populations. The two providers represent and serve communities in all three counties.

- South Coast Business Corporation (SCBEC) is currently operating a houseless project. Services are designed to assist with securing adequate housing to enable participants to engage in training, including on-the-job training and/or other career services needed to secure fulltime employment. Priority populations served include women, veterans, low-income communities, houseless, and rural and frontier communities.
- Alternative Youth Activities (AYA) is currently operating a project that includes houseless individuals and Hispanic outreach. Services are designed to assist the houseless with securing adequate housing to enable participants to participate in training, including on-the-job training and/or other career services needed to secure fulltime employment. In addition, they have launched a Hispanic outreach program meant to engage that population in employment and training services. The priority populations include women, veterans, communities of color, LGBTQ+, low-income communities, houseless, and rural and frontier communities.

SOWIB reported that other providers were hesitant to accept the Prosperity 10,000 funding due to the program's goals, specifically that at least 75% earn at least \$17 per hour. Providers expressed fear that the performance targets would be unattainable, and potentially affect future funding opportunities, including WIOA funding. While Prosperity 10,000 funding was intended to be used to develop innovation and creative solutions, as well as to expand existing capacity in workforce development, especially for the priority populations, providers were apprehensive that an inability to achieve performance goals would jeopardize future funding from various sources, including Future Ready Oregon dollars.

Southwest Oregon is not unique in having a difficult time engaging potential customers in services. SOWIB reported providers are working hard to enroll customers in WIOA-funded services under

their current contracts and are just meeting the performance metrics for those programs. SOWIB explained that adding large enrollment numbers for the Future Ready Prosperity 10,000 Program is daunting for them. Contractor's report being as creative as possible in their recruitment efforts; however, customer engagement is still slow. In addition, under current conditions individuals who are "work ready" are already employed. The customers who are engaging in services often have multiple barriers that need to be addressed to get them to a place that they can fully participate in and benefit from services. The relatively short implementation timeline for Prosperity 10,000 funds does not provide the time necessary for barrier removal and entrance into training services that will lead to self-sufficient employment.

SOWIB partnered with ODHS to serve individuals who receive support from the SNAP. SOWIB became a SNAP 50/50 provider and worked with ODHS to develop opportunities in the early education field. Childcare providers are in high-demand and the availability of childcare is necessary for parents to work. As a result, SOWIB launched the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Apprenticeship program and allocated up to \$300,000 in Prosperity 10,000 funds to be used as the 50/50 match for eligible SNAP participants.

We are proudest of our ECE Apprenticeship program and its creative approach to leveraging SNAP 50/50. Secondly, we are proud of our ability to secure providers in all three of our counties, and that they are interested and willing to find bold and creative solutions to tackle homelessness -- knowing that addressing homelessness and employment requires the ability to negate the difficult barrier: need a house to get a job; need a job to get a house.
~Southern Oregon Workforce Investment Board

Overall, SOWIB expanded existing partners, contracting with seven new providers under Prosperity 10,000. Collectively, their providers intend to reach all priority populations, and they partnered with ODHS to provide childcare and other services for SNAP recipients. They focused on several in-demand sectors in their region. SOWIB is planning to track how fast the ECE Apprenticeship program grows and the opportunities that will be available in their region as a result. At the same time, the Board reports concern that some of the programs are unable to ramp up at the speed and capacity necessary to meet the Prosperity 10,000 goals within the grant timeline.

Rogue Workforce Partnership

Rogue Workforce Partnership (RWP) is the local workforce development board serving Jackson and Josephine counties. RWP uses collaboratively defined sector strategies to solve priority industry-wide issues; work to align education and workforce systems to meet industry demand; and improve accessibility of career pathways for all.

RWP plans to use the Prosperity 10,000 funding to invest in new sector strategies and expand existing sector strategies. They have identified six key industry sectors that drive their region's

economic vitality: 1) advanced manufacturing, 2) construction, 3) information technology / e-commerce, 4) healthcare, 5) natural resources, and 6) transportation and logistics. Additionally, RWP identified the need for supporting childcare and early learning education occupations and added this as a seventh target for in-demand occupations.

RWP has not yet offered Prosperity 10,000 funds to serve individuals with workforce development or wraparound support services for two reasons: 1) RWP needed to identify the best touchpoints for serving priority populations, and 2) the technology system, I-Trac, was not built out to ensure information about the participants served are in place, which occurred September 30, 2022. This delay is presenting a challenge to RWP because it limits the time to implement the Prosperity 10,000 funded programs, making sure the funds are expended by June 30, 2023.

RWP plans to invest Prosperity 10,000 funds in what they know works well, while simultaneously focusing on building other strategies that benefit the priority populations in the Future Ready Oregon legislation. Currently, RWP has contracted with the Oregon Employment Department's (OED) WorkSource Rogue Valley office to help identify the appropriate agents for priority populations. Moreover, RWP partners with the ODHS's SNAP, STEP programs through the local leadership team, which includes a strong referral process.

WorkSource Oregon and Rogue Workforce Partnership teamed up with Natives of One Wind Indigenous Alliance (NOWIA) Unete, Center for Farm Worker Advocacy to conduct three listening sessions with members of the Latino/a/x community to plan their Prosperity 10,000 job training and outreach services. The events were facilitated by NOWIA Unete staff and OED. RWP reported the themes from the listening session identified an overall lack of awareness of existing training programs in the community. Participants communicated a strong need for assistance with resumes—how to highlight their skills for different occupations. RWP reported the main findings were that most participants were needing some type of financial compensation to participate in training programs and concerns shared by participants regarding inflexible hours of workforce development opportunities as prohibiting them from participating. They plan to use these findings to roll out their Prosperity 10,000 funds.

WorkSource Rogue Valley has a business service team that works directly with employers to support building workforce pipelines. The direct link to employers is particularly beneficial when recruiting women into Prosperity 10,000 workforce development opportunities. Specifically, the team supports sectors in advertising and recruiting more women where most of their existing employees are male (e.g., natural resources, construction, and manufacturing).

RWP is also working with Jackson County Community Corrections Partnership to support incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals by learning the complex systems this population faces upon re-entry. The information gleaned from this partnership will help identify the appropriate methods and providers for exploring career goals and the necessary supports and trainings needed to meet those goals.

Overall, RWP postponed expending Prosperity 10,000 funds until data collection procedures are in place, though they report being eager to start serving the priority populations to prepare them for gainful employment. They used the time to conduct listening sessions with a priority population to understand their needs better and identify barriers to service provision so that they could better serve this community with the funds. They also acknowledge they have work to do to better partner and serve Oregon's tribal communities.

East Cascades Workforce Investment Board

East Cascades Works Investment Board (ECWIB) supports the talent needs of employers and aligns investments with the career goals of individuals in the ten-county region of central Oregon - Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Deschutes, Wheeler, Jefferson, Crook, Lake, and Klamath counties.

ECWIB invested the Prosperity 10,000 funding in two providers from their current service provider network. The initial Prosperity 10,000 funds bolstered resources the local workforce development board received through its WIOA allocation. ECWIB leveraged its current service providers because these providers have demonstrated success with the sectors and priority populations identified in the Future Ready Oregon legislation (SB 1545, 2022).

The ECWIB Board identified healthcare, construction, technology, and manufacturing across the 10-county region as the targeted industries for further investments because these sectors offer high wage and high demand career pathways. ECWIB leveraged other funds to support the construction and healthcare sectors, particularly in the Central Oregon subregion. The populations prioritized by the ECWIB for Prosperity 10,000 services include people incarcerated or previously incarcerated, low-income individuals, rural and frontier community residents, ELL, Tribal members (Warm Spring, Klamath and Celilo confederated tribes), and youth.

ECWIB used the WIOA formula to allocate the new funds, as it is based on a long-standing formula that is understood by providers and ensured consistency in the way they allocate funds. ECWIB funded the two existing WIOA Title I providers with the Prosperity 10,000 funding because they continue to see an uptick in the number of customers needing access to training/retraining, have a demonstrated history of serving low-income individuals, rural and frontier communities, people who have barriers to employment, people with housing insecurity, and people who have been formerly incarcerated. Moreover, these workforce development providers meet or exceed performance measures annually, serve those most in need, and are diligent about innovation and customer service. ECWIB shared that one of these organizations repeatedly requested additional training funds to support the need from job seekers, even during the pandemic when most areas were not able to find job seekers to serve.

ECWIB partners closely with ODHS as they are co-located in most of the comprehensive WorkSource Oregon Centers, as well as active members on all ECWIB's local leadership teams. However, they did not implement a STEP program with the initial investment because the performance period was less than six months. Further, partners at the ODHS- Self Sufficiency Program and OED have funding to specifically support SNAP participants. ECWIB decided to focus

investments on a great number of low-income individuals who are not SNAP recipients and who are not being served. ECWIB focused on the Board's identified special populations as there are few funding streams dedicated to serve them.

ECWIB identified three gaps in services and shared their plans to fill those gaps, which include using Prosperity 10,000 funding to fill two of the gaps. These two are 1) procure English translation services and 2) provide cohort training specific to the targeted industry sectors (i.e., healthcare, construction, technology, and manufacturing). Filling their third gap will involve procuring a management information system that will identify individual job seeker characteristics, enrollment, and performance measures for those in services supported by the Prosperity 10,000 Program.

ECWIB plans to help organizations innovate to better serve the populations the ECWIB Board has prioritized with the Prosperity 10,000 funding. For example, ECWIB sited Oregon's first ever WorkSource Oregon Center inside a state correctional institution. ECWIB plans to fund a full-time staff person in the regional state prisons at Deer Ridge and Warner Creek Correctional Institutions to support returning citizens rapidly gain employment pre- or post-incarceration, expecting a reduction in recidivism.

We are extremely proud of the work our WIAO Title I contractors provide. They are determined to serve those most in need and are diligent about innovation and customer service. Their reliability and flexibility results in exceptional customer service to a diverse set of job seekers and businesses. We are extremely fortunate to work with such a dedicated group of professionals.
~East Cascade Workforce Investment Board

ECWIB leveraged other funds to support the construction and healthcare sectors, particularly in the Central Oregon subregion. ECWIB plans to make investments in manufacturing, namely bioscience in central Oregon; agriculture technology in the Columbia Gorge and Plateau subregions; and in the construction industry in the Klamath Basin with the second round of Prosperity 10,000 funding.

Overall, ECWIB reports being intentional about how they have allocated and how they plan to continue to allocate Prosperity 10,000 funds. They report concern that this one-time investment will start effective programming, but it will not have the investment to sustain the programs or the expected initial outcomes. Furthermore, rural areas in Oregon lack population density and therefore receive a much lower allocation of federal funding. The federal investment in workforce development has been on a steady decline over the past decade – it is less than half of what it was twelve years ago. As a rural local workforce board, ECWIB is concerned about addressing inequities and new challenges in workforce development in an atmosphere of reduction year after year.

Eastern Oregon Workforce Board

Eastern Oregon Workforce Board (EOWB) is the local board serving the eight eastern-most counties in Oregon, including Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties. EOWB

reported very little narrative information to the WTDB and the HECC, making it difficult to understand how EWOB is implementing Prosperity 10,000 in its region.

EOWB reported that the local board contracted with Training and Employment Consortium (TEC), its existing WIOA service provider, to fulfill the requirements of the Prosperity 10,000 program. TEC is providing On-the-Job-Training (OJT) to individuals in the Future Ready Oregon priority populations. In collaboration with TEC and Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), EOWB is supporting certificate training in the field of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and/or Unmanned Aircraft Vehicles (UAV).

With just under 10,000 adults in the eight-county service area that have neither a high school diploma nor a GED certificate, the EOWB will team with TEC to provide the preparatory instruction and will also partner with BMCC in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) testing of adults to earn a certificate.

Lessons Learned

The Prosperity 10,000 program is early in the performance period, and our conclusions to date are based on implementation efforts. Taken together, the nine local workforce boards began implementation of Prosperity 10,000 in an unusually narrow window of time. Eight of the boards have awarded contracts, and seven have begun serving participants in that timeframe. The ninth waited intentionally until systematic data collection efforts were underway, which was just before this writing.

Future Ready Oregon in general and Prosperity 10,000—in particular aim for both expediency in delivering services and innovation to serve communities better, and all the nine local workforce boards balanced these needs in some way, employing different methods to invest the first round of funding. Some built new processes and new partnerships, while others used proven approaches and partners to prioritize speed of implementation. Many used some elements of both. At a minimum, the differences in these strategies are influenced by the unique communities they serve, the composition and size of regional businesses and industries, the relationships with the Oregon Employment Department's WorkSource offices, and the capacity of both the local workforce boards and the organizations they award to offer workforce development services.

Regarding Future Ready Oregon's priority on community engagement, four of the boards reported intentional engagement with partners and community groups to enhance their effectiveness in providing service to their area. Some paid careful attention and spent time to understand the unique needs of employers, workforce development service providers, educational organizations, and populations served who may benefit from Prosperity 10,000 funded workforce development opportunities and services. For example, CWP held listening sessions with key partner groups prior to opening the RFP process and used what they learned to make awards. RWP held focus groups to identify how best to serve the Latino/a/x community. WWP opened an RFQQ and was able to garner a wider knowledge base of the needs of CBOs and those they serve. SOWIB incorporated the language and intent of Prosperity 10,000 in their general RFP process prior to their Prosperity 10,000 allocation, resulting in seven new provider awards—two of which were awarded Prosperity 10,000 funding. These examples demonstrate the importance of community feedback and intentional planning for advancing innovation and establishing new partnerships to reach Oregonians who have

been underserved. In total, four of the nine boards reported intentional community feedback opportunities.

In terms of the priority populations in Future Ready Oregon, serving these communities was a focus for all boards in some way. For some boards, the ability to serve priority populations was an awarding criterion for subgrantees. For most boards, the communities they focused on were sizeable in their region. Other boards included individuals whom they identified as communities in need but are not identified in the Future Ready Oregon legislation (SB 1545, 2022) as priority populations. While this resulted in being more inclusive, the dispersed attention may also reduce effectiveness and impacts for individuals served. Few local workforce boards reported focusing on women as a priority population. Therefore, this is an area we will be paying particular attention to in the coming year, as one of the Prosperity 10,000 goals is to ensure half of the participants are women. In addition, multiple local workforce boards self-identified needed improvements in partnerships to effectively serve members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

With regard to the emphasis on supporting high-demand industries, all local workforce boards awarded (or will award) Prosperity 10,000 funds in alignment with their existing sector strategies. In all cases, these sector strategies are based on extensive analysis of the regional economy, gaps in skills among the regional workforce, and industry demand performed by the local workforce board staff. These predetermined sector strategies and identification of communities most in need allowed the local workforce boards to invest and leverage Prosperity 10,000 funding more quickly and strategically than if they had needed to develop sector strategies. In addition to their existing sector strategies, several local workforce development boards expanded their sector strategy work into the early childhood education industry. Further, some of the local workforce boards chose to focus on the childcare and housing needs of their communities and those they serve in response to barriers participants are facing in these areas.

Regarding lessons learned, the local workforce boards identified some cause for concern regarding the sustainability of investments. Multiple boards identified the decline in federal workforce development funding over the past several years as a significant obstacle to the work that they do. While they welcomed Prosperity 10,000 funds as a much-needed infusion of funds into Oregon's workforce system, some local workforce development boards acknowledged the future challenge of sustaining expanded workforce services once the one-time funding has been expended, as well as the drawbacks of a rapid turnaround time for spending down the funds. Without confidence in sustainable funding, the local workforce boards expressed concern about being able to achieve the Prosperity 10,000 goals. This concern has influenced the investment decisions made by at least one board.

Another concern that influenced the timing of investments for one board and influenced the ability to report preliminary progress towards achieving the Prosperity 10,000 Program goals for all boards is the delay in a reporting solution to track participant characteristics, workforce development activities, and outcomes. For RWP, this delay in a reporting solution influenced their decision to wait

to invest the Prosperity 10,000 funds in direct supports for participants. While the solution is available now, RWP participants will have a shortened time-period to receive the opportunities that were funded in the first round of Prosperity 10,000 funding.

Local workforce development boards, the HECC, and the WTDB must all work together to continue developing and to improve qualitative and quantitative data collection and reporting. The Future Ready Oregon legislation calls out reporting requirements for local workforce development boards and the HECC and a Prosperity 10,000 oversight role for the WTDB. The organizations planned qualitative data collection and analysis for implementation to be led by the local workforce development boards and present findings to the WTDB, but in practice, the HECC and WTDB did not receive the type and amount of information on Prosperity 10,000 that they had hoped from Section 3a.2 of the legislation, “Each local workforce development board shall compile data on the progress made toward carrying out the Prosperity 10,000 Program. The boards shall prepare and submit a joint report that includes data, disaggregated by race, gender and geography, to the commission and the State Workforce and Talent Development Board no later than October 31 of each year, in the manner provided in ORS 192.245.”

Further, WTDB members were not well-prepared to meaningfully exercise their oversight mandate. Going forward, HECC staff will continue to work closely with local workforce development boards to ensure reporting expectations and needs are clear and that local workforce development boards have the tools and resources they need to be successful in data collection and reporting. Further, HECC staff will ensure that WTDB members are clear on their role regarding Prosperity 10,000, receive reports in a timely fashion, and are briefed by staff who have analyzed the data.

Conclusions

Overall, Oregon’s local workforce boards implemented Prosperity 10,000 well. Under a very tight timeframe, they have solicited applications and awarded grants, conducted community engagement, built new partnerships, and begun to serve participants. The Prosperity 10,000 Program has already funded more than 40 providers to serve participants throughout the state of Oregon. Those providers are offering workforce development program navigation, expanded access to community-based career counseling and wraparound supports and services, and opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and degrees through work-based learning experiences. While significant variation exists across the boards and regions, this diversity can serve as a strength if boards learn from each other. Participant outcomes related to the specific program goals established in the legislation (SB 1545, 2022) will be forthcoming in the 2023 report.

CAREER PATHWAYS

SB 1545 (2022) allocated \$14.9 million to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to administer the Future Ready Oregon Postsecondary Career Pathways Program. Most of these funds (\$14.2 million) delivered financial support to community colleges to expand their Career Pathways programs and provide direct support to Career Pathways students. In this section, we describe the process HECC used to implement this program and administer these funds.

Career Pathways are not new to Oregon’s community colleges. Launched in 2004 through the National Governors Association’s Pathways to Advancement Initiative, Oregon’s Career Pathways Initiative began with five colleges. In 2006, the initiative expanded to 11 colleges and then to all 17 community colleges in 2007. The State Board of Education approved the creation of a new short-term certificate, the Career Pathway Certificates of Completion (CPCC), in July 2007. These certificates, combined with existing Less Than One Year (LTOY) certificates, ensure flexible educational and skill building options for unemployed and underemployed workers, career changers, part-time students who need to work, and students who desire a short-term credential to jump-start their careers in an entry-level occupation. They are part of a national set of Career Pathways programs at both secondary and postsecondary levels (see, for example, <https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/career-pathways-systems>).¹³

*We anticipate serving more priority populations under the Future Ready Oregon Career Pathways grant than in years past.
~Portland Community College*

Oregon Career Pathways are programs that link education and training with intentional student support to enable individuals to secure credentials and advance over time to higher levels of education and employment in an occupation or industry sector. Career Pathways facilitate student transition from high school to community college; from pre-college courses to for-credit postsecondary programs; and from community college to university or employment. Career Pathways in Oregon improve systems and are aligned with guided pathways work. They are an integrated approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent, and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guide each student effectively and efficiently from the point of entry through to the attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.

Four essential features help operationalize Career Pathways programs:

¹³ Perkins Collaborative Resource Network (2022).

1. Well-connected and transparent education, training, support services, and credentials developed through relationships with faculty, industry, CTE, apprenticeship, workforce development or education partners align with local priorities and/or labor market need.
2. Multiple entry points create equity and access for diverse populations, including individuals with barriers to education, and support all students' successful entry into a career pathway.
3. Multiple exit points at successively higher levels lead to self- or family supporting employment and align with subsequent entry points.
4. Stackable credentials prepare students for additional credentials or training and one or more of the following: industry-recognized credential, occupational license, or credential with labor market value.

A student is considered a Career Pathways student once the student receives intentional student support and attends a Career and Technical Education (CTE) course that is part of one of the designated pathways beyond the drop date; students appearing on the Fourth Week Enrollment Report for a Career Pathways CTE course are counted as attending beyond the drop date. Career Pathways grant recipients (community colleges) determine which students are Career Pathways students, as they define what services are included in intentional student support in the program and which courses are part of their Career Pathways program.

The Future Ready Oregon investment in the Career Pathways programs provides direct and indirect support for students to successfully complete their program, earn a credential recognized by a targeted industry sector, and obtain employment with an income that meets the self-sufficiency standard for the county in which the community college resides. Moreover, the investment is intended to reduce disparities experienced by priority populations in securing gainful employment or obtaining career advancement. These priority populations include the following:

- Communities of color
- Women
- Low-income communities
- Rural and frontier communities
- Veterans
- Persons with disabilities
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes

- Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age
- Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community

HECC's Office of Community College and Workforce Development (CCWD) administers the Future Ready Oregon Postsecondary Career Pathways Program. In May 2022, CCWD notified colleges of their award. Each college was awarded a different total amount. The funding formula was based on three different factors:

- All colleges received a base of \$300,000.
- All colleges received additional funding based on the number of Fulltime Equivalent Students (FTES) served by the college.
- Smaller colleges with less 5,000 FTES were provided additional funding due to less tuition revenue they receive despite having similar administrative costs as larger colleges.

CCWD released a request for applications (RFA) to colleges to apply for the Future Ready Oregon funding. All 17 colleges submitted applications to receive their distribution of Future Ready Oregon Postsecondary Career Pathways funds. To expedite the distribution of funds under a short timeline, CCWD used a streamlined application format that was similar to a recent process for a previous allocation of Career Pathways funding. The application included a simple budget form and brief narrative of how the funds were to be used. CCWD incorporated the application narratives, invoice requirements, and data reporting deadlines into the grant agreements. Colleges reported using a recent application process and receiving the priorities stated in the Future Ready Oregon legislation and the amount of funding each college would receive from this allocation were very helpful.

Colleges reported using the funding to expand existing Career Pathways programs, develop targeted outreach efforts to priority populations, build or expand curriculum in targeted industries, and upgrade technology and equipment in Career Pathways CTE programs. Some colleges are using the funds to expand capacity for CTE programs that serve Career Pathways and other students. Finally, some colleges are strengthening their efforts to recruit and support participants and collaborating with CBOs, workforce agencies and other partners to maximize enrollment and support to students in postsecondary career pathway training programs.

Table 2.2 includes brief descriptions of the plans to use the grant funding, instructional programs, amounts awarded to colleges, and, if identified, the priority populations the colleges are targeting their Future Ready Oregon grant funding to serve.

Table 2. 2: Career Pathways Program Descriptions by Community College, Academic Program, Priority Populations, and Amount Awarded

Community College (CC)	Brief Description of Career Pathways	Academic Program (Industry)	Priority Populations Intentionally Recruited or Served	Amount Awarded
Blue Mountain CC	Upgrade and purchase equipment for Commercial Driver’s License (CLD) and welding programs; support instruction for CDL program, launch a career center and leverage other funding sources	CDL, Welding	Rural communities, low income	\$519,959.00
Columbia Gorge CC	Build and expand advanced manufacturing, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), construction, health occupations programs; targeted marketing; scholarship and student support services; equipment upgrades	Advanced Manufacturing, EMT/paramedicine, construction, Health Occupations	Rural, low-income	\$436,899.00
Central Oregon CC	Instructional support for CTE programs, Integrated Education & Training (IET) program development, new certificate development, sub-agreements for outreach and recruitment efforts; direct student support tuition/fee/supplies; equipment and technology upgrades	CIS, Business, Digital Arts, GIS, Forestry, Addiction Studies, Public Health, Exercise Science		\$801,440.00
Chemeketa CC	Collaborate with community partners to expand and leverage existing programs and support services; Integrated Education & Training (IET) program development in Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Early Childhood Education and Welding programs. Leverage Inclusive Career Advancement Program (ICAP) to serve individuals with disabilities.	CNA, Welding, Early Childhood Education	Rural, low-income, individuals with disabilities	\$1,311,502.00
Clackamas CC	Hire personnel to develop and lead Career Pathways and Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs; outreach to priority populations; direct student support tuition and wraparound services		Low-income	\$980,919.00

Community College (CC)	Brief Description of Career Pathways	Academic Program (Industry)	Priority Populations Intentionally Recruited or Served	Amount Awarded
Clatsop CC	Hire personnel to develop new coordinated resource team including data and reporting staff, instructional assistants, faculty for vessel operating program; outreach to priority populations; purchase student assistive technology; purchase equipment	Vessel Operator Training, Automotive	Rural, low-income, individuals with disabilities	\$486,242.00
Klamath CC	Outreach and marketing to priority populations; purchase curriculum for Adult Education programs; purchase equipment for welding and advanced manufacturing programs	Advanced Manufacturing, Welding	Rural, low-income	\$545,844.00
Linn Benton CC	Leverage SNAP Training and Employment Program (STEP) to support low-income students; outreach to priority populations; collaborate with industry partners		Low-income	\$848,766.00
Lane CC	Expand capacity and leverage existing student support programs; develop new Career Pathway Certificates; expand Integrated Education & Training (IET) program; direct student support tuition and wraparound services			\$1,118,294.00
Mt. Hood CC	Expand existing career pathway student support programs; develop new certificates in welding, EMT and construction; outreach to priority populations; equipment upgrades	Healthcare, Early Childhood Education, Accounting, Construction, Computer Science, Advanced Manufacturing		\$1,082,780.00
Oregon Coast CC	Expand curriculum development, faculty training and assessment in Allied Health and Welding programs; provide direct student support.	Allied Health, Welding	Low-income	\$399,435.00

Community College (CC)	Brief Description of Career Pathways	Academic Program (Industry)	Priority Populations Intentionally Recruited or Served	Amount Awarded
Portland CC	Hire personnel and expand capacity in existing career pathways programs; develop new Integrated Education & Training (IET) programs; develop new Career Pathway Certificates; provide direct student support; targeted outreach to priority populations		Low-income, women, veterans, LGBTQ+ communities	\$2,842,242.00
Rogue CC	Pilot new program, hire personnel; outreach to priority populations and collaborate with community partners; provide direct student support and wraparound services;		Low-income	\$782,990.00
Southwestern Oregon CC	Collaborate with community partners and leverage other funding services; outreach to priority populations; hire personnel to implement grant; purchase equipment		Rural, low-income	\$568,975.00
Tillamook Bay CC	Expand existing career pathways programs; build pilot program to recruit students to Welding program; hire contractor to manage renovations and upgrade to Industrial Technology center	Welding		\$399,128.00
Treasure Valley CC	Hire personnel to develop new Career Pathways team, outreach to priority populations, develop Integrated Education & Training (IET) programs, direct student support.		Communities of color, low-income, rural	\$501,521.00
Umpqua CC	Expand career pathways programs; targeted outreach to priority populations; expand High School Bridge program; direct student support; hire personnel; develop new certificate programs	Healthcare, Manufacturing, Automotive	Rural, low-income	\$615,839.00

Lessons Learned

Some colleges created new Career Pathways programs (i.e., new academic programs) and other colleges improved existing programs. This difference added a complexity to deciphering which students to report in the Future Ready Oregon data submission for colleges. To support the colleges, HECC offered three technical assistance “office hours” and invited all colleges to join if they had questions. HECC documented those questions and answers and produced a frequently asked questions document that was sent out to all colleges.

Colleges reported several challenges with initial implementation activities of the Future Ready Oregon Career Pathways investment. The quick turnaround time to write the proposal followed by the lag time to contract execution meant colleges had to wait longer to begin hiring procedures or spending grant funds for the coming academic year. This delay shortened grant progress, which could not begin until contracts were complete in late July and early August. Additionally, colleges did not receive final specifications for collecting participant-level data until mid-October, and colleges collectively reported this was a significant challenge.

“We have pulled together key players at our college and community stakeholders. We problem solve student barriers and needs and collaborate so all of us can support students with our various funding streams.”
~Clatsop Community College

Similar to other Future Ready Oregon programs, colleges reported the tight timeline of achieving grant goals for expanding programming and building capacity within the 2022-2023 school year is a challenge. In addition, they reported the data collection and quarterly reporting of student-level data is a challenge because it requires staff time to be dedicated to reporting that could be dedicated to grant implementation or direct student service. Finally, some colleges (not all) requested that intentional student support services be centrally-defined, rather than allowing colleges to define it for themselves, to make program evaluation and improvement more straightforward.

Colleges also reported challenges of their own. They identified a wide range of gaps to effectively serve the priority populations in their regions. These included enrolling and serving systemically underrepresented communities of color, low-income, and rural communities. Some colleges’ project activities include developing targeted marketing and outreach to these populations. Additionally, colleges identified various service needs for students to be successful including transportation, childcare, internet and technology, and language barriers. Some colleges are collaborating with CBOs and workforce partners to provide these services to identified populations.

Conclusion

Colleges are using the Future Ready Oregon Postsecondary Career Pathway Program resources for expanding their career pathways programs, capacity building, new programming, collaboration with community partners, and adding new and/or expanding intentional student support services to students. In the upcoming year, colleges anticipate serving more priority populations under the Future Ready Oregon Postsecondary Career Pathways grant than in past years due to deliberate investments in programming and services that support priority population as well as collaborations with CBOs and workforce agencies.

Taken together, HECC and the community colleges implemented the Career Pathways component of Future Ready Oregon effectively. HECC put together an efficient and useful application process, though contract execution took longer than colleges planned to begin their implementation in the short timeframe. HECC was delayed in getting data specifications to the colleges but provided technical support for colleges to implement the specifications. Colleges used funds to strengthen program infrastructure that will serve current and future students, to develop new programs, to plan and implement new outreach strategies to priority populations, and to provide student support services. In the coming year, the colleges and the HECC will begin to assess the effectiveness of these various investments.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

The Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), Apprenticeship and Training Division (ATD) was allocated \$18.9 million in Future Ready Oregon (SB 1545, 2022) grant funding to administer the Future Ready Oregon Registered Apprenticeship Program. These funds are intended to provide financial support to accelerate innovation in the development, expansion, and implementation of health care and manufacturing apprenticeships and to support the development of pre-apprenticeship training programs in healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. In this section, we describe the processes BOLI undertook to implement this program and administer these funds.

The Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council (OSATC), under the direction of the Apprenticeship and Training Division of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, is the governing body that approves new apprenticeship committees, programs, and policies. It also makes decisions about individual apprentices' registration, discipline, and placement. Aligned with its role, OSATC makes the final decision of the Future Ready Oregon Registered Apprenticeship Program grant awards.

OSATC awards the Future Ready Oregon apprenticeship grants on a competitive basis based on recommendations from the Evaluation Committee. The evaluation committee was convened to review applications and provide recommendations to the OSATC for approval/denial to fund the awards. The evaluation committee consisted of four members: one member of OSATC, a representative from BOLI, a public member who has either large grant funding or fiscal experience, and the ATD Director.

The evaluation criteria include ensuring the proposed programs of the apprenticeships or pre-apprenticeships are within the healthcare, manufacturing, or construction industries, have defined measurable outcomes, identify, and engage the priority populations they serve, and have a well-defined proposal for implementation. These priority populations, as defined in SB 1545 (2022), include the following:

- Communities of color
- Women
- Low-income communities
- Rural and frontier communities
- Veterans
- Persons with disabilities
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes

- Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age
- Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Additionally, the grant awardees must be CBOs, labor organizations, local workforce development boards and other entities that develop these apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship training programs. The allowable grants activities are listed below:

- To pay the costs of convening employers in health care and manufacturing;
- To recruit and conduct outreach for apprentices;
- To provide tuition and fee assistance to program participants;
- To pay the costs of tools, supplies and equipment and other training-related costs;
- To pay for technology supports, including broadband services;
- To provide apprentices with supports and services that are equivalent to the supports and services available to apprentices who perform work on a bridge or highway project;
- To develop uniform standards for new registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training programs;
- To develop a curriculum and standard courses of study for the instruction of apprentices; and
- For any other activities that the bureau deems necessary to support the expansion of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training programs and to support overall increased program participation, with an emphasis on increased participation by women and individuals from communities of color.

By the end of the fiscal award, BOLI's ATD will have engaged in three rounds of Request for Proposals (RFP) to disperse Future Ready Oregon funding. The first two rounds have been funded and program enrollment and activities have commenced. The third round opened on November 4, 2022 and will close on March 10, 2022.

First Round of Funding

The first round of funding opened with an RFP released on May 2, 2022 and closed on June 2, 2022. ATD did extensive outreach over 13,573 contact lists through listservs and those organizations they considered to be interested in the funding or partners in communicating the opportunity as widely as possible. From the opening of the RFP through its closing, ATD held multiple training sessions and posted those recordings to their website. In addition, they met individually with those who indicated they would be applying for funding to thoroughly explain the goals of this Future Ready Oregon

apprenticeship program and the importance of clear, targeted outreach strategies to priority populations.

In total, twenty grant proposals were received by ATD in the first round; 15 large grant applications and five small grant applications were submitted. The Evaluation Committee recommended four large pre-apprentice and five large apprentice applications to be approved. Additionally, two small grant proposals were recommended to be funded. At the July OSATC meeting, funding decisions were made to allocate \$2,160,959 over the 11 organizations that had been recommended. During the first round they allocated funding in two categories, 1) large grants and 2) small grants.

The eleven awards OSATC approved will serve more than 400 people in the state. These awards included all three key industries. See Figure 2.2. Each Future Ready Oregon priority population was included in at least one proposal in round one. See Figure 2.3.

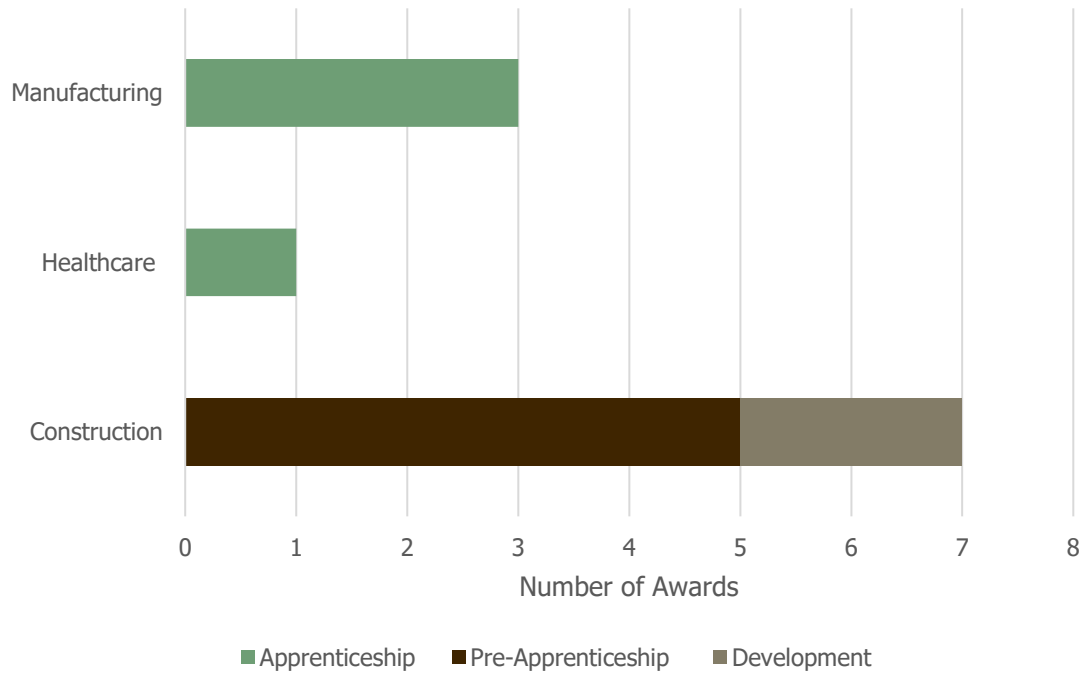


Figure 2. 2: Career Pathways Program Descriptions by Community College, Academic Program, Priority Populations, and Amount Awarded

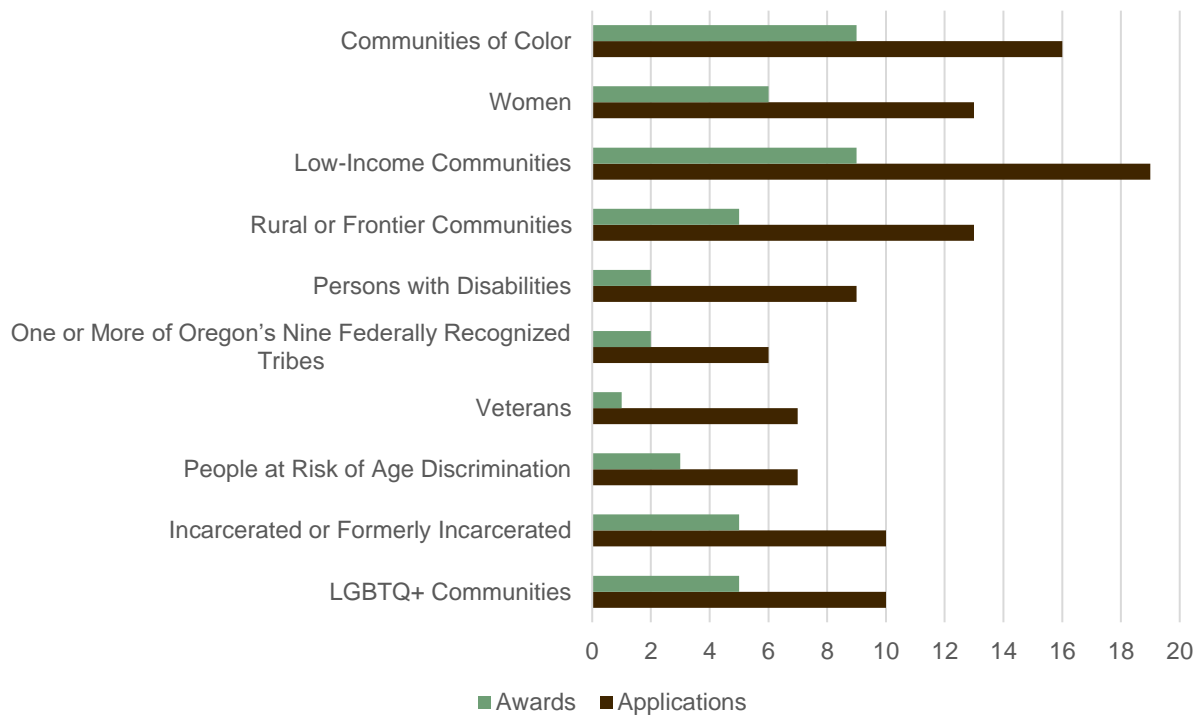


Figure 2. 3: Number of Awards and Applications in the First Round of Applications by Priority Population

ATD also tracked the local workforce region to ensure that all regions of Oregon were served under the Future Ready Oregon Registered Apprenticeship Program. All regions, except for the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board—including Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties, were included in both applications and awards for the first round. See Figure 2.4.

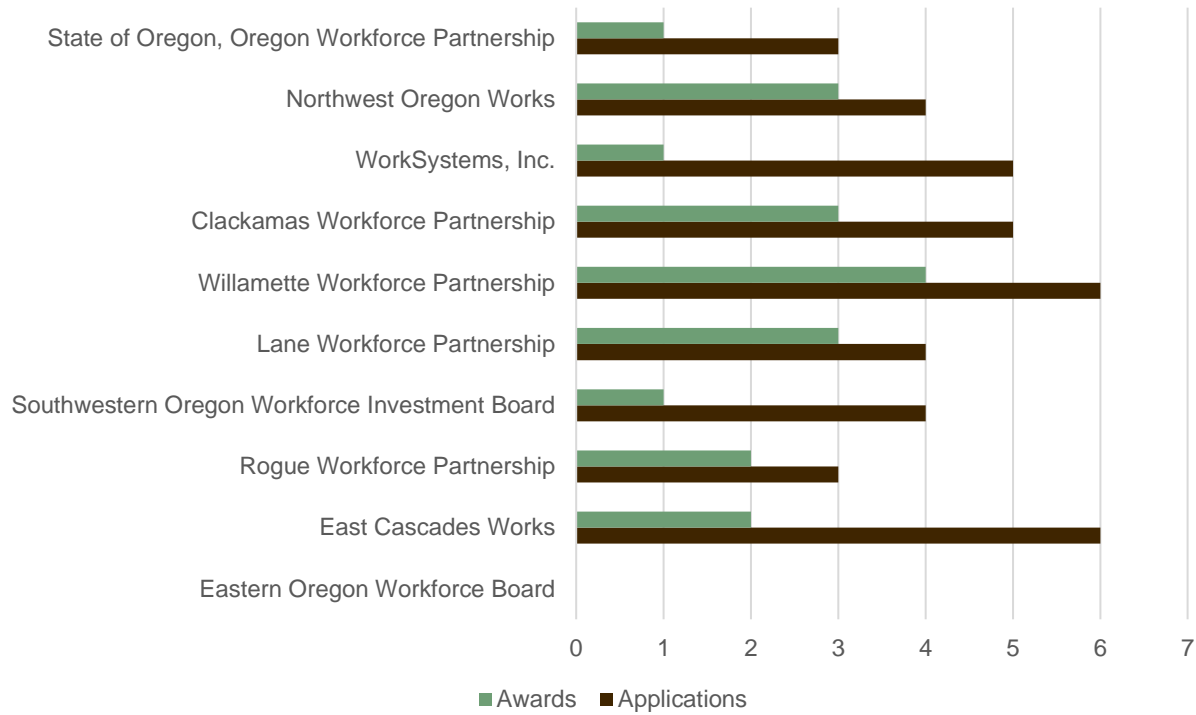


Figure 2. 4: Number of Awards and Applications in the First Round of Applications by Local Workforce Board District

Table 2.3, below, identifies the organization, description, region, priority population, industry, and the amount awarded in the first round of funding.

Table 2. 3: Registered Apprenticeship Program Round One Awardees, Project Description, Region, Priority Populations, Industry and Amount

Round 1 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
Klamath Community College	Recruit, train, and facilitate 25 more high school students' participation in construction pre-apprenticeship activities/courses, academic/degree track, supported employer placements, and support services for student materials, tools, tuition, and technology supports.	East Cascades Workforce Region: Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler counties	High School students: communities of color, women, low-income, rural communities, persons with disabilities, Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, age discriminated people, LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$62,100
Chemeketa Community College	Expand CCC's existing pre-apprenticeship programs to serve 50 individuals, 40 of whom will be from priority populations.	Willamette Workforce Partnership Region: Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties	Communities of color, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals	Construction	\$56,750
Oregon Department of Corrections	Create a new registered apprenticeship program in manufacturing. The Boiler Operator Apprenticeship for incarcerated individuals will begin by serving 4 participants.	Northwest Oregon Works, Willamette Workforce Partnership, Lane Workforce Partnerships: Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, Tillamook, Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill, and Lane counties	Communities of color, low-income, rural communities, individuals with disabilities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, Oregon's nine federally recognized Indigenous tribes, individuals facing age discrimination, and LGBTQ+ community	Manufacturing	\$30,507

Round 1 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
ENDVR	Create a new, innovative registered apprenticeship program for a Botanical Extractionist within the manufacturing industry. Serving 4 participants to remove barriers to quality employment in the cannabis industry. A Botanical Extractionist works in a state-compliant processing lab performing solvent-based and/or solventless extractions with cannabis. A large portion of this proposal is for the development of program standards, curriculum, and an online learning platform to enable statewide student access.	Northwest Oregon Works, WorkSystems, Inc., Clackamas Workforce, Willamette Workforce, Lane Workforce: Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, Tillamook, Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill, and Lane counties	Oregon’s historically underserved communities, including the priority population of communities of color	Manufacturing	\$554,991
Portland Youth Builders	Expand outreach and enrollment for its pre-apprenticeship Bridge Program in the construction industry to train an additional 125-apprenticeship ready graduates. The Bridge Program is a nine-week pre-apprenticeship program providing vocational training to youth.	Clackamas Workforce Partnership, WorkSystems, Inc. region: Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, and LGBTQ+ individuals	Construction	\$144,473
Rogue Community College	Develop a new Industrial Machinist Apprenticeship Program in the manufacturing industry, providing support services to 10 new apprentices.	Rogue Workforce Partnership: Jackson and Josephine counties	Low-income communities, Veterans, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals	Manufacturing	\$249,751
Southwestern Oregon Community College	Develop Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, in the construction, serving 75 high school juniors and seniors from 12 selected schools in Coos, Curry, and Western Douglas counties.	Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board: Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties	Women, low-income communities, and rural and frontier communities	Construction	\$432,250

Round 1 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
United We Heal	Expand the Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor (CDAC) Registered Apprenticeship Program in the healthcare industry, including providing support services for 30 registered apprentices.	Northwest Oregon Works, Willamette Workforce Partnership, Lane Workforce Partnership, East Cascade Works: Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, Tillamook, Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Lane, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Healthcare	\$233,000
Youth 71five Ministries	Create two brand-new Construction Pre-Apprenticeship Programs with corresponding support services for 75 youth (ages 16-24 yrs. old), providing student case management and direct support services. They will partner with Association of General Contractors, Community Justice, and Builders Association of Southern Oregon	Rogue Workforce: Jackson and Josephine counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment based on age, and individuals of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$92,296
Pacific Northwest Ironworkers	Research and develop project that will create an ironworker pre-apprenticeship program in the construction industry at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, serving 40-48 annually.	Clackamas Workforce Partnership: Clackamas County	Women, communities of color, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.	Construction	\$10,000

Round 1 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
Latino Built	Research and develop project that identifies and addresses barriers to enrollment in Oregon's Construction Apprenticeship Programs to increase Latinx participation and overall success in Oregon's construction apprenticeships	State of Oregon, all regions, and counties	Communities of color and low-income communities	Construction	\$10,000

Second Round of Funding

After the first-round awards were announced, it became clear that some organizations do not have appropriate compliance requirements in place to develop and offer pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs. As an example, one of the Round 1 awardees did not have the necessary insurance required to offer apprenticeships. The cost of the insurance alone was more than \$10,000, which was highest amount of the small grants. Therefore, ATD changed the structure of the types of grants for the second round by eliminating the small grants and required all funding requests to be at least \$10,000 for the second and third round of RFPs. ATD wanted to make sure smaller and/or newer programs were not penalized because they don't have the same existing institutional resources as other, larger programs.

The first-round proposals that were not funded were not selected because of a lack of understanding of apprenticeship, lack of detail in outreach strategies to priority populations, and little to no plan for the sustainability of the program beyond the scope of Future Ready Oregon funding. ATD provided the feedback to the organizations, worked with them to strengthen their application, and invited them to apply in a subsequent round.

The second round of funding was available from August 2, 2022, to September 2, 2022. For the second round of funding, ATD followed the same protocols that were established in the first round of funding, including announcement to list serves and other contacts throughout Oregon, training sessions, and individual meetings with applicants. Additionally, they reached out to partners in eastern Oregon to engage potential partners to apply in the second round since no proposals in the first round came from the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board region.

Seventeen grant awards have been announced and officiated from the second round of proposals. The sum of the awards approved in the second-round of proposals totals \$6,161,460 and is expected to serve more than 500 people. In addition, funds that pay for infrastructure will support participants well into the future. Two grant applications (totaling \$637,796 and 160 participants served) submitted in the second round had not yet been voted on and have been forwarded for further consideration at the December 15, 2022, OSATC council meeting.

The second round of awards included all three industries as well. See Figure 2.5. All the Future Ready Oregon priority populations were also included in at least one proposal in round two. See Figure 2.6.

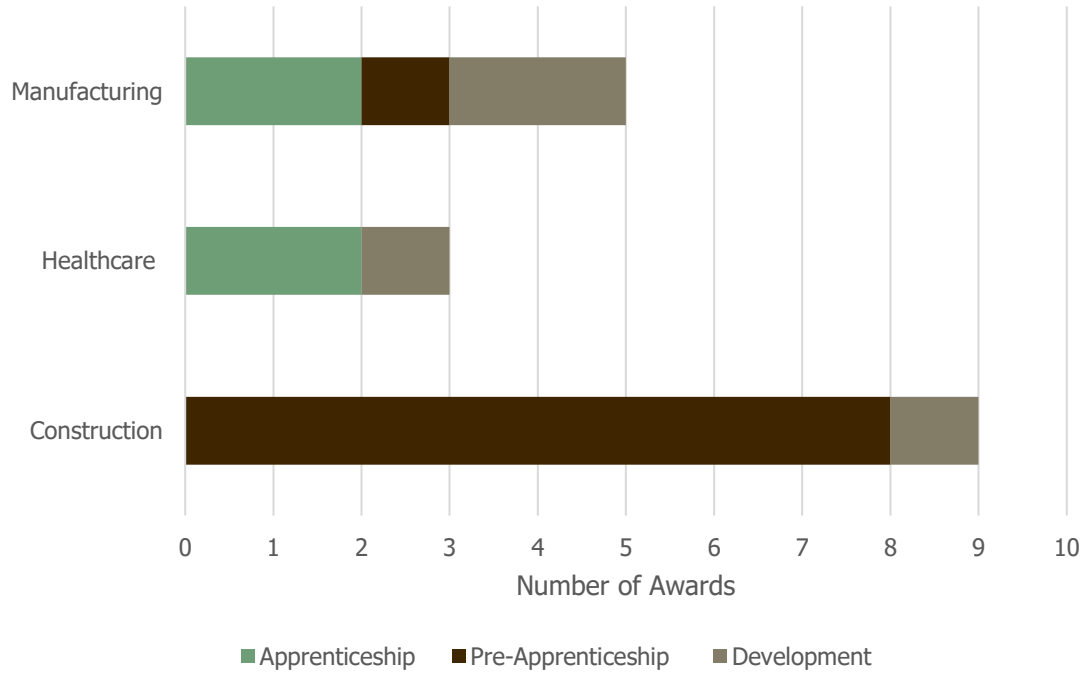


Figure 2. 5: Number of Second Round Awards by Industry and Type of Project Funded

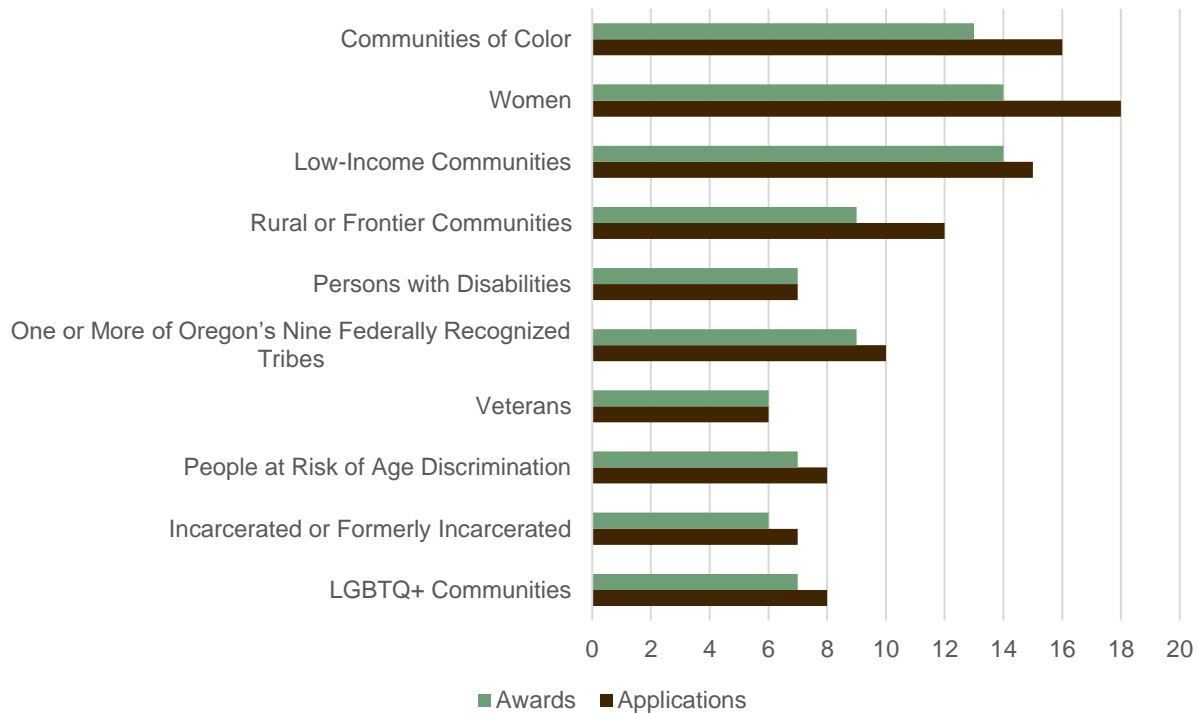


Figure 2. 6: Number of Awards and Applications in the Second Round of Applications by Priority Population

All the workforce regions within Oregon applied and were awarded funding to create, expand, or develop capacity to offer apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in manufacturing, healthcare, and construction. The outreach to partners within the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board was effective. See Figure 2.7.

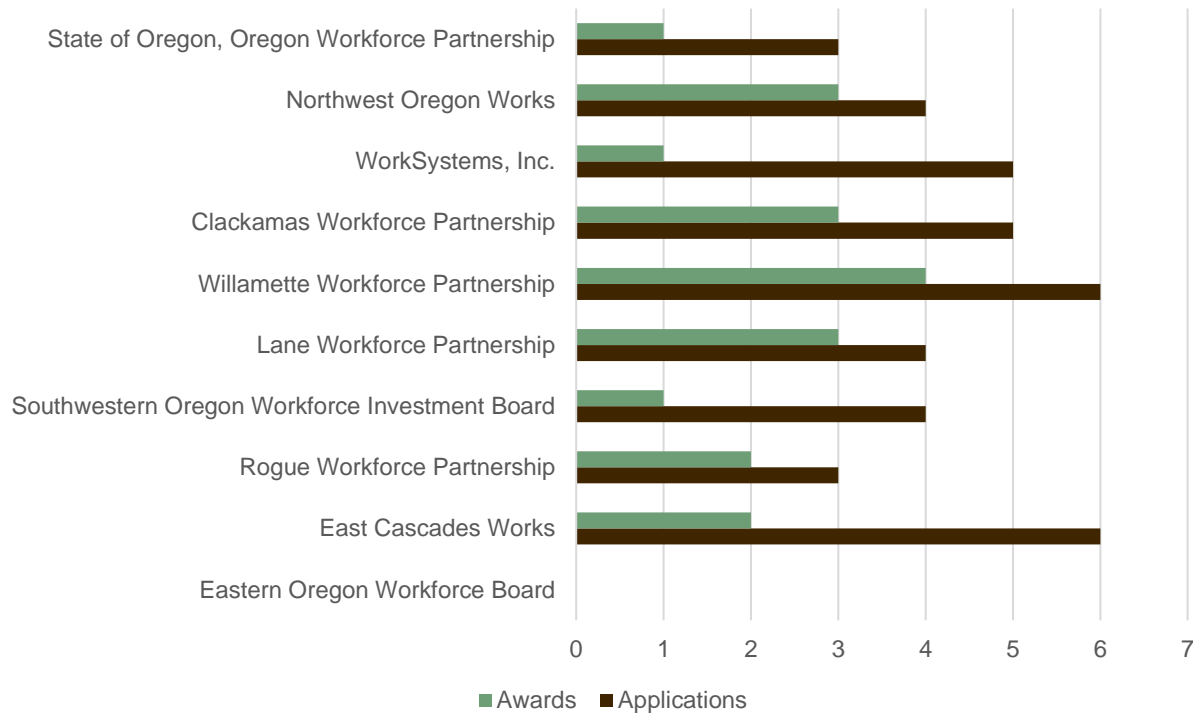


Figure 2. 7: Number of Awards and Applications in the Second Round of Applications by Local Workforce Board District

Descriptions of the second-round awards are in Table 2.4, below.

Table 2. 4: Registered Apprenticeship Program Round One Awardees, Project Description, Region, Priority Populations, Industry and Amount

Round 2 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians	Development grant for pre-apprenticeships.	State of Oregon, all regions, and counties	Members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes.	Construction	\$42,168
Baker Technical Institute	Create a pre-apprenticeship program	East Cascade Works and Eastern Oregon Workforce Boards: Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler, Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties	Women, rural and frontier communities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, and members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes	Construction	\$300,000
Columbia Helicopters	Expand manufacturing registered program	WorkSystems, Inc., Clackamas Workforce Partnership, Willamette Workforce Partnership: Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties	Communities of color, women, Veterans, persons with disabilities, individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Manufacturing	\$35,000
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	Create a construction pre-apprenticeship program	Eastern Oregon Workforce Board: Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, Veterans, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon’s nine federal recognized Indian tribes, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$73,700

Round 2 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
Eagle Ridge High School	Create a construction pre-apprenticeship program	East Cascades Works: Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, Veterans, persons with disabilities, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes, individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$198,000
Green Muse, LLC	Received a development grant in healthcare	State of Oregon, all regions, and counties	Communities of color, low-income communities, and individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age	Healthcare	\$600,000
Impact NW	Create a pre-apprenticeship program	WorkSystems, Inc., and Clackamas Workforce Partnership: Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, persons with disabilities, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes, individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Manufacturing	\$322,583
Instruction Construction	Create a construction pre-apprenticeship program	WorkSystems, Inc., Clackamas Workforce Partnership, Willamette Workforce Partnership: Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, persons with disabilities, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals	Construction	\$444,274
Journalistic Learning Initiative	Received a development grant	State of Oregon, all regions, and counties	Communities of color, low-income communities, and rural and frontier communities	Manufacturing	\$10,000

Round 2 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
Koontz Machine and Welding	Create a manufacturing registered apprenticeship program	Southwest Oregon Workforce Investment Board: Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties	Women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, Veterans, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, and members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes	Manufacturing	\$47,973
Lane Education Service District	Create a pre-apprenticeship program in construction	Lane Workforce Partnership: Lane County	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, individuals who experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$264,000
Northwest College of Construction	Create a construction pre-apprenticeship program	WorkSystems, Inc.: Multnomah and Washington counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, individuals who experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$400,000
OnTrack Rogue Valley	Create a healthcare registered apprentice program	Rogue Workforce Partnership: Jackson and Josephine counties	Women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities	Healthcare	\$67,648
Oregon Bioscience Association	Received a development grant	WorkSystems, Inc., Lane Workforce Partnership, East Cascades Works: Multnomah, Washington, Lane, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, and members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes	Manufacturing	\$205,522

Round 2 Awards					
Organization	Description	Region	Priority Populations	Industry	Amount
Oregon Tradeswomen	Expand existing construction pre-apprenticeship program	Willamette Workforce Partnership, Lane Workforce Partnership, Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board, Rogue Workforce Partnership, East Cascades Works, and Eastern Oregon Workforce Board: Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Lane, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler, Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, Veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$1,129,852
Pacific NW Ironworkers Apprenticeship 29	Create a construction pre-apprenticeship program	Clackamas Workforce Partnership: Clackamas County	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, Veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community	Construction	\$264,740
RISE Partnership	Create a healthcare registered apprentice program	State of Oregon, all regions, and counties	Communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural & frontier communities, persons with disabilities, and individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age	Healthcare	\$1,756,000

Third Round of Funding

The third round of Future Ready Oregon Registered Apprenticeships opened on November 4, 2022 and will close on March 10, 2022. The third round of funding will allocate up to \$9,440,874 or if the two second-round proposals are awarded in December, \$8,810,077 will be available to be awarded in round three. ATD chose to have an extended awarding timeframe for the third-round due to the time it takes organizations newer to apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships to learn what is required and how best to serve priority populations. ATD wanted to be sure that time was available for them to work with organizations interested in developing and expanding apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, a lesson learned from both the first and second round of awarding.

Each month, beginning in December 2022, the Evaluation Committee will review the round three submissions if there are at least five applications and the total amount sought from all proposals equals or is greater than \$2 million. ATD timed this schedule based on several factors: schedule of when OSATC meets and reasonable time to make sure expenditures occur prior to June 30, 2023. This schedule also allows for any funding from the first two rounds that will no longer be expended to be reinvested in awards from the third round.

We are most excited about continuing to work with applicants and grantees to develop incredibly innovative and industry-changing apprenticeship programs across the state of Oregon, and to see these programs' deep and meaningful impact on priority populations and local communities.
~Apprenticeship and Training Division, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

Lessons Learned

Throughout the awarding process, ATD identified lessons learned and made rapid changes in response. One of the lessons learned was the importance of working one-on-one with applicants to make sure organizations understand apprenticeships, have outreach strategies to priority populations, and have a sustainability plan for the program beyond the scope of Future Ready Oregon funding. Another lesson learned was informing applicants of insurance requirements earlier in the awarding process, compiling a list of insurance providers for applicants to contact, and, in some cases, pushing back the date of the contract to give applicants more time.

ATD reported that the primary challenge for the upcoming year is the timeline, which is unusually short for the amount of funding involved. The legislation gives ATD one year to implement the Registered Apprenticeship program, award the Future Ready Oregon funds, and ensure the funds will be expended by June 30, 2023. ATD anticipates challenges with respect to the grantees' short timelines of twelve months from the date of signing the contract. These timelines provide grantees only a narrow window in which to build and launch the programs. ATD suggested that 24 months would be more reasonable, especially to offer additional support to organizations that are new to apprenticeships but already serve priority populations in other ways.

Conclusion

ATD's implemented the Future Ready Oregon Registered Apprenticeship Program quite effectively. They built a new team and a new grants program at an accelerated speed to ensure that the \$19 million could be allocated in less than a year. They developed effective processes to ensure adherence to the requirements and goals of Future Ready Oregon and to distribute the funds in a fair manner. They conducted extensive outreach to encourage applications from new and existing partners, from across the state, and from both large and small organizations. They worked repeatedly with applicants to ensure they understood the requirements, and they provided ongoing technical assistance. Their award decisions accounted for complete plans to meet the program's goals and service to all priority populations and across all regions of the state. They launched apprenticeships in new and expanding industries including cannabis and healthcare, respectively. They received feedback about the challenges applicants faced and made improvements in real time to improve their processes. In short, they worked with applicants and grantees to develop innovative and industry-changing apprenticeship programs across the state that can provide meaningful impact on priority populations and local communities.

ATD continues to work with applicants and grantees. They report that grantees' plans to serve priority populations are underway and expect to see higher rates of retention for priority populations. For the third round of funding, ATD reports hoping to see more applicants from new and emerging industries in apprenticeships and plan additional technical assistance to facilitate apprenticeship development there.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

In this section, we describe the Youth Programs component of Future Ready Oregon, how it is being implemented, and what this implementation means for 2023 and for Future Ready Oregon in general. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Youth Development Division (YDD) was allocated \$10.5 million in Future Ready Oregon ([SB 1545, 2022](#)) grant funding to administer the Youth Programs. The Youth Development Division's Workforce Readiness and Reengagement grant programs support high quality, community-based workforce readiness programs for youth ages 14-24 who are disconnected from education and employment. This \$10.5 million investment expands YDD's existing grant programs, providing for expanded workforce readiness and reengagement services, including outreach, academic remediation, diploma, and GED completion, mentoring and coaching, career exploration, and paid work experience.

YDD functions under the direction and control of the Youth Development Council (YDC). The YDC was created to support Oregon's education system by developing state policy and administering funding to community and school-based youth development programs, services, and initiatives for youth ages 6-24 in a manner that supports educational success, and career and workforce development with a focus on Positive Youth Development, and is integrated, measurable and accountable. The Council ensures implementation of best practices that are evidence based; are culturally, gender and age appropriate; address individual risk factors and build upon factors that improve the health and well-being of children and youth; and includes tribal best practices.

With Future Ready Oregon, Youth Programs funding, YDD is making investments in workforce development programs for youth ages 14-24 who are out of school, unemployed, and/or reengaging in education through a YDD Reengagement Program. These funds support training, paid work experience, job placement and coaching, and industry recognized credentials for youth. Investments emphasize recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities, while prioritizing key populations.

As stated previously, the total amount to be all allocated to YDD is \$10.5 million consisting of both general fund and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to carry out the Future Ready Youth Programs. Of the \$10.5 million, \$3.5 million is general funding:

- \$186,571 was allocated for operation expenses in allocating and managing the grant awards and
- \$3,313,429 was allocated for the Youth Programs grant making.

These general funds must be expended by June 30, 2023. In addition, \$7 million is allocated from ARPA funding for grant making. These funds may be expended into the next biennium, i.e., past June 30, 2023. YDD plans to disburse Youth Programs funding in two application rounds: the first round will use general funding, and the second round will distribute ARPA funds for use in the 2023-25 biennium.

The grant awards, both in the first round and all other future rounds, focus on the workforce development strategies outline in the Future Ready legislation and the priority populations ages 14-24. These priority population include the following:

- Communities of color,
- Women,
- Low-income communities,
- Rural and frontier communities,
- Veterans,
- Persons with disabilities,
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals,
- Members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes,
- Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment based on age, and
- Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In addition to the priority populations identified above, the youth population intended for these funds are youth who are not enrolled in school, not employed, and/or enrolled in a YDD reengagement program. Ensuring the services reach this youth population, the grants will direct funding to three core services described in the legislation: paid work experiences, job placement and coaching, and credentials and certifications. The application required a focus on one of the three areas, ideally whichever would be the focal point of programming, however organizations may deliver two or all three of these services if awarded. Thus far, YDD has completed the first round of making. Currently, they are finalizing the grant agreements.

First Round of Funding

YDD issued the Future Ready Oregon Youth Programs Request for Applications (RFA) on June 24, 2022, and it closed on August 7, 2022, for the first round of funding.¹⁴ The total amount to be allocated was \$3,345,806—adding a small amount of general funds than was intended due to salary savings from a slight delay in hiring due to the highly competitive talent acquisition market.

The applications requested had to focus on at least one of the three core services described in the Youth Programs section of legislation: 1) paid work experiences, 2) job placement and coaching, and 3) credentials and certifications. YDD did not restrict services to the three core industries that some other Future Ready programs are statutorily required to do (i.e., manufacturing, healthcare, and Technology). YDD allowed credential attainment to include both those recognized by an industry or by employers partnered with the program; work experience and job placement also did not have industry specific requirements. Being more inclusive by industry allowed more flexibility in serving youth, and more accessibility for communities with workforce needs outside of the three core industries (e.g., lifeguard training for youth, which is a specific need of YMCAs across Oregon, and a national issue¹⁵).

YDD took steps sought to make the process of applying for the Future Ready Oregon Youth Programs as simple as possible in order to receive as many applications as possible, especially from new partners. The RFA did not require a detailed budget until the award stage; YDD did this to reduce the workload for applicants, recognizing budgets often change once grantee reaches award negotiation stage, and may also be modified to support programming during the grant period. Additionally, while the RFA was open, YDD held multiple technical assistance meetings and published detailed responses to questions and requests for clarifications.

YDD also conducted extensive outreach to CBOs to maximize awareness of the funding opportunity. This included sharing information via in person visits to YDD grantees and community outreach carried out in Spring and Summer 2022, as part of a broader YDD community engagement effort. YDD also publicized the grant opportunity via it's ODE mailing list, and shared information about the opportunity with state agency partners working with organizations that serve youth populations the agency sought to serve with these grants (e.g., youth experiencing homelessness and youth in the foster care system).

¹⁴ RFA: https://odemail-my.sharepoint.com/personal/ydd_onedrive_ode_oregon_gov/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fydd%5Fonedrive%5Fode%5Foregon%5Fgov%2FDocuments%2FRFA%20Files%2FFuture%20Ready%20RFA%2FRFA%20Documents%20Attachments%2FYDD%20Future%20Ready%20Youth%20Programs%20RFA%20Full%20Packet%2006242022%281%29%2Epdf&parent=%2Fpersonal%2Fydd%5Fonedrive%5Fode%5Foregon%5Fgov%2FDocuments%2FRFA%20Files%2FFuture%20Ready%20RFA%2FRFA%20Documents%20Attachments&ga=1

¹⁵ Torchinsky, R. (2022).

The application process was highly competitive, and many high-quality organizations with proven and innovative programs were not funded. In total, YDD received 54 applications from their RFA; 51 determined eligible for \$6.8 million in total requests. They received applications from ten of the eleven Economic Development Regional Solutions Areas of the state. The applications cumulatively supported all the Future Ready Oregon priority populations, with the exception of veterans to a lesser extent and older people who may experience age discrimination. These exclusions are because few to no youth ages 14-24 have these characteristics.

YDD formed an application review team to identify the applications that would be funded. YDD provided application reviewers with training, including a scoring rubric and guidance on how to score applications consistently. Reviewers were brought together to discuss and finalize scores at the end of the process, with particular attention to questions where reviewers scores diverged. The scores for each proposal by each reviewer were consistent across reviewers, with very few widely diverging scores, pointing to successful training and norming of reviewers, and consistent use of training tools.

Reviewers used five evaluation items to score each eligible application. The five items included the following list:

1. Priority populations served;
2. Description of essential employability skills training;
3. Presence of hands-on/experiential training program for at least one of the three core services:
 - paid work experiences,
 - job placement and coaching, and
 - industry recognized credential;
4. Partnerships with schools, local workforce boards, other government office, and CBOs; and
5. Organizational description and capacity.

Overall, the application evaluation model is strong, resulting in 26 conditional awards with clear workforce development program models that provided young people with employment and/or credentials, as well as evidence that program is effectively working with priority populations.

YDD sought to make sure that all the state of Oregon’s economic development regions were presented in the first round of grant awards. The Greater Eastern Oregon Development District is the only region that had neither an application nor an award. (See Figure 2.8.) This region is comprised of Gilliam, Grant, Morrow, Umatilla, Wheeler, Harney, and Malheur counties.

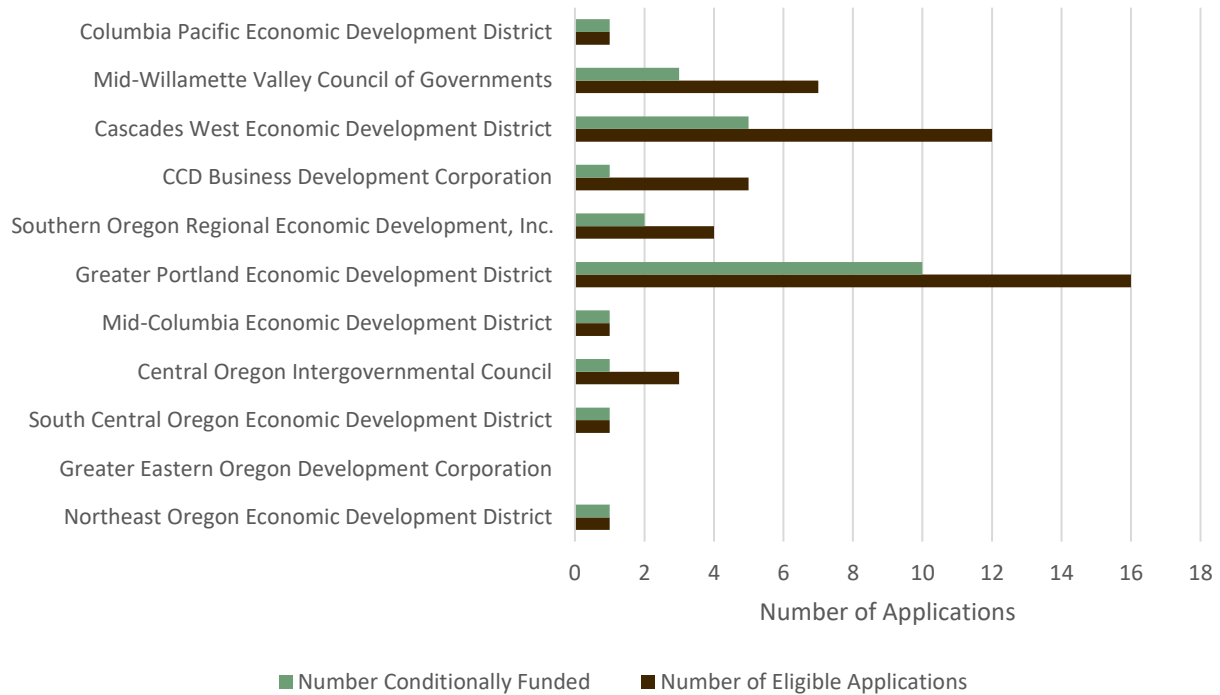


Figure 2. 8: Youth Development Program Number of First-Round Applications Received and Conditionally Awarded by Youth Development Division

Table 2.5, below, identifies the organization, description, counties, priority population, and the amount requested in the first round of funding. We note that some applicants interpreted the priority population who is at risk of age discrimination to be youth rather than middle aged or older workers. This selection indicates a perception of barriers youth face when seeking employment, due to limited experience, and negative perceptions of young people’s skills and attitudes. Youth programs seek to change these perceptions by way of effective training and job coaching.

YDD did not receive applications from Tribal Nations but received (and conditionally awarded) two programs that will serve Tribal youth. YDD is working on consultation and discussion with established Tribal partners to determine how we can more effectively fund Tribal Future Ready Youth Programs.

Finally, YDD plans to capture information about programs that are serving youth experiencing homelessness, and those in or exiting the foster care system. Neither group is called out as a priority population, however these are two youth populations facing significant barriers to employment and

experiencing disproportionately negative outcomes. YDD reported they will seek to capture how Future Ready funds serve these youth populations via the Future Ready Oregon Youth Programs grants.

Table 2. 5: Youth Programs Round One Conditional Awards

Conditionally Awarded				
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Amount Requested
Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis	The Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis’s Club Retail and T3 programs will build a diverse, resilient workforce. Training, paid employment, college/career exploration, and connections to work opportunities empower teens on a path out of intergenerational poverty. 100% of T3 teens have graduated on time and secured a first job.	Benton County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+,	\$75,000
Centro Cultural de Washington County	Through Centro Cultural’s Prosperidad program, at least 75 low-income Latino youth between the ages of 16-24 who are unemployed or not in school will gain employability skills and enter employment. As the oldest Latino nonprofit in Oregon, Centro provides culturally-specific employment training and has long-established links with local employers.	Washington County	Communities of Color, Low-Income Communities, Women, Rural and Frontier Communities, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination	\$150,000
College Dreams, Inc.	The Career Build program will bring meaningful work experience opportunities to youth in the Rogue Valley that are paid and linked to priority industries. This program provides tailored employability skills training, mentoring, paid work experience and credentialed trainings to youth throughout Southern Oregon from priority and high need populations.	Josephine and Jackson counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income Communities, Women, Rural and Frontier Communities, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
Community Services Consortium	CSC’s youth workforce development program will provide paid work experiences and relevant employability skills training to people ages 18-24 in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Training will be provided to assist priority youth with identifying interests, developing skills, and preparing for living-wage jobs.	Linn County and Lincoln counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000

Conditionally Awarded				
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Amount Requested
Douglas Education Service District	Douglas ESD's proposes to expand and institutionalize the workforce component of its Youth Reengagement program within the Youth Development Department by deepening its connections and systems between the Career Tech Education/Perkins local high school programs, Southern Oregon Workforce Investment Board's Recruit HIPPO youth workforce program, and Umpqua Community College.	Douglas County	Communities of Color, Low-Income Communities, Women, Rural and Frontier Communities, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
Eastern Oregon Workforce Board	Youth Alliance Union County aims to create a Teen Resource Center that is safe, welcoming, and inclusive, where youth can receive peer and school support, vocational training/paid apprenticeships, and achieve their goals. Youth will also be connected to crisis support such as wrap services, including mental health and housing.	Union County	Low-Income Communities, Women, Rural and Frontier, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
HomePlate Youth Services	The youth employment program at HomePlate Youth Services will serve youth in Washington County with connections to sustainable career path opportunities and self-sufficiency. This will be achieved through individualized service toward employment opportunities that align youth interests, skills, and abilities with high demand, living wage jobs.	Washington and Multnomah counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$147,400
Hood River County Prevention Dept	The HRC Youth NOW Program will address the inequity in employment for young women of all ethnicities ages 18-24 living in poverty in our rural community. Youth NOW is partnering with local businesses and Columbia Gorge Community College to provide one-on-one skills training, workforce training, and employment opportunities.	Hood River County	Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier	\$108,800

Conditionally Awarded				
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Amount Requested
Isaac's Room	This grant will increase IKE Quest capacity from 40 to 60 youth. IKE Quest is a strength-based program for economically disadvantaged and/or culturally marginalized transition-age youth (16-21). IKE Quest uses a cohort model that includes physical exercise, life-skills training, family-style dinners, internships, service-learning, paid apprenticeships, employment skills training, and mentorship.	Marion County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination	\$150,000
Klamath Works, Inc.	The Klamath Works program will provide direct, hands-on training in workforce readiness and skill development in retail and construction industries. Students will work alongside professionals in each field learning necessary skills. We have employers in both fields ready to employ students completing the program.	Klamath County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
Looking Glass Community Services	The Looking Glass Future Ready Youth Program provides paid work experiences, Employability Skills development, and Financial Literacy training. Services are culturally responsive and based on promising practices that address the barriers and disparities of Priority Populations. Wraparound support services, incentives to support retention, and transition services are provided.	Lane County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
McMinnville Economic Development Partnership	This program expands on McMinnville WORKS (10 years running) providing paid employment for youth ages 14-24, connects employers with a wage subsidy, and provides priority population youth weekly essential skills workshops. Participants receive entry-level internships that follow "career-ladders" leading to living wage jobs and careers in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology.	Yamhill County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$149,850

Conditionally Awarded				
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Amount Requested
Native American Youth and Family Center	NAYA's Career Readiness Program is designed to increase the economic success of the Native American and Alaska Native community in Portland through assessment of youths' aspirations, interests, and curiosities to better meet their career goals. Job readiness and career skills are developed through one-on-one coaching sessions and group workshops.	Multnomah County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$122,500
Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board	The Tribal Community Health Provider Project at the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board works with Tribes to implement the federal Community Health Aide Program. Education and training will be accomplished in partnership with Tribal schools and clinics, enabling youth to attain federal CHAP certification and work as healthcare providers.	Multnomah County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes	\$150,000
Northwest Youth Corps	NYC's Leadership Development Program Credential Project finishes and beta-tests a new system to deliver workforce readiness services to out-of-school and unemployed young adults 19-24 years of age. Through this seven-week program, youth from priority populations receive essential employability skills training and earn industry-recognized credentials designed for the outdoor industry.	Lane, Clatsop, Josephine, and Coos counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$89,256
Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc.	POIC+RAHS requests funding to support our successful, long-serving Work Opportunities Training (WOT) programs for youth ages 14 – 24, with a focus on job placement and coaching. WOT includes several programs that provide college and career exploration, career coaching and training, internship opportunities, and job placement services.	Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women	\$150,000

Conditionally Awarded				
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Amount Requested
Portland YouthBuilders	In Portland YouthBuilders' Bridge program, PYB will provide construction-focused paid work experience, essential skills training, credential attainment, and job placement to 15 Priority Population youth. 95% of participants will earn a state-recognized pre-apprenticeship credential, and 90% of graduates will enter apprenticeships and/or employment within 3 months of program completion.	Multnomah and Washington counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$65,000
Project 48 Inc	Project48's (P48) Life Skills Transitions Program will serve youth/young adults aged 18-23 experiencing foster care. The Program will provide mentorship and skills in budgeting and financial literacy; career preparation; resume building; job hunting; and interviewing. This Program prepares individuals to navigate adulthood and enter the workforce successfully and confidently.	Multnomah County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$75,000
SE Works, Inc.	The trauma of incarceration holds youth back from full workforce participation. SE Works will provide low barrier workforce programming to justice-involved youth aged 18-24 in partnership with State of Oregon and Multnomah County justice systems. We will assist youth in developing the skills to transition successfully to sustainable living-wage jobs.	Multnomah County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
Silver Falls School District	Sequoia Falls Academy in partnership with Silverton Chamber of Commerce will utilize Future Ready Funding to facilitate paid internships for priority population students with the purpose of removing identified living wage employment barriers.	Marion and Clackamas counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, People with Disabilities, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$100,000
State Alliance of Oregon YMCAs	The Oregon Alliance of YMCAs will offer the YMCA Lifeguard and Swimming Instructor Training and Credentials program in at least six locations in five regions. In addition to YMCA and/or American Red Cross credentials, all participants will receive essential employability skills training, and will be offered paid work experience.	Tillamook, Jackson, Multnomah, and Linn counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, People with Disabilities, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, Veterans	\$150,000

Conditionally Awarded				
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Amount Requested
Tillamook County Family YMCA Independent Living Program	The Work Opportunity Rural Youth program will collaborate with local agencies to provide a wraparound employability skill training within the rural community setting. Participants with barriers to employment will participate in an evidenced based curriculum and paid work experiences to remove barriers to stable employment.	Tillamook, Columbia, Clatsop, and Lincoln counties	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$113,000
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District	THPRD will deliver workforce development programs that offer individualized Essential Skills Training and Paid Work Experiences based on participant interest and need that lead to meaningful, sustainable employment for youth from Priority Populations.	Washington County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000
Warm Springs Community Action Team	WSCAT will work with 50 youth to provide workforce development opportunities on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation. This includes providing youth with work experience, skill building workshops, and team building activities.	Jefferson County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, Members of OR 9 Federally Recognized Tribes, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination	\$150,000
Working Theory Farm	We will employ 15 youth impacted by the juvenile justice system, homelessness, housing instability, or developmental disabilities. We will integrate farm tasks and social-emotional curriculum to develop universal job skills and work with youth to both find continuing employment and respond to the underlying barriers these youth face.	Washington County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals	\$50,000
Youth 71Five Ministries	71Five VoTech will improve pathways to employment and/or apprenticeship for 50 priority population older youth ages 14 to 24 who are disconnected from education and/or the workforce by offering industry recognized certifications and employable skills for high quality jobs through expanding 71Five VoTech into the underrepresented communities of Josephine County.	Jackson County	Communities of Color, Low-Income, Women, Rural and Frontier, People with Disabilities, Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Individuals Experiencing Age Discrimination, and Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+	\$150,000

Lessons Learned

YDD is already designing improvements for their second round of funding allocation. These improvements include new tools to support applicants, including a training on how to write an effective application, which will give applicants insight into strong application responses, how questions are scored, and other insights that YDD reports will support applications with limited grant writing experience or capacity. Additionally, they are improving the clarity and readability for the next RFA, including publishing frequently asked questions and answers based on the learnings from the first round. YDD will also develop a “Quick Start Guide.” Finally, they will clarify credential and certification requirements and require more detail in the application on how the priority populations will be served.

YDD reports that it will work with Tribal communities to increase Tribal interest and applications for the next round of Future Ready Oregon Youth Programs. Currently, they are consulting with established Tribal partners to make sure applications supporting Tribal youth are included in the next round of funding. Additionally, YDD will work with partners in Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation region to increase the interest and applications submitted from the eastern region of Oregon.

YDD forecasts two challenges for next year. Like other Future Ready Oregon programs, YDD reports that the short timeline for implementation is a challenge. Specifically, YDD wants to make sure they can award all the general funds and carry the subsequent rounds of ARPA funding into the new biennium. The second challenge YDD reports is a result of having such strong applications in the first round. YDD reports balancing the ease of re-applying among unfunded first-round applicants with being inclusive enough to support new organizations applying for funding.

YDD reports that while there are numerous successes from the first Future Ready Youth Programs RFA round, for YDD a significant success of this implementation was the collaboration of YDD internal teams and partnership with Future Ready Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) colleagues. YDD shared that sharing of past learning, best practices, and innovations led to a highly successful RFA for YDD. YDD will build on this collaborative approach as they make improvements to the next round of funding.

Conclusion

Overall, made extensive efforts to be expansive and innovative in the application process for Youth Programs funds. They engaged community partners, created a streamlined and simple initial application, and evaluated applications in alignment with the goals of Future Ready Oregon. The efforts appeared to pay off, as they received more than twice as many applications for more than twice as many dollars as they had funding. Awards were made to organizations that could serve youth from priority populations and that came from across the state. Looking ahead to 2023, has plans for working more closely with Tribal nations of Oregon and the eastern Oregon region, as well as continuing to develop their application process.

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Future Ready Oregon, (SB 1545, 2022), allocated \$10 million to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) was to administer the Future Ready Oregon Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) grant program. These funds are intended to expand credit awarded to students from priority populations for learning they gained outside of colleges and universities that contributes to an employment-related credential. Section 8 of the legislation specifies:

“The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall establish a grant program to award grants to community colleges and universities that work toward increasing opportunities for students from priority populations to receive academic credit for prior experience or skills gained outside of traditional higher education institutions, with such academic credit counting toward a certificate or credential that provides a pathway to employment or career advancement. In administering the grant program under this section, the commission shall consult with employers and targeted industry consortia to develop uniform standards that may be used to certify whether a student’s technical competency, qualifications, knowledge, or skills are sufficient to earn a certificate or credential recognized by a targeted industry sector.”

- Specifically, the funding can be used by colleges and universities to develop methods and criteria to assess prior learning, to train staff in these methods and criteria, and to reach students from priority populations.¹⁶ The priority populations include the following:
 - Communities of color
 - Women
 - Low-income communities
 - Rural and frontier communities
 - Veterans
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals

¹⁶ Specifically, the legislation (SB 1545, 2022) specifies the funds may be used to do the following activities:

“To develop assessment criteria and practices that may be used to evaluate whether a student’s prior experience or skills may count toward earning a certificate or credential recognized by a targeted industry sector;

To train staff on how to apply the assessment criteria and practices in awarding credit for prior experience and skills; and

For recruitment of and outreach to priority populations.”

- Members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized Indian tribes
- Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age
- Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community

CPL is not new Oregon’s public postsecondary institutions. Oregon House Bill 4059 (2012) (ORS 350.110)¹⁷ directed the HECC to work with the state’s public, independent non-profit, and for-profit postsecondary institutions to increase the number of students awarded high-standard, academic credit, especially as it applies to a postsecondary credential; expand the number and type of high-standard academic credit that can be awarded; create clear policies and methods for awarding credit and improve the practice of these; create means to expand expertise about prior learning credit within and among institutions; develop articulation agreements as needed, and define and track measures of progress. This work has had mixed results, largely because institutions lack the resources to fulfill the mandates.¹⁸ For example, few community colleges have been able to comply with the student-level data requirements needed to track progress, because of lack of clarity about the awarding procedures and the technical resources to implement into their regular data submissions. Indeed, one of the eight recommendations made by the State’s Adult Learner Advisory committee was to fund the CPL initiative.¹⁹

The Future Ready Oregon legislation provided one-time funds to create the capacity needed to expand CPL opportunities to Oregonians. HECC’s Office of Community College and Workforce Development (CCWD) administers the Future Ready Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Program.

The HECC issued a request for applications (RFA) to Oregon’s seventeen community colleges, seven public universities and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to award grant moneys to create and expand CPL opportunities in higher education. The RFA opened on June 29, 2022 with a July 20, 2022 due date. Upon initial review, the proposals did not sum to the \$10 million available. Communication was sent to the applicants requesting that they increase the amount of funding requested and update the activities the additional funding would offer. The applicants had until August 5, 2022 to update their proposals.

Of the 25 public postsecondary institutions that were eligible for the funds, 14 community colleges and 5 public universities applied. Due to staffing limitations because the CPL policy advisor was not hired until August 1, 2022 no further outreach to public postsecondary was conducting to encourage all postsecondary institutions to apply. The HECC awarded funds to all institutions that applied, allocating the entire \$10 million of general fund grant dollars. The HECC finalized execution of those contracts in late September, early October.

¹⁷ Credit for Prior Learning, H.B. 4059, 76th Oregon Legislative Assembly, 2012 Regular Session.

¹⁸ Adult Learner Advisory Committee (2021).

¹⁹ Adult Learner Advisory Committee (2021).

The funded activities lay out plans for developing assessment, training, and student engagement at the colleges and universities. They are consistent with the legislation's intent to expand credit awarded for prior learning and to reduce barriers to the credit. In addition, the HECC plans to share the best practices that develop across the institutions to leverage the funding further and further align policies and practices. While this funding will build CPL opportunity for Oregonians, the awarded postsecondary institutions report the timeline to expend grant funds by June 30, 2023, will be a challenge.

Table 2.6 shows the planned grant activities and amount awarded by public postsecondary institution.

Table 2. 6: List of Oregon’s Public Postsecondary Institutions Awarded Future Ready Oregon CPL Grant, Grant Activities, and Amount Awarded

Postsecondary Institution	Assessment Strategies	Staff Training Strategies	Recruitment Strategies	Amount Awarded
Blue Mountain Community College	<p>Research determine and report the best practices for developing, implementing, and administering challenge exams, and portfolio assessment.</p> <p>Recruit a cross functional team to develop processes and documents, present information, and implement new processes.</p>	<p>Develop training materials and schedule for administrators, faculty and staff engaged with students.</p> <p>Incorporate CPL training into College In-service training in 2023-24.</p>	<p>Create forms and CPL documents that are ADA accessible and translate into Spanish. Update college website, create Canvas course shell for materials and student submission.</p> <p>Create marketing materials and documents for students and employers. Launch a multi-media marketing strategy.</p>	\$111,926
Chemeketa College	<p>Review existing practices and revise to create a consistent system with flexible options for student, focus on equitable, expedient, culturally responsive and inclusive strategies. Expand the current cross functional team and form an advisory workgroup to develop assessment criteria. Incorporate CPL into one-stop student enrollment model.</p>	<p>Provide training and continuing professional development opportunities led by internal and external experts and leaders to increase faculty and staff knowledge and understanding of CPL practices, and the benefit to students, businesses, community, and the college.</p>	<p>Develop and implement a CPL marketing and promotion strategy that utilizes community outreach, business partnerships, social media, and general communication to identify and connect current and prospective students who may benefit from earning CPL. Bilingual staff and translation services will be utilized to support students.</p>	\$247,326
Central Oregon Community College	<p>Engage faculty to develop assessment criteria and practices. Convene a cross functional CPL team to focus on work experiences, licenses, certifications, and other credentials.</p>	<p>Provide training for faculty and staff implementing CPL. Engage outside experts to support training on best practices. Create training materials that can be used beyond the grant period. Training will be designed to meet the unique needs of each employee group.</p>	<p>Staff will conduct recruitment and outreach to priority populations. College will engage a marketing firm to develop an outreach strategy and materials, translate materials in Spanish, update the website, develop social media content, and develop.</p> <p>Engage with programs that serve priority populations to promote CPL.</p>	\$412,614

Postsecondary Institution	Assessment Strategies	Staff Training Strategies	Recruitment Strategies	Amount Awarded
Clackamas Community College	Partner with Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to explore assessment criteria best practices, access CAEL training modules. Convene a cross functional team to assess current practices and recommend changes.	Expand CPL credits awarded by creating sustainable tools for faculty and staff to increase knowledge about CPL. Create a virtual training program to increase capacity and sustain staff knowledge. Use CAEL training tools and develop an ongoing training plan.	Leverage efforts that are already focused on adult learners, including Career Pathways funded outreach and Strategic Enrollment Management Goals	\$108,036
Clatsop Community College	Formalize a written process for CPL and distribute campus wide.	None Specified	Create a plan to identify and reach out to service members and other prospective students with CPL information. Launch a multi-media campaign to promote CPL.	\$50,000
Columbia Gorge Community College	Build a robust, wholistic CPL program to provide opportunities for priority groups to achieve their educational goals. Evaluate current offerings and recommend improvements. Focus on military, licensure, prior work experience and portfolio process.	Develop a cross functional training program to increase staff capacity. Work with CAEL and the American Council on Education to support staff training.	Recruit students from priority populations. Develop and implement a recruiting strategy and materials, translate materials in Spanish. Focus on serving the Hispanic community, veterans, and Tribal Communities in the district.	\$1,290,503
Klamath Community College	Create a cross functional CPL advisory group that includes external stakeholders to conduct a review of current CPL policy and practice. Improve data entry and processing capacity. Assess data system needs to align with HECC data reporting. Align with and embed CPL in academic programs.	Create a repository of CPL activity examples. Provide training opportunities for instructors and staff as well as industry partners.	Create marketing and outreach video content in English and Spanish. Create electronic and paper outreach materials for students, employers, and other stakeholders.	\$154,000
Lane Community College	Develop better-linked placement and CPL tools for writing and math, including artifacts approved for CPL. Develop connections with national CPL groups and update internal policies and procedures. Align CPL with certificate and degree requirements and expand the types of CPL available.	Norming of artifacts and instruments by faculty. Development of tools for automating CPL Development of a tracking/documentation system.	Create marketing and recruitment materials focused on high school students and badging aligning to LCC programs.	\$275,000

Postsecondary Institution	Assessment Strategies	Staff Training Strategies	Recruitment Strategies	Amount Awarded
Linn Benton Community College	Improve CPL by investing in innovation, technology, systems development, and training to close equity gaps and provide opportunities for priority populations. Review and update existing policies, curriculum, and assessment practices. Engage industry partners to validate CPL assessments.	Utilize CAEL training modules, connect with national experts and engage faculty and staff in the training.	Develop strategies to raise awareness for priority population prospective students. Adopt practices that support DEI, education programs and labor market analysis. Develop marketing and outreach materials in English and Spanish. Create a one-stop webpage for CPL to support student access.	\$483,336
Oregon Coast Community College	Build capacity to develop assessment criteria and evaluation for CPL. Focus on healthcare, manufacturing, and technology programs. Develop standardized policies and procedures for the review of military and public service experience. Develop rubrics for portfolio development and a crosswalk to evaluate CPL for certifications, licensure, and continuing education.	Reach out to experts in CPL to engage them for staff training. Specifically focused training on developing the process and assessments for programs. Engage employees in professional development in multiple formats. The college will also develop a CPL annual review process to review, evaluate and revise policies.	Create a greater awareness of CPL to increase access, availability, and understanding for priority populations. Build and support a multi-media marketing strategy that engages priority populations to close the educational equity gap and accelerate degree completion. Conduct outreach to multiple community partners to reach previously underserved communities.	\$120,000
Portland Community College	Examine current assessment criteria and practices to determine how prior experience count toward credential attainment and how CPL can support this. Align CPL with Pre-Apprenticeship. Use Labor Market Data to identify curriculum gaps and CPL assessment criteria. Expand CPL leadership team to expand faculty and staff knowledge and capacity related to CPL.	Train key faculty members and targeted staff and administrators about the benefits of internally assessed CPL; the full variety of CPL options available; how to direct students to the best resources that match their backgrounds and educational goals; and how faculty can develop effective competency-based assessments.	Leverage existing outreach and engagement strategies and teams by building staff knowledge and capacity to assess CPL. Create marketing and recruitment materials, review, and update CPL webpages.	\$90,965

Postsecondary Institution	Assessment Strategies	Staff Training Strategies	Recruitment Strategies	Amount Awarded
Southwestern Oregon Community College	Purchase CAEL Credit Predictor Pro assessment tool to help identify and match student skills with academic pathways. Develop a portfolio course in Canvas and a system for advising students into the course.	Train faculty and advising staff on best practices for CPL. Train faculty on portfolio assessment. Send a college team to CAEL's annual conference to learn more about CPL beset practices.	Work with internal and external partners to develop a marketing campaign to build awareness of CPL to the community and students. Provide materials to programs that serve priority populations. Use EMSI tools to identify skills for careers and align with recruitment efforts.	\$230,000
Tillamook Bay Community College	Coordinate efforts in developing a comprehensive and flexible approach to CPL and competency-based assessment. This will create a systemic and equitable process for assessing student learning and awarding CPL.	Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for employees to increase awareness and use of CPL.	Create multi-media marketing and recruitment materials in multiple languages to showcase CPL as a viable alternative to traditional pathways and highlight the benefits to students and the community. Work with CBOs to promote awareness of CPL and coordinate efforts with student facing staff.	\$163,551
Umpqua Community College	Research CPL models and implement at the college. Create a cross walk for IEC courses. Develop policies and procedures for CPL, develop a CPL process that is recognizable and student friendly. Explore CPL with local industry to recognize years of experience in STEAM areas.	Engage CPL taskforce and train faculty (including part time faculty) at annual in-service or faculty retreat.	Align with electrical apprenticeship, explore other industry partnerships that make sense for CPL. Market CPL to UCC students, working to attract rural students from poverty.	\$200,000
Eastern Oregon University	Re-develop and update current APEL model and recruit personnel to build a team around the new vision for APEL and Credit for Prior Learning at EOU. Scale assessment criteria for the size of the institution. Create a measurable assessment model that can be duplicated across the state, accessible to all higher ed institutions, business, STEM Hubs, high school counselors and students.	Train faculty and staff to apply assessment criteria in awarding CPL. Training will also be provided to industry partners and other institutions to ensure consistency, accuracy, equity, and success in applying the assessment criteria and practices to award CPL. External evaluator will review professional development and provide feedback. The university seeks to serve as a CPL professional development training site for external partners.	Develop a three-fold marketing plan to recruit credit for prior learning candidates from the workforce/high school/GED graduates/tribal partners/and high populated students from diverse backgrounds and with needs and barriers to attending college through this transfer pathway.	\$1,665,000

Postsecondary Institution	Assessment Strategies	Staff Training Strategies	Recruitment Strategies	Amount Awarded
Oregon Institute of Technology	Create systematic process to award CPL with new criteria and evaluation methods. Create assessment guidelines including a comprehensive list of common learning experiences relevant to degree programs. Convene a committee for evaluating effectiveness and improvement of CPL assessment criteria and practices.	Engage with CAEL to support training needs and professional development. Create CPL Committee to develop, organize and conduct academic events to identify and define requirements and outcomes of CPL to coordinate training. Promote CPL at annual Convocation event and provide ad hoc training for new faculty and staff.	Engage with high schools, community colleges and industries with high numbers of priority populations, determine degree pathways and develop focused recruiting strategies. Develop joint pathways with community colleges and partner on systematic CPL evaluation and credit award standards to support transferability.	\$1,000,000
Portland State University	Engage experts from CAEL to develop assessment criteria and practices. CAEL will also review policies and compare to national best practices with recommendations for policy changes. CAEL will also create crosswalks for evaluating non-collegiate training.	Work with CAEL to develop training for staff on how to apply the assessment criteria for CPL. Training will focus on foundations of a CPL program, assessing prior learning, and CPL process mapping.	Reach out to priority populations using CAEL's Credit Predictor Pro tool to help guide students to document their prior learning experiences.	\$2,425,290
Southern Oregon University	Develop assessment criteria and practices to evaluate a student's prior experience or skills by expanding assessment criteria for PLA Portfolios in courses that don't currently have it, expanding CLEP and ACE credit offerings, adding Industry Certificates and Professional Licensure, and adding a staff member to jumpstart and focus this work.	Identify 2 to 4 faculty members per appropriate academic program who would be trained in applying assessment criteria and practices in awarding credit for prior experience and skills. Those faculty would then serve as trained champions within their departments for further enthusiasm and development of CPL access.	Create marketing and recruitment materials to amplify the message about CPL availability. Outreach to priority populations, develop new CPL webpage to improve transparency and access to information. Design a multi-media marketing campaign to reach priority populations.	\$338,470
Western Oregon University	Build foundational infrastructure to support CPL in high priority disciplines and develop a model template for this work that can be applied in additional disciplines in the future.	Train staff and faculty on how to apply the assessment criteria, practices and rubrics developed in the previous section (assessment criteria and procedures) to award portfolio-based credit for the student's demonstration of knowledge and/or skills that align with WOU course outcomes.	Cross-functional CPL Work Group proposes a layered and cohesive approach to internal and external recruitment and outreach for expanded CPL options. This will include engagement with priority populations, employers, and others. University will develop a CPL webpage and create multi-media marketing materials.	\$633,983

In the coming year, college and university grantees will report on their grant activities to the HECC in January (halfway through the grant period) and in August (the end of the grant period). HECC will convene the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee, which is required by the ORS 350.110 but will also serve as an opportunity to meet with employers and targeted industry consortia as required by Future Ready Oregon. The CCWD Office expects Credit for Prior Learning to expand at the 19 institutions that were awarded capacity-building funds from Future Ready Oregon. The HECC will be collecting data on the activities, lessons learned, and recommendations of the funded programs and how these might change opportunities for students, Credit for Prior Learning standards, and data collection.

Lessons Learned

Reporting credit for prior learning has been a particular challenge for the community colleges because of questions about awarding procedures and because of technical resources needed to incorporate the credit into their regular data. Only one college has been able to submit individual-level data with their regular data submissions to the state, and this only after considerable expense. Eight others report some data in alternate ways, and the remaining eight have been unable to submit consistent or any data. Future Ready Oregon provides an opportunity to fill this gap by developing consistent awarding procedures and allocating technical resources. Of the eight community colleges that have not reported more than very limited data, seven applied for and received capacity-building funds under Future Ready Oregon. All seven public universities report students earning CPL consistently.

Conclusion

In a short timeframe, HECC administered grants for public institutions to expand student opportunities to earn credit for their previous learning. HECC was efficient in the awarding of funds to enable institutions as much time as possible to build their programs. Perhaps because of the narrow timeline, six of the public colleges and universities did not apply for funds, which raises some concern about whether students will have fewer opportunities at those institutions. HECC plans to share successful tools and strategies developed out of Future Ready Oregon across all institutions, which may help mitigate differences in opportunities.

WORKFORCE READY GRANTS

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) received \$95 million of the Future Ready Oregon investment funds for the Workforce Ready Grants, \$10 million in general funds and \$85 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These investments are intended to build new and innovative education and training programs in the key sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, and technology; build organizational capacity; and provide direct benefits to individuals, including stipends and funding to pay for education, training, and wraparound services. The legislation directs HECC to administer the Workforce Ready Grants Program, in consultation with the Workforce Talent Development Board (WTDB), Industry Consortia, and the nine local workforce development boards. As the administrator of the funds, HECC establishes criteria and standards to award competitive grants to CBOs and workforce service providers.

The Workforce Ready Grants Program is administered by the HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program team. The legislation directs the funding for competitive awards to workforce service providers and CBOs that administer workforce programs in the three key sectors and that prioritize equitable program participation by individuals from historically underserved and vulnerable populations prioritized in the Future Ready Oregon legislation. Specifically, the allowable uses consist of the following as listed in the legislation (SB 1545, 2002, Section 9, a-e):

- Provide paid work experience, including stipends and wages;
- Offer tuition and fee assistance for workforce programs;
- Provide wraparound workforce development services;
- Develop culturally and linguistically specific career pathways for obtaining certificates or credentials recognized by targeted industry sectors; and
- Fund organizational investments, including, but not limited to:
 - Hiring staff;
 - Developing organizational development strategies;
 - Purchasing equipment, technology, or other training-related supplies;
 - Covering administrative costs; and
 - Any other activities identified in a grant proposal as necessary to administer workforce programs described under this section.

The Future Ready Oregon legislation further defined how HECC will award grants on a competitive basis, considering proposals that reflect the following criteria (SB 1545, 2002, Section 9, a-e):

- Describe how the workforce service provider or the community-based organization intends to engage with employers in the targeted industry sectors to provide workforce development opportunities to individuals from priority populations.
- Demonstrate the workforce service provider’s or the community-based organization’s experience serving individuals from priority populations.
- Describe how the workforce service provider or the community-based organization intends to collaborate with one or more of the following entities to increase accessibility for priority populations to workforce programs and opportunities:
 - Other workforce service providers or CBOs;
 - Kindergarten through grade 12 schools;
 - Community colleges;
 - Education and training partners;
 - Local workforce development boards;
 - Economic development organizations.
- Demonstrate that a workforce partner with which a workforce service provider or a community-based organization intends to partner possesses specific qualifications, including the organizational and technical capacity, necessary to carry out the activities.

The HECC convened an advisory workgroup in February 2022 to review the legislative intent of the program and prepare for the first Request for Application (RFA) for the Workforce Ready Grants. The workgroup membership was comprised of leaders from CBOs, local workforce development boards, and community colleges. Specifically, the HECC tasked the workgroup to do the following:

- Engage with HECC’s Equity Lens to shape their work.
- Assume passage of SB 1545 to plan and prepare for implementation of Future Ready Oregon. (This work would inform future legislative, agency, and/or partner work if the legislation did not end up passing.)
- Work collaboratively and inclusively while honoring the diversity of members and thinking to contribute to the development of a grant-making process
- Provide input to inform an inclusive, low-barrier grant process for the Workforce Ready Grants \$10 Million general fund allocation.

The Workforce Ready Grant workgroup’s recommendations laid the foundation for the content of the first Workforce Ready Grants RFA and informed the support the HECC offered to prospective

applicants. The workgroup recommended the first round of competitive funding (\$10 million of general funds) focus on capacity building, that the HECC offer the RFA and supporting materials in both English and Spanish, provide technical assistance consultants to support the applicants through the process, host virtual information sessions, use an easily accessible cloud-based application solution for the application materials, and not place word limits on any of the application questions/materials. The Workforce Ready Grant workgroup concluded its work in April 2022, prior to Workforce Ready Grants first RFA opening on June 29, 2022.

The first round of the Workforce Ready Grants aimed to build the capacity of new and existing organizations to serve priority populations with workforce development programs in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. The intent was to include community-based and culturally specific organizations that work with priority populations but are new to workforce development to expand their capacity to offer workforce education and training services.

We have been dreaming about this project for over two years. This funding focused on capacity building is exactly what we need to make it happen!
~Miles Pendleton, NAACP Eugene-Springfield

To implement a low-barrier process and support all applicants but especially those new to workforce development, HECC contracted with consultants to assist prospective applicants. The contractors provided technical assistance throughout the entire application process, including providing access to interpreter services. In total, 268 requests made by 95 individual prospective applicants resulted in a total of 251 hours spent by technical assistance consultants to support applicants and respond to applicants' questions. HECC also hosted three information sessions virtually that accommodated language and accessibility needs. These sessions were offered at varying times throughout the day, and 194 attendees (non-HECC attendees) participated in at least one session. HECC used a web-based application process to avoid technology and word processing software barriers and to allow applicants to use Google translation and accessibility features throughout the process.

The Workforce Ready Grant RFA posted on June 29, 2022 and closed on August 13, 2022. Because the initial investment of \$10 million in general fund dollars must be spent by the end of the current biennium (June 30, 2023), it was essential that HECC move quickly to release the RFA opportunity. Future opportunities will provide additional time for application. The RFA included criteria on which applications would be scored. These criteria are listed below:

- How the project is intentionally tailored to advance opportunities for individuals from priority populations and their unique needs. (15 points)
- The extent to which the project will result in long-term, sustainable impacts for individuals from priority populations. (15 points)

- The applicant’s demonstrated experience serving individuals from priority populations. (15 points)
- How the applicant’s project will further the workforce development system and the efforts of Future Ready Oregon. (12 points)
- How the applicant intends to engage with employers in the healthcare, manufacturing, and technology industry sectors to provide workforce development opportunities. (12 points)
- How well the applicant demonstrates how the activities described in the project plan will contribute to the project’s success. (10 points)
- How the applicant intends to collaborate with one or more of the following entities: (8 points)
 - Other workforce service providers or CBOs
 - Kindergarten through grade 12 schools
 - Community colleges
 - Education and training partners
 - Local workforce development boards
 - Economic development organizations
 - Industry associations
 - Universities
- How reasonable the expenses documented in the project budget are in relation to the project. (8 points)
- How the applicant will leverage the use of other funding sources, including federal funds and private sector contributions, toward workforce programs and opportunities. (5 points)

Early after publishing the RFA, two scored questions were raised by applicants in the information sessions as potentially disadvantaging applicants new to workforce development. The decision was made by the Future Ready Oregon Program team to remove the points for the following two questions from final scores:

- How the applicant will leverage the use of other funding sources, including federal funds and private sector contributions, toward workforce programs and opportunities. (5 points)

- How the applicant intends to collaborate with one or more of the following entities.: (8 points)

While the criteria remained in the application materials for review and consideration, point values were not assigned and therefore did not contribute to the application's overall score. As a result, CBOs, and workforce service providers new to the workforce system were not disadvantaged by limited experience, partnerships, and leveraged funding as compared to applicants with established partnerships and funding mechanisms. This was particularly important as the HECC prioritized capacity building in this first round of grant funding.

In total, 146 Workforce Ready Grant applications were received. HECC staff reviewed the applications to determine eligibility based on the following: 1) the submission of all responses and attachments required, 2) the applicant's status as either a workforce service provider or a community-based organization, and 3) the proposed project fitting within the scope of the RFA. One application was determined to be ineligible due to not meeting the definition of an eligible applicant, leaving 145 proposals eligible for review. In total, the 145 eligible proposals requested more than \$70 million in funding.

Just you wait, you are going to be so proud of what our students are accomplishing, of what they are doing. This opportunity is transforming their lives and breaking the bonds of generational poverty.
~Heather Stafford from EncodeXP

The HECC convened an evaluation team to review and score applications based on the criteria presented above. The evaluation team was comprised of members of the TAC, representatives from community-based and culturally specific organizations, business and industry leaders, individuals from priority populations, HECC staff and commissioners, members of the WTDB, state agency partners, and the general public. Reviewers were asked to identify any conflicts of interest based on affiliation with any applicants; individuals were excluded from participating in review and scoring if their organization or an organization they were affiliated with had submitted application for a Workforce Ready Grant. In total, 42 volunteers comprised the evaluation team and were divided into groups of three, with each group assigned ten to eleven applications to review. All evaluation team members attended a training session on the purpose of the Workforce Ready Grants, the context of the capacity-building RFA, and norms/criteria for evaluation and scoring. Training also included how to use the technology solution employed to score the applications.

The applications were highly competitive; the applicants were high-quality organizations with innovative and promising programs aligned with the goals of the Workforce Ready Grant program

Technical Advisory Committee

In August 2022, the HECC convened a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to serve as an advisory body to the HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program. The TAC was convened to advise HECC staff, to review all aspects of the implementation of the first round of Workforce Ready Grant funding, inform Workforce Ready Grants processes and grantee supports, provide feedback as part of the effort to continuously improve, and make recommendations related to assessment and accountability, communications, and outreach.

To provide continuity and expertise, the membership of the TAC included some of the same members who served on HECC's initial Workforce Ready Grant advisory workgroup, as well as members of the Governor's Racial Justice Council Workforce Workgroup that informed development of the Future Ready Oregon legislation. The TAC's scope was limited to advising on the Workforce Ready Grants. The committee met bi-weekly between September and December 2022. While the HECC may reconvene the TAC in 2023 to advise continuous improvement for the Workforce Ready Grants grantmaking processes and grantee supports, the TAC's work as defined by its charter is complete.

The TAC committee makes recommendations for grantmaking processes and grantee supports that are inclusive, accessible, and low-barrier and that will result in a diverse pool of grantees, a strengthened workforce system, and improved access for priority populations. The TAC also makes recommendations related to assessment and accountability, communications, and outreach. The scope of the Technical Assistance Committee's work includes the following:

- Utilize the HECC Equity Lens to shape its work.
- Work collaboratively and honor the diversity of members and thinking to contribute to the development of the Workforce Ready Grants process.
- Provide input to inform the design of an inclusive, effective, low barrier grant process for the Workforce Ready Grants.

The TAC membership includes representatives from community-based organizations, members of the WTDB, the local workforce boards, and the Governor's Racial Justice Council.

and the Future Ready Oregon legislation. Once the evaluation team had completed scoring, HECC staff identified the top scoring applications that totaled no more than \$10 million. That initial strategy would have resulted in 21 of the 145 applications being funded. The HECC then established a maximum award amount of \$300,000, based on the estimate of how quickly funds could be expended by June 30, 2023 (required of general funds). As a result, 42 applications were funded with a maximum award of \$300,000; this amounted to 28% of eligible applications.

After review and scoring was complete, HECC staff evaluated the highest scoring applications for alignment with the Future Ready Oregon legislation, ensuring projects recommended for funding advance or support career-connected learning that serves adult learners, dislocated workers, and disconnected youth, and resulting in tangible outcomes for participants, such as an industry-recognized credential or certificate. HECC staff also considered whether proposals established new programs and partnerships or expanded existing programs and partnerships. The HECC also sought to ensure diverse engagement across priority populations and geographic areas served by the awards. For example, projects were funded in nine of Oregon's eleven economic development districts in the first round of funding. (See Figure 2.9.)

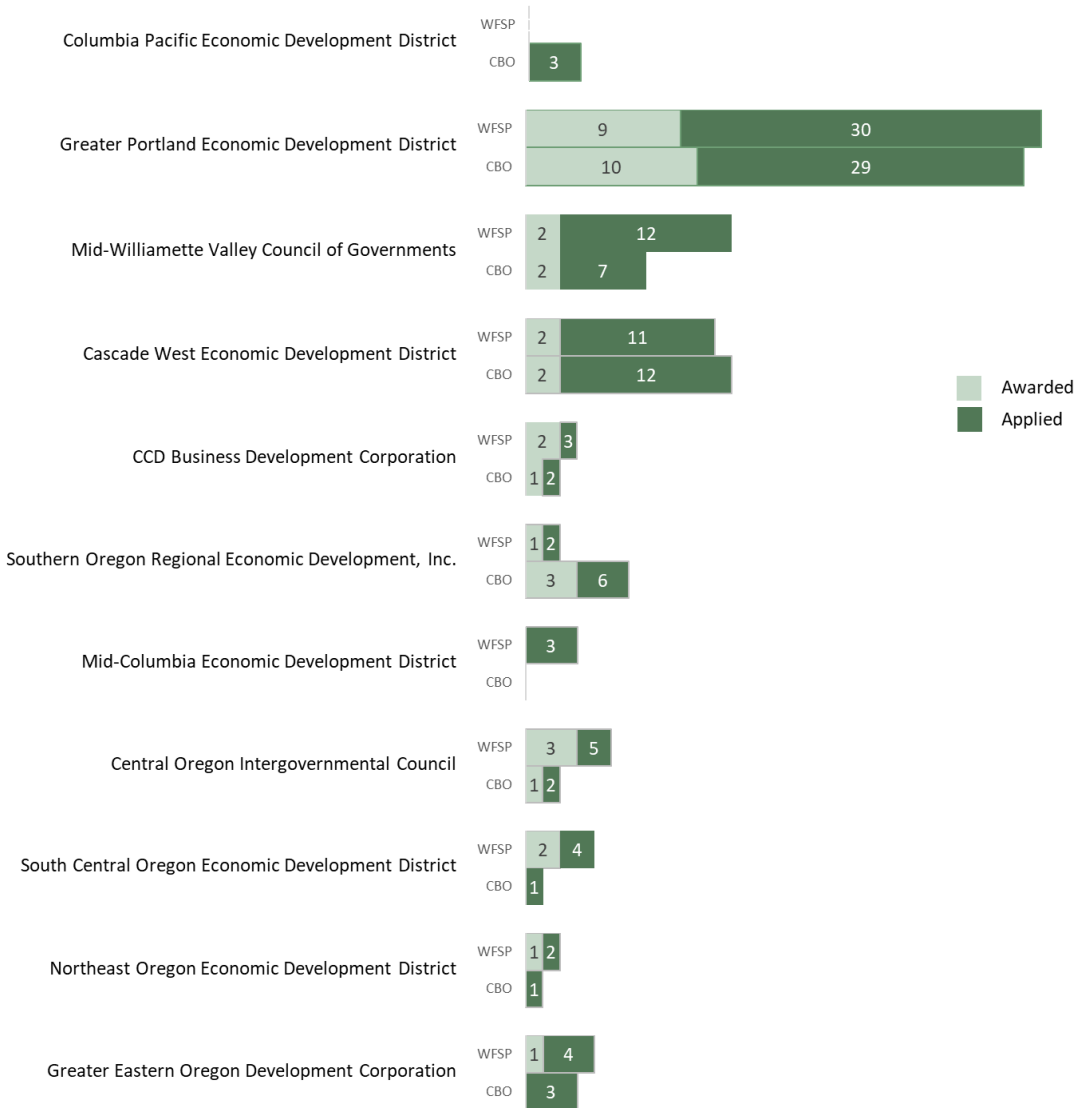


Figure 2. 9: Workforce Ready Grants Applications and Awards for Oregon’s Economic Development Districts by Community-Based Organizations (CBO) and Workforce Service Providers (WFSP)

Once award decisions were made, HECC staff drafted communications to inform all applicants of their funding status. These communications were sent to all applicants, regardless of funding status. For the 42 projects that were funded, applicants were prompted to schedule a meeting with the Future Ready Oregon Program team to discuss the next steps in the process as well as to talk about the development of a grant agreement. The applicants that were not funded were offered the opportunity to engage with technical assistance providers (the same contractors who supported the application process) to receive feedback on the application that they submitted; at the time of this report 59 of the 104 applicants not funded opted to receive feedback.

See Table 2.7 for the awardees, brief description of grants awarded, counties served, priority populations identified, and award amounts.

Table 2. 7: Workforce Ready Grant Recipients with Brief Description, County, Priority Populations, Industry Sector, and Award

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Advocates for Life Skills and Opportunities - ALSO	Three key initiatives identified will increase the capacity to expand workforce programs for people with disabilities in the manufacturing, technology, and healthcare industries. Nurturing the intersection of job seekers, employers, service providers, community, and stakeholders. 1. Assess, attract, and engage stakeholders in the manufacturing, technology, and healthcare industries within urban, rural, and frontier Oregon communities. 2. Address the needs of job seekers through workforce discovery groups, financial literacy, and assistive technology. 3. Build internal capacity through person-centeredness training, DEI training, and succession planning.	Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Umatilla, Deschutes, Klamath, Harney, Jackson, and Josephine Counties	Persons with disabilities, Low-income communities, rural and frontier	Healthcare Technology Manufacturing (General)	\$300,000
AntFarm, Inc.	AntFarm is a grassroots organization in rural Clackamas County with 16 programs that support local youth and families, with local partners representing schools, churches, businesses, and families. These funds will expand training in businesses of Technology, Manufacturing, Construction, Early Childhood Development, and Health Care.	Rural Clackamas County	Communities of color, Low-income communities, Persons with disabilities, Tribes, Rural and frontier	Healthcare Technology Manufacturing	\$300,000
Baker Technical Institute	The goal of BTI's Manufacturing Academy is to get students in, get them trained and have them ready to work in 5-weeks. The manufacturing academy training series will address several key industry components, including developing acuity in technology driven skills through Computer Aided Design, 3D Printing and Computer Navigated Cutting. Participants will also receive training in welding and fabrication, forklift certification, First Aid/CPR and Hazardous Waste First Responder certification	Baker County	Women, Low-income communities, Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, Tribes	Manufacturing	\$89,500
Bay Area Enterprises	This funding will expand a program that enables persons with disabilities to access employment opportunities within the medical sector via development of an EVS (Environmental Services) program. This program will allow for advanced training ultimately leading to the development of transferable skills that allow individuals the ability to be self-sufficient and self-reliant.	Curry, Coos, Lincoln, Lane, Douglas Counties	Low-income communities, Persons with disabilities, Rural and frontier	Healthcare	\$300,000
Central Oregon Community College	Central Oregon Community College (COCC) will purchase needed equipment for the future health career programs being developed as part of the COCC Madras campus expansion and will fund the planning and design of a redesign/retrofit of the COCC Manufacturing and Applied Technology Center (MATC) in Redmond.	Deschutes County	Communities of color, Low-income communities, Rural and frontier, Tribes	Healthcare Manufacturing	\$300,000

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council	The Future Ready grant will add staffing to strengthen outreach, extend and expand services to more youth, ages 16-24 and all adults 18 and older. It will also add a mobile WorkSource unit to provide employment services to rural and frontier communities.	Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson Counties	Communities of color, Women, Low-income communities, Rural and frontier, Veterans, Persons with disabilities, Incarcerated, Tribes, Age Discrimination, LGBTQ+, (plus Homeless/Houseless, High School Dropouts)	Healthcare Technology Manufacturing (General)	\$300,000
Centro Cultural de Washington County	Centro's Workforce Capacity Building leverages the existing Prosperidad program and connections with both Washington County's Latino community and local employers, jurisdictions, and workforce boards. Our program will connect people with emerging opportunities in advanced manufacturing and healthcare.	Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties	Communities of color, Low-income communities	Healthcare, Manufacturing	\$300,000
Chemeketa Community College	Chemeketa Community College, an Hispanic Serving Institution with campuses and centers in Yamhill, Marion and Polk Counties, will increase the capacity to place and support individuals from target populations in jobs in manufacturing, healthcare and technology industries by building and strengthening employer connections to create an aligned pathway from education to employment, assuring individuals receive the pre and concurrent training that leads to higher-wage careers. Employers will be offered tuition free DEI classes leading to a Cultural Competency Certification to ensure workplaces are ready to inclusively welcome and retain new employees.	Marion, Polk, Yamhill counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Persons with disabilities; Tribes LGBTQ+; (disengaged youth)	Healthcare Technology Manufacturing	\$300,000
City of Hillsboro	With grant resources, Hillsboro Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Partnership (HAMWP) capacity will increase access and expand accessible training opportunities that are pathways to direct employment, create culturally and linguistically relevant career mapping, and launch a manufacturing campaign in the advanced manufacturing sector. They will build consortium capacity through investments that support a strong workforce ecosystem. Elements of this ecosystem include an aligned talent pipeline, holistic access, and engagement to support priority populations and advocacy and awareness of the manufacturing sector.	Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities	Manufacturing	\$300,000

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
City of Portland, Portland Fire & Rescue	Portland Fire & Rescue (PF&R) will use Round 1 of the HECC funds to build capacity to launch an Emergency Medical Technician Certification Program for individuals from priority populations that include communities of color, women, low-income communities, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.	Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Persons with disabilities; Tribes; LGBTQ+	Healthcare	\$300,000
Daisy Chain	With this grant, Daisy C.H.A.I.N. (DC) will hire 2 doula mentors to support our capacity to mentor incoming doulas. They will provide paid mentorship for 3 DC volunteers who attended doula training in June 2022. These mentees will be paid for up to 6 months of on-the-job learning, shadowing at least 1 prenatal, 1 birth, and 1 postpartum visit. This project will increase DC's capacity to sustain this specialized workforce development in a healthcare field in which people of color and other priority populations are underrepresented due to systemic racism and oppression.	Lane County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Persons with disabilities; LGBTQ+	Healthcare	\$225,496.60
Diversability Inc.	Funding allows Diversability Inc. to increase wages for our Employment Professionals who provide the direct service that is critical to the success of the individuals we support. HECC funding also allows Diversability Inc. to partner with Central Oregon healthcare, technology and manufacturing businesses, promoting individuals with Diversabilities as a capable and highly under-utilized workforce.	Central Oregon; Deschutes County	Women; Low-income communities; Persons with disabilities; LGBTQ+	Healthcare; Technology; Manufacturing	\$50,000
EncodeXP	Funding will enable EncodeXP to integrate career pathway mapping and student mentorship, to design and build a tech aptitude assessment, and to increase our outreach and support for communities of color, women, rural and frontier regions, individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, and other young people who may not see themselves in the tech field.	Jackson and Josephine counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Persons with disabilities; Incarcerated; Tribes; Age Discrimination; LGBTQ+	Technology; Manufacturing	\$193,870

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Eugene-Springfield NAACP Unit #1119	The NAACP Health Committee will plan and implement "Health Care Career Boost," a workforce development and mentoring program for people of color in Lane County, recruiting and mentoring middle school and high school students of color to complete a high school Health Sciences Career and Technical Education (CTE) career pathways program and subsequently enroll in the local community college or other higher education options, with the goal of obtaining employment in the health care or behavioral health care workforce.	Lane County	Communities of Color	Healthcare	\$225,953
Golden Rule ReEntry	This pre-apprenticeship program will manufacture eco-aware modular homes, tiny homes, and auxiliary structures primarily for entities serving the homeless population. Once launched, Golden Rule ReEntry will hire in-house case managers and incorporate the services of other local nonprofits and agencies including but not limited to Rogue Community College, WorkSource Rogue Valley, Rogue Workforce Partnership, Empower Coaching, Phoenix Counseling, CrimAnon and Welcome Home Oregon.	Jackson and Josephine counties	Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals	Manufacturing	\$300,000
Hacienda CDC	Providing a comprehensive digital literacy curriculum and exposure to emerging technology is the goal for this program to create family-wage jobs in the manufacturing and technology sectors. Through this work, they intend to bridge the gap between noncomputer users and well-paying, highly-regarded technology and manufacturing careers. In addition, a Spanish Language Digital Literacy course and create a technical skill learning path will be offered.	Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities	Technology; Manufacturing	\$300,000
Horizon Project Inc. (HPI)	The Future Ready capacity building grant will allow HPI to enhance and expand their current workforce development offerings by creating new partnerships with employers in the health care and manufacturing fields, by launching an internship / apprenticeship program, and by incorporating person-centered curricula that include tactile learning both on the job site and in the classroom. HPI will develop its apprenticeship program in partnership with Hermiston High School and Hermiston-based employers, focusing on the health care and manufacturing industries.	Umatilla County	Persons with disabilities	Healthcare; Manufacturing	\$143,780

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization	Understanding the many barriers to gainful employment, this capacity grant will engage job seekers from targeted immigrant and refugee communities living and working in the greater Portland metro area via focus groups to help identify and understand barriers to entering manufacturing, technology, and healthcare industry sectors. With both job seeker and employer input, they will develop a new program modeling culturally and linguistically specific appropriate services that identifies barriers, needs, and career opportunities for priority populations.	Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Persons with disabilities; Incarcerated; Tribes; Age Discrimination; LGBTQ+; (Plus immigrants and refugees)	Healthcare; Technology; Manufacturing	\$111,000
Klamath Community College (KCC)	The KCC Apprenticeship Center, an approximately \$11.5 million, 30,000-square-foot instructional facility for BOLI registered apprenticeships (in construction and related trades), manufacturing, technology, allied "hands on," skills education, and Emergency Response Operations (ERO) training, is now under construction. This Workforce Ready project will focus predominantly on migrant and seasonal farmworker households/ students associated with KCC's Highschool Equivalency Program (HEP) which predominantly works with individuals in the Latino/Hispanic community. The college will build on and enhance established relationships while continuing to seek out new mutually beneficial collaborations.	Klamath and Lake County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Persons with disabilities; Incarcerated; Tribes; Age Discrimination; LGBTQ+	Technology; Manufacturing	\$300,000
Klamath Works	Klamath Works will provide supported work and actual work experience opportunities for any individual in the Basin who is interested in pursuing a career in manufacturing. The grant will provide participants with work readiness services, and paid supported work in its manufactured-related enterprises. In addition, Klamath Works will offer full-time paid work experience positions with preeminent manufacturing firms.	Klamath County	Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Incarcerated; (young adults 18+)	Manufacturing	\$200,000
Latino Network	The project focuses on updating their culturally specific and Spanish language Community Health Worker (CHW) curriculum and obtaining OHA's certification so that we can continue to offer CHW training to our community. We will also continue planning for future work to ensure that CHWs have access to continuing education classes, particularly in mental and behavioral health, as well as externships that lead to a secure job placement through a partnership with Raices de Bienestar and Centro Cultural of Washington County's Centro de Prosperidad.	Multnomah, Washington Counties	Communities of color; Low-income communities; LGBTQ+	Healthcare	\$118,533

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Mercy Flights	The project allows Mercy Flights to build an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Apprenticeship Program in Southern Oregon. Designed to expand the available pool of EMS professionals and address the current and forecasted EMS workforce crisis, the program is modeled after longstanding trade sector apprenticeship models, where students earn a livable wage while learning a profession.	Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Douglas Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Tribes; LGBTQ+	Healthcare	\$267,813
Mid-Willamette Valley Communication Action	This project provides the opportunity to meaningfully connect and engage with employers to build concrete, ongoing bridges to employment opportunities in the manufacturing and technology industries within Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties. They will expand their current employment services including acting as a liaison between the reentry community and manufacturing/technology employers.	Marion, Polk & Yamhill Counties	Communities of color; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Incarcerated	Technology; Manufacturing	\$168,630
Mt. Hood Community College	This project a) creates a mobile training/teaching lab to be used onsite at manufacturer's sites (for incumbent or existent workers); b) mentors current experts from the industry to become part-time faculty and provide the training (increasing sustainability and collaboration); c) provides workforce training opportunities for jobseekers with introductory mechatronics classes; and d) provides wraparound support for participants through student resource specialists, strengthening job attainment, retention, and promotion among participants.	Multnomah County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Persons with disabilities; Incarcerated; Tribes; Age Discrimination; LGBTQ+	Technology; Manufacturing	\$300,000
Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN)	This project aims to support workforce programs in the healthcare sector through evidence-based research uncovering the barriers to workforce expansion and sustainability specific to low-income and rural communities. The information gleaned from this project will allow the local workforce development board to recommend, lead, coordinate, and conduct new initiatives to advance opportunities specifically designed to reduce resistance and eliminate barriers for low-income and rural community members, which in turn enhances their capacity to launch, expand, sustain, and offer continued support to the local nursing workforce.	Coos County	Low-income communities; Rural and frontier	Healthcare	\$115,640

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Oregon State University	Ecampus grant project will serve Veteran students who are living in Oregon and using the post-9/11 GI Bill to pursue degrees in health care, technology, and manufacturing in online programs. Presently, the federal government reduces the housing allowance portion of the GI Bill for these students—simply because they are studying online. This grant funding will help make the housing allowance more equitable for veterans pursuing online degree programs in the targeted disciplines in the state of Oregon.	Statewide	Veterans	All	\$52,737
Oregon State University	Expands Community Health Worker (CHW) training to serve Oregon’s Veterans. Grant activities include (a) recruiting two small cohorts of Veterans and training them to become entry-level CHWs who are certified for work by the Oregon Health Authority; (b) developing and launching a Continuing Education course for all CHWs regarding Veteran’s health care needs; and (c) supporting Veteran’s job placement as CHWs with professional networking opportunities.	Statewide	Veterans	Healthcare	\$278,141
Oregon Workforce Partnership (OWP)	In this capacity-building grant, OWP will lead the integration of WorkSource Oregon services in the 12 Oregon state prisons alongside the Department of Corrections. The emphasis of this program will focus on work readiness, education, training opportunities, and placement connections to high-wage, high-growth industries.	Statewide	Low-income communities; Incarcerated	Manufacturing	\$107,500
PODER Oregon’s Latino Leadership Network	Due to the lack of culturally specific mental health providers and employers, PODER is working to support behavioral health by increasing the number of Latino bilingual and bicultural qualified mental health providers. This work is expected to establish a statewide Latino Health Council made up of diverse Latino healthcare professionals, healthcare research experts, and healthcare CBOs. The goals are to expand access to bilingual/bicultural services for Latino across the region and to strategically inform and guide healthcare policy and resources in the private, nonprofit, and public sectors to improve health outcomes and increase capacity for our communities.	Marion County; Statewide	Communities of color; Low-income; communities; Rural and frontier	Healthcare	\$300,000

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Portland Community College (PCC)	This project is designed to support communities of color, women, low-income communities, formerly incarcerated individuals, and members of Oregon's nine federally-recognized Indian tribes by improving awareness of and expanding access to culturally-relevant, industry-aligned training that leads to high-demand, good paying jobs in manufacturing, with a particular focus on machine manufacturing technology. It will accomplish this by engaging community and industry partners in a comprehensive review of a student's journey, including initial engagement with PCC, career and college preparatory activities, technical training in MMT, and holistic student supports that can create and strengthen pathways to careers in machine manufacturing. This work will inform a future curriculum redesign that better meets the needs of priority populations as well as industry.	Multnomah, Washington, Yamhill, Clackamas, and Columbia Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Incarcerated; Tribes	Manufacturing	\$300,000
Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc (POIC)	POIC's project will expand Health Care career training pathway to serve approximately 50 new trainees and support them in ultimately entering living-wage careers. POIC and Rosemary Anderson High School (RAHS) are well-positioned to make a significant impact on the healthcare sector in the Portland Metropolitan Area. We have strong partnerships with hundreds of workforce partners across Portland and beyond who are in dire need of qualified, highly skilled, and diverse applicants. POIC+RAHS' programming is unique because participants have access to POIC+RAHS' array of other wraparound services including access to a Career Coach and mentors (before and after their placement), financial education support, counseling, additional education, pro-social activities, and much more.	Multnomah County	Communities of color; Low-income communities; Incarcerated	Healthcare; Manufacturing	\$300,000

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Portland State University (PSU)	PSU's Vernier Science Center STEM Equity Hub will transform existing priority-population student support programs and physical space to ensure that STEM/health students can succeed in their disciplines and quickly enter fulfilling, well-paying careers. This capacity-building project will enable our team to 1) expand connections and build a common agenda with employers and other workforce partners in the health, manufacturing, and technology workforce; 2) develop foci on climate change mitigation/adaptation and connect partners' perspectives to the vision for the Center; 3) begin scaling existing programs in the Center that can immediately support student success and grow the workforce in priority sectors. The efforts are designed to 4) bring in new partners—particularly CBOs led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color—to the workforce ecosystem.	Multnomah County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Persons with disabilities; Incarcerated; Tribes; Age Discrimination; LGBTQ+; (plus undocumented/DACA and foster care experience)	Healthcare; Technology; Manufacturing	\$223,741
RISE Partnership	RISE Partnership provides workers in long-term care facilities with training, apprenticeship, and mentorship to help them thrive in their careers. Careworks created and operates Oregon's first and only competency-based and BOLI-certified Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) apprenticeship program. Rural Equity Project will scope the cost and feasibility of mobile training units that can be training centers for rural communities who may benefit from targeted strategies to grow and retain a long-term care workforce. These mobile training units would be designed to serve as training facilities to mimic on-the-job training (e.g., hospital beds, vital equipment) and have computer training and broadband access. The funding will also support developing curriculum continuing education for long-term care facility workers, and developing a new, Oregon-specific CNA curriculum.	Statewide	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Persons with disabilities; Incarcerated; Age Discrimination	Healthcare	\$300,000
Rockwood Community Development Corporation, East County Community Health (ECCH)	ECCH will initiate this workforce initiative incrementally through three phases. Phase I of CHW community health capacity building initiative will strengthen current relationships while building new partnerships, develop robust programming, and being intentional in outreaching into BIPOC communities for participants. Phase II will launch the CHW Community Health Workforce Training and Certification program for People of Color (POC) community members and students. Phase III will focus on securing additional funding sources for sustainability and expansion.	Multnomah County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Age Discrimination	Healthcare	\$181,985.33

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Rogue Community College (RCC)	The scope of the grant-funded project is to increase RCC's capacity to launch, sustain, and support workforce training in healthcare within the Rogue Valley, in response to the region's industry needs. Priority populations affected by this project include first-generation college students, as well as rural and economically disadvantaged residents of the Rogue Valley. Anticipated longer-term outcomes of this project include 1) providing pathways to high-demand, high-wage jobs in the Rogue Valley; 2) expanding the healthcare training portfolio in the region; 3) responding to urgent requests from healthcare partners; and 4) increasing the economic output in the region.	Jackson, Josephine Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Veterans; Age Discrimination	Healthcare; Technology; Manufacturing	\$300,000
South Coast Business	South Coast Business will use the funding to bridge the gap between Spanish-speaking populations and manufacturing employers throughout the western portion of the state through developing targeted recruitment practices and developing culturally competent employment opportunities.	Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier	Manufacturing	\$300,000
The Contingent	This project aims to expand the Empowering Leaders Internship program to Southern Oregon and build the infrastructure needed to scale to multiple locations beyond the Portland Metro area. The expansion to Southern Oregon is in partnership with Project Youth +, a non-profit working in Jackson and Josephine Counties to increase opportunities for youth to thrive in school, careers, and life. Funding will support recruitment of Southern Oregon companies to provide internships across sectors, with an emphasis on the technology sector as well as support roles in manufacturing and health care. Student recruitment will focus on enhancing opportunities for students from communities of color and/or lower-income rural backgrounds.	Jackson, Josephine Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier	Healthcare; Technology; Manufacturing (general)	\$300,000

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
United We Heal Training	This project will utilize existing grassroots structures to establish and nurture long-term support structures for thousands of workers including primarily women and people of color to advance their careers in healthcare and in IT Help Desk roles. The project will 1) develop recruitment and selection materials and processes with engagement from BIPOC, female, rural, and gender non-binary individuals; 2) engage existing worker caucuses to build mentorship programs that are culturally-relevant, union-associated, and worksite-based; 3) engage experienced adult educators to develop mentor training curriculum as well as recruit and train mentors; 4) recruit trainees; and 5) prepare for future workforce funding opportunities, including future rounds of Workforce Ready Grants to pay for tuition.	Statewide	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Persons with disabilities; LGBTQ+	Healthcare; Technology	\$300,000
Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center (VGMHC)	The funding increases VGMHC's capacity to expand, strengthen and diversify workforce pipelines to healthcare careers through our partnership with Hillsboro School District (HSD) and Portland Community College (PCC). All three partners serve priority populations, including people with low incomes, people of color, immigrants, and refugees. They will pilot co-faculty teaching positions for VGMHC registered nurses and dental hygienists at PCC and HSD as a potential method of creating a pipeline for existing staff and community members to enter these fields.	Washington County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities	Healthcare	\$300,000
Vision Action Network (VAN)	VAN will support a collaborative cohort to focus on the behavioral health sector with Adelante Mujeres and Raíces de Bienestar, two CBOs located in Washington County. Together, they intend to build their capacity to provide culturally-specific behavioral health services for the Latino/a/e/x communities in Washington County and rural areas in the Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon.	Washington, Clackamas, Marion, Polk, Jackson & Josephine Counties.	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier	Healthcare	\$300,000
Warm Springs Community Action Team (WSCAT)	WSCAT will build the capacity of the workforce development program by conducting needs assessments, asset mapping, and developing a vision and strategic plan around technology workforce training in Warm Springs. This includes a variety of technology sectors, including IT and solar. They will serve tribal members living on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.	Jefferson County	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier; Tribes	Technology	\$110,579

Applicants Awarded					
Organization	Description	County	Priority Populations	Industry Sectors	Award Amount
Willamette Education Service District	With funding, they will obtain needed high-priced industry-standard equipment for the new Information Technology and Manufacturing Programs including a precision lathe, a CNC machine, downdraft tables, an ironworker, large scale printer, and water jet tools. Engage students in networking and competitive opportunities through participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations. They encourage participation of female students in career pathways in non-traditional areas by sponsoring WCA female students' attendance at the Oregon Tradeswomen's Career Fair where they can build more networking experiences for students in non-traditional careers.	Marion, Polk & Yamhill Counties	Communities of color; Women; Low-income communities; Rural and frontier	Technology; Manufacturing	\$274,329

Important to note, while some applicants and awardees demonstrated a commitment to serving tribal members, the Workforce Ready Grants Round One RFA did not receive applications from any of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribal governments. Intentional outreach to develop relationships among the HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program and Oregon's federally recognized tribal governments will facilitate more equitable participation across the state. HECC staff learned from our tribal government partners that the application period needs to be longer to facilitate the tribal government approval process. HECC staff are planning at least a 60-day application period for the next round of funding to assure tribal governments' ability to participate. This first round of grant funding was general funds and required a shorter performance period; subsequent grant opportunities will be ARPA-funded and will have a longer time for implementation.

This money means so much to us. We are a newer organization and working on our old, busted computers and trying to house and train these folks who just need a second chance. This money is such a big deal to us, to our community.

Thank you so much.

~Abigail Lewis, Golden Rule ReEntry

Lessons Learned

HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program reported that the first round of Workforce Ready Grant funding resulted in lessons learned to improve the grantmaking process for future funding opportunities. Many of these lessons were identified by the technical assistance consultants and pertain to all aspects of the process, from application through awarding. HECC staff shared these lessons and potential solutions with the TAC for review and planning throughout the fall of 2022. The TAC further refined the recommendations and advised HECC staff on how improvements may be implemented in the RFA solicitation, application, review and scoring processes. Table 2.8 below provides a summary of these lessons and potential solutions.

Table 2. 8: Workforce Ready Grants Lessons Learned and Improvement Strategies

Category	Round One Lessons Learned	Recommendations for Future Rounds	Potential & Actionable Solutions for Improving Future Rounds
RFA	The first RFA focused on the industry sector skills and did not account for needed foundational skills.	Allow for skill-building in addition to industry sector-specific skills.	Consider funding projects that support attainment of skills necessary for more complex training needed in targeted industry sectors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology skills - English Language literacy - Budgeting - Employability skills - Career seeking skills
	The RFA was short and easy to read but the lack of guidance caused confusion.	Provide more context and explanation within the RFA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide clear eligibility criteria with examples - Separate small grant and large grant categories - Include word count recommendations - Include page limits for attachments - Provide clarity on administrative rate - Improve clarity regarding scoring criteria - Provide guidance on how to engage with TA contractors
Application	Access to information and resources was limited.	Improve accessibility to information and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use accessible and clear language - Include separate and distinct webpage for grant opportunities and link to RFA and resource documents - Offer Survey Monkey tutorials - Include TA provider information - Offer both live and recorded information sessions
	The scoring did not include points for collaboration or leveraging financial resources.	Direct more focus on collaboration and leveraging financial resources without penalizing new organizations to workforce development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include key partner(s) integral to success of proposed project, with their roles, length of partnership, and letters of support - Include leveraging of resources from other funding sources

Category	Round One Lessons Learned	Recommendations for Future Rounds	Potential & Actionable Solutions for Improving Future Rounds
	<p>Little information was available about grantee responsibilities during the application period.</p>	<p>Increase clarity on grantee administrative and contracting obligations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a sample grant agreement - Provide information about technical assistance available to grantees - Provide information about ARPA funding and unique requirements - Provide reporting templates - Include requirements for participant-level data, quarterly performance reporting, invoicing, and fiscal reconciliation
	<p>Difficult to decipher what made the applicants and their programs well-positioned to serve specific priority populations.</p>	<p>Provide more clarity on direct, intentional support of priority populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include location of organization, as well as location of proposed project - Include composition of organization: board, staff, etc. - Include organization's understanding of the lived experience of the priority population(s) served; identify barriers and proposed solutions - Identify which priority population(s) the organization supports, as well as which population(s) the project will directly and intentionally support
<p>Outreach</p>	<p>Few applicants from rural economic development districts; no applicants from tribal governments, and few applicants from culturally specific CBOs, particularly in certain regions of the state.</p>	<p>Improve outreach to CBOs in rural economic development districts, tribal governments, and culturally specific CBOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate and collaborate outreach and community engagement strategies with Future Ready partners, such as BOLI & YDD, to cross-promote funding opportunities - Partner with Oregon organizations to leverage outreach - Allow for a longer application window - Consider a rolling deadline

Category	Round One Lessons Learned	Recommendations for Future Rounds	Potential & Actionable Solutions for Improving Future Rounds
Technical Assistance (TA)	Technical assistance consultants did not reflect the priority populations.	Increase diversity of technical assistance consultants/contractors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow for regular invoicing from technical assistance providers rather than invoicing at the close of services provided - Recruit Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) providers - Coordinate with Business Oregon to ensure COBID-certified businesses are aware of and have access to the opportunity - Recruit Spanish-speaking providers - List biographical information for technical assistance providers so applicants can self-select based on organizational fit - Prioritize support to culturally-specific CBOs
Post Award	The follow-up with awardees not funded was more ad hoc than planned.	Provide closure to applicants not funded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide feedback specific to application submitted - Provide review of evaluator comments - Allow discussion of agency review criteria - Offer ways to explore future funding opportunities
	Some awardees had similar projects to projects funded by other Future Ready funding and some applicants received funding from other Future Ready funding.	Create opportunities to network across Future Ready Oregon funded projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information about funding from multiple Future Ready Oregon funding sources by organization - Share project information and contacts with local workforce boards, WTDB, Industry Consortia, and fellow funded projects to network and share promising practices across Future Ready Oregon investment programs

Category	Round One Lessons Learned	Recommendations for Future Rounds	Potential & Actionable Solutions for Improving Future Rounds
	Need support for organizations new to providing workforce development opportunities.	Support success for newer and existing organizations/awardees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead with learning - Build trust between HECC and grantees - Create safe spaces to learn and share challenges - Celebrate successes - Offer weekly technical assistance drop-ins with grant administrators and fiscal specialists - Develop library of recorded topics to support grantees - Provide reporting template and invoicing examples - Create intentional learning communities and collaboratives - Allow topics driven by grantee interest/need
	Given the questions regarding restrictions of spending general fund dollars, HECC anticipates more support is needed for future grantees awarded ARPA funding.	ARPA funding will come with additional complexities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build transparency about implications for this funding source - Clarify additional reporting requirements for federal ARPA funds

The HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program team is planning for the second round of funding available under the Workforce Ready Grants. The project period for the second round of funding will run from approximately mid-2023 until December 2026. The RFA is planned to open in early 2023 and will be informed by the lessons learned and recommendations provided by the TAC. This second RFA will be funded with federal ARPA dollars and defined by the parameters outlined within the legislation.

The Future Ready Oregon Program team reports that the tight timeline of expending the Workforce Ready Grants general funds allocation by June 30, 2023, is a challenge. Like the challenges identified by the Oregon Department of Education, Youth Development Division for the Future Ready Oregon Youth Programs, the HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program wants to make sure they can award all the general funds and carry the subsequent rounds of federal ARPA funding into the new biennium. Additionally, the quality of the applications in the first round of funding was strong, leading the HECC's Future Ready Oregon Program to balance the ease of re-applying among unfunded first-round applicants with being inclusive enough to support new organizations applying for funding.

Conclusion

HECC implemented the first round of Workforce Ready Grants in a narrow window of time with substantial engagement of external partners and high priorities on equity and inclusivity. The HECC balanced the time needed to offer broad technical assistance and develop community review with the time for providing services to participants within this narrow window. The result was the receipt of nearly 150 applications requesting over \$70 million for the first round of funding. The HECC also developed advisory committees to inform and employ inclusive, low-barrier strategies for accessing government funding that would bring new organizations to the work to serve, engage, and support priority populations better—a high priority for Future Ready Oregon in general and for the Workforce Ready Grants in particular. Committee membership included representatives from community-based and culturally specific organizations serving priority populations, workforce development and education partners, and community leaders and advocates for racial justice and equity throughout Oregon. The HECC continues its efforts in their ongoing work to implement lessons learned by engaging communities to inform continuous improvement in processes and systems.

INDUSTRY CONSORTIA

The Future Ready Oregon legislation ([SB 1545, 2022](#)) directed the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), in consultation with the State Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB), to establish a program to convene three statewide Industry Consortia, representing the health care, manufacturing, and technology sectors. These key industry sectors are experiencing significant growth, an aging workforce, and record retirements, resulting in significant job vacancies. These sectors also provide short-term pathways to employment, self-sufficient earning potential, and opportunities for economic mobility in communities across Oregon.

The Consortia's purpose is to strengthen relationships between employers, education and training providers, and community partners to improve systems alignment to better meet the needs of Oregon's employers, ensure equitable opportunities for a diverse workforce, and advance Oregon's economic competitiveness. The Consortia will identify statewide workforce needs, skills gaps, and high-value credentials, as well as support job readiness, and inform recruitment, retention, and career advancement strategies. The legislation (SB 1545, 2022) identifies the activities that each of the consortium will perform specific to the industry sector they represent:

- “Establish strategic partnerships to align workforce development activities that aim to increase participation in workforce programs by individuals from priority populations²⁰.”
- Develop structured processes to address mutual goals and promote consensus in decision making.
- Identify industry-specific workforce needs in this state, including the need for high-value credentials, to inform the development and implementation of culturally and linguistically diverse workforce education and training curricula.
- Develop targeted recruitment strategies to increase equitable participation by individuals from priority populations in statewide workforce programs.
- Promote workforce development programs and activities in the targeted industry.”

The Future Ready Oregon legislation also specifies the composition of the leadership team and membership of each consortium. Each Industry Consortium will be directed by a leadership team composed of representatives from business, a workforce-related Community-Based Organization (CBO), a workforce training provider, and a labor organization. Ideally, the leadership team will represent the priority populations identified in Future Ready Oregon. In addition to the leadership team, the remaining membership of each consortium will include one or more representatives from

²⁰ Future Ready Oregon Priority Populations are people with the following characteristics: communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, Veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment based on age, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

each of the following: the WTDB, the Racial Justice Council within the Office of the Governor, employers, industry associations, labor organizations, local workforce boards, and economic developers.²¹

Industry Consortia are to be convened by the WTDB. HECC staff assessed the landscape of workforce development and related needs in these industries. The HECC and WTDB then retained The Woolsey Group as an implementation partner and strategist to help design the consortia framework and engage industry partners. The Woolsey Group has expertise in leading industry partnerships in Oregon, including development of effective strategies for greater alignment of workforce training across organizations and areas. The contract with The Woolsey Group was executed in the summer of 2022.

Figure 2.9 shows The Woolsey Group’s timeline and scope of work.

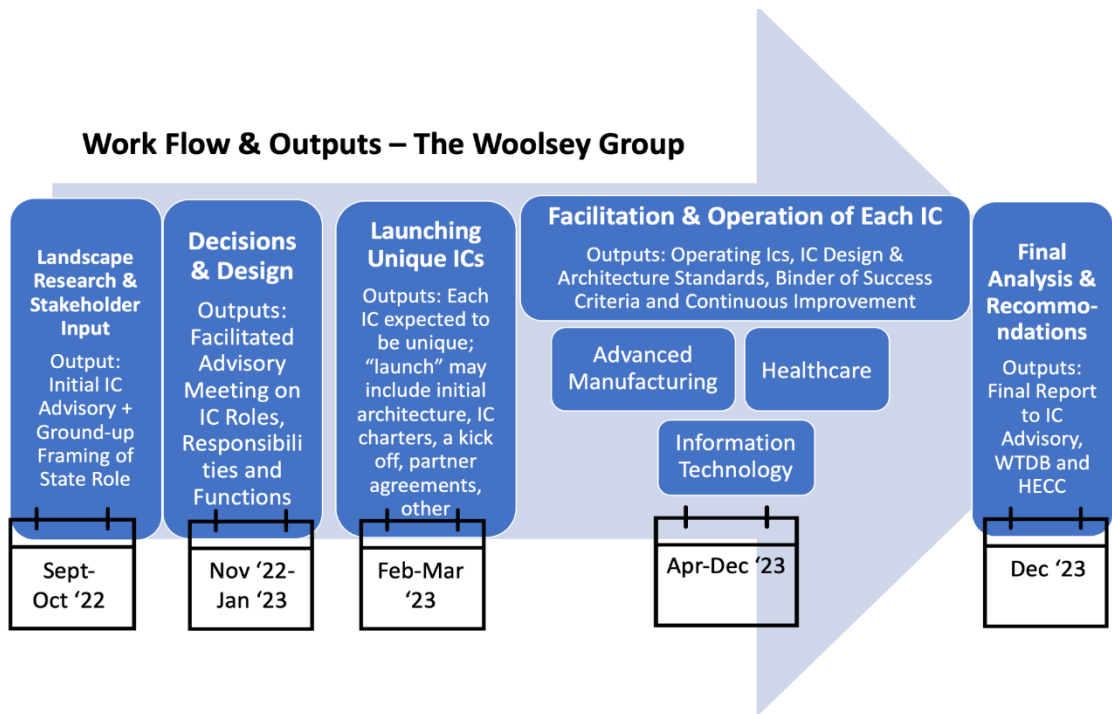


Figure 2. 10: Workflow & Outputs – The Woolsey Group

²¹ SB 1545, 2022: Section 10.

Over the summer of 2022, The Woolsey Group began their work by creating foundational materials and gathering input from engaged parties. The Woolsey Group and HECC staff identified the following outcomes of the Industry Consortia:

- Advance racial justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- Align state and local/regional efforts to reimagine and/or improve the comprehensive workforce system in Oregon including the public workforce system, postsecondary training and education, supportive services providers, and others;
- Improve quality of workforce resources, programs and services made available through the public workforce system and transparency of information regarding their performance metrics and outcomes;
- Provide quality employment experiences and equitable outcomes for job seekers and businesses participating in programs; and
- Align with economic development organizations that work directly with companies for the purposes of recruitment, retention, and expansion.

These expected outcomes will evolve with time as the consortia develop, build partnerships, and accomplish the work. As these outcomes are achieved by each of the consortia, Oregonians are expected to experience improved quality and equity of workforce programs, including industry-led credentials and career pathways, career-connected learning, and community-based partnerships.

In September and October of 2022, The Woolsey Group conducted interviews about the current state of workforce needs in Oregon with more than thirty key leaders, including those from businesses, local workforce investment boards, Oregon's Workforce and Talent Development Board, CBOs, local and state government, education, economic development organizations, and others. They identified themes and recommendations from the collective feedback regarding workforce training needs, the consortia functions, and the consortia staffing. These themes include the following workforce training needs, recommendations about how the Industry Consortia should function, and staffing considerations:

Workforce Training Needs

- Unreliable information about industry needs
- Reactive vs. pro-active responses to industry needs
- No connection to economic strategy
- Initiative overload
- No forum for industry leaders to share best practices, models, pre-competitive opportunities

- No formal structure for state systems to engage with this work
- No actual skills standards for critical occupations and pathways in Oregon’s most important industries
- Missed opportunities for shared curriculum
- Bigger missed opportunities for brokered, connected pathways
- Unaddressed certificate and licensure bottlenecks
- No one responsible for resource mapping
- Confusion over what warrants a statewide Industry Consortia
- No single go-to, trusted source for data
- No forum for the big messy policy issues that are barriers to talent development and equal job opportunities – housing, transportation, childcare
- No forum for big, innovative solutions to industry-wide and state-wide issues

Recommendations for Industry Consortia Functions

- Be the forum for real industry input and discussion to surface current needs, trends, and changes for each target industry; a forum where institutional, local, regional best practices can roll up.
- Create a roadmap for each industry sector by focusing on five areas: 1) understanding talent and skills needs; 2) integrating education and training responses; 3) expanding equity and diversity; 4) connecting industry and education as hubs for research, new knowledge, and innovation; 5) prioritizing policy issues for shared advocacy.
- Broker connections and create task forces (temporary or longer-standing) that move key efforts forward related to the roadmap.
- Facilitate and publish Trusted Skills Standards – actual standards (knowledge, skills, abilities) to be successful on the job, in the top 10 (or top 20) critical jobs (by employment, by posting frequency, by a specific quality standard), in each target industry, informed by the right representatives from industry, and created/refreshed on a regular basis.
- Inform Future Ready Oregon initiatives (and related or future funding) – including development of RFPs, review criteria for grantee selection, and metrics of success.

- Uncover and broker solutions to licensure barriers, and other bottlenecks that prevent available, skilled workers from filling needed jobs.
- Be the mapping agent on behalf of the targeted industry for funding and resources siloed in multiple agencies or state systems that should be blended or braided.
- Identify common and needed stackable credentials, map particular program competencies within and across institutions, facilitate and broker connected pathway building.
- Identify and act on cross-policy issues where multiple Industry Consortia can align and join forces for change.
- Create clear metrics of success for roadmap activities and core functions, with baselines and timelines.

Considerations for Staffing:

- **Coordinator:** Each Industry Consortium will require a full-time coordinator, not necessarily housed inside the WTDB or HECC, but inside an organization with credibility and well positioned for success across the needed functions.
- **Statewide Education & Training Concierge (Industry-specific):** This position exclusively focuses on creating and updating the inventory of programs and institutions with education and training relevant to the target industry.
- **Policy Liaison (Industry-specific):** This position combines policy advocacy with policy brokerage across multiple systems, with an ability to translate Industry Consortia policy needs (legislative and administrative) to stakeholders and decision makers that can make needed changes.

These findings and recommendations apply to all three consortia and provide a framework for use in other industries. The Woolsey Group also offered specific recommendations and considerations related to the healthcare and manufacturing Industry Consortia based on their initial assessment of each industry and the role each consortium can serve.

Healthcare Consortium

The Woolsey Group found that while many groups are convening around preparing for Oregon's healthcare workforce needs, no one group is leading or organizing these efforts, especially at a statewide level. The Healthcare Consortium, once convened, can fulfill this role.

They recommend the Healthcare Consortium be broad-based and inclusive of the many healthcare occupations that provide care to patients. The Woolsey Group recommended mapping out: 1) the organizations, activities, authority, and membership of existing healthcare industry efforts related to

workforce training, and 2) the major investments in healthcare workforce initiatives prior to convening the Healthcare Consortium.

Manufacturing Consortium

Many associations and regional collaborations have also convened over the past decade to address the manufacturing workforce needs. However, most of these associations and collaborations are sub-sector focused (e.g., wood, outdoor, food processing, semiconductor, etc.) signifying a need for a statewide approach that includes the many sectors of manufacturing and regions of Oregon. The Woolsey Group recommended defining the subsectors of manufacturing that would be included and determining what subsector experts should be included in the consortium prior to convening the Manufacturing Consortium.

Next Steps

At the time of this report, the three Industry Consortia are on track to convene and begin operations in early 2023. Each consortium is planned to have a Coordinator that will work with industry, education, and community partners, manage workstreams of the consortium, and broker relationships and cross-system collaborations. The HECC expects to hire Industry Consortia Coordinators in early 2023 and begin the preparatory work necessary to convene the Consortia.

Conclusion

Prior to convening the Industry Consortia, the HECC and the WTDB contracted with The Woolsey Group to assess the workforce landscape of each industry and inform the framework for establishing statewide Industry Consortia. They completed extensive consultation with a wide range of business, education, and community leaders to understand workforce training needs and determine how the statewide Industry Consortia could fill those needs. From their findings, they laid out a framework for the consortia based on their functions and goals and identified staffing needs. This groundwork was not only completed in a short timeframe (summer and fall 2022) but also lays a path forward that is much clearer and more specific than would have occurred without it. The HECC and WTDB, in partnership with The Woolsey Group, have effectively positioned Future Ready Oregon's Industry Consortia to be productive leaders in the coming year.

The specific path forward to convene each consortium differs based on the extent of industry engagement and organizations actively working to address improvements to the pipeline into employment and retention. The plan for the three Industry Consortia in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology is for them to become the credible authority of industry and workforce development information that shapes workforce strategies. These statewide Industry Consortia are intended to lay the framework for equitable participation in quality workforce development as well as equitable recruitment, employment, and retention and career advancement opportunities aligned with the industry needs in Oregon.

I've even heard quite clearly from colleges and CTE [career and technical education providers], who have requirements of having their own advisory boards etc., [that] if we knew that there was a statewide entity that could really get to the knowledge, skills, and the abilities of the most critical occupations now and that we know are the future occupations in the not-so-distant future, that would be gold. For us [colleges and CTE] to be able to cross check our own information around skills and knowledge and abilities that we use to shape our curriculum and credentials every single day is going to be important. We have advisory boards that we use, but they're still small, still somewhat narrow sometimes, and they often only represent the geography that we're in. So again, for a statewide entity to be able and responsible for that information would be very powerful.

~ Lindsey Woolsey, The Woolsey Group, shared at the Oregon Workforce Talent Development Board executive committee on October 19, 2022, regarding Industry Consortia

WORKFORCE BENEFITS NAVIGATORS

The Future Ready Oregon legislation ([SB 1545, 2022](#)) includes \$10 million to establish and administer a program to employ Workforce Benefits Navigators across Oregon. The program will be administered through the HECC in consultation with the WTDB. The HECC will award funds to local workforce development boards that apply with a plan to implement workforce benefits navigators pilot projects in partnership with comprehensive one-stop centers and CBOs.

Workforce Benefits Navigators are intended to be employed by local workforce development boards, working at comprehensive one-stop centers or CBOs to advise and assist individuals from priority populations in accessing workforce programs and applying for benefits and services that are available under the programs. Navigators are expected to possess comprehensive knowledge and understanding of workforce programs as well as of available benefits and services. Navigators must be culturally and linguistically responsive, possess knowledge of the lived experiences of individuals from priority populations, and trained in trauma-informed practices.

The HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff reports they are currently hiring a program analyst to establish and coordinate the Workforce Benefits Navigators program. Once employed and onboarded, this staff member will convene and work with an advisory committee, including representatives from the local workforce development boards, CBOs, and state agency partners, to further define implementation of the Workforce Benefits Navigators program to increase participation in workforce development services, especially among priority populations. The themes gleaned from this work will inform the content and process of the request for applications (RFA).

Because the Workforce Benefits Navigator program is funded by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds—which has a longer timeline for expenditures, HECC prioritized implementing the other programs funded with general funds. HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff plans to send out the RFA to Oregon's nine local workforce development boards to apply for Workforce Benefits Navigators funding in the second quarter of 2023 (i.e., April 2023 – June 2023). Each local workforce development board must submit a complete application and proposal that demonstrates how it will deploy Workforce Benefits Navigators at comprehensive one-stop centers and CBOs across their region, specifically demonstrating how they will intentionally engage with and support priority populations. HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff reported they will make every effort to ensure Workforce Benefits Navigators are available in all parts of the state. Final award and selection criteria will be informed by the advisory committee.

CHAPTER THREE: ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND BASELINE

The Future Ready Oregon legislation requires the annual report to include baseline estimates of statewide labor force participation rates, progress made toward achieving the statewide educational attainment goals, and projections related to postsecondary educational attainment needs. In addition, the legislation notes that long-term employment projections for health care and manufacturing should be part of the baseline labor force participation data. These measures are directly related to the economic and equity goals of Future Ready Oregon. Labor force data reflect the need for a more equitable workforce system by illustrating the size of the equity gap in workforce development, i.e., the difference between the composition of the workforce and the composition of Oregon.

Employment projections indicate the growth in the workforce needed in particular industries. The status of statewide educational attainment goals—overall and for priority populations—and the employment projections for postsecondary education and training both indicate the number of postsecondary credentials needed to achieve the long-term economic and equity goals of the State and of Future Ready Oregon.

As such, this chapter presents these baseline data for understanding today and to be used as benchmarks against which we will assess the impact of Future Ready Oregon in the future. In particular, we present the following data, statewide and with disaggregation by priority populations where possible:

- Labor force participation rates and size of working-age population
- Employment projections in focus industries
- Progress in educational attainment goals

STATEWIDE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

Labor force participation rates are calculated based on the civilian, noninstitutional population ages 16 and older and represent the proportion of this population that is either employed or looking for work. These rates, especially as compared to the size of the working-age population provide the means to track how much Future Ready Oregon brings new workers into the labor force by connecting them to the skills needed for well-paying jobs. In Oregon, the labor force participation rate has mostly declined over the past two decades. Though it has generally recovered from the pandemic-related economic crisis, it remains lower than it was prior to the Great Recession. This trend is consistent with national trends.²²

²² Morrisette, T. (2022).

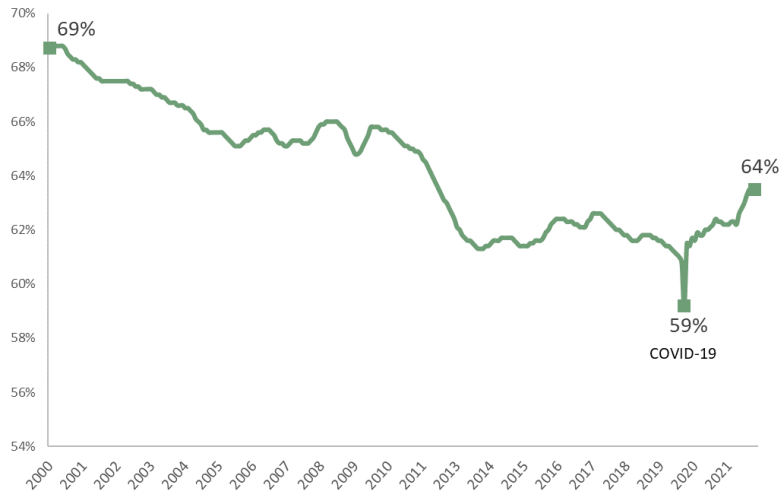


Figure 3. 1: Oregon’s labor participation rate among noninstitutionalized persons ages 16 and older²³

Oregon’s Office of Economic Analysis (OEA) produced a Latent Labor Force Report in 2021 addressing the low labor force participation rate, low unemployment rate, and limited recovery in participation since the Great Recession. The OEA estimates Oregon has a potential “latent” labor force of 308,000 people (or roughly 13% of adults age 16 and up) who might become employed, although this is a theoretical forecast and includes both young people for whom continued education is the primary focus and retired people for whom re-employment is unlikely.²⁴ Even with these caveats, this potentially larger labor force indicates considerable room for higher employment—and thereby economic growth—for individuals, businesses, and the state. The low levels of paid labor force participation, both historically and relative to other industrialized nations, combined with the generally low unemployment and tight labor market conditions, suggest the possibility that significant potential for growth exists if we invest in people now on the sidelines, particularly priority populations. However, to engage potential workers who are not currently employed and may not have been consistently employed for some time likely requires workforce investments that are both bigger and different. Future Ready Oregon seeks to support this economic growth by improving the state workforce system.

Future Ready Oregon seeks not only to improve economic outcomes for individuals, businesses, and the state, but also to improve the equity in these outcomes. Therefore, we also present labor force participation rates and population sizes for underserved groups. Future reports will track whether these measures are becoming more equitable and how they compare to the representation of different groups in Future Ready Oregon programs.

²³ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022).

²⁴ Oregon Office of Economic Analysis (2021).

Labor Force Participation by Age

Over the past two decades, Oregonians ages 16 to 24 are not entering the workforce at the same rate as prior to 2000.²⁵ At the same time, the large Baby Boom generation is moving into traditional retirement age. As a result, fewer people are in the labor force compared to the overall population. In addition, labor force participation rates have also declined in adults aged 25 to 54. Table 3.1 presents labor force and population data by age group for 2021.²⁶ We will be tracking these measures and comparing them to participation in Future Ready Oregon programs by age.

Table 3. 1: Oregon's population and labor force data by age group, 2021

Age Group	Civilian Non-Institutional Population Size	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Total	3,450,000	62.2%	59.0%	5.2%
16 to 19 years	202,000	37.8%	33.8%	10.6%
20 to 24 years	262,000	77.6%	72.6%	6.5%
25 to 34 years	572,000	83.0%	78.2%	5.7%
35 to 44 years	583,000	82.1%	78.2%	4.7%
45 to 54 years	534,000	83.5%	80.0%	4.1%
55 to 64 years	479,000	66.8%	63.5%	4.9%
65 years +	819,000	18.0%	17.2%	4.4%

Labor Force Participation Rate by Race/Ethnicity

When we examine these same data by race/ethnicity, labor market disparities become clear (Table 3.2 below).²⁷ People of color generally participate in the labor force at higher rates than White people than the population as a whole. In addition, people who identify as Black/African American and Native American/Alaska Native face higher levels of unemployment than people who identify as White or than the labor force as a whole. This is not only evident in the current Oregon data shown in Table 3.2 but also over time and nationally. These racial/ethnic disparities indicate the significant barriers for people of color seeking employment.²⁸ In future reports, we will compare the labor force

²⁵ Oregon Office of Economic Analysis (2021).

²⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022).

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau (2020a).

²⁸ Within this general context, we should also note the specific legacy of racism in the state of Oregon. The state sits on expropriated tribal land, and for decades the state had laws prohibiting Blacks/African Americans from moving to the state to live. Further analysis of this history is beyond the scope of this report, but awareness of the impacts of this history should at the very least encourage an equity-focused approach in future public policy.

participation rate to the participation rate by race/ethnicity in Future Ready Oregon programs, with the goal of increasing access to well-paying jobs among people of color.

Table 3. 2: Oregon’s population and labor force data by race/ethnicity, 2021.

Race/Ethnicity	Working-Age Population	Percent Of Total Population	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment To Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate
Total	3,487,919	100%	61.6%	57.6%	6.4%
Asian American/Asian	162,048	4.7%	66.4%	63.2%	4.6%
Black/African American	63,611	1.8%	63.5%	56.8%	10.1%
Latino/a/x/ Hispanic	419,930	12.0%	72.0%	67.1%	6.6%
Multi-racial	353,031	10.1%	66.5%	61.9%	6.7%
Native American/ Alaska Native	44,396	1.3%	68.2%	62.5%	7.4%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Not Available (N/A)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Some other race	170,342	4.9%	72.0%	66.9%	6.8%
White	2,605,372	74.7%	59.4%	55.6%	6.3%

Labor Force Participation by Gender

Examining labor force and population data by gender reveals disparities as well (Table 3.3 below).²⁹ In Oregon, men have labor force participation rates that are almost ten percentage points higher than women’s rates, and men are employed at about a nine percent higher rate. Unemployment rates for men and women appear generally similar.³⁰ If labor force participation were the same for women as it is for men, approximately 156,000 additional workers would be in the labor force by 2031.³¹

Gender gaps in labor force participation are partially attributable to the demands of family and childcare, which have fallen significantly more on women historically and culturally. Prior to the pandemic, the supply of paid childcare was insufficient, and during the pandemic it fell dramatically

²⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022).

³⁰ However, this general similarity hides a within-group disparity that can also be (partially) attributed to social norms around family. While women have a slightly lower unemployment rate on average, the more voluntary (non)participation of married women shrouds the higher unemployment rate experienced by women who maintain families (i.e. single moms). That is, married women with their spouse present potentially have more choice with respect to employment, while women who maintain families as the sole earner have less. The result is that women who maintain families are more likely to participate in the labor force, but must also confront barriers to employment, and as a result they are unemployed at nearly three times the rate of their married counterparts (8.4% & 2.9%, respectively).

³¹ Oregon Office of Economic Analysis (2021).

and has not fully recovered. In addition to broader societal changes that would reduce the burden on women, increasing the affordability and availability of high-quality childcare is likely part of reducing barriers to their employment.^{32,33} In future reports, we will track the measures below and compare them to the participation in Future Ready Oregon programs by gender.

Table 3. 3: Population and labor force data by binary gender, 2021

	Population	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Total	3,450,000	2,146,000	62.2%	59.0%	5.2%
Men	1,687,000	1,131,000	67.1%	63.5%	5.4%
Women	1,763,000	1,015,000	57.5%	54.7%	5.0%

Labor Force Participation by Geography

We also examine labor and population data by county, we see disparities across urban, rural, and frontier communities as well (Table 3.4 below).³⁴ The differences by geography are stark; urban counties have markedly higher participation and employment rates, and noticeably lower unemployment. Less than half of working-age residents of frontier counties are employed, only some of which is attributable to the higher average age in rural areas.³⁵ The sizable gaps between urban and rural areas point to greater potential labor force expansions in rural and frontier communities if barriers in education and training were reduced and jobs were available.³⁶ In future reports, we will compare the labor force participation rate to the participation in Future Ready Oregon programs by geography, with the goal of increasing the labor force among rural and frontier communities.

³² Oregon Office of Economic Analysis (2021).

³³ Nelson, J. (2021).

³⁴ Urban, rural, and frontier county designations are based on a combination of definitions from the federal Office of Management and Budget and the Oregon Office of Rural Health. This combination results in 13 urban counties, 13 rural counties, and 10 frontier counties. Out of the total population of Oregon, the ORH identifies “33% (1,397,718) lives in rural areas, 2% (94,404) in frontier, and 65% (2,789,625) in urban areas.” (Rural Institute (2022) and Oregon Office of Rural Health (2022)).

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau (2020b) & HECC

³⁶ Calculating the size of this potential latent labor force is beyond the scope of this report.

Table 3. 4: Population and labor force data by geography, 2021

	Population	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Urban	2,856,876	64.3%	60.9%	5.4%
Rural	476,854	53.9%	50.2%	7.0%
Frontier	74,692	52.3%	49.1%	6.3%

Future Ready Oregon specifies priority populations beyond age, communities of color, women, and rural/frontier communities. Additional priority populations include low-income communities, veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes, and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. However, labor force participation data is only available by age, race, gender, and geographic areas. In future reports, we will compare the participants in Future Ready Oregon programs with the labor force and population data with the goal that the participation in Future Ready Oregon programs will exceed the labor force participation rates among communities of color, women, and geography.

Employment Projections

While Future Ready Oregon invests in the entire economy, it also supports specifically targeted industry sectors that are important to the overall economy of Oregon, offer jobs that can lead to self-sufficiency, and face recruitment challenges in the current tight labor market. These industry sectors are healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. Technology does not constitute a single industry but rather represents a significant occupational need across all industries, including both health care and manufacturing. In addition, these three key sectors also provide short-term pathways to meaningful employment, higher earning potential, and opportunities for economic mobility. Table 3.5 shows the projected needs for employment in manufacturing and healthcare/social assistance over the next decade.³⁷ These serve as the goals for labor force expansion in these industries, and we will track employment in these industry sectors among Future Ready Oregon participants in the coming years.

Table 3. 5: Projected employment in manufacturing industry and health care and social assistance industry, 2020-2030.

Industry	2020	2030	Change	Percent Change
Manufacturing	184,900	205,900	21,000	11%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	264,500	315,500	51,000	19%

³⁷ Oregon Employment Department (2022, October).

Healthcare is a particular focus of Future Ready Oregon for two reasons. It was already a high-wage, high-demand field that was growing before the pandemic. In addition, the acute crisis of COVID-19 exacerbated this rising need for healthcare workers. A 2021 report by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on healthcare workforce needs showed that most occupations involved in direct patient care were growing considerably faster than the population long before the pandemic. Specifically, “the occupations with the largest increases are nurse practitioners (average annual increase of 5.6%), physician assistants (8.6%), counselors and therapists (10.4%), physical therapists (5.3%), and occupational therapists (4.5%).”³⁸

Healthcare then became the center of the COVID-19 crisis, facing the burden of directly combatting the pandemic. This resulted in widespread burnout among nurses and hospital staff and, as a result, hospitals and nursing facilities have continued to see workers leave the industry since the start of the pandemic.³⁹ While other sectors recovered, healthcare has not. Job vacancies are at historic highs, many of which employers report are hard to fill, and there is a “potential need for significant investments along the talent pipeline.”⁴⁰

The second specific industry of focus, manufacturing, represents a sizeable industry sector in Oregon and also offers jobs that lead to self-sufficiency. The National Association of Manufacturers report that the industry employs ten percent of the workforce and accounts for 13.6% of the total output of the state. People who work in manufacturing have annual earnings average more than \$82,000.⁴¹ According to the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), “the top challenge manufacturers face continues to be attracting and retaining a skilled workforce.”⁴²

The technology workforce has grown by more than half and its share in total employment in the United States in the last 20 years—with much of the increase occurring in the last couple of years.⁴³ The demand for technological skills is easy to understand and experience, as technology touches most aspects of living and working in our society. All industries are increasingly needing employees with technological skills, such as engineers, programmers, and information technology technicians to advance the efficiencies and effectiveness of work.

Moreover, the production of computer and electronic products – technology – represents the largest subsector of manufacturing in Oregon, producing over \$15 billion annually.⁴⁴ Technology manufacturing falls under two of the three specific industry sector priorities of Future Ready Oregon. This sub-sector is facing workforce challenges made more acute by the current tight labor market.

³⁸ Oregon Health Authority (2021).

³⁹ [Oregon Employment Department \(2022\)](#).

⁴⁰ ECONorthwest (2022).

⁴¹ National Association of Manufacturers (2022).

⁴² Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt, P.C., and Aldrich CPAs + Advisors (2022).

⁴³ Barua, A. (2021).

⁴⁴ National Association of Manufacturers (2022).

By investing in workforce development and training, Future Ready can support these industry sectors in their search for workers while opening doors to careers that can be self-sustaining for workers. The targeted investments also move Oregon toward preparing our workforce for the current and future industry needs.

Oregon's Adult Attainment Goal and Future Ready Oregon

Educational attainment is an important aspect of both the greater prosperity and the greater equity to which Future Ready Oregon aims. Tracking progress in educational attainment is the means to track the intended increase in more equitable opportunities for education and training that lead to employment, career advancement, and upward economic mobility. Just as attaining job-related education and training is so closely related to obtaining self-sufficient employment, educational attainment is also the precursor to expanding the labor force. This is evident in Table 3.6, below, which shows how labor force participation increases and unemployment decreases at higher levels of educational attainment.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ U.S. Census Bureau (2020a).

Table 3. 6: Population and labor data by educational attainment, 2021.

Educational Attainment	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment To Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate
Less than High School	63.0%	56.7%	9.8%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	70.6%	65.4%	7.2%
Some College or Associate Degree	76.0%	71.2%	6.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	86.4%	83.4%	3.4%

Oregon has two educational attainment goals. The 40-40-20 goal (ORS 350.014) focuses on young Oregonians, that 40% of the high school graduating class of 2025 will complete a 4-year degree, 40% will complete a 2-year degree or certificate, and 20% will earn a high school diploma or equivalent. Figure 3.2 shows current educational attainment of young adults ages 25-34 compared to this goal. We will track progress toward this goal, particularly toward the middle 40% of new certificate credentials, in comparison with the attainment of Future Ready Oregon participants.

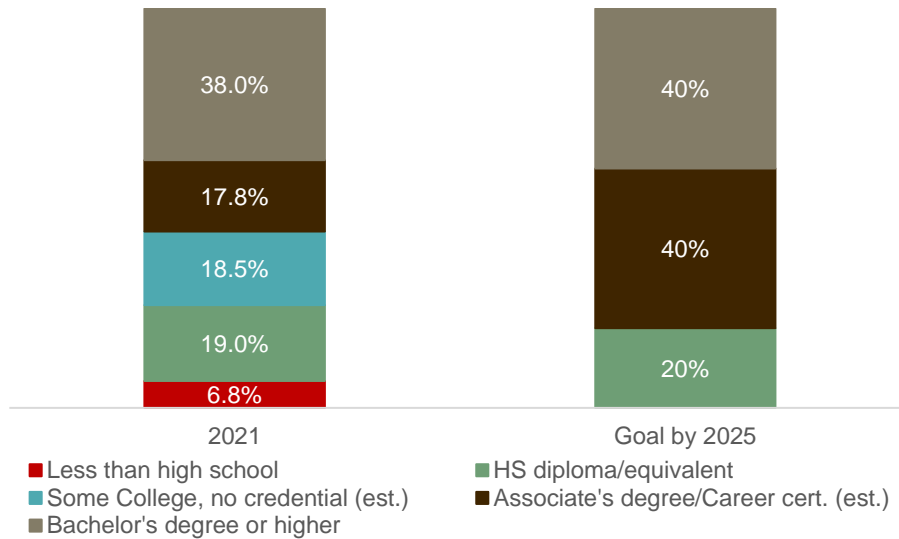


Figure 3. 2: Oregon Educational Attainment among People Ages 25 to 34

Oregon’s second educational attainment goal focuses on older adults, ages 25 through 64. This educational attainment goal calls for 300,000 adults to earn postsecondary certificates or degrees by 2030. Oregon anticipates more than 300,000 jobs that call for postsecondary training or education between 2020 and 2030. To meet this need, 100,000 additional adult Oregonians will need to earn a degree, certificate or other credential valued in the workforce above the roughly 200,000 adult Oregonians who are expected to earn a credential at the current pace over this period. Table 3.7

shows the number of adults earning postsecondary credentials over the last five years. We will continue to track progress toward this goal in comparison with credential attainment among Future Ready Oregon participants.

Table 3. 7: Number of Oregon Adult Learners (ages 25 and older) Who Earned Credential(s), 2016-17 through 2020-21

Year	Earned by Adult Learners Earned Credential(s)
2016-17	19,750
2017-18	20,258
2018-19	19,911
2019-20	20,067
2020-21	20,898

Data Source: HECC analysis of student data.

Educational attainment gaps exist across many priority populations and closing equity gaps in educational attainment is a precursor to closing equity gaps in the labor market. In 2021, 55.5% of all Oregonians ages 25 and older have earned a postsecondary degree or certificate. However, people of color, excluding those identifying as Asian American/Asian, have significantly lower educational attainment rates.

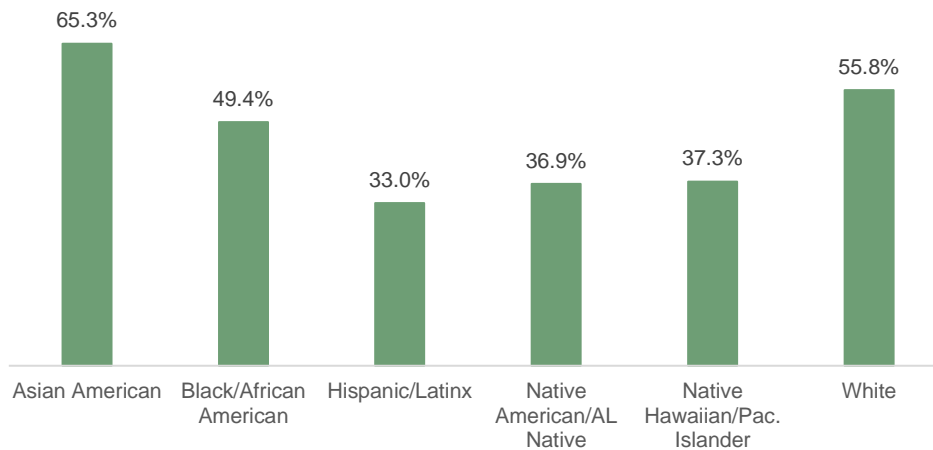


Figure 3. 3: Percent of Oregonians who have earned a postsecondary certificate or degree among people ages 25 and older by race/ethnicity, 2021

Rural Oregonians also have significantly lower educational attainment rates than their urban counterparts.

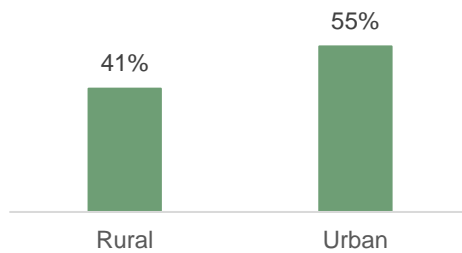


Figure 3. 4: Percent of Oregonians who have earned a postsecondary certificate or degree among people ages 25 and older by county of residence as rural or urban/mixed, 2020

Future Ready Oregon programs will offer more opportunities for Oregonians, especially Oregonians who are underserved, to have access to workforce development opportunities, especially those opportunities for people to earn a credential. In future reports, we will compare the Future Ready Oregon programs credential attainment rates with the percent of Oregonians who have earned credentials by age, race, gender, and geography. If credential attainment among Future Ready Oregon participants exceeds the average credential attainment rates among Oregonians for communities of color, women, and geography, educational attainment gaps can begin to close.

Conclusion

Significant workforce challenges point to the need for new investment in workforce development, even while raising questions about its potential effectiveness. First, low labor force participation rates, even in the age groups most likely to be employed, have combined with an aging workforce leading to a forthcoming stream of retirements⁴⁶ (Oregon Talent Assessment, 2022, pp.6-7). The first trend indicates an imminent need for more people entering the labor force, while the latter indicates this may be difficult to achieve. In addition, inequities in the labor market are longstanding and are further perpetuated by inequities in other social institutions related to the economy (e.g., education systems, health care systems, and criminal justice systems). Even when a group accesses a previously less accessible occupation or industry, their lack of seniority leaves them vulnerable to layoffs during economic downturns. Thus, even where overt oppression is not intended, the weight of history remains.

The baseline data presented here illustrate the need for greater resources for workforce training that are invested both broadly and in particular industries and populations. They also call for investments that both expand existing approaches to workforce training and create new ones. These highlighted issues motivated the policy changes in Future Ready Oregon and will be where we look for Future Ready Oregon to make an impact: a more cohesive system of connected agencies, explicit focus on

⁴⁶ ECONorthwest (2022).

wrap-around services, expanded employment, especially in high-demand sectors, rising economic power for individuals and businesses, and increased equity within each of these to serve disenfranchised communities better.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

In spring 2022, the Oregon Legislature passed Future Ready Oregon, a comprehensive and multifaceted suite of investments in workforce development. The \$200 million package aims to develop a more equitable workforce system by expanding and innovating workforce training, and to raise equitable economic prosperity by connecting individuals to the education and training they need for well-paying jobs and businesses to the skilled labor they need to grow and prosper. This report examines the initial implementation of these investments, covering the first eight months since the law's enactment, and provides baseline data for tracking the legislation's impacts in future reports.

Future Ready Oregon consists of eight component programs, administered by the HECC, BOLI, and ODE—YDD, in coordination with multiple other state agencies, governing boards, and local organizations. All eight programs have begun implementation, with most well underway.

Implementation of Prosperity 10,000. Oregon's nine local workforce boards began implementation of the Prosperity 10,000 Program in a very tight timeline. Each one used a unique approach, but nearly all awarded grants, conducted community engagement, and began serving participants. Contracted providers are offering workforce development program navigation, expanded access to community-based career counseling and wraparound supports and services, and opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and degrees through work-based learning experiences. Many local workforce boards established new partnerships and reported learning new strategies to improve their services after community outreach. The diversity in approaches can serve as a strength in the coming year if boards learn from each other.

Implementation of Career Pathways. HECC designed an efficient application process in a short time for the Postsecondary Career Pathways Program. Community colleges are implementing the Future Ready Oregon investment to expand and build capacity in existing Career Pathways programs, create new programming (e.g., new careers), collaborate with community partners, and expand or create intentional student support services to students. Colleges have also invested funds in programming, services, and infrastructure that support priority populations and have collaborated with community-based organizations and workforce agencies to serve priority populations better. Contract execution took longer than some colleges planned when designing their programs, but implementation is underway. Additionally, HECC was delayed in getting data specifications to the colleges but then provided technical support for colleges to implement the specifications.

Implementation of Registered Apprenticeships. BOLI built a new team and a new grants program at an accelerated speed that implemented the Registered Apprenticeship Program in innovative ways. They developed effective processes to ensure adherence to the requirements and goals of Future Ready Oregon, conducting extensive outreach to encourage wide-ranging applications and providing technical assistance to applicants. Their award decisions accounted for program goals and service to all priority populations and all regions of the state. They launched new and expanded apprenticeships

in the healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and construction (pre-apprenticeship only) sectors with the first two rounds of funding and improved their processes along the way in response to constituent feedback and their own assessment to ensure representation of all regions and priority populations.

Youth Programs. YDD implemented Youth Programs with extensive efforts to be expansive and innovative. They engaged community partners, created a streamlined application, and evaluated applications in alignment with the goals of Future Ready Oregon. They received many more applications than they could fund and awarded grants to organizations that could serve youth from priority populations and that came from across the state. They continue to refine their processes with plans to engage Tribal nations and the eastern Oregon region in the second round.

Credit for Prior Learning. In a short timeframe, HECC administered grants for public institutions to expand student opportunities to earn credit for their previous learning. HECC was efficient in the awarding of funds to enable institutions as much time as possible to build their programs. Perhaps because of the narrow timeline, six of the public colleges and universities did not apply for funds, which raises some concern about whether students will have fewer opportunities at those institutions. HECC plans to share successful tools and strategies developed out of Future Ready Oregon across all institutions, which may help mitigate differences in opportunities.

Workforce Ready Grants. HECC implemented the first round of Workforce Ready Grants in a narrow window of time with substantial engagement of external partners and a high priority on equity and inclusivity. HECC worked to balance the time needed to engage partners, provide technical assistance and supports to grant applicants, and develop community review with the time grantees would need to provide services to participants. The result was the receipt of many more applications than could be funded. The HECC maximized the number of grants awarded by instituting a funding ceiling given the short time frame grantees would have to expend the funds. The HECC also convened advisory committees to inform and employ inclusive, low-barrier strategies for accessing government funding that would bring new organizations to the work. The first round of grants have been awarded, and the HECC is continuing to engage external communities to refine its processes for the second round.

Industry Consortia. The HECC and the WTDB contracted with The Woolsey Group to assess the workforce landscape of each industry (healthcare, manufacturing, and technology) and inform the framework for establishing statewide Industry Consortia. In a short timeframe, they completed extensive consultation with a wide range of business, education, and community leaders to understand workforce training needs and determine how the statewide Industry Consortia could fill those needs. They laid out a framework for the consortia from their findings that creates a clearer and more specific plan than would have occurred without it. The HECC and WTDB, in partnership with The Woolsey Group, have effectively positioned Future Ready Oregon's Industry Consortia to be productive leaders in the coming year. The plan is for the three Industry Consortia to become the credible authority of industry and workforce development information that shapes workforce strategies for retention and career advancement opportunities in these industries.

Workforce Benefits Navigator. Because the Workforce Benefits Navigator program is funded by federal ARPA funds (which have a longer timeline for expenditures), HECC prioritized implementing the other programs funded with the shorter-term general funds. HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff plans to send out the RFA to Oregon's nine local workforce development boards to apply for Workforce Benefits Navigators funding in the second quarter of 2023. Local workforce development boards interested in participating in the program will need to apply and describe how they will deploy Workforce Benefits Navigators at comprehensive one-stop centers and community-based organizations across their region. They will also need to demonstrate how they will intentionally engage with and support priority populations. HECC's Future Ready Oregon program staff reported they will make every effort to ensure Workforce Benefits Navigators are available in all parts of the state.

In general, implementation of Future Ready Oregon programs has been timely and has adhered to the legislation's focus on community engagement, equity, and innovation. The two programs in initial stages of implementation are Industry Consortia and Workforce Benefits Navigators. While the Industry Consortia are not convened yet, implementation is well underway by laying significant groundwork to set the Consortia up for success. The Workforce Benefits Navigator Program relies on ARPA funds with a longer timeframe for expending funds. Six of Future Ready Oregon's program investments have awarded grants, and grantees have begun their work. Though organizations uniformly reported that the tight time frame made the work challenging, they released RFAs, awarded grants, and implemented work nonetheless. This is a testament to the priority that the administering agencies and nearly all related organizations placed on Future Ready Oregon, a priority which we heard repeatedly in their reports to us.

At the same time, organizations had to make tradeoffs as they balanced expediting funds with the legislation's emphasis on innovation and engagement. Organizations balanced these competing goals differently, depending on their other obligations, the availability of other funding, and their previous experience with innovation and engagement. Some participating organizations innovated little if at all or engaged the community little if at all. This was more often the case in the earlier programs. However, most organizations did use Future Ready Oregon as an impetus to be innovative. Agencies developed new processes to bring new partners to the table, to consult with communities, to draw wide and diverse pools of applicants, and to be responsive to potential new partners. Across the board, partners who conducted community engagement and consultation saw increased applications for grants, worked with new partners, and heard feedback that improved their processes.

Serving priority populations was a consistent emphasis in implementation as well. Agencies and almost all partner organizations used it as criterion for grant awarding. Even in the case of capacity-building grants, organizations often planned use of the funds to build capacity for better serving and including priority populations than they had done previously. Partners in different regions and serving different communities understandably focused on priority populations in their area. However, across the programs, we observed that one result of this was that Oregon's federally recognized

Tribal communities appeared less represented in among grant applicants and awardees, though they were identified represented in project proposals as participants to serve.

Multiple partners expressed apprehension about participant-level data submissions, because of the short time window to develop processes, problems with related data collected prior to Future Ready Oregon, concern about asking participants for personal information, and not having all data specifications and processes in place prior to implementation. This stage of implementation and plans for data alignment will unfold further in the coming year.

Baseline data from the broader labor force show the need for more people in the labor force broadly and for more postsecondary credentials to meet the labor requirements of businesses and industries. Statewide labor force and education data also illustrate the equity gaps in both arena that limit economic growth at regional, state, business and industry, and individual levels and contribute to continued inequities. Such data make clear the need for greater investment in and for new approaches to workforce training in order to connect individuals to career building skills development. In the coming years, we will compare these statewide data to the participant-level data collected in Future Ready Oregon programs to understand better whether individuals, especially those from priority populations, are earning new credentials and obtaining new employment opportunities, and experiencing upward economic mobility.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Taken together, Future Ready Oregon is well situated for the coming year after the implementation work conducted this year. Most processes are in place, programs are off the ground, and the investment is positioned to make the impacts organizations hope to make. Looking to 2023, the agencies and partner organizations are now generally in a state of continuous improvement that allows for learning from the first year and sharing best practices.

The first of these is around community engagement. Across these many programs and organizations, the practices employed in this first year make clear that deliberate outreach is necessary to engage communities. This is especially true for communities who have not been engaged with government funding mechanisms and/or with the workforce development system, and it is especially true for underserved communities identified as priority populations. Deliberate engagement can take many forms, including listening sessions, advisory committees, individual outreach, and travel. Engagement yielded consistent benefits to serving communities, bringing in new service providers, and creating the innovation needed to develop the diverse workforce Oregon needs. We strongly recommend that organizations who have not begun this work do so in 2023 in order to serve priority populations effectively. We also recommend that all organizations approach community engagement with a learning lens to continue to develop their processes.

The second lesson that is clear from a wholistic view of the many implementation processes is the need to increase focus on some priority populations. Tribal communities, women, and LGBTQ+ communities were identified less frequently as priority populations served and, for Tribal and

LGBTQ+ communities, less frequently among applicant organizations. This may be related to community engagement, if engagement is uneven. We recommend all organizations increase attention to these populations in outreach, RFAs, awarding criteria, and participants served to ensure they are being served equitably.

The third lesson has to do with serving participants and comes from combining implementation stories with labor force data. Unemployment is low and workers who can already work likely are. This means that workforce training likely needs to address basic infrastructure needs for those who are not currently employed, such as childcare, housing and food insecurity, and language interpretation. To that end, benefits navigators who can connect people with these and other resources are essential. For individuals who are currently employed, workforce training may have more to do with career advancement, e.g., through stacking credentials. We recommend that service providers plan for both levels of workforce development, acknowledging the full career pipeline.

Finally, we observed organizations that expected continuous improvement or practiced “leading with learning” from themselves and their partners were most likely to be innovative and to engage new partners. With long-term labor force participation declines and rising need for economic growth, creating a more economically viable and equitable workforce system depends in part on doing things differently. We therefore recommend all organizations adopt an expectation for continuous improvement and lead with learning.

Oregon is not alone in the workforce challenges that prompted Future Ready Oregon. These are national challenges being faced across the country. However, Oregon is unique in its response to these challenges with the investment of Future Ready Oregon and its goals of greater alignment, innovation, and equity. After eight months of unusually rapid implementation of large-scale programs, Oregon’s workforce training system is already more able to address these challenges than it was a year ago. It is better resourced, expanding and coordinating efforts more cohesively, and engaging with communities and underserved groups in new and innovative ways. We look forward to the coming year of continued work to see how these efforts are supporting Oregonians.

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