

# A-Engrossed House Bill 2961

Ordered by the House April 10  
Including House Amendments dated April 10

Sponsored by Representative RUIZ; Representatives HUDSON, LIVELY, Senators DEMBROW, GORSEK, SOLLMAN (Pre-session filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

**Establishes legislative findings relating to expanding need-based financial aid opportunities, ensuring that historically underrepresented students have increased access to wraparound services and support programs at post-secondary institutions of education and increasing levels of targeted state investment that result in increased student service levels.**

**Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to regularly evaluate administrative rules relating to distribution of grants and financial aid and, to degree permitted by law, amend rules to ensure enrollment needs of adult Oregonians who are currently in professional workforce are met in equitable manner.**

**Requires commission to establish program to enable post-secondary institutions of education to provide current high school students with services and outreach regarding transitioning from high school to post-secondary institutions of education.**

**Requires commission to establish block grant program that allows any public institution of higher education to apply for block grant for any program desired by institution.**

**Requires Department of Early Learning and Care to conduct comprehensive review of Oregon Student Child Care Grant Program and child care centers located at post-secondary institutions of education to determine combination of direct student support and state grants that best meets needs of greatest number of student parents enrolled at post-secondary institutions of education. Requires department to submit report to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to higher education detailing findings of review.**

**Requires each public institution of higher education to internally develop integrated network that includes all student support services and provide each enrolled student with liaison to help student navigate and utilize integrated network.**

**Authorizes commission to award Oregon Opportunity Grant awards in excess of maximum statutory amount to low-income students. Sunsets authority on June 30, 2025.**

**Appropriates moneys to commission.**

*[Appropriates \$5,000,000 to Higher Education Coordinating Commission for allocation to expand scope and community reach of college access and success programs at public universities and community colleges.]*

Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2023.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to funding post-secondary education; and declaring an emergency.

Whereas Oregonians need access to educational opportunities beyond high school and throughout life; and

Whereas the Legislative Assembly has found that Oregonians need to cultivate an advanced literacy essential to leading productive and rewarding lives, including the capacity to think logically and critically; to internalize and exemplify humane values; to write, speak and figure clearly and accurately; to understand, in some depth, a variety of psychological, historical, cultural, aesthetic and scientific concepts and theories; and to master a range of occupational, professional, avocational, social and personal skills; and

Whereas the State of Oregon has adopted ambitious educational goals wherein, by the year 2025,

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 100 percent of Oregon students will graduate from high school, with at least 40 percent earning an  
2 associate's degree or certificate, another 40 percent earning a baccalaureate degree or higher and  
3 another 20 percent entering the workforce; and

4 Whereas performance on key student outcomes and outcomes for historically underserved pop-  
5 ulations must improve rapidly for this state to meet the 40-40-20 goal; and

6 Whereas in 2018 the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly established a Joint Committee on Stu-  
7 dent Success to create a plan to improve educational outcomes for K-12 students throughout Oregon;  
8 and

9 Whereas in 2019 the Eightieth Legislative Assembly passed the Student Success Act to meet  
10 specific K-12 student needs, including physical health and safety, mental or behavioral health, in-  
11 creased instructional time, reduced class sizes or staff case loads, and the need to broaden curric-  
12 ular opportunities; and

13 Whereas in 2019 the Eightieth Legislative Assembly established the Fund for Student Success  
14 to receive net revenues from a corporate activity tax; and

15 Whereas in 2021 the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly established the bicameral, bipartisan Task  
16 Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education to develop student  
17 success policy and funding proposals focused on increasing the likelihood of student success in  
18 higher education for students who have been historically underrepresented; and

19 Whereas the task force found that there is a strong relationship between affordability and  
20 completion, with students more likely to graduate in less time when the cost of attendance is more  
21 affordable; and

22 Whereas the task force found that the high costs of housing, child care, transportation and  
23 Internet access are additional affordability challenges faced by underrepresented students; and

24 Whereas the task force found that combined state and federal grant aid for a student at the  
25 lowest income level is insufficient to meet the full cost of attendance at many public institutions of  
26 higher education in Oregon; now, therefore,

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

28 **SECTION 1. The Legislative Assembly finds that:**

29 **(1) Oregon should expand need-based financial aid opportunities.**

30 **(2) The Legislative Assembly should enact policies and appropriate sufficient moneys to**  
31 **ensure that historically underrepresented students at post-secondary institutions of educa-**  
32 **tion have increased access to wraparound services and support programs that have been**  
33 **demonstrated to promote positive outcomes.**

34 **(3) The state's academic and student support services must receive greater levels of**  
35 **targeted state investment that result in increased student service levels.**

36 **SECTION 2. Section 3 of this 2023 Act is added to and made a part of ORS chapter 348.**

37 **SECTION 3. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall regularly:**

38 **(1) Evaluate rules adopted by the commission that impact how the commission distrib-**  
39 **utes or awards grants or financial aid to students enrolled in post-secondary institutions of**  
40 **education; and**

41 **(2) To the degree permitted by law, amend rules described in subsection (1) of this section**  
42 **in order ensure that the enrollment needs of adult Oregonians who are currently in the**  
43 **professional workforce are being met in an equitable manner.**

44 **SECTION 4. (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall by rule establish a**  
45 **program to enable post-secondary institutions of education to provide current high school**

1 students with services and outreach to:

2 (a) Assist students in transitioning from high school to post-secondary institutions of  
3 education; and

4 (b) Assist students who desire to attend a post-secondary institution of education identify  
5 and utilize available resources, including but not limited to financial resources.

6 (2) The commission shall publicize and make access to the program available to all post-  
7 secondary institutions of education based in this state.

8 **SECTION 5.** (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall by rule establish  
9 and administer a block grant program.

10 (2) The program must:

11 (a) Allow any public institution of higher education to apply for a block grant for any  
12 program desired by the institution, including but not limited to:

13 (A) Programs that assist first-generation or historically underserved students;

14 (B) Programs that provide academic coaching or mentoring;

15 (C) Programs that develop career pathways;

16 (D) Programs that provide Adult Basic Education (ABE);

17 (E) Programs that result in a student earning a General Educational Development (GED)  
18 certificate; or

19 (F) Programs that provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); and

20 (b) Develop metrics for how the commission will evaluate applications for block grants  
21 under paragraph (a) of this subsection.

22 (3) The commission shall adopt any rules necessary for the administration of this section,  
23 including but not limited to any requirements related to:

24 (a) Specifying the form and timelines for submitting an application for a block grant  
25 under this section;

26 (b) Establishing selection criteria that can be used to determine which applicants are  
27 awarded grants; and

28 (c) Prescribing grant calculations programs.

29 (4) As used in this section, “public institution of higher education” has the meaning given  
30 that term in ORS 350.260.

31 **SECTION 6.** (1) The Department of Early Learning and Care shall conduct a compre-  
32 hensive review of both the Oregon Student Child Care Grant Program administered by the  
33 Higher Education Coordinating Commission and child care centers located at post-secondary  
34 institutions of education in this state in order to determine the combination of direct student  
35 support and state grants that would best meet the needs of the greatest number of student  
36 parents enrolled at post-secondary institutions of education in this state.

37 (2) The department shall submit, in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, a report that  
38 describes the review conducted and determinations reached under subsection (1) of this sec-  
39 tion, and may include recommendations for legislation, to the interim committees of the  
40 Legislative Assembly related to higher education no later than September 15, 2024.

41 **SECTION 7.** Section 6 of this 2023 Act is repealed on January 2, 2025.

42 **SECTION 8.** (1) As used in this section:

43 (a) “Public institution of higher education” has the meaning given that term in ORS  
44 350.260.

45 (b) “Student support offices” means, for each public institution of higher education:

- 1 (A) The office responsible for student financial aid;
- 2 (B) The office or offices responsible for undergraduate student advising and counseling;
- 3 (C) The office responsible for course registration;
- 4 (D) The office responsible for student housing; and
- 5 (E) The office responsible for student financial advising.

6 (2) Each public institution of higher education shall:

- 7 (a) Internally develop an integrated network that includes all student support offices; and
- 8 (b) Provide each student enrolled at the institution with a liaison who is responsible for
- 9 helping the student successfully navigate and utilize the integrated network of student sup-
- 10 port offices.

11 **SECTION 9.** (1) Notwithstanding ORS 348.205, 348.250 or 348.260, the Higher Education  
12 Coordinating Commission may provide Oregon Opportunity Grant awards that are in excess  
13 of the maximum Oregon Opportunity Grant amount established under ORS 348.205 to low-  
14 income qualified students who either receive federal Pell grants or federal Supplemental  
15 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

16 (2) As used in this section, “qualified student” has the meaning given that term in ORS  
17 348.180.

18 **SECTION 10.** Section 9 of this 2023 Act is repealed on June 30, 2025.

19 **SECTION 11.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-  
20 priated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July  
21 1, 2023, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$\_\_\_\_, for the purpose of providing enhanced  
22 Oregon Opportunity Grants in the manner described in section 9 of this 2023 Act.

23 **SECTION 12.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-  
24 priated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July  
25 1, 2023, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$\_\_\_\_, for allocation to public post-secondary  
26 institutions of education for the purpose of providing grants to keep students enrolled  
27 through one-time or transitory emergency situations.

28 **SECTION 13.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-  
29 priated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July  
30 1, 2023, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$\_\_\_\_, for allocation to Oregon TRIO Asso-  
31 ciation, the Future Connect scholarship and support program at Portland Community College  
32 and the Educational Opportunities Program at Oregon State University.

33 **SECTION 14.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-  
34 priated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July  
35 1, 2023, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$\_\_\_\_, for the purpose of implementing the  
36 legislative findings described in section 1 of this 2023 Act.

37 **SECTION 15.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appro-  
38 priated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July  
39 1, 2023, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$\_\_\_\_, for the purpose of providing block  
40 grants to public institutions of higher education in the manner described in section 5 of this  
41 2023 Act.

42 **SECTION 16.** This 2023 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public  
43 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2023 Act takes effect  
44 July 1, 2023.