

HB 4162 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Higher Education

Prepared By: Ellen O'Brien, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/8, 2/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure appropriates \$1 million to Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) Program. The measure also appropriates \$5 million to a grant program for basic needs programming at public institutions of higher education. It requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish and administer the grant program. It identifies priorities for granting awards. It requires HECC to submit a report on the impact of the grant program to the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2025. The measure declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Competing costs of tuition, fees, textbooks, housing, food, and childcare
- Recommendations from the Joint Task Force on Underrepresented Students in Higher Education
- Impact of benefit navigators and basic needs programs
- Opportunities to develop and scale programs at individual institutions

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 The amendment replaces the measure. It omits the appropriation to Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) program. It requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to administer a grant program for basic needs programming at public institutions of higher education when sufficient moneys are available. It requires the award amount to be based on the percentage of students at the institution receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG). It requires HECC to submit a report on the impact of the grant program to the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2025. It appropriates \$5 million to fund the grant program. The amendment declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

Open educational resources (OERs) are freely accessible teaching, learning, and research resources such as textbooks, videos, and images, that can be legally adapted and redistributed for students' use at low or no cost. In 2015, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 2871, which provided a \$700,000 appropriation to hire an OER specialist and establish a one-time grant program within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). In 2017, House Bill 2729 established Oregon's Open Educational Resources Program and required HECC to coordinate and report on the effectiveness of the program. [House Bill 3121 \(2023\)](#) would have appropriated \$5.2 million to Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) Program.

Many students at institutions of higher education face challenges in affording basic needs while receiving their education. Students have reported higher than average rates of food insecurity. These students may be eligible for need-based public assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicaid. Additional local programs may offer housing assistance, child care, or financial assistance for textbooks.

[House Bill 2835 \(2021\)](#) required each public institution of higher education in Oregon to employ a benefits navigator to assist students in applying for assistance from benefits programs. The original legislation appropriated \$4,999,150 for community colleges and public universities to hire benefits navigators for the 2021-2023 biennium. [House Bill 2262 \(2023\)](#) would have appropriated funds for institutions to hire benefits navigators in the 2023-2025 biennium.