



# TRU + PSU Investment, Benefits Navigators, and Prison Education Program

Joint Ways and Means Education  
Subcommittee

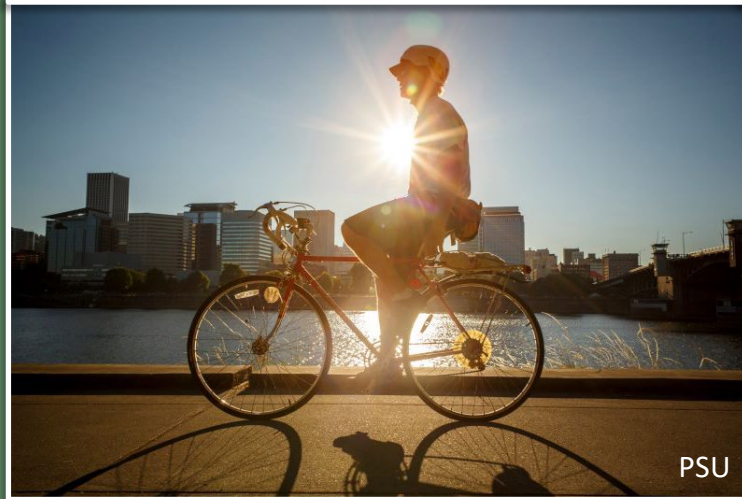
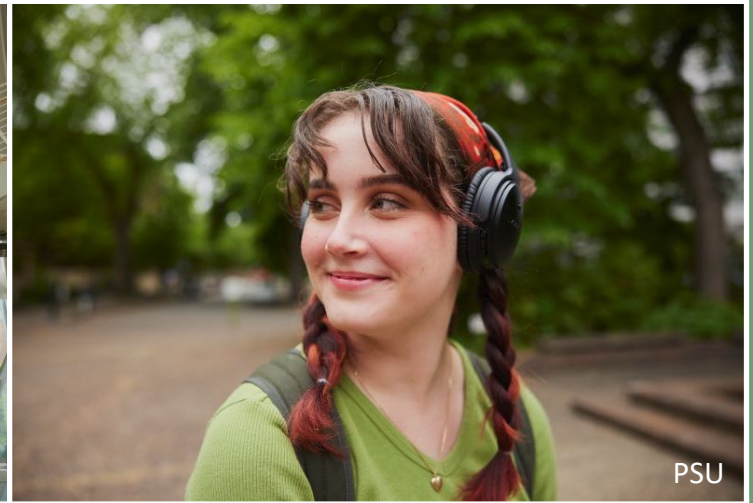
**Ben Cannon**, Executive Director

**Donna Lewelling**, Director, Office of Community  
Colleges and Workforce Development

FEBRUARY 6, 2025

# TRU+ PSU Investment

Ben Cannon, Executive  
Director



# Overview

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Background

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Projects Funded

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Recommendation

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## Objective

*In this section, we provide a status update, discuss the process used to approve projects, and offer a recommendation for 2025-27.*

# Understanding the Problem – Key Takeaways

Changing statewide demographics are shifting the students served.

Enrollment challenges will impact available revenue.

There is room to grow retention rates.

The universities are currently in fragile financial positions.

Each of them have unique paths to financial sustainability that can be strengthened through collaboration.

**Source:** National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), *TRU+ PSU Financial Sustainability Funding: Analysis and Allocation Process*, January 19, 2024.

# Components of Funding

**\$6,164,482**

Funding to the TRUs and PSU distributed based on the 2022-23 PUSF model for innovative proof of concept efforts. Distributed Sept 2023.

**\$100,000**

Funding to hire a consultant to assist with the financial sustainability report. Report from NCHEMS published in January 2024.

**\$18,735,518**

Special purpose appropriation granted to HECC from the emergency board for grants to TRUs and PSU to assist with long-term financial sustainability.

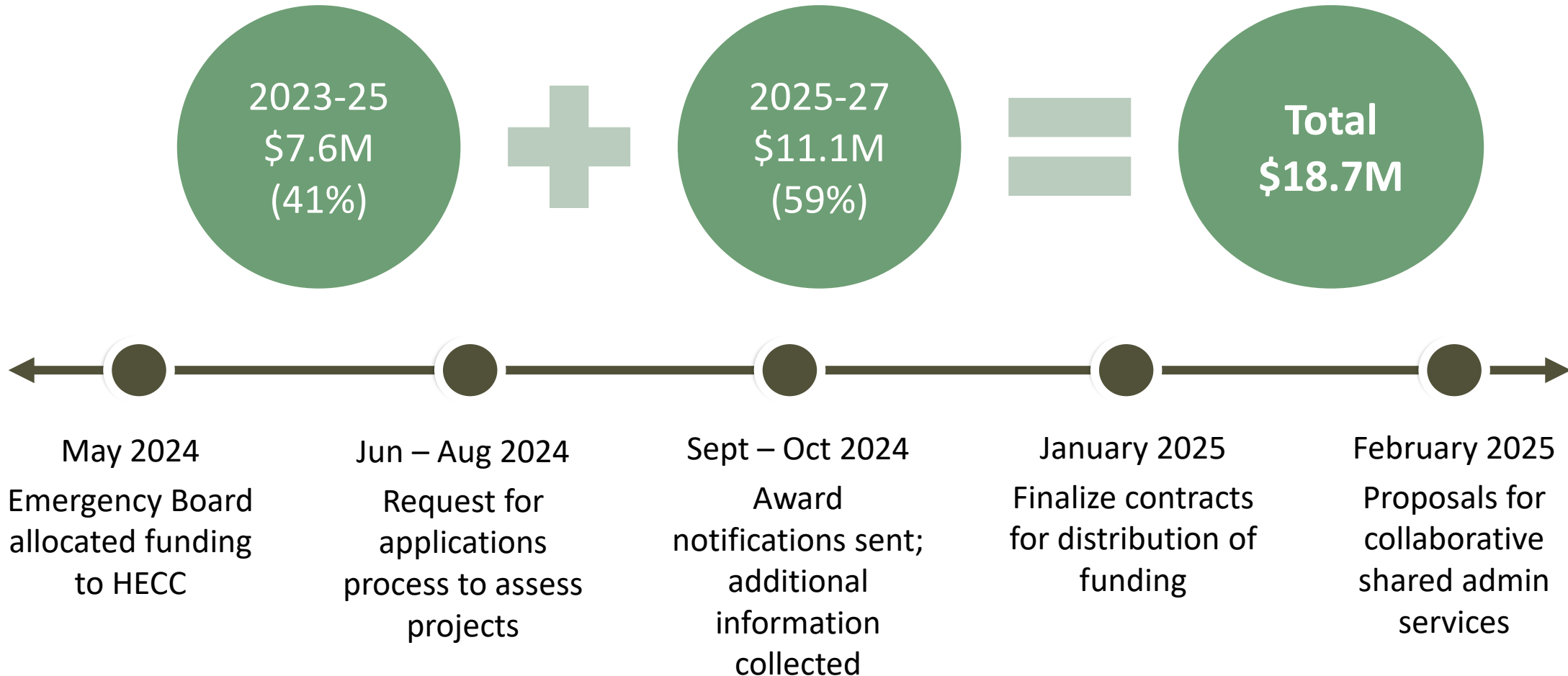
**\$25M Total**

*One-time funding intended to support the universities in realigning services and resources in alignment with emerging enrollment, economic, and workforce realities.*

**Acronyms:** TRU refers to the technical and regional universities (EOU, OIT, SOU, WOU). PUSF is the public university support fund. NCHEMS is the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.



# Components of Funding



# Requests for Applications

HECC accepted proposals in three categories aligned with plans for strategic transformation to support financial sustainability.

Each TRU was eligible for up to \$2.3M, PSU was eligible for up to \$7.0M, and \$2.5M was reserved for collaboration.

## Categories

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**Strategic cost cutting** – retirement incentives, administrative efficiencies, or retiring debt.

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**Growing revenue** – through equipment purchases that allow for the expansion of high-demand programs.

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**Collaborative activities** – up-front costs for the development of shared academic, administrative, or student support services.

# Assessment Process

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HECC staff conducted a rigorous analysis of each project focused on five criteria.

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For approval, a project had to receive at least 15 out of 20 possible points on all five criteria.

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Projects were required to demonstrate a high likelihood of improving the university's financial position.

Alignment with changing realities.

Improved financial sustainability.

Adequate resources not reliant on continued state funding.

Collaboration with campus community.

Aligned with Oregon's higher education goals.



# Projects Funded

19 projects submitted  
15 projects funded  
Totaling \$16.8M

Estimated net return of  
\$88M including  
incremental revenue  
and/or cost savings.

**EOU** will focus on expanding current high-demand, graduate healthcare program array.

**OIT** will focus on digital transformation, student retention/success for online students, and re-entry for students as well as the strategic realignment of financial operations.

**PSU** will focus on academic program revitalization, operational excellence for admin services, and data analytics for improved student success in alignment with the *Bridge to the Future* plan.

**SOU** will focus on their continuing core information system replacement and a student-centered website replacement project in alignment with the *SOU Forward* plan.

**WOU** will focus on a comprehensive upgrade to their financial systems infrastructure.

**Note:** The net return is cumulative, estimated within five years after implementation. Many projects include ongoing cost savings. The net return is the additional value added after accounting for initial project costs.

# Collaborative Activities

## Administrative Services

- A third-party consultant to assist on assessing current opportunities
- The result, actionable plans for implementation, identifying specific steps to achieve cost savings and improved service
- Current need exists in procurement, compliance and risk management, and internal audit

## Student Support

- Work focused on partnerships designed to support the re-entry of stopped out students
- This can help students successfully complete or assist adult learners re-engage with tailored support
- A collaborative workgroup is currently mapping out the details of a specific proposal

# HECC Recommendation

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As included in the GRB, \$11.1M in GF be re-appropriated in 2025-27 for continued pursuit of program objectives.

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The timeline for execution is expected to continue through June 2027 with ongoing outcome assessment.

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Additional collaboration is recommended to understand the potential for improved cost efficiencies.

*“The past is not prologue for the future of regional public higher education. While the fundamental reason for the creation of public institutions remains, the needs they were created to address have changed. The future requires them to consider how they may have to change to adapt.”*

National Association of College and Univ Business Officers (NACUBO) and Baker Tilly, *Path to Sustainability Project, 2023.*

# Higher Education Benefits Navigators

Donna Lewelling, Director,  
Office of Community  
Colleges and Workforce  
Development



# 2023-25 Funding for Benefit Navigators Connected Students with Programs and Services

HECC distributed funds to public higher education institutions, administers the contracts, and supports partners questions and policy development (HB 2835, 2021)

Not included in the GRB for 2025-27, though legislative mandate remains for institutions to provide these services.

## How it Works - HECC

- HECC distributed 2023-25 funding to 17 community colleges, 7 public universities and Portland Community College to support the Community of Practice. The HECC also administers the contracts for these funds, which include the expectation for reporting

## How it Works - Institutions

- Hire benefits navigators who work with students in navigating various program eligibility and application criteria, coordinate and provide culturally specific resources, and coordinate and leverage resources for students. A Community of Practice provides best practice sharing, convening to facilitate professional development, data collection, and reporting

# Benefits Navigators Funding Overview

- Funds distributed to all public universities and community colleges to hire a Benefits Navigator to help students access resources and public benefits while attending college.
- Funds also distributed to Portland Community College to lead and coordinate the consortium.

Benefits Navigator Funding			
2021-23: \$5 million		2023-25: \$5.2 million	
Institutions	Consortium	Institutions	Consortium
\$4,524,150	\$475,000	\$4,714,165	\$494,950



# Basic needs insecurity of Oregon college students

- 47% of students experience food insecurity
- 45% experience housing insecurity
- 16% experience homelessness



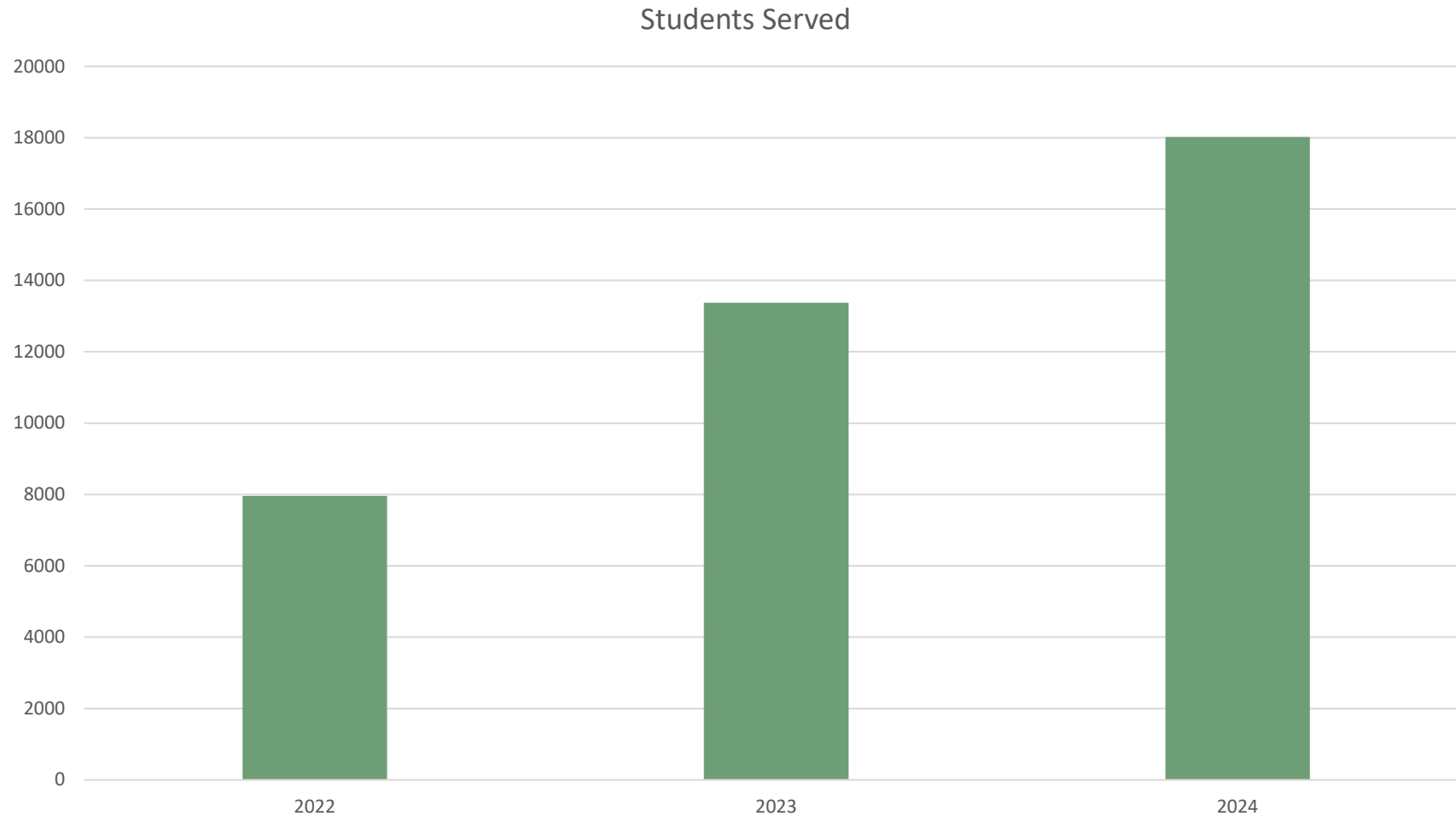


## What do benefits navigators do?

- Meet with students to identify needs, develop individualized plans, and make referrals to services
- Help access and apply for resources
- Provide a warm hand-off to appropriate services
- On-campus food pantries
- Individualized emergency vouchers

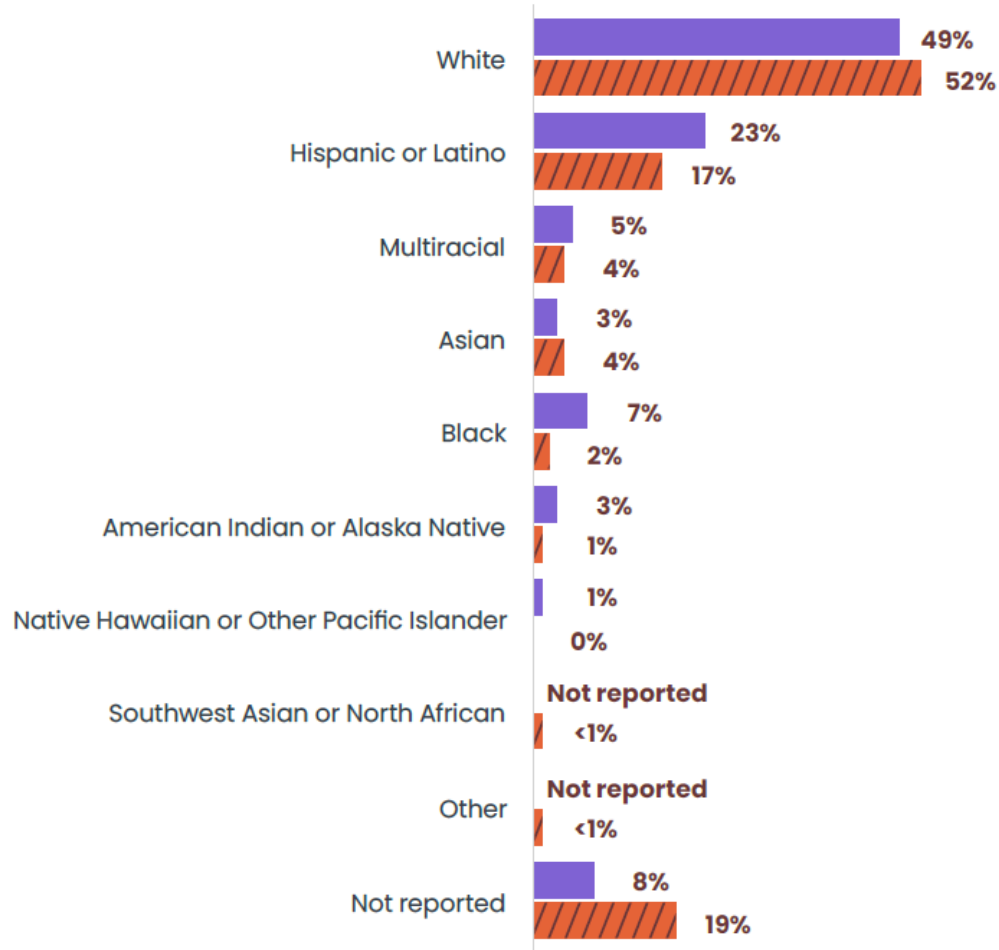
# Increase in Students Served Continues

Served more than 39,000 students in the first three years



# Demographic data

- Basic Needs Oregon community college students served
- Oregon community college population



**57%**

of community college students served by Basic Needs Oregon were women, compared to

**51%**

of Oregon community college students



# Outcomes and Impact

Benefits navigators referred students to resources:



**13,891** referrals to internal college offices or systems



**3,634** referrals to community partners



**2,602** referrals to the Oregon ONE portal

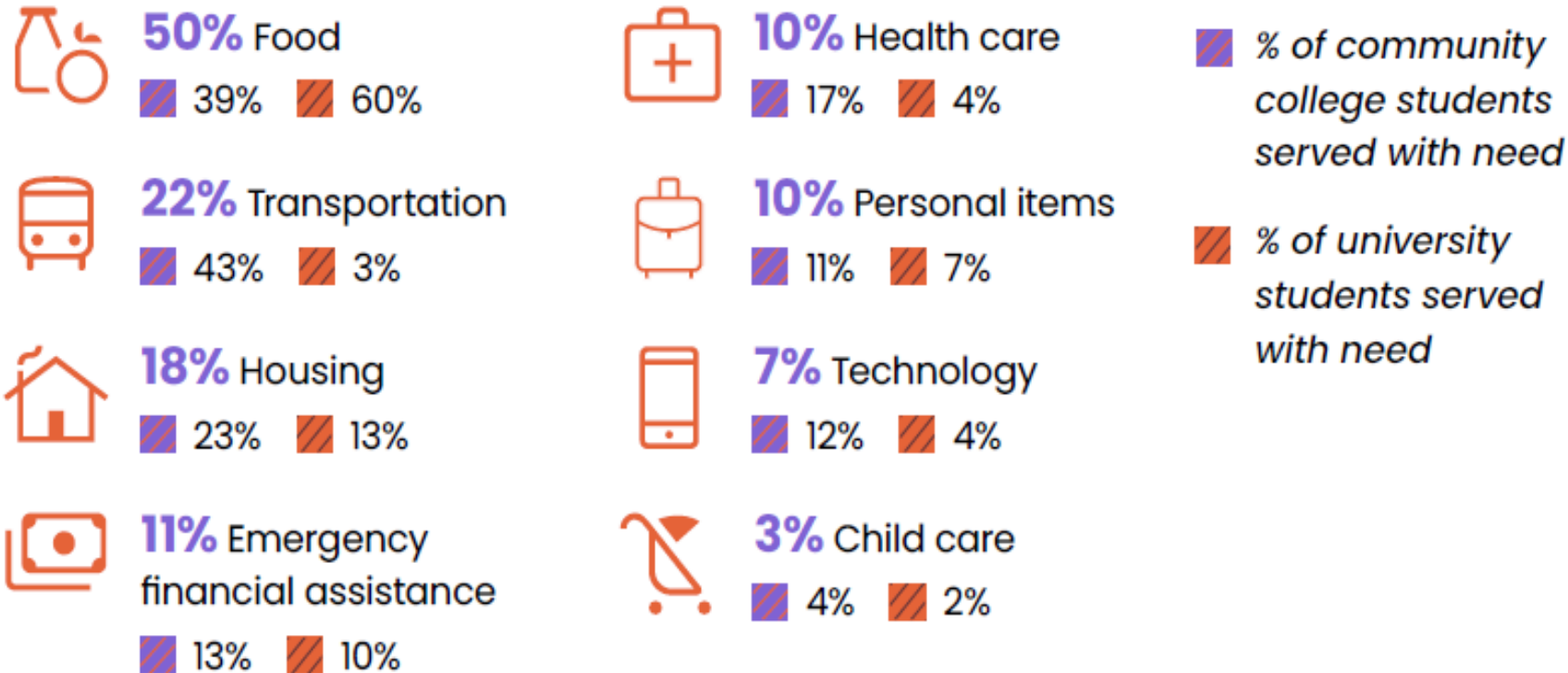


**2,097** referrals to government agencies



# Areas of highest need

Benefits navigators reported addressing a wide range of student needs, often addressing more than one need when meeting with a student:



Source: Basic Needs Oregon Metrics Tracking, July 2023 to August 2024.



# Building Partnerships to improve coordination & access to services

- Campus partnerships
- Program Partnerships
- Statewide consortium partnerships
  - Oregon Food Bank
  - Partners for Hunger-Free Oregon
  - Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)



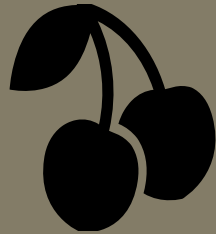
# Postsecondary Benefits Navigator Program Highlights

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## Portland CC

Supports students in identifying housing and assistance programs and supports the student in the application and paperwork processes.



## Eastern Oregon University

*Expended food pantry services with two new locations and worked with local community to secure generous food donations*



## Portland State University

Assisted student who fled an abusive situation to connect with immediate resources for urgent needs. Student is back in class and continuing their education.



## LANE CC

*Developed relationship with an organization that provides low-cost or free laptops to students and another that provides free pairs of glasses to students in need.*

# Prison Education Program

Donna Lewelling, Director,  
Office of Community  
Colleges and Workforce  
Development



# Overview

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Key Legislation



Education for Adults in  
Custody



WorkSource Oregon  
Centers



Ongoing HECC/DOC  
Partnership

# Key Legislation

## SB 234 (2021)

### Recommendations

#### Curriculum and Course Delivery

- Expansion of offerings, partnerships, and alignment

#### Technology

- Increase access and availability

#### Policy

- Increase access through revisions to Statutes and Rules

## SB 269 (2023)

### MOU between Corrections and HECC

#### Advisory Committee

- Data Sharing Between Agencies
- Clarity on Education Programs Offered to Adults in Custody (AICs)
- Develop Distance Learning Policy
- Develop Method for AICs to Apply for Federal Financial Aid

## SB 269 - MOU Work Plan

In addition to the MOU, the SB 269 Advisory Committee identified several priorities for interagency collaboration, expanding upon the work outlined in the MOU. Those priorities have been incorporated into a Work Plan that is attached to the MOU.

- Implementation of the SB 269 MOU
- Data Sharing
- Education and Training Program Transparency and Accountability
- Aligned Agency Budget and Policy Requests
- Distance Learning
- Financial Aid



# Education for Adults in Custody - Adult Basic Skills

## Central Oregon Community College

- Deer Ridge Correctional Institution

## Chemeketa Community College

- Oregon State Correctional Institution
- Oregon State Penitentiary
- Santiam Correctional Institution

## Portland Community College

- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
- Columbia River Correctional Institution
- South Fork Forest Camp

## Treasure Valley Community College

- Snake River Correctional Institution
- Warner Creek Correctional Facility
- Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution
- Powder River Correctional Institution
- Two Rivers Correctional Institution

# Education for Adults in Custody Adult Basic Skills

College	Institution	Approximate number of students served 2023-25
Central Oregon	DRCI	168
Chemeketa	OSCI	270
	OSP	250
	SCI	175
Portland	CCCF	200
	CRCI	120
	SFFC	25
Treasure Valley	SRCI	550
	WCCF	100
	EOCI	190
	PRCF	70
	TRCI	190

# FAFSA Simplification Act (2020)

## Second Chance Pell

- Participating institutions are allowed to enroll students who are incarcerated before they have an approved Prison Education Program (PEP) under certain specific guidelines. The participating schools must reach specific milestones that demonstrate progress toward developing approved PEP(s).

## Chemeketa Community College

- Oregon State Correctional Institution
- Oregon State Penitentiary
- Santiam Correctional Institution

## Treasure Valley Community College

- Snake River Correctional Institution

# FAFSA Simplification Act (2020) continued

## Prison Education Programs (PEP)

### SB 269 Advisory Committee – Additional Charge

- Serves as the Advisory Committee required by the US Department of Education to provide feedback to the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) regarding the approval and operation of Prison Education Programs within the DOC's jurisdiction.
- Institutions approved by USDOE (21 nationwide)
  - Central Oregon Community College – Deer Ridge Correctional Institution
  - Portland State University – Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
- Several other Oregon Public Institutions have applied and are awaiting approval

# Education for Adults in Custody - Apprenticeship Programs

Program	CCCF	CRCI	DRCI	EOCI	OSCI	OSCI Fac	OSP	OSP Laundry	SCI	SRCI	TRCI	WCCF	WCCF Fac
Boiler Operator				2			2						
Cabinet Maker				0	2					4			
HVAC/R Service and Systems Installer Technician				0	0		2			0			
Limited Energy Technician - B	1		0	1		2	1				0		
Limited Maintenance Electrician	2		0	1	0			1	0	6	0		1
Manufacturing Plant Electrician	0	0	2	3	2		4		0	8	5	0	
Painter				1	2		0						
Plumber	1	2		4			2			4	3		

# Education for Adults in Custody – Community Colleges

## Central Oregon Community College

- Deer Ridge Correctional Institution (AAOT 18 students, Welding Certification 10 students)

## Chemeketa Community College

- Oregon State Correctional Institution (AAOT 34 students)
- Oregon State Penitentiary (AAOT 104 students)
- Santiam Correctional Institution (AAOT 50 students)

## Portland Community College

- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (Various courses 119 students)
- Columbia River Correctional Institution (Pre-Trades Construction 33 students)

## Treasure Valley Community College

- Snake River Correctional Institution (AAOT, Building Construction Trades, and Peer Recovery Coach 9 students)
- Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution (Various courses 30 students)
- Powder River Correctional Institution (Peer Recovery Coach 14 students)



# Education for Adults in Custody – Universities & Alliance

## Lewis and Clark

- Columbia River Correctional Institution (*College Inside Out 16 students*)

## Portland State University

- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (*Various courses 146 students*)
- Oregon State Prison (*Various courses 14 students*)

## University of Oregon

- Oregon State Penitentiary (*Various courses 83 students*)
- Oregon State Correctional Institution (*Various courses 69 students*)
- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (*Various courses 78 students*)

## Corban University

- Oregon State Correctional Institution (*Bachelor's degree 77 students*)

# WorkSource Oregon Reentry Program

## Partnerships

- East Cascade Works
- Oregon Department of Corrections
- Oregon Employment Department
- Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

## Facilities and Staffing

- All Correctional Facilities are Implementing or Operational

## Braided Funding

- US Department of Labor Pathways Home 4 Grant
- Future Ready Oregon Workforce Ready Grants

## Proposed Legislation

- HB 2972 proposes \$3 million for staffing in the 2025-27 biennium

# WorkSource Oregon Reentry Program

## July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024, Performance (Deer Ridge and Warner Creek)

Pre-release program participants	332
Number of released participants	277
Active participants post release	138
Total number in employment and training	107

As of January 2025 - 350 adults in custody have been enrolled. Of those enrolled who have exited services, there is only a **1.43% recidivism rate** (convicted of a new crime and measured for 1 year after release from prison). The official recidivism rate for the state of Oregon is 40.5% (convicted of a new crime and measured over a 3-year period).

# Ongoing HECC/DOC Partnership

- Continued Implementation of SB 234 Workgroup Recommendations
- Implement SB 269 MOU and Work Plan – Continuing to expand AIC access to postsecondary education and training
- Support Full Implementation of WorkSource Oregon Reentry Infrastructure and Staffing
- Coordinate Access to WSO Resources for Education and Training Programs
- Support Ongoing Expansion of Staffing and Infrastructure for DOC AIC Education Programs (HB 2747)