

Oregon Promise Frequently Asked Questions

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Legislative Update for Oregon Promise

Oregon Promise Temporary Administrative Rule

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission has established the following Temporary Administrative Rule, which clarifies the process for determining eligibility based on Expected Family Contribution. New additions to the rule are underlined below:

575-039-0080

Prioritization of Grant Recipients

(1) The Commission may prescribe the priority by which grants are awarded, which allows for preference to be given to persons enrolled in school districts or high schools that meet specified criteria as determined by the Commission.

(2) Prior to the start of the fall term of each academic year, the Commission shall determine whether there are sufficient moneys to award a grant to each person who meets the eligibility criteria described in OAR 575-039-0020. On the basis of this determination, the Commission may limit eligibility to receive a grant to a person whose family contribution, is at or below the level the Commission determines is necessary to allow the Commission to operate the Oregon Promise program with available moneys. In setting a limitation on eligibility and setting eligibility limits, the Commission shall consider:

- (a) The amount of funds allocated to the Oregon Promise program for the biennium;
- (b) The estimated costs of awarding eligible students in prior-year cohorts who have not yet exceeded the program's 90-credit limit;
- (c) The estimated costs of awarding new eligible applicants during each academic year, assuming a liability of up to 90 credits, which may extend beyond two years;
- (d) The anticipated tuition changes at the Oregon Community Colleges; and
- (e) The sustainability of the program to accommodate current and future cohorts within the

biennium.

(3) The Commission may reduce or eliminate any limitation on eligibility previously imposed by the Commission under (2) of this subsection.

(4) For purposes of this section, "family contribution" is the same as a student's Expected Family Contribution.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 341

Stats. Implemented: ORS 341

Hist.: OSAC 2-2016, f. & cert. ef. 4-21-16, OSAC 7-2017

How much funding did Oregon Promise receive for 2017-19?

The State has invested a total of \$40 million in the Oregon Promise Grant for 2017-19. The \$40M investment allows Oregon to extend grants for 2016-17 awardees and add grants for eligible new students who will enter community college in the next two years. This will help to cover the cost of providing the grant to eligible Oregon students, but the funding falls approximately \$8 million short of the projected cost to fully fund Oregon Promise in 2017-19.

What changes did the Oregon Legislature make to the Oregon Promise?

The major change is that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) now has the authority to establish certain cost controls for Oregon Promise, when necessary. Due to the limited funding available for 2017-19, the HECC will limit eligibility for the Oregon Promise Grant to new applicants who meet certain income-related criteria. This change will **not** impact continuing students who started in the Oregon Promise program in 2016-17. The HECC has established criteria for this new process in administrative rule.

Another important change is that certain students may be eligible for a waiver of the 6-month enrollment requirement for Oregon Promise, including students who experience significant hardship, students who enter into service with certain career and technical student organizations relating to farming, and certain new Oregon National Guard recruits. The student must have already applied for and been awarded an Oregon Promise Grant by OSAC to be considered for a waiver. Please contact the Financial Aid office or OSAC for more information: (800) 452-8807.

What do the changes mean for: Continuing students who received the Oregon Promise Grant in 2016-17?

If you received the Oregon Promise Grant in 2016-17, then you are **not** subject to income-related criteria for renewal. You must still meet all the requirements for continued eligibility and renewal of the grant each year. OSAC will notify students of award information in August 2017, via email.

What do the changes mean for: Students who have applied to begin Oregon Promise in Fall 2017?

If you have applied to begin Oregon Promise in Fall 2017, then you will be subject to new eligibility criteria, that considers your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Your EFC is based on financial information reported in your 2017-18 FAFSA or ORSAA. The EFC limit for all new 2017-18 applicants is **\$18,000**. Only students who are at or below the EFC limit will be eligible for an award. Award information is currently available to students in the [OSAC Student Portal](#). *This EFC eligibility criteria is subject to change.*

The new EFC limit is higher than the current limit for the Federal Pell Grant and the Oregon Opportunity Grant, allowing many applicants to qualify for an Oregon Promise Grant. OSAC is able to award approximately 4 out of 5 eligible applicants in Fall 2017.

What do the changes mean for: Future applicants?

Each year, the HECC will look at the funds available and determine if and where to establish an eligibility limit for each new group of applicants, based on their Expected Family Contribution. The HECC may decide to adjust or eliminate the EFC limit future years, if sufficient funds are available.

Overview Information

What is Oregon Promise?

Oregon Promise is a state grant that covers most tuition at any Oregon community college for recent high school graduates and GED® recipients. This program was launched by legislation passed in 2015, and grant awards became available for Oregon students to attend college in fall 2016. Oregon Promise does not cover the full cost of college attendance; see award amount details below. Oregon Promise is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Office of Student Access and Completion.

Where can I find more information and program support?

Visit the [main Oregon Promise Page](#) for full program details. For support, contact info@oregonpromise.org or (541) 687-7400.

How do students apply and when?

1. Complete the Oregon Promise application in the [OSAC Student Portal](#). Oregon Promise has rolling deadlines that depend on when the student graduates. The application deadline for students who graduated from high school in spring 2017 and plan to attend community college in fall 2017 was July 3, 2017.
2. File the FAFSA or ORSAA. The deadline for Fall 2017 applicants to file was July 14, 2017.

For students who are graduating after July 1, 2017: Updated program deadlines will be available by September 2017. Check back for more details at that time.

How will applicants be notified if they have been awarded Oregon Promise?

The State of Oregon's Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) will notify students of their award via email, and the information will be available in the student's profile in the [OSAC Student Portal](#). Make sure that your email is updated in the Student Portal, so that you will receive all notifications.

OSAC will also notify community college financial aid offices on a weekly basis. Colleges include this award information in students' financial aid award letters.

Does Oregon Promise pay for summer classes?

No, Oregon Promise funds are not available during summer quarter. The Oregon Promise Grant is available to students during fall, winter, and spring quarters.

Eligibility Details

What are the eligibility requirements for Oregon Promise?

In order to be eligible to participate in Oregon Promise, a student must meet the application requirements, including:

- Complete an Oregon Promise Grant Application by the [appropriate deadline](#).
- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* or Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA) and list at least one Oregon community college.
- Be a recent Oregon high school graduate or GED recipient.
- Have a 2.5 cumulative high school GPA or higher.
- Be an Oregon resident for at least 12 months prior to college attendance.
- Have no more than 90 college credits completed or attempted.
- *Beginning with Fall 2017 applicants, students may be subject to eligibility criteria based on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC).*

** Some students may be selected to verify information on their FAFSA. If a student has been selected for verification and they have questions, they should contact their college's financial aid office. Students must complete verification before they can receive their Oregon Promise award.*

Maintain eligibility by:

- Maintaining at least half-time continuous enrollment (i.e. 6 or more credits) during fall, winter, and spring terms each year. *Oregon Promise does not include summer term and only covers up to 12 credits per term and a maximum of 90 credits attempted.*
- Accepting all state and federal grant aid offered through the community college financial aid office.
- Completing a First-Year Experience as directed by the community college where the student attends. The First-Year Experience will vary depending on the college. If students have questions they should contact their college financial aid office.

Can students participate in Oregon Promise if they have been out of high school longer than six months?

No. Participation in Oregon Promise is limited to students who will begin community college no more than six months after high school completion or GED completion. Students must also meet the appropriate application deadline for Oregon Promise, based on their graduation or GED completion date.

What if a student's high school GPA is below 2.50 at the time of application, but they expect to have a 2.50 GPA by the time they graduate?

Students should submit their Oregon Promise applications and ensure that their high school verifies their GPA by the appropriate deadline. If the GPA does not meet the 2.50 minimum at the time of application, then OSAC will ask the student and/or high school staff to verify the GPA again at a later date once final grades are available.

Does Oregon Promise consider "weighted" GPA?

No. Oregon Promise uses unweighted, cumulative high school GPA to determine qualification for the grant.

Can part-time college students participate in Oregon Promise?

Yes. Students who attend college at least half-time (6 credits or more per term) and meet all other requirements are eligible for the Oregon Promise. See prorated award amount details below.

What does the 90 credit limit include?

Oregon Promise: Explaining the 90 Credit Limit

This is a limit on the *total number of college credits* you have attempted. Once you have attempted a total of 90 college credits, you are no longer eligible for Oregon Promise. All of the following types of credits count toward the 90 credit limit:

- College credits you take while in high school or as part of a high school completion program
- College credits you take during summer term*
- College credits you take at another college or university while dual-enrolled at a community college
- College credits for courses you withdraw from or fail
- Any other college credits you attempt or complete prior to and during your time as an Oregon Promise recipient

*Oregon Promise does not pay for summer courses.

If a student is awarded Oregon Promise but then does not attend community college, can they use the grant later on?

No. When a student applies for Oregon Promise and is awarded the grant, it is for a particular term when they **must** begin attending community college. If the student delays enrollment, attends a 4-year college or other college instead, then they cannot use the grant at a later date.

There may be some exceptions made for students who must delay college enrollment due to significant hardship. With the passage of SB 1032 in 2017, a new waiver process will be established by OSAC. More information will be available soon.

Application Details

How does GPA verification work?

For most students, their seventh-semester grades will be used to demonstrate a GPA of at least 2.50. There are two ways to verify high school GPA: 1) The student can upload their high school transcript in the Oregon Promise application; or 2) High school staff can verify the student's GPA via the OSAC High School Portal. If high school staff need access or additional permissions for the OSAC High School Portal, they should contact OSAC at (541) 687-7400 for assistance.

What if a student does not list an Oregon community college on the FAFSA or ORSAA?

This is a required part of the application process and must be included for consideration for Oregon Promise. OSAC relies on school codes listed on the FAFSA and the ORSAA to identify which students plan to attend community college.

In order to receive an Oregon Promise award, the student must list the community college where they end up attending. This can be updated on the FAFSA or ORSAA.

Award Amount Details

How much Oregon Promise money will I receive?

For full-time students, awards range from \$1,000 to \$3,540 per year (in 2017-18). Your Oregon Promise award amount depends on your remaining financial need after you receive other state and federal grants. A \$50 co-pay is automatically deducted from the award each term.

These factors determine your Oregon Promise award amount:

1. **Federal Pell Grant and Oregon Opportunity Grant Award Amounts** - Oregon Promise covers your remaining tuition amount (up to the average cost of 12 credits per term) after any Federal Pell Grant and Oregon Opportunity Grant funds have been applied.
2. **Number of Credits Taken** - You must enroll in at least 6 credits per term to receive Oregon Promise. Oregon Promise covers up to 12 credits per term. Students are financially responsible for paying for any additional credits above 12. Oregon Promise award amounts are based on standard enrollment ranges.
3. **Tuition at Your Community College** - Oregon Promise will cover up to the average tuition charged by an Oregon community college (\$3,540 in 2017-18). Some community colleges have a higher or lower tuition cost than this average. If the tuition cost is above the average, the student is responsible for the difference. If the tuition cost is below this average, Oregon Promise pays up to that college's actual tuition cost.
4. **\$50 Co-Pay** - A co-pay of \$50 *per term* is automatically deducted from your Oregon Promise award amount.
5. **90 Credit Limit** – Once you have attempted a total of 90 college credits, you are no longer eligible to receive Oregon Promise. If you are close to the 90 credit limit (81 or more total credits), then your

award amount may be reduced during your final term of Oregon Promise eligibility. [Learn more about what the 90 credit limit includes.](#)

Does Oregon Promise cover all community college costs?

No. Oregon Promise helps pay for community college tuition after other state and federal grant aid has been applied. However, there are other college costs of attendance that may not be fully covered by Oregon Promise, such as books, fees, and housing. Additionally, a \$50 co-pay is automatically deducted from the Oregon Promise award each term.

What is the maximum number of credits that Oregon Promise covers?

Oregon Promise covers up to 12 credits per term (fall, winter, spring) for a maximum of 90 credits attempted. Oregon Promise does not pay for summer term, but any credits earned during summer term count toward the total 90 maximum credits attempted.

Credits attempted include those that students take for college credit while in high school, as well as those taken once officially enrolled after high school completion. If a student takes a class but does not pass, the credits are still counted toward the 90-credit limit.

Do award amounts differ according to the number of credits taken?

Yes. You must enroll in at least 6 credits per term to receive Oregon Promise. Oregon Promise covers up to the average cost of 12 credits per term. Students are financially responsible for paying for any additional credits above 12.

Oregon Promise awards are based on standard enrollment ranges:

Credits Attempted Per Term	Enrollment Status	Oregon Promise Award Amount
12 or more credits	Full time	100% of award
9-11 credits	Three quarter time	75% of award
6-8 credits	Half time	50% of award

Students receive the same award amount within a given credit range. For example, a student receives the same award amount whether they take 9 credits or 11 credits.

Information for Current Recipients

For current Oregon Promise recipients, what is the award renewal process?

Current Oregon Promise recipients must file the 2017-2018 FAFSA* or ORSAA by July 14, 2017 and list your Oregon community college. No additional application is required to apply for funding for 2017-18.

* Some students may be selected to verify information on their FAFSA. If a student has been selected for verification and they have questions, they should contact their college's financial aid office. Students must complete verification before they can receive their Oregon Promise award.

How do current recipients remain eligible for Oregon Promise?

- Complete a First-Year Experience as directed by the community college, within your first 3 terms of college. The First-Year Experience varies depending on the college. More information is available at the college financial aid office.
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, as determined by the community college.
- Maintain at least half-time continuous enrollment (i.e. 6 or more credits) during fall, winter, and spring terms each year.
- Accept all state and federal grant aid offered through the community college financial aid office.
- Have attempted or completed no more than 90 credits.

What if I transfer to a different community college?

You can transfer and still use your Oregon Promise award at another community college in Oregon. When you are preparing to transfer, update your current [FAFSA or ORSAA](#) to list the new community college. It is also a good idea to contact your new community college's financial aid office to ensure that they have your Oregon Promise award information.

Information for Specific Applicant Types

Can undocumented and DACA students participate in Oregon Promise?

Yes. To be eligible, individuals must graduate from an Oregon high school (see GED details below), live in Oregon for at least 12 months prior to attendance at a community college, and meet all other program eligibility requirements. Undocumented and DACA students must complete the [Oregon Student Aid Application \(ORSAA\)](#) (instead of the FAFSA) and complete the Oregon Promise application.

Are students who are dual-enrolled in a community college and a four-year university eligible for the Oregon Promise?

Yes. The community college must be listed as the student's home college for financial aid purposes. Oregon Promise will only cover tuition for credits taken at the community college. However, credits completed at both colleges will count toward the 90 credit limit allowed by Oregon Promise.

Can home-school students participate in Oregon Promise?

Yes, provided they meet all of the other eligibility requirements.

Which transcripts should home-school students provide?

Home-school students must provide the following documentation:

- A copy of the *Confirmation of Enrollment letter* (also called "Letter of Intent to Home-School") on file at your local Educational Service District (ESD); (A DMV receipt or record will not suffice.)
- A copy of the results of your *tenth-grade standardized achievement test* is required for all home-school students; and
- A *transcript* from your home-school teacher describing your coursework and letter grades assigned

Does the GED certificate need to be obtained through the state of Oregon?

No. The GED® does not need to be awarded through the State of Oregon; however, the student must have been a resident of Oregon for at least 12 months prior to attending community college.

How do GED test scores translate into a 2.5 cumulative GPA?

A GED® score of 145 is equivalent to a 2.5 cumulative GPA. Students who pass each of the four GED® tests with a score of 145 or better meet the Oregon Promise requirement of a 2.5 cumulative GPA.

If a student graduated from high school years ago, can they earn their GED now and be eligible for Oregon Promise?

No. Graduation or GED completion eligibility dates pertain to a student's first graduation or GED completion.

If a student has taken college classes while in high school, can they be eligible for Oregon Promise?

Students will be eligible for Oregon Promise as long as they have not already earned 90 college credits. College credits earned while a student is still enrolled in high school will be included in the student's cumulative GPA at the community college.

If a student participates in an Expanded Options Program (fifth-year senior program), can they be considered for Oregon Promise?

Yes, provided that: 1) the student has not already earned or attempted 90 college credits; and 2) the student obtains a high school diploma or GED and begins the Oregon Promise program within 6 months of graduation or GED completion. College credits earned while a student is still enrolled in high school are included in the student's cumulative GPA at the community college.

If a student receives a Modified Diploma, can they be eligible for Oregon Promise?

Yes. Students who receive an Oregon Modified Diploma are eligible for the Oregon Promise if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Can Adult High School Completers participate in Oregon Promise?

Yes. Students who receive an Adult High School Diploma are eligible for the Oregon Promise if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Can current and former foster youth participate in Oregon Promise?

Yes. All foster youth who meet the eligibility requirements can participate in the Oregon Promise program.

Can foster youth access Oregon Promise and the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver simultaneously? How does it work?

Yes. If a student is eligible for the Tuition and Fee Waiver, the waiver comes into effect if tuition and fee costs still remain after all grants and scholarships have been applied, including Oregon Promise.

For students whose tuition and fees are fully covered by the Federal Pell Grant and the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the Tuition and Fee Waiver would not apply. They would be eligible to receive \$1,000 under Oregon Promise for other educational expenses (if attending full-time, full year).

For students who do not receive sufficient Federal Pell Grant or Oregon Opportunity Grant funds to cover their tuition, the Oregon Promise grant would cover most or all of their remaining tuition costs. In that case, the Tuition and Fee Waiver could be applied to their student fees or any tuition costs that exceed the amount covered by Oregon Promise.