

Oregon to provide financial aid for Tribal students, who should apply for the Oregon Tribal Student Grant

SALEM, Ore. – The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has announced that the application is now open for the Oregon Tribal Student Grant for 2022-23, a new state financial aid program supported by the Oregon Legislature's 2022 historic investment in equitable college access and success for Tribal students.

The Oregon Tribal Student Grant is expected to pay for most or all public college-related expenses – including tuition, housing, books and other costs not covered by other grants – for eligible students who are enrolled members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. It can be applied toward undergraduate or graduate study at Oregon public colleges and universities as well as eligible private non-profit institutions, where award amounts can go up to the public institution maximum level, in the upcoming 2022-23 school year.

The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) will administer the grant, and encourages Tribal students to apply by the priority application deadline of Aug. 1, 2022. Visit oregonstudentaid.gov/oregon-tribal-student.aspx for details.

Gov. Kate Brown proposed this program in the 2022 legislative session, in consultation with Oregon Tribal government leadership and working closely with HECC, to address longstanding educational equity gaps by removing financial barriers to college for Oregon Tribal students. With the Oregon Legislature's approval of program funding for the 2022-23 academic year, the grant is now available to enrolled members of:

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Coquille Indian Tribe
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- Klamath Tribes

"The launch of the Oregon Tribal Student Grant marks a historic moment for Oregon. For far too long, due to disparities caused by systemic barriers, too few Tribal students have had access to postsecondary education," said Brown. "This grant program is a remarkable step forward that will serve as a model for the rest of the nation, help to right historic wrongs and profoundly impact the future of Oregon's Tribal students and our dynamic Tribal communities."

Tribal partners, schools, universities, communities and families are encouraged to learn more and help share news on the grant with potential applicants. Students must submit the Oregon Tribal Student Grant application and either a 2022-23 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA).

The grant will apply to the estimated average total cost of attendance, which is calculated by each institution, including tuition and fees, living expenses, books, supplies, transportation and miscel-

laneous expenses. Grant amounts vary based on each student's college choice and enrollment level, with private institution awards capped at the average Oregon public university cost of attendance.

The Oregon Tribal Student Grant is currently only funded for the 2022-23 academic school year and renewal of the grant for following years is dependent upon reauthorization and permanent funding that will need to be considered by the Oregon Legislature in 2023. The HECC is currently developing its recommendations for the next budget cycle on sustaining this and other financial aid investments.

At its April 14 public commission meeting, the HECC voted unanimously to approve the initial administrative rules for the program after hearing testimony on the critical need to intentionally dismantle historic systemic barriers to college access and success for Tribal learners.

Among American Indian/Alaska Native undergraduates at Oregon public institutions, 40 percent of those who apply for financial aid cannot afford college costs, even with the support of public grant aid, most institutional aid, expected family contributions and student earnings.

A recent HECC report on education and training after high school for Oregonians who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native illustrates the extensive barriers Tribal students face in the Oregon education system at every level, including affordability challenges. These barriers contribute to a serious equity gap in college-going rates, with 48.5 percent American Indian/Alaska Native high school students going to college compared to 61.8 percent for all high school graduates (HECC Key Performance Metrics #1, #2).

"I am pleased and excited to see the new Tribal Student Grant program come to fruition. It has been the vision of the HECC for some time to support Oregon's Tribal students' college and university education as we actively apply the HECC Equity Lens," said Terry Cross, HECC chair. "Now with the leadership of the governor and the action of the Legislature, the HECC is implementing this exemplary program. We hope all who are eligible will apply!"

Juan Báez-Arévalo, director of the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion, said, "By addressing the cost of attendance in a time of rising college costs, the Oregon Tribal Student Grant removes one of the most serious barriers to college success for a population that has been deeply underserved. We are honored to work in consultation with Oregon Tribes to build equitable college opportunity and support the talents and promising futures of Tribal students, their families and communities."

The State of Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future in which all Oregonians – and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized – benefit from the transformational power of high quality postsecondary education and training. For more information, visit www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd.

Tribal members:

Recently I was in a chat with Tribal members discussing going to descendency for Tribal enrollment. I tried to make a point that enrollment could more than double and would have an impact on Tribal services. What feedback I received showed me that many Tribal members do not understand how the Tribe gets funded, how much it is funded and what limits are on that funding.

A comment was made that if we double our enrolled members, the government would double the funds given out in per capita. Another person said that the money we get for services would be doubled if we increased our membership by double. While it would be nice if that was the way the funding was given out, it is not what really happens.

I have participated in the BIA funding process on the national, regional and Tribal level, but the people I was chatting with do not believe me. So, what I would like the Tribal Council or Tribal administration to do is put a series of articles in the Tribal newspaper outlining how funds are distributed to the Tribe from BIA, Indian Education, Indian Health and the casino net profit fund. They could outline how funds are established and what things can and cannot be provided with those funds. If available, they might also briefly describe the impact of doubling the enrolled membership.

Just to be clear, this is not a statement for or against changing the blood degree. I just want people to understand what the Tribal Council and the administration have to consider when establishing the annual budgets.

Gerald Ben

Oregon Tribal Student Grant

Funding is now available for undergraduate and graduate student college costs for enrolled members of:

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Coquille Indian Tribe
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- Klamath Tribes

Eligibility

The **Oregon Tribal Student Grant** is available to new and existing students. Eligibility requirements are:

- Must be an enrolled member of an Oregon federally recognized Tribe
- Enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an Oregon college or university
- Working toward earning first associate, bachelor's or graduate degree

Awards

The Oregon Tribal Student Grant is expected to pay for most or all public college-related expenses not covered by other grants for students pursuing their first **Associate, Bachelor's or Graduate degree**. Award amounts will vary depending on where the student attends school and the degree pursuing.

Undergraduate Public Colleges or Universities:
Award will be calculated based on the average Cost of Attendance (COA) reduced by the amount of state/federal grants and scholarships

Undergraduate Private Universities:
Award will be calculated based on the average COA at the highest cost public university reduced by the amount of state/federal grants and scholarships

Undergraduate Other Private Institutions:
Award will be calculated based on the average COA at the highest cost public community college reduced by the amount of state/federal grants and scholarships

Graduate Student Awards:
Award will be calculated based on the average undergraduate COA at the highest cost public institution reduced by the amount of state/federal grants and scholarships
Award amounts cannot exceed the student's actual cost of attendance.

Application

- Complete a grant application
- Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA)
- Priority consideration for applications and FAFSA/ORSAA received by Aug. 1 at 5pm
- See website for additional information

Funding is available for the 2022-2023 academic year for undergraduate and graduate students. Grant renewal is dependent on funding being allocated for the 2023-2024 academic year by the Oregon State Legislature.

Additional information can be found on our website:
OregonStudentAid.gov/Oregon-Tribal-Student.aspx

Siletz News Letters Policy

Siletz News, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, is published once a month. Our editorial policy encourages input from readers about stories printed in *Siletz News* and other Tribal issues.

All letters must include the author's signature, address, and phone number in order to be considered for publication. *Siletz News* reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain profane language, libelous statements, personal attacks or unsubstantiated statements.

Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Siletz News*, Tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

Please type or write legibly. Letters longer than 450 words may be edited for length as approved by Tribal Council Resolution #96-142.

Please note: The general manager of the Siletz Tribe is the editor-in-chief of *Siletz News*.

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