

## Employment Opportunities

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A deadline is approaching for local students to apply for free tuition at community colleges as part of the first 'Oregon Promise' grant.

## Free Community College Opens Doors

### Deadline nears for 'Oregon Promise' grants

BY ERIC TEGETHOFF

High school seniors have less than a month to apply for the first "Oregon Promise," a state grant covering tuition for community colleges, trade and technical schools.

Students must have a grade point average of 2.5 or higher or have passed the GED within six months of applying for college, no matter their immigration status.

Jennifer Satalino, director of The College Place Oregon, which provides students applying to college with financial advice, said this is a major door-opener.

"We're kind of hoping this is a 'rising tide floats all boats' situation," she said. "We really want to encourage with this program -- with this Oregon Promise -- that idea that college is there, and there's a way to pay for it."

There is \$10 million set aside for the program. It's estimated that from 4,000 to 6,000 students will receive grant money.

The Oregon Promise has some

caveats. Students also must apply for federal or state aid and accept any funds offered to them. The grant then will cover any leftover costs. Undocumented students who have lived in the state for three years are eligible to apply as well. These students can't apply for federal aid, and Satalino said the Oregon Promise lifts an enormous burden from their shoulders.

"The idea that none of our students have to worry about the first two years of college is absolutely amazing," she said. "It's more than a light at the end of a tunnel."

Oregon is the first state to follow Tennessee, which saw a 10 percent increase in college enrollment last year. Like recipients in Tennessee, Bob Brew, executive director of the Office of Student Access and Completion, said students don't have to use the grant for the traditional community-college route.

"The money can be applied toward the tuition cost of any credit-bearing class or career technical education class," he said.

Students can apply at [oregonpromise.org](http://oregonpromise.org). That website also has a link to federal- and state-aid applications.

--Oregon News Service

## Black History Month Tours

For Black History Month, the "Hidden History of Albina" serves a primer to the controversial debate about whether gentrification and displacement are good or bad for the community.

The tour highlights the vast cultural transformation of the region, beginning at Little Big Burger, and hearing from speakers at the Sons of Haiti Lodge, the North Northeast Business Association, the Urban League of Portland, and the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods.

"As a native black Portlander I

see the issues we face," said Urban League organizer and tour speaker Llondyn Elliot. "These are very different than the struggles of white natives, and drastically different from transplants. I think it's important for both groups to know and understanding what has happened for both awareness and so they are not repeating history again."

Upcoming tour dates are Saturday, Feb. 27 and Friday, March 4. For more information, contact Know Your City executive Cameron Whitten at 503-890-5716.

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