

## Sports Lottery: Opening Doors for Oregonians

### Overview

For nearly 30 years, Oregon has dedicated Sports Lottery funding in recognition that not all Oregonians find their way to higher education through the same route or have the same needs once they arrive on campus. Funding intercollegiate athletics and academic scholarships through the Sports Lottery has a proven positive effect on enrollment, retention, and diversity for about 2,466 students every year at Oregon's public universities. In the 2023-25 biennium, a full 1% of Sports Lottery would be expected to provide \$17.8M to athletics and graduate scholarships across the seven universities.

### Providing Access for All Oregonians

Across Oregon, Sports Lottery funding has enabled students to enroll in a public university when they might otherwise not have had access to college. Investment in student-athletes supports the overall goal of student diversity across categories of gender, geographic origin, ethnicity, and economic conditions. An average of 75% of the Sports Lottery funding dedicated to athletics goes to student-athlete scholarships, providing affordable access and increased degree outcomes. The remaining funds support athletic operations.

Being engaged in intercollegiate athletics while pursuing a degree has a positive effect on student performance. Data show that student-athletes have, on average, better retention rates, GPAs, and graduation rates than the overall student population.

Sports Lottery funding is the primary way that campuses are able to meet Title IX requirements to equitably fund women's athletics programs. Reduced funding of the Sports Lottery would have a quick and direct impact on the funding of women's athletics, student-athlete scholarships, and the overall operation of intercollegiate sports.

In addition to providing increased access to student-athletes, Sports Lottery funding has a significant economic impact on the communities in which the campuses reside. Travel by student-athletes in Oregon and by competing out-of-state teams brings much-needed revenue to cities and towns across the state when teams pay for accommodations, meals, fuel, and other services and supplies used.

### Funding for Athletics and Scholarships

Sports Lottery is divided into funding for intercollegiate athletics (88%) and graduate student academic scholarships (12%). The graduate student scholarship support annually provides about \$500,000 for both merit- and need-based aid, helping almost 200 graduate students a year. These scholarships offer invaluable help to graduate students who are not eligible for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the Pell Grant, or other programs generally reserved for undergraduate students.

**State Funding:** As noted above, the public universities first received 1% of Sports Lottery funding in 2007-09. Full 1% funding was not received again until the 2019 Legislative Session, just the second instance of full funding since the

### History of Sports Lottery Funding

In 1989 the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3262, giving the Oregon Lottery statutory authority to establish a sports betting program. The Sports Action Lottery game was a way to fund intercollegiate athletics at Oregon's seven public institutions. With the passage of HB 3466 in 2005, the Legislature removed the statutory authority for the Lottery to run sports betting games and replaced the revenue to public institutions and dedicated 1% the lottery money to be transferred to the Economic Development Fund.

program's inception. Again, for the 2021-23 biennium, legislators authorized the 1% share of funding for the Sports Lottery, benefiting student-athletes and graduate students across our seven institutions over the last two school years.

## Examples of Campus Impacts

**Eastern Oregon University** Many rural, first-generation, and low-income students could not attend EOU without Sports Lottery scholarships. The program also helps fund assistant coaches through the graduate assistant program, allowing EOU to work closely with rural, place-bound students who are not able to relocate but want to further their education in a graduate program.

**Oregon Tech** Sports Lottery funding has economic impacts in Klamath Falls and across Oregon. The rooms booked and meals eaten during sports travel within Oregon increase business activity and revenues in rural areas and small towns such as Burns and Oakridge. Supporting athletics in rural areas improves student diversity in all regards, including rural, low income, first-generation, and students of color.

**Oregon State University** In combination with other departmental and college-based resources, Sports Lottery funding is an important source of graduate and professional student financial aid, providing access to students of color in advanced degree programs. Half of the funds are awarded on academic merit alone, with the remaining based on financial need and merit.

**Portland State University** PSU utilizes its Sports Lottery funding for student-athlete scholarships through its Division I sports programs and has seen the academic performance rate of these students steadily increase over the past few years. These funds increase opportunities for students who are not financially supported by other means and helps to increase retention and graduation rates of PSU student-athletes, allowing for their growth and success both on and off the field.

**Southern Oregon University** Sports Lottery is a primary funding source for SOU's 19 athletic teams, particularly its 11 women's sports. Maintaining Sports Lottery funding will support student-athlete travel and overall operational services. SOU student-athletes have a graduation and retention rate higher than the student average and make up a significant amount of student credit hours on campus. Student-athletes also increase the university's diversity, benefiting both students whose paths to higher education are tied to sports and those who are enriched by the inclusive campus community.

**University of Oregon** In Fiscal Year 2021-22, 59 Promising Scholars awards were granted across 28 different degree programs. The program has been successful in recruiting talented cohorts of students and growing diversity within UO's graduate programs, increasing access for students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue and obtain an advanced degree. With Sports Lottery support, the Promising Scholars program moves UO forward as an institution in its efforts to educate an exceptional and inclusive community of scholars.

**Western Oregon University** Western Oregon, the only public NCAA Division II-university in the state, utilizes Sports Lottery funding primarily to support student-athlete grants-in-aid. During the 2021-22 year, \$1,121,000 in athletic aid was distributed to 236 student-athletes. WOU student athletes have an academic success rate (ASR) of 80% while competing in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC) and the Lone Star Conference (LSC) for football.

Number of Student-Athletes Benefiting from Sports Lottery 2021-22	
Institution	Student-Athletes
EOU	345
OIT	218
OSU	404
PSU	333
SOU	437
UO	493
WOU	236
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,466</b>

## For More Information

Please contact Dana Richardson, Oregon Council of Presidents, at [richardsond@mail.wou.edu](mailto:richardsond@mail.wou.edu), or the government relations staff member from any of the seven public universities. Thank you for supporting Oregon's students.