

# HB 2550

## Expanding eligibility for the Oregon Promise Grant

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HB 2550 removes the requirement that a student apply for the OPG immediately after high school, and related requirements.

### Background

The Oregon Promise program was created in 2015 and is the state's second-largest state-funded financial aid program. The Oregon Promise Grant (OPG) is available to recent Oregon high school graduates or GED® graduates attending community college who have not completed a degree or 90 hours of attempted credits.

To receive the OPG, students are required to apply for Federal aid. The OPG fills in the remaining need up to the average cost of community college tuition. The OPG is not a means-tested aid program, but when sufficient funds are unavailable, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) can limit the program to new students whose Student Aid Index (SAI) is below a certain threshold.

### Problem

Because of Federal student aid awards, most Oregon Promise Grant funds end up going to students who are above the income threshold for Federal aid—the students who are in the least financial need. According to the HECC, one-third of students receiving grants have family incomes suggested to be \$100k or more, and those students account for 60-65% of program expenses. Furthermore, the OPG doesn't help a segment of the population that we really want to help: those who seek to return to higher education to improve their employment prospects.

### Solution

HB 2550 removes several requirements that impede access to the OPG, including recent graduation and graduation from an Oregon institution. It eliminates requirements around high-school-era GPA so that Oregonians can confidently return to the classroom without being held back by their teenage selves. It also expands OPG eligibility to include participants in community colleges BSN and applied baccalaureate programs. It maintains the Oregon residency requirement, the requirement that a student be working toward a degree or certificate, and is still limited to students who have not yet completed a degree or 90 attempted credit hours.



For more information, please contact Representative Zach Hudson at [rep.zachhudson@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:rep.zachhudson@oregonlegislature.gov).

HB 2550 aligns with the recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (Proposal SA-9: Expanding Eligibility for the Oregon Promise Grant).

## FAQ

**Q: Does the bill appropriate increased funds for the Oregon Promise Grant?**

A: No. This bill doesn't change the appropriation for the OPG, just the eligibility requirements.

**Q: Would expanding the eligibility mean that some students who would previously qualify would now be limited?**

A: No student currently receiving the OPG would have their award reduced, but new higher-income applicants might be less likely to receive a grant. The aim of this bill is to prioritize those most in need, for whom the OPG would make the most measurable difference in their success.

**Q: Does the bill remove grade point average as a criterion for OPG eligibility?**

A: The bill removes high school GPA as a criterion for eligibility, but does not remove the requirement to maintain a certain GPA while in college according to the requirements of the degree program.

**Q: If the OPG is only for students up to 90 attempted credit hours (approximately two years of classes, or an associate's degree), why include the applied baccalaureate and BSN programs?**

A: A student must be enrolled in a particular degree program to be eligible for the OPG, so it is important to include these programs, even though a student would only receive the OPG for the first two years.



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