



Legislative Fiscal Office
 83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly
 2025 Regular Session

Prepared by: Michael Graham
 Reviewed by: John Borden, Kim To, Amanda Beitel
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Bill Title: Relating to the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program; declaring an emergency.

Government Unit(s) Affected: Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Public Defense Commission, Oregon Judicial Department, Counties

Summary of Fiscal Impact

2025-27 Biennium	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	Positions	FTE
Higher Education Coordinating Commission	\$ 3,579,824	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,579,824	-	-
Total Fiscal Impact	\$ 3,579,824	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,579,824	-	-

2027-29 Biennium	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	Positions	FTE
Higher Education Coordinating Commission	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	-
Total Fiscal Impact	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	-

- The fiscal impact does not include duplicative Other Funds expenditure limitation necessary to expend General Fund revenue deposited by the measure into the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program Fund.

Measure Description

The measure establishes the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to provide training and supervision of court-certified law students to undertake misdemeanor cases. The measure also establishes the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program Fund, which is continuously appropriated to HECC for distribution to law schools in Oregon. The revenue source for the new fund is the General Fund. The measure provides a one-time \$3.6 million General Fund appropriation to HECC in the 2025-27 biennium for deposit into the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program Fund to carry out the measure’s provisions.

Fiscal Analysis

The measure establishes a new clinical law program within HECC and provides \$3.6 million General Fund to provide training and supervision to court-certified law students to undertake misdemeanor cases. Assuming HECC is only responsible for distributing funds to the law schools, HECC can absorb the administrative costs of setting up the new fund, including contracting and payments. However, HECC would need increased Other Funds expenditure limitation in the 2025-27 biennium to transfer funds to the law schools out of the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program Fund.

The measure is silent on which law school(s), private and/or public, would receive funding, in what amount(s), and for which justice or circuit courts. The Legislature funded a similar (non-statutory) program in the 2024

session through the passage of HB 5204, which provided \$2.1 million General Fund to the Public Defense Commission for distribution to the three accredited Oregon law schools: University of Oregon (\$951,236), Lewis and Clark University (\$552,600), and Willamette University (\$552,600). Two of the law schools were expected to collaborate with local public defender offices: University of Oregon with Multnomah Defenders, Inc., and Lane County Public Defender Services; and Lewis and Clark University with Metropolitan Public Defenders. That program is expected to train a combined total of 60 law students to provide public defense services for eligible defendants for between 300 to 400 misdemeanor cases at an average cost per defendant of \$5,876. Under HB 5204, each law school was instructed to report annually to the Public Defense Commission on the total number of students trained, clients served, legal issues presented in the cases, and case outcomes.

The measure is not anticipated to have a fiscal impact on the Public Defense Commission, Oregon Judicial Department, and counties.

Relevant Dates

The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on July 1, 2025.