

# Senate Bill 977

Sponsored by COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: Tells the HECC to create a college program for youth with certain disabilities. Sets forth the needs for the program. Gives money to the HECC for the program. Creates a task force to look into possible law changes to improve the experience of students with certain disabilities. Ends the task force on January 2, 2028. Declares an emergency and takes effect on July 1, 2025. (Flesch Readability Score: 60.4).

Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to work with Portland State University and community colleges to establish a post-secondary program for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Specifies the requirements of the program.

Appropriates moneys to the commission for allocation to Portland State University to support the Career and Community Studies program.

Appropriates moneys to the commission for allocation to community colleges that participate in establishing a program for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Establishes the Task Force on Ensuring Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities for the purpose of investigating whether statutory changes would improve the experience and outcomes of students with disabilities.

Sunsets the task force on January 2, 2028.  
Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2025.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities; and declaring an emergency.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1. (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall work with Portland**  
5 **State University and community colleges operated under ORS chapter 341 to establish a**  
6 **program that provides a full post-secondary educational experience for youth with intellec-**  
7 **tual and developmental disabilities.**

8 **(2) The program established under subsection (1) of this section shall:**

9 **(a) Establish and plan for the expansion of an individualized model of support that pro-**  
10 **vides the opportunity to learn and succeed within a community college experience to youth**  
11 **with intellectual and developmental disabilities who enroll in a two-year program at partic-**  
12 **ipating community colleges;**

13 **(b) Ensure that youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities who complete a**  
14 **two-year program at participating community colleges have the option to complete their**  
15 **studies in the nondegree prebaccalaureate Career and Community Studies program at**  
16 **Portland State University;**

17 **(c) Provide individualized support for youth with intellectual and developmental disabili-**  
18 **ties across inclusive academic, employment and social engagement activities at the campus**  
19 **of each participating community college and at Portland State University;**

20 **(d) Include, to the degree possible, partnership with community stakeholders and**  
21 **nonprofit organizations to provide needed employment and community living supports to**  
22 **youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities;**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (e) Prepare youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities for post-graduation  
2 outcomes, including pathways to employment that are aligned with career goals and that  
3 promote independent living and engagement within neighborhoods and communities;

4 (f) Support the commitment of community college and public university faculty to es-  
5 tablish instructional routines that serve a full range of learners through a focused universal  
6 design for learning; and

7 (g) Support equitable access to an inclusive college experience for youth with intellectual  
8 and developmental disabilities by encouraging undergraduate students and graduate students  
9 to serve as academic coaches, peer navigators and career counselors for youth with intel-  
10 lectual and developmental disabilities.

11 (3) As used in this section, “youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities” means  
12 individuals between 16 and 26 years of age with an intellectual or developmental disability  
13 who:

14 (a) Require modifications to the standard academic curriculum in order to successfully  
15 engage in coursework, integrated supported employment and social activities; and

16 (b)(A) Enroll in the nondegree prebaccalaureate Career and Community Studies program  
17 at Portland State University; or

18 (B) Enroll at a community college in a two-year program that is developed under this  
19 section.

20 **SECTION 2.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropri-  
21 ated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July 1,  
22 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$600,000, to be allocated to Portland State  
23 University for the support of the Career and Community Studies program, including the ac-  
24 ademic support, job development and employment services components of the program.

25 **SECTION 3.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropri-  
26 ated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July 1,  
27 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$900,000, to be allocated to community colleges  
28 that participate in establishing the program for youth with intellectual and developmental  
29 disabilities described in section 1 of this 2025 Act.

30 **SECTION 4.** (1) The Task Force on Ensuring Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities  
31 for Individuals with Disabilities is established.

32 (2) The task force consists of 19 members appointed as follows:

33 (a) The President of the Senate shall appoint two members from among members of the  
34 Senate.

35 (b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members from among  
36 members of the House of Representatives.

37 (c) The Governor shall appoint:

38 (A) Five members who are:

39 (i) Current or former students at public universities listed in ORS 352.002 and community  
40 colleges operated under ORS chapter 341; and

41 (ii) Members of a diverse range of disability communities;

42 (B) Five members who are disability community advocates; and

43 (C) Five members who are staff from public universities and community colleges who  
44 have worked with students with disabilities.

45 (3) The task force shall investigate whether statutory changes, institutional policy

1 changes or financial investments would improve the experience and outcomes of students  
 2 with disabilities.

3 (4) A majority of the voting members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the  
 4 transaction of business.

5 (5) Official action by the task force requires the approval of a majority of the voting  
 6 members of the task force.

7 (6) The task force shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson.

8 (7) If there is a vacancy for any cause, the appointing authority shall make an appoint-  
 9 ment to become immediately effective.

10 (8) The task force shall meet at times and places specified by the call of the chairperson  
 11 or of a majority of the voting members of the task force.

12 (9) The task force may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the task force.

13 (10) The task force shall submit a report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, and  
 14 may include recommendations for legislation, to the interim committees of the Legislative  
 15 Assembly related to higher education no later than September 15, 2026.

16 (11) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall provide staff support to the  
 17 task force.

18 (12) Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to the task force are nonvoting  
 19 members of the task force and may act in an advisory capacity only.

20 (13) Members of the task force who are not members of the Legislative Assembly are not  
 21 entitled to compensation or reimbursement for expenses and serve as volunteers on the task  
 22 force.

23 (14) All agencies of state government, as defined in ORS 174.111, are directed to assist  
 24 the task force in the performance of the duties of the task force and, to the extent permitted  
 25 by laws relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and advice the members of the task  
 26 force consider necessary to perform their duties.

27 (15) As used in this section:

28 (a) "Disability communities" includes individuals with intellectual and developmental  
 29 disabilities, individuals with physical disabilities, individuals who utilize mobility aids, indi-  
 30 viduals with mental illness, neurodivergent individuals, individuals with vision impairment,  
 31 individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, individuals with acquired brain injuries and in-  
 32 dividuals with acquired spinal injuries.

33 (b) "Neurodivergent individuals" includes individuals who have autism, attention-  
 34 deficit/hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, dyscalculia or obsessive compulsive disorder.

35 **SECTION 5.** Section 4 of this 2025 Act is repealed on January 2, 2028.

36 **SECTION 6.** This 2025 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public  
 37 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2025 Act takes effect  
 38 on July 1, 2025.