

## Background and Goals

**House Bill 3029 makes key adjustments to workforce statute by building on progress and lessons learned from Future Ready Oregon and the Office of Workforce Investments’ youth-focused programs.**

Oregon continues to face significant workforce shortages in industry sectors that are critical to Oregon’s economy and communities. Additionally, workforce-related priorities, programs, and initiatives across the state are not always well-aligned, and the complex nature of the state’s workforce education and training system makes it difficult for many Oregonians to navigate available programs and services. To address these challenges, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) oversees statewide workforce initiatives, including Future Ready Oregon (SB 1545, 2022) and youth-focused workforce programs. HB 3029 seeks to strengthen Oregon’s workforce education and training system by:

- ✓ Expanding the definition of “**priority populations**” to include Oregon’s immigrant and refugee communities and clarifying how grantees are expected to serve priority populations.
- ✓ Improving alignment between state and local workforce priorities, goals, and activities to more effectively address **critical workforce shortages** and **strategic workforce opportunities**.
- ✓ Strengthening **youth programs** administered by HECC, including by expanding Oregon Youth Corps activities, providing a pathway for funding the Oregon Conservation Corps, clarifying criteria for grantees of youth workforce programs, and including an equity lens.

*HB 3029 does not contain a fiscal note. Additionally, all funding appropriated to Future Ready Oregon in 2022 has been obligated, though programs and services will continue through 2026 and beyond.*

### Changes to Priority Populations

**Immigrants and refugee communities:** Adds immigrant and refugee communities to the list of priority populations, who are the focus of some statewide workforce investments.

**Experience serving priority populations:** Requires local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to administer Prosperity Program grants to organizations that can demonstrate that they have experience effectively serving priority populations.

**Equity in youth programs:** Requires youth conservation workforce programs to award grants using an equity lens to support communities of color, indigenous communities, limited-English-proficiency communities, and low-income communities, among others. Removes deficit-based language in statute.

**Priority populations currently include:** communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated/formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon’s 9 federally recognized tribes, older adults, and individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.

## Critical Workforce Shortages (CWS) and Strategic Workforce Opportunities (SWO)

HB 3029 seeks to clarify the roles of HECC, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), the Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB), and sector-specific Industry Consortia to meet the state’s CWS and SWO.

### State and Local Entities’ Roles:

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)	Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs)	Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) and Industry Consortia
<p><b>Administer grants and convene Industry Consortia</b> in industries experiencing CWS and SWO beyond health, manufacturing, and technology (current).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Can provide grants directly to organizations that can effectively respond to CWS and SWO.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Identify local industries experiencing CWS and SWO</b> using criteria established by the WTDB.</p> <p><b>Identify strategies and outcomes</b> that are responsive to both statewide and local CWS and SWO.</p> <p><b>Administer the Prosperity Program</b> to address state and local CWS and SWO.</p>	<p><b>WTDB identifies industries experiencing CWS and SWO (statewide).</b></p> <p>WTDB and Industry Consortia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Prioritize specific occupations within focus industries.</li> <li>→ Identify education and training barriers to meeting workforce needs (such as enrollment capacity).</li> <li>→ Integrate supply and demand forecasting data to inform the assessment of CWS and SWO.</li> </ul>

*HB 3029 defines CWS and SWO:*

**Critical Workforce Shortage:** Current or projected shortage of workers in an occupation or industry considered critical to the well-being of Oregon’s communities and economy.

**Strategic Workforce Opportunity:** Opportunity to grow, strengthen and diversify workforce participation in an industry; advance Oregonians’ economic mobility and well-being; and respond to a workforce investment undertaken to achieve significant economic and community gains in Oregon.

## Youth and Young Adult Workforce Development in Oregon

**Oregon Youth Corps:** Expands the list of eligible activities to include clean energy/climate change mitigation, childcare services, elderly and disabled care, literacy education programs, recycling and waste reduction programs, and construction and trades projects. Consolidates OYC programming.

**Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC):** Adds a requirement that HECC consult with the State Fire Marshal in administering OCC grants.

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