



IMPLEMENT FUTURE READY OREGON TO ADVANCE A SKILLED, DIVERSE WORKFORCE IN A NEW FRAMEWORK

The Opportunity and Why It's Important

At a time of growing job skill demands, Oregon has both need and opportunity to connect diverse workers to education and training resources leading to well-paying, skilled jobs. That's the purpose of Future Ready Oregon, a \$200 million workforce investment enacted by the 2022 Legislature. With the legislation in hand, Oregon's challenge now is to implement its provisions and realize its benefits for individuals and the economy.

Future Ready Oregon will offer unprecedented education and support services to thousands of adult learners, dislocated workers, disconnected youth, and historically marginalized populations. It will enable them to earn credentials and prepare for jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and other growing sectors. In addition to training opportunities, the investment aims to redesign the workforce education system to focus on the needs of the job seeker, provide wraparound services, engage employers, and provide innovative models of service.

Current Status

Future Ready Oregon resources are being distributed through a combination of formula and competitive grants. The HECC has already distributed one round of "Prosperity 10,000" grants to local workforce boards to expand existing successful programs and it will make a second distribution later in the year. Meanwhile, the agency is developing a series of other funding opportunities, including competitive, "Workforce Ready" grants focused on redesigning and reimagining workforce education that connect people to good jobs. The bill also establishes new consortia in the manufacturing, healthcare, and technology sectors to support employer engagement and collaboration.

Recommendations

- **Maintain the focus on system redesign and draw on national evidence and expertise.** Future Ready's training investments are well-timed and critical, but policymakers cannot lose sight of the act's second aim: redesign. National workforce experts believe the investment puts Oregon in a leadership position if the dollars can advance systemic change. One key: building durable industry consortia that improve timely employer-educator exchanges on occupational skill needs. Well-studied models to explore include San Antonio's Project Quest and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management program.
- **Accelerate work on outcome-based funding for high quality, non-degree credentials.** Oregon has completed initial work to identify short-term credentials that lead to good-paying, in-demand jobs. That work should accelerate under Future Ready Oregon and explore alternative funding models tied to successful placement of trainees in Oregon firms.