Rogue Valley residents can train as occupational therapy assistants

Rogue Community College has expanded its partnership with Linn-Benton Community College to provide training for occupational therapy assistants in Jackson and Josephine counties.

The two-year associate's degree program is designed to prepare students to function as entry-level occupational therapy assistants. Graduates will be eligible and prepared to sit for the national certification examination.

Linn-Benton Community College awards the degree, but RCC offers program prerequisites, general education, and related coursework. The training follows a hybrid-delivery model in which classroom work is delivered online to allow participation by students at remote sites while lab and fieldwork are delivered locally and at partner sites throughout Oregon.

Certified occupational therapy assistants help people who have mental, physical, or developmental disabilities. They work under the supervision of occupational therapists to help patients develop, maintain, and/or regain health and function through the use of purposeful activity. They also address physical, mental, and social components of activity as they work with clients to improve the underlying cause of impairment and/or to adapt activities for client success.

Major employers include hospitals, nursing homes, schools, rehabilitation centers, and occupational therapists’ offices. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of occupational therapy assistants is expected to increase 43 percent from 2010 to 2020. The national annual median wage is $51,010.1 In Oregon the annual average wage for occupational therapy assistants is $55,272 per year.2

The Pathways to Allied Health Professions (PATH) grant from the U. S. Department of Labor provides funding for the partnership.

RCC will begin accepting applications for the Occupational Therapy Assistant program May 13. All applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. June 5. For application information and program prerequisites, call Bruce Scanlon at 541-245-7845 or visit www.roguecc.edu/AlliedHealth/OTA.

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