

July 14, 2015

## Facts About "Free College" and the Oregon Promise

GRANTS PASS, Ore.--There has been great interest in "Free Community College" after the Oregon legislature passed the Oregon Promise bill (Senate Bill 81) on July 3. But what exactly is in this bill and is it really free college?

First, it is not exactly free. Rogue Community College enthusiastically supports any program that will help more people get more access to a college education. This bill is a positive step toward that goal, but the legislature approved only \$10 million for the program, not enough to completely fund every Oregonian for two years of community college. Only some people will qualify to have their educations partially subsidized by the state.

For example, there were 45,000 high school graduates in 2015 and \$10 million divided between them would be \$222 per student. For this reason, there will be specific criteria to determine who qualifies for the Oregon Promise and the amount of each student's award:

- The Oregon Promise provides funding for Oregon residents who have graduated from and Oregon high school or earned a GED to go to community college.
- Students must enroll in a community college within six months of graduation or GED completion.
- They must be enrolled at least half-time (6 credits) in one-year transferable coursework, or an associate degree or CTE program.
- They must have a complete Federal Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) on file.
- Students will have to maintain 2.5 grade point average and show progress toward their academic goal.

- Grants will be provided to students starting in the 2016-2017 academic year.
- The minimum award available to students is expected to be \$1000 and it will be last dollar contributed to the cost of college after other federal and state financial aid is awarded.

It will be challenging to track student progress and administer other parts of the program such as eligibility for students.

This program is a positive step toward inspiring people get an education and therefore a better life. That would be good for everyone. The RCC graduates in 2015 will be entering jobs in the Rogue Valley in health care, manufacturing, electronics, computer science, and other areas. Collectively, they will earn millions of dollars which they will spend locally.

For a complete fact sheet visit [OREGON PROMISE FACTS](#).

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