

Navigating the Landscape of Readiness

**2026 ASPIRE Fall Conference
October 2nd, 2026**

Oregon State University- Cascades Campus

Welcome to the ASPIRE Fall Conference.

Thank you for joining us at this year’s ASPIRE Fall Conference! We’re thrilled to share a great lineup of workshops that dive into the real-world challenges and opportunities in Career and College Readiness (CCR). From supporting students from underserved communities and building strong middle school programs, to navigating financial aid and expanding pathways into trades and apprenticeships — there’s something here for everyone.

Whether you’re here to strengthen your current CCR efforts or discover new ways to connect with middle and high school students, we hope you leave with fresh ideas, practical tools, and plenty of inspiration. We truly appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to be here. We’re excited to learn, share, and grow together as we help students shape their futures.

— The ASPIRE Team

8:00-9:30	Registration and Breakfast <i>Ray Hall</i>
9:30-10:00	Welcome and Introduction <i>Ray Hall</i>
10:00-10:50	Session 1
11:00-11:50	Session 2
11:50-1:00	Lunch <i>Ray Hall</i>
1:00-1:50	Session 3
2:00-2:50	Session 4
2:50-3:10	Break with Snack <i>Ray Hall</i>
3:10-4:00	Session 5
4:00	Adjourn

Workshop Schedule

Session 1: 10:00-10:50

OBSN 205 From Potential to Possibility: The Ford Family Scholarships - Ford Family Foundation	OBSN 207 Paying for College - ECMC - OSAC	SSC Boardroom Building Career and College Development at the Middle School -Dunniway Middle School
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Session 2: 11:00-11:50

OBSN 205 From Potential to Possibility: The Ford Family Scholarships - Ford Family Foundation	OBSN 207 Q and A Session: Financial Aid - ECMC - OSAC	SSC Boardroom Igniting ASPIRE: Kickoff for a Year Long Middle School Professional Learning Community (PLC) -OSAC
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Session 3: 1:00-1:50

OBSN 205 OSAC Scholarship Application Useful Insights - OSAC	OBSN 207 Paying for College - ECMC - OSAC	SSC Boardroom New ASPIRE Coordinator Training -OSAC
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Session 4: 2:00-2:50

OBSN 205 Good Moon Rising: Reimagining Career & College Readiness for Neurodivergent Learners - Good Moon Rising - Network Charter	OBSN 207 Making Sense of Financial Aid Offers: A Guide for Families and Students - Portland State University	SSC Boardroom Q and A Session: ASPIRE -OSAC
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Session 5: 3:10-4:00

OBSN 205 Youth Workforce and Service Options Available to People 13-26+ - HECC	OBSN 207 OSAC Scholarship Application Useful Insights - OSAC	SSC Boardroom Rethinking Mentorship: Unique Mentor Program Designs That Expand Reach and Student Impact -OSAC
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Workshop Schedule

Session 1: 10:00-10:50

RAYH 011 Good Moon Rising: Reimagining Career & College Readiness for Neurodivergent Learners - Good Moon Rising - Network Charter	RAYH 013 Behavioral Health Pre-Apprenticeship Opportunity -United We Heal	RAYH 203 Oregon by the numbers - A look at Oregon jobs and where they are heading -Oregon Employment Department
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Session 2: 11:00-11:50

RAYH 011 ILP Student Support Panel -Oregon Department of Human Services	RAYH 013 Rethinking Mentorship: Unique Mentor Program Designs That Expand Reach and Student Impact -OSAC	RAYH 203 Bridging Classroom to Career: Leveraging Oregon Employability Skills for Senate Bill 3 Success -Oregon Department of Ed.
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Session 3: 1:00-1:50

RAYH 011 ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care Experience -Oregon Department of Human Services	RAYH 013 Helping Neurodiverse Students Take Confident Next Steps In Their Choice-Filled Future -The International Dyslexia Association	RAYH 203 Overview of Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships -BOLI -OSAC
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Session 4: 2:00-2:50

RAYH 011 Beyond the Brochure: College Prep Through Interactive Games - ECMC	RAYH 013 Leading Students Entering the Workforce Toward Fulfilling Careers in Long-Term Care -Oregon Care Careers	RAYH 203 Beyond the Backpack— Improving Outcomes for Students Experiencing Homelessness -A Family for Every Child
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Session 5: 3:10-4:00

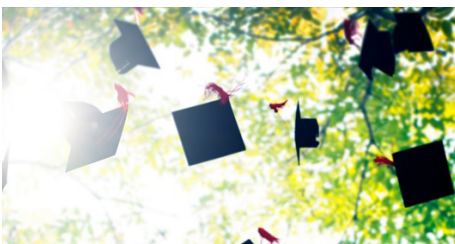
RAYH 011 Bringing Upward Bound to Your Community: Federal Resources for College & Career Readiness - Oregon TRIO	RAYH 013 Overview of Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships -BOLI -OSAC	RAYH 203 From Prompts to Possibilities: Strategies for Using AI in Career and College Readiness -OSAC
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Campus Tour- 3:10-4:00 meet at Ray Hall

Tracks

Navigating The Perfect Conference

Not sure which sessions to choose? We've crafted six dynamic conference tracks to help you discover the sessions that match your goals, spark your curiosity, and elevate your experience. Dive in and find your perfect fit!



Financial Aid

- Session 1:** Paying for College
- Session 2:** From Potential to Possibility: The Ford Family Scholarships
- Session 3:** OSAC Scholarship Application Useful Insights
- Session 4:** Making Sense of Financial Aid Offers
- Session 5:** From Prompts to Possibilities

Trades and Workforce Development

- Session 1:** Oregon by the numbers - A look at Oregon jobs
- Session 2:** Bridging Classroom to Career:
- Session 3:** Overview of Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships
- Session 4:** Leading Students Entering...Careers in Long-Term Care
- Session 5:** Youth Workforce and Service Options Available

Supporting All Students

- Session 1:** Good Moon Rising: Reimagining Career & College...
- Session 2:** Overview of Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships
- Session 3:** ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care...
- Session 4:** Beyond the Backpack- Improving Outcomes...
- Session 5:** Youth Workforce and Service Options Available

Middle School

- Session 1:** Building Career and College Development at the MS
- Session 2:** Igniting ASPIRE: Kickoff for a Year Long Middle School PLC
- Session 3:** Helping Neurodiverse Students Take Confident Next Steps
- Session 4:** Beyond the Brochure: College Prep Through...Games
- Session 5:** Rethinking Mentorship: Unique Mentor Program Designs...

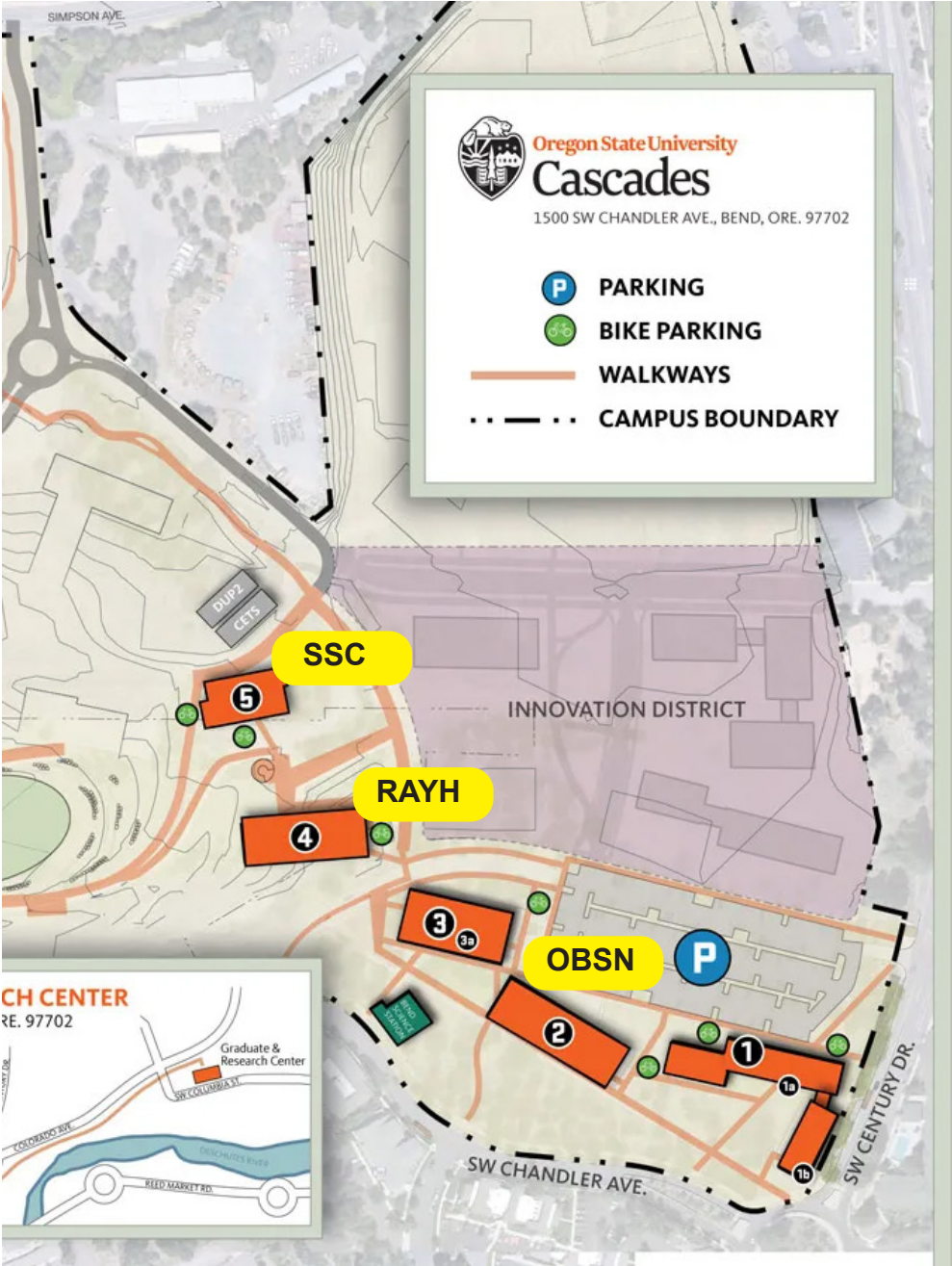
College Access and Support

- Session 1:** From Potential to Possibility: The Ford Family Scholarships
- Session 2:** Bridging Classroom to Career ...
- Session 3:** ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care...
- Session 4:** Beyond the Brochure:College Prep Through...Games
- Session 5:** From Prompts to Possibilities: Strategies for Using AI...

New to ASPIRE

- Session 1:** Paying for College
- Session 2:** Rethinking Mentorship: Unique Mentor Program Designs...
- Session 3:** New ASPIRE Coordinator Training
- Session 4:** Q and A Drop-In ASPIRE
- Session 5:** OSAC Scholarship Application Useful Insights

Map



- 1 RESIDENCE HALL**
 - 1a MAIL ROOM & I.D. CARDS
 - 1b FITNESS CENTER
 - CASCADES ADVENTURES
 - HOUSING OFFICE
 - STUDENT RESIDENCE
- 2 OBSIDIAN HALL**
 - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
 - BEND BEAVS GEAR
 - BUSINESS OFFICE
 - CAMPUS SAFETY
 - CASHIER
 - CLASSROOMS
 - DINING HALL
 - PARKING & TRANSPORTATION
- 3 TYKESON HALL**
 - 3a WELCOME CENTER
 - CLASSROOMS
 - COMPUTER LAB
 - ENROLLMENT SERVICES
 - FACULTY OFFICES
 - LABS
 - LIBRARY
- 4 EDWARD J. RAY HALL**
 - CLASSROOMS
 - EXECUTIVE OFFICES
 - FACULTY OFFICES
 - FORCE LAB
 - LABS
 - MAKERSPACE
 - PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC
- 5 STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER**
 - ACADEMIC ADVISING & TRIO
 - CAREER DEVELOPMENT
 - HEALTH & WELLNESS
 - STUDENT GOVERNMENT
 - STUDENT LIFE & CLUBS
 - STUDY GROUNDS CAFÉ
 - THE BRIDGE

Workshop Locations

Workshops will be held in Edward J. Ray Hall (RAYH), Obsidian Hall (OBSN), and the Student Success Center (SSN).

- From Obsidian Hall to Student Success Center: approximately 5 minutes walk
- From Obsidian Hall to Ray Hall: approximately 2 minutes walk
- From Ray Hall to Student Success Center: approximately 2 minutes walk

Workshop Descriptions

Session 1: 10:00-10:50

OBSN 205 From Potential to Possibility: The Ford Family Scholarships

Explore how the Ford Family Scholarships create meaningful opportunities for students with high financial need who aspire to attend college. Learn key details about eligibility, the application process, and what makes a strong candidate.

Gain helpful tips to support your students and discover how you can guide them at every step. We'll also highlight how our scholarships extend beyond funding to foster scholars' growth and success throughout their postsecondary journey.

- Carolyn Dennis, The Ford Family Foundation - Postsecondary Success
- Madeleine Cole, The Ford Family Foundation - Postsecondary Success

OBSN 207 Paying for College

This workshop provides an overview of how families pay for college, including college costs, financial aid applications, types of financial aid, and alternative ways to pay for college. Presented from an Oregon point of view.

- Jenn Satalino, ECMC The College Place Oregon
- Anel Venegas-Trujillo, HECC- OSAC

SSC Boardroom Building Career and College Development at the Middle School

Various career and college activities will be shared to help strengthen this area of growth in the middle school years, grades 6-8. Activities will be for Classroom/Advisory, PE, and school wide events.

- Kelly McIntyre, Duniway Middle School, McMinnville School District

RAYH 011 Good Moon Rising: Reimagining Career & College Readiness for Neurodivergent Learners

Struggling to engage neurodivergent and multicultural learners in traditional Career & College Readiness (CCR) instruction? Join Denise Velasco and Heather Hickcox (Good Moon Rising and Network Charter School) for an immersive, "learning by doing" workshop that bridges the gap between theory and daily classroom practice.

Anchored in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and robust SPED supports, this session delivers high-impact scaffolding techniques that blend cultural competence with strategies to strip away barriers and ignite student engagement. Educators and counselors will experience hands-on modeling of inclusive activities that can be immediately integrated into any CTE or CCR curriculum.

- Heather Hickcox, Network Charter School / Good Moon Rising
- Denise Velasco, Network Charter School / Good Moon Rising

RAYH 013 Behavioral Health Pre-Apprenticeship Opportunity

This workshop introduces the Behavioral Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which allows high school students to earn up to 9 free college credits in behavioral health while completing three courses through their high school or dual enrollment, followed by 36 weeks of online career training in their senior year. The program prepares students for college, entry-level behavioral health roles and provides a direct pathway into apprenticeship opportunities through United We Heal, advancing toward QMHA-R or CADC certification within a year of graduation. The session also highlights long-term educational pathways from CADC to CADC II, bachelor's degrees, and master's-level training to earn their QMHP.

- Sarah Rambeck, United We Heal
- Sarah Drake United We Heal

Session 1 Workshop Descriptions Continue

RAYH 203 Oregon by the numbers - A look at Oregon jobs and where they are heading

It's good to know what the job situation is when working with students exploring their future. This session will show the numbers behind the current economic situation in Oregon, and where we forecast employer's needs will be over the coming decade. The session will include free resources attendees can leverage like QualityInfo.org to get a sense of what is going on in Oregon's economy and how it compares nationally.

- Jason Payton, Oregon Employment Department

Session 2: 11:00-11:50

OBSN 205 From Potential to Possibility: The Ford Family Scholarships

Explore how the Ford Family Scholarships create meaningful opportunities for students with high financial need who aspire to attend college. Learn key details about eligibility, the application process, and what makes a strong candidate.

Gain helpful tips to support your students and discover how you can guide them at every step. We'll also highlight how our scholarships extend beyond funding to foster scholars' growth and success throughout their postsecondary journey.

- Carolyn Dennis, The Ford Family Foundation - Postsecondary Success
- Madeleine Cole, The Ford Family Foundation - Postsecondary Success

OBSN 207 Q and A Session: Financial Aid

This session is your chance to ask our experts all your financial aid questions.

- Jenn Satalino, ECMC The College Place Oregon
- Anel Venegas-Trujillo, HECC- OSAC

SSC Boardroom Igniting ASPIRE: Kickoff for a Year Long Middle School PLC

Join us as we launch an exciting ASPIRE PLC focused on boosting career and college readiness in middle school! This kickoff session will introduce the goals, tools, and monthly structure of the PLC, giving middle school ASPIRE coordinators a supportive space to collaborate, share ideas, and strengthen their ASPIRE programs.

- Dr. Lori Ellis, HECC-OSAC

RAYH 011 ILP Student Support Panel

The Student Support Panel is an opportunity for students to share their experiences in high school and how those experiences influenced their plans for after high school including going to college, starting a career in the trades, joining the military, or entering the workforce. This is also an opportunity to help shape how schools offer support to current high school students.

- Hayley Smith, ODHS Child Welfare Youth Transitions

RAYH 013 Rethinking Mentorship: Unique Mentor Program Designs That Expand Reach and Student Impact

Similar to last year's From Startup to Standout: Growing a Thriving ASPIRE Mentor Program, this session explores innovative, high impact mentorship strategies that help ASPIRE Coordinators expand their reach, elevate student impact, and rethink traditional mentoring models. From engaging teachers and counselors, to building student led systems, to forming community partnerships and mentor networks, each section offers actionable steps that increase visibility, deepen collaboration, and multiply your impact. Whether you're launching a new program or expanding an existing one, you'll leave with clear, adaptable approaches for creating a vibrant, student centered environment where postsecondary planning is accessible, supported, and celebrated across your school community.

- Rochelle Farris, HECC- OSAC

Session 2 Workshop Descriptions Continue

RAYH 203
Bridging Classroom to Career: Leveraging Oregon Employability Skills for Senate Bill 3 Success

As Oregon districts prepare to meet Senate Bill 3 graduation requirements—specifically the 0.5 credit in Higher Education and Career Path Skills (HECPS)—educators and mentors need practical, actionable strategies to prepare students for what comes next. This session explores how the Oregon Employability Skills (OES) framework serves as a turn-key foundation for Career Connected Learning (CCL) and SB 3 compliance. Participants will learn how mentors and educators can actively support students in developing real-world competencies, navigate standards alignment, and access plug-and-play classroom resources. Additionally, the presentation will showcase family and caregiver engagement materials designed to extend career-readiness conversations into the home, ensuring every student has a wrap-around network support system.

- Cherie Clark, Oregon Employability Skills
- Dr. Beth Wigham, Oregon Dept of Education

Session 3: 1:00-1:50

OBSN 205
OSAC Scholarship Application Useful Insights

Learn practical tips and helpful insights to better support students completing the OSAC Scholarship Application. This session highlights common challenges and smart strategies that help high school counselors and staff guide students with confidence.

- Jennifer Bruce, HECC- OSAC

OBSN 207
Paying for College

This workshop provides an overview of how families pay for college, including college costs, financial aid applications, types of financial aid, and alternative ways to pay for college. Presented from an Oregon point of view.

- Jenn Satalino, ECMC The College Place Oregon
- Anel Venegas-Trujillo, HECC- OSAC

SSC Boardroom
New ASPIRE Coordinator Training

The ASPIRE New Coordinator Training is your chance to learn the basics of running an ASPIRE Pro-gram. This workshop equips new Coordinators with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to successfully run and support their local ASPIRE efforts.

- ASPIRE Staff

RAYH 011
ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care Experience

Learn about the barriers foster youth and other young adults face as they moved through high school, plan for and eventually attend college. Presenters will share students’ stories and provide suggestions for how to help youth make a successful transition to post-secondary education, training, or careers. DHS staff will let you know the services available and eligibility to access assistance for youth while they maneuver life after high school.

- Hayley Smith, ODHS Child Welfare Youth Transitions

Session 3 Workshop Descriptions Continue

RAYH 013
Helping Neurodiverse Students Take Confident Next Steps In Their Choice-Filled Future

This session immerses participants in brief simulation activities to foster deep empathy for those facing language-based learning challenges. Students with dyslexia will share firsthand insights into their successful post-high school transitions. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of the college and career transition process for neurodiverse students, leaving equipped with practical checklists, tools, and the confidence to navigate a clear path forward.

- Danielle Thompson, The International Dyslexia Association-Oregon Branch
- Shelbe Park, The International Dyslexia Association-Oregon Branch

RAYH 203
Overview of Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships

Stacey Stonesifer (OSAC) and Laura Tocki-Toggenburger (BOLI) will offer an overview of the apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships what they are and how they work.

- Laura Tocki-Toggenburger, Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Apprenticeship and Training Division (ATD)
- Stacey Stonesifer, HECC- OSAC

Session 4: 2:00-2:50

OBSN 205
Good Moon Rising: Reimagining Career & College Readiness for Neurodivergent Learners

Struggling to engage neurodivergent and multicultural learners in traditional Career & College Readiness (CCR) instruction? Join Denise Velasco and Heather Hickcox (Good Moon Rising and Network Charter School) for an immersive, “learning by doing” workshop that bridges the gap between theory and daily classroom practice.

Anchored in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and robust SPED supports, this session delivers high-impact scaffolding techniques that blend cultural competence with strategies to strip away barriers and ignite student engagement. Educators and counselors will experience hands-on modeling of inclusive activities that can be immediately integrated into any CTE or CCR curriculum.

- Heather, Hickcox, Network Charter School/ Good Moon Rising
- Denise Velasco, Network Charter School/ Good Moon Rising

OBSN 207
Making Sense of Financial Aid Offers: A Guide for Families and Students

This session provides a overview of how to read and compare financial aid award letters. Participants will learn how to identify the different types of aid, understand the true cost of attendance, recognize key differences in award letters, and help calculate the numbers in making informed college affordability decisions.

- Tania Sanchez, Portland State University

SSC Boardroom
Q and A Session: ASPIRE Coordinators

This session is your chance to ask our ASPIRE team any and all your questions.

- ASPIRE Staff

Session 4 Workshop Descriptions Continue

RAYH 011
Beyond the Brochure: College Prep Through Interactive Games

In today’s fast-paced educational landscape, engaging students in college and career readiness can be a challenge. This interactive session introduces a dynamic, game-based approach to preparing students for higher education. Participants will explore a suite of ECMC-created and curated games—including FAB Life, Match Game, and the Admissions Race Game, each designed to build essential college knowledge, decision-making skills, and self-awareness in a fun, low-pressure environment.

Attendees will also discover free tools and templates for creating their own customized games, making it easy to adapt this approach to any school setting or student population.

- Jenn Satalino, ECMC The College Place Oregon

RAYH 013
Leading Students Entering the Workforce toward Fulfilling Careers in Long-Term Care

Many students are drawn to meaningful healthcare careers but may not see a traditional medical degree as the right fit for their goals. Community-based long-term care offers rewarding career pathways with multiple entry points, strong growth potential, and opportunities that often go unexplored.

In this session, discover how Oregon Care Careers (OCC) helps individuals explore and launch careers in the long-term care field through free, personalized career navigation and support. Learn about career lattices that create flexible pathways for advancement and explore practical ways OCC can serve as an extension of your school's counseling or Career and Technical Education (CTE) team to help students connect with fulfilling, in-demand careers.

- At the end of the session, participants will be able to:
- Describe three entry points for high school students to begin long-term care careers.
 - Refer a student to Oregon Care Careers with a clear next-step process.
 - Access free online OCC resources.

- Jessica Lawrencen, Oregon Care Careers

RAYH 203
Beyond the Backpack—Improving Outcomes for Students Experiencing Homelessness

In this session, we will discuss how to seamlessly align school-based college and career readiness interventions with the community's broader ecosystem of support for youth experiencing homelessness. Participants will leave with a comprehensive understanding of the specific resources available to unhoused youth and how coordinated, inter-agency collaboration focused on pathways to living-wage employment can effectively disrupt the pipeline from youth housing instability to adult homelessness.

- Megan Anderson, A Family for Every Child

Session 5: 3:10-4:00

OBSN 205
Youth Workforce and Service Options Available to People 13-26+

There are a number of existing programs and grant opportunities to engage young people in workforce development and service learning. This session will have a panel of young people from local organizations speak to their experiences in workforce and service programs. The session will also provide reference documents of grant programs available throughout the state and highlight open/upcoming grant opportunities. The goal of this session is to increase awareness of opportunities available to young people.

- Hillary Blackstone, HECC
- Matt Collins, HECC- OSAC

Session 5 Workshop Descriptions Continue

OBSN 207
OSAC Scholarship Application Useful Insights

Learn practical tips and helpful insights to better support students completing the OSAC Scholarship Application. This session highlights common challenges and smart strategies that help high school counselors and staff guide students with confidence.

- Jennifer Bruce, HECC- OSAC

SSC Boardroom
Rethinking Mentorship: Unique Mentor Program Designs That Expand Reach and Student Impact

Similar to last year’s From Startup to Standout: Growing a Thriving ASPIRE Mentor Program, this session explores innovative, high impact mentorship strategies that help ASPIRE Coordinators expand their reach, elevate student impact, and rethink traditional mentoring models. From engaging teachers and counselors, to building student led systems, to forming community partnerships and mentor networks, each section offers actionable steps that increase visibility, deepen collaboration, and multiply your impact. Whether you’re launching a new program or expanding an existing one, you’ll leave with clear, adaptable approaches for creating a vibrant, student centered environment where postsecondary planning is accessible, supported, and celebrated across your school community.

- Rochelle Farris, HECC- OSAC

RAYH 011
Bringing Upward Bound to Your Community: Federal Resources for College & Career Readiness

Learn how TRIO Upward Bound programs provide federally funded college and career readiness services for low-income and first-generation students. This session will introduce the upcoming Upward Bound grant opportunity and explore how Oregon schools and partners can expand student support services through federal funding and collaboration.

- Matt Bisek, Oregon TRIO Association

RAYH 013
Overview of Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships

Stacey Stonesifer (OSAC) and Laura Tocki-Toggenburger (BOLI) will offer an overview of the apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships what they are and how they work.

- Laura Tocki-Toggenburger, Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Apprenticeship and Training Division (ATD)
- Stacey Stonesifer, HECC- OSAC

RAYH 203
From Prompts to Possibilities: Strategies for Using AI in Career and College Readiness

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly common tool for students. This beginner-friendly session will introduce ASPIRE coordinators to the basics of AI and demonstrate how it can be used responsibly to support students with college and scholarship essays. Participants will learn practical prompting techniques, briefly discuss ethical considerations, and explore strategies for helping students use AI to brainstorm ideas and maintain their authentic voice. Leave with practical tips and resources you can share with students as they prepare for life after high school.

- Dr. Lori Ellis, HECC-OSAC
- Anne Shearer, HECC- OSAC

Presenters

Anel Venegas-Trujillo **Higher Education Coordinating Commission-** **Office of Student Access and Completion**

Ms. Anel Venegas-Trujillo is a State Grants Administrator at the Office of Student Access & Completion (OSAC) with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) serving the Oregon Promise Grant and Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA) programs. As a first-generation Latina, Anel graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Economics from Willamette University in 2015. Prior to OSAC, Anel was a Bilingual Financial Aid Counselor from 2018 to 2022 at Western Oregon University, where she grew her interest in the Financial Aid world. She dedicates her work to bridge language and first-generational gaps to ensure all students feel they belong and are safe in higher education institutions, especially while students navigate their Financial Aid journey.

Anne Shearer **Higher Education Coordinating Commission-** **Office of Student Access and Completion**

Anne Shearer currently administers the Oregon Opportunity Grant program. Over the past five years Anne has administered many of the grant programs at OSAC including the Chafee ETV Grant program, Oregon Student Child Care Grant, and the Oregon Tribal Student Grant. Prior to joining OSAC in 2021, Anne worked at Oregon State University as a Financial Aid Advisor. Anne has a master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of South Carolina and a bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico, where she grew up.

Beth Wigham **Oregon Department of Education**

Dr. Beth Wigham has served as the Career and College Readiness & School Counseling Programs Education Specialist for 10 years at the Oregon Department of Education. She is a passionate student advocate and a collaborative leader, dedicated to implementing and improving equitable career and college readiness systems, standards and supports for all students.

Carolyn Dennis **The Ford Family Foundation - Postsecondary Success**

Carolyn Dennis is a Program Associate for Scholarship Outreach and Selection in The Ford Family Foundation's Postsecondary Success office, based in Eugene. In her role, she partners with college access organizations to lead scholarship outreach efforts and supports the application and selection processes across all programs. With more than two decades of experience in higher education admissions and enrollment, Carolyn brings deep expertise in expanding access and opportunity for students.

Cherie Clark **Oregon Employability Skills**

Cherie Clark is the chief architect of Oregon Employability Skills, an initiative driven by statewide employer demand. To build this high-impact framework, she managed a collaborative effort alongside educators, industry leaders, and the Oregon Department of Education. Through this work, Cherie remains dedicated to creating sustainable talent pipelines that deliver lasting economic growth for students, workers, and local businesses alike.

Danielle Thompson **The International Dyslexia Association-Oregon Branch**

Danielle Thompson, MAT, C-SLT, President of The International Dyslexia Association-Oregon Branch, is a certified teacher with thirty years of experience teaching language arts, reading, and social studies in public schools and is nationally certified in Structured Literacy from the Center for Effective Reading Instruction. Danielle's journey with navigating dyslexia and other common learning differences comes from teaching high school, from personal experience with loved ones, and from tutoring students of all ages with a variety of learning differences. Danielle strives to empower students, parents, educators, and adults with a network of information and support and seeks to transform our collective practices in education and in the workplace to better meet the needs of our neurodiverse learners and employees.

Denise Velasco **Network Charter School / Good Moon Rising**

Denise is the heart and soul of guidance at Network Charter School, where she has lovingly worn many hats, from math and health teacher to administrator, since 2004. As a foundational pillar of the school, she co-coordinates both the ASPIRE career readiness and Outdoor Credit Recovery Adventure Program to ensure every student finds their unique path to success. Over the last 21 years, Denise has dedicated herself to supporting teachers, guiding administrations, and developing creative programs that lift students up. When away from school, Denise enjoys hiking, backpacking, and traveling the world.

Gordy Toyama **Higher Education Coordinating Commission-** **Office of Student Access and Completion**

Gordy's work in higher education has centered on expanding equity and access. Working with Carrer and College Readiness counselors brings him full circle to his first role as an admissions counselor.

Hayley Smith **ODHS Child Welfare Youth Transitions**

Hayley Smith has been serving as the Youth Transitions Post Secondary Program Analyst for the last three years. She has worked within Child Welfare for over nineteen years, in a variety of capacities, previously serving as Youth Transitions Housing Specialist for fifteen years, and as a Case Management Coordinator in Marion County. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts from Oregon State University. Hayley enjoys serving young people that have experienced foster care and their adult supporters, promoting post-secondary resources and options and supporting those with a desire to access to post-secondary education or training. Given her extensive experience with this population and her passion to support their adult supporters, she facilitates trainings to educate all those interested in supporting young people to navigate the system and to benefit from all the available resources and supports.

Heather Hickcox **Network Charter School / Good Moon Rising**

Heather believes every student deserves a clear path to independence and a fulfilling career. As a Special Education Coordinator at Network Charter School, leading both the ASPIRE and Outdoor Credit Recovery Adventure Program, she specializes in building students' confidence alongside real-world technical skills. Drawing from a decade as a trades instructor and eight years running a full-inclusion program, she co-designs welcoming, ready-to-use resources for diverse classrooms where over half of students have unique learning needs. When she is not teaching, she can usually be found reading, camping, or planning some new family adventure.

Hillary Blackstone **Higher Education Coordinating Commission**

Hillary Blackstone is a Youth Program Specialist at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. She specializes in youth workforce grant opportunities.

Presenters continued

Jason Payton
Oregon Employment Department

Jason is the occupational economist for the Oregon Employment Department’s Workforce and Economic Research Division. He has worked for the Division for over 18 years and currently focuses on providing occupational related information and statistics to Oregon jobseekers, educators, students, and policymakers.

Jenn Satalino
ECMC The College Place Oregon

Jenn Satalino is the director of The College Place-Oregon. She has more than 30 years of experience helping students pursue higher education. In her work at The College Place, she enjoys working with a variety of students from around the state; every day is different. She holds a BS from University of Oregon and an MBA from Portland State University. Jenn is a Certified Financial Aid Administrator, the highest certification offered by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA).

Jennifer Bruce
Higher Education Coordinating Commission-Office of Student Access and Completion

Jennifer Bruce joined the Oregon Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) in May 2023 as a Scholarship Portfolio Coordinator. She has over a decade of experience in higher education, including eight years at Corban University, where she served as Director of Financial Aid. Jennifer is passionate about empowering students to pursue their educational goals and confidently navigate the path to college and career success.

Jessica Lawrence
Oregon Care Careers

Jessica serves as the Senior Program Coordinator at Oregon Care Careers and is a dedicated career guide for the community based long-term care field. In her role, she helps job seekers navigate training, certification, and growth opportunities, from entry-level positions to advanced careers. With her expertise in career pathway design, Jessica has collaborated with schools, community-based organizations, and workforce partners to raise awareness of the rewarding work in this field across the state.

Kelly McIntyre
Duniway Middle School, McMinnville School District

I have been a school counselor for 23 years, 20 of which has been in middle school. I have been National Board Certified since 2012. Career and college development has been a passion of mine for most of those 23 years.

Laura Tocki-Toggenburger
Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Apprenticeship and Training Division (ATD)

Laura Tocki-Toggenburger completed Oregon Tradeswomen pre-apprenticeship in 2016 and journeyed out from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBC) affiliated apprenticeship in 2020. After years of advocating for the training of apprentices on jobsites, she found her way to the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Apprenticeship and Training Division (ATD) as an Operations and Policy Analyst providing technical assistance to registered apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and training programs.

Lori Ellis
Higher Education Coordinating Commission-Office of Student Access and Completion

Dr. Lori Ellis is the ASPIRE and Outreach Administrator at the Oregon Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC), where she leads statewide initiatives that increase access to career and college readiness, financial aid, and postsecondary opportunities for students across Oregon. She oversees the ASPIRE program, outreach strategy, and partnerships that support students, families, schools, and community-based organizations.

Madeleine Cole
The Ford Family Foundation - Postsecondary Success

Madeleine Cole is an Administrative Associate in The Ford Family Foundation's Postsecondary Success office, based in Eugene. She supports the team’s outreach and scholarship selection efforts, helping to create a seamless and positive experience for scholarship applicants and awardees. Through her work, Madeleine plays a key role in ensuring programs run smoothly and participants feel supported throughout the process.

Matt Bisek
Oregon TRIO Association

Matt Bisek began working for TRIO programs in the Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search programs at Clatsop Community College in 2015 as an advisor. Matt served as the treasurer of the Oregon TRIO Association (501(c)(3) non-profit) from 2018 to 2021 before taking on the position of Executive Director in September of 2021. Matt is passionate about creating opportunities and removing barriers for first-generation and low-income students to pursue post-secondary education. He strives to grow the state TRIO association model to be a conduit between the practitioners who work directly with students and those organizations & foundations that have resources and opportunities available to positively impact students’ lives.

Matt Collins
Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Matt Collins is a Program Coordinator at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Matt supports a broad array of grants related to youth workforce and service programs like AmeriCorps.

Megan Anderson
A Family for Every Child

Megan Anderson serves as the Executive Director of A Family for Every Child (AFEC) in Eugene, Oregon. With a decade of leadership in the child welfare sector and experience as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), she specializes in leveraging inter-agency collaboration to support unhoused and vulnerable youth. A trained social worker, Megan utilizes a micro-to-macro systems approach to design community-driven programs that create sustainable pathways for youth success.

Nomi Pearce
Higher Education Coordinating Commission-Office of Student Access and Completion

Before becoming an ASPIRE Access Specialist in 2022, Nomi worked for state social services, state and private colleges, and community-based organizations. Ten years after graduating from high school Nomi earned a B.A. in sociology from Central Washington University. Before finding a home in sociology, her majors along the way were physical education, psychology, elementary education, and history. She earned a master’s degree in international education from University of Oregon. Her message to students is that life is full of opportunities and challenges that will change who you are and how you want to live your life – allow your dreams to adjust. In her free time Nomi loves walking, reading, writing, practicing tai chi, and connecting with family and friends.

Presenters continued

Rochelle Farris

Higher Education Coordinating Commission- Office of Student Access and Completion

Rochelle holds a Master of Arts in Leadership: Higher Education from Bushnell University and is deeply committed to help students succeed and assist educators as they establish meaningful, college and career ready practices within their schools. She brings five years of experience as an ASPIRE Access Specialist, supported by earlier roles in financial aid, admissions, and residential programs at Western Oregon University and a private trade school. Rochelle has also advanced college and career readiness initiatives in the Salem Keizer School District as an ASPIRE/College and Career Advisor.

Sarah Drake

United We Heal

Sarah Drake holds a Master's degree in Professional Mental Health Counseling and has experience in behavioral health, outdoor education, and counseling across California, Colorado, and Oregon. Her background gives her a deep understanding of youth behavioral health needs and the workforce shortages affecting Oregon.

Sarah Rambeck

United We Heal

Sarah Rambeck specializes in supporting high school learners and has many years of experience guiding students toward trade certifications and postsecondary opportunities. As a QMHA-1 credentialed professional and QPR Trainer, Sarah understands the behavioral health workforce from both the training and service delivery sides.

Shelbe Park

The International Dyslexia Association-Oregon Branch

Shelbe Park is a native Portlander and now lives in Vancouver Washington with her husband. She has two grown children. She became active in the Oregon branch of IDA when her daughter was diagnosed with dyslexia at age nine. Shelbe has served on the Board of Directors, as Vice-President, and two terms as President. Her daughter is now a successful engineer and Shelbe contributes that to the support she received from IDA. Shelbe is a full-time tutor for students with Dyslexia and believes that it is important to teach students with dyslexia to advocate for themselves. She is the mentor of the IDA Oregon Student Empowerment Group. She is in awe of the amazing students she has met and mentored.

Stacey Stonesifer- M.Ed

Higher Education Coordinating Commission- Office of Student Access and Completion

Since 2017, Stacey has been our Eastern and Central Oregon ASPIRE Access Specialist. She is a first generation college student and her passion is serving the schools and students of Rural Oregon.

Tania Sanchez

Portland State University

Tania Sanchez is the Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Portland State University and a first-generation college graduate who earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from PSU. She began her career as the Scholarship Coordinator for the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber before joining the PSU admissions team in 2013, where she has also supported the university's Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) initiatives. Tania is passionate about expanding access to higher education and helping students and families navigate the college admissions process.

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- Oregon TRIO Association
- Portland State University
- The Ford Family Foundation
- The International Dyslexia Association-Oregon Branch
- United We Heal

Notes