



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Office of Student Access and Completion

3225 25th Street SE

Salem, Oregon 97302

www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: STATE FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION FOR OREGON
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AND MIXED STATUS FAMILIES

TO: Secondary and post-secondary administrators, faculty, and staff including
superintendents, presidents, principals, student services and financial aid
professionals, counselors, and advisors

FROM: Ben Cannon, Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating
Commission (HECC); Kerry Thomas, Director, HECC Office of Student
Access and Completion (OSAC)

DATE: September 10, 2026

We are writing to ensure that education partners, particularly those advising students about financial aid for college, have accurate information to advise undocumented students and students in mixed-status families¹ on the process for applying for state administered grant and scholarship programs.

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is committed to removing barriers that prevent Oregonians from being able to access the transformational opportunities that post-secondary education can provide. Under the guidance of the HECC, the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) is working to ensure that students have clear information as they decide which financial aid application to complete as they pursue their education.

¹ Here, a mixed-status family is one in which the student is a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen, and their parent(s) or spouse—also known as FAFSA contributor/s — do not have a Social Security number (SSN) or is undocumented.



Undocumented students, including students with DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), TPS (Temporary Protected Status), or U-Visa status, and students in mixed-status families in Oregon should not be dissuaded from applying for state grants and scholarships that can help them realize their dreams of a college education.

This memo contains three sections. Section I contains information about OSAC's **expansion of the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA) to include mixed-status families**. Section II contains information related to **data security**. Section III contains information about pre-existing **rights and Sanctuary State protections**.

I. Expanding Access to the ORSAA to include students who are in mixed-status families

The HECC is committed to removing barriers that prevent Oregonians from being able to access state financial aid. The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion has become aware that some students from mixed-status families in Oregon have decided not to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) because they have concerns related to data privacy. As a result of not completing a FAFSA application, they are not able to access state aid. The HECC is providing an option for students in this circumstance to complete the ORSAA in lieu of the FAFSA to access state and institutional aid. **The information below can be shared with students to enable them to make informed decisions on whether to submit a FAFSA or ORSAA².**

Aid Applications and Eligibility:

Oregon has many forms of financial aid that students may qualify for if they are undocumented or in mixed-status families.

² It is important to remind students early that FAFSA-eligible students and families have the option to file the FAFSA later, after the ORSAA, if they choose to.



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By completing the ORSAA, undocumented students and students in mixed-status families may demonstrate eligibility for state-funded and privately funded grant and scholarship programs administered by the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC), as long as students meet all other program requirements. Information on eligibility and deadlines for these programs is available at www.OregonStudentAid.gov.

As part of the application process for these programs, **individuals who are undocumented Oregon students or students with a DACA, TPS, or U-Visa status must complete the ORSAA to be considered for HECC-administered programs.**

As of October 1, 2026, the ORSAA may be used in lieu of the FAFSA by students in mixed-status families to apply for Oregon state-administered financial aid programs. This expanded access to the ORSAA is effective as of the 2027-28 aid year. **Please note that students from mixed-status families will forgo access to all federal aid in addition to Oregon Promise state funds if they decide to file the ORSAA instead of the FAFSA.** Oregon Law requires all students eligible to file a FAFSA to do so to be eligible for the Oregon Promise. Students who do not complete the FAFSA will not be eligible for federal financial aid programs such as the Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), work study, and federal loans.

II. Data Security

About the ORSAA and Data Security

The ORSAA is an Oregon developed application that is required for students who are not eligible to complete the FAFSA to apply for state aid.

ORSAA Use of Data

ORSAA is a confidential application that is used solely by the HECC to qualify students for state financial aid in Oregon. It is not used for federal financial aid



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purposes. Information that is shared with the HECC via the ORSAA is used only by the HECC state agency and our partnering colleges, universities, and foundations for administering state grants and scholarships.

ORSAA Application Now Hosted Internally

As part of our ongoing commitment to protecting student privacy, the HECC is upgrading the ORSAA application to our internally hosted agency network. Returning users will notice a new look and feel, and will need to set up new login credentials. This change will ensure sensitive personal and financial data is more secure than ever within state-controlled systems.

III. Resource Reminders: Student and Family Rights, and Sanctuary State Status

In addition to providing information on student financial aid processes and data security, the HECC wants to share a reminder about information and resources below to ensure that students and families are aware of their rights in Oregon and what sanctuary state status means.

Students and families have rights under the U.S. Constitution regardless of immigration status, this includes right to stay silent, right to be free from unreasonable search, and right to hire an attorney.

- Students and families can learn how to exercise their rights if confronted by immigration enforcement by accessing information from the [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#) and the [Immigrant Legal Resources Center \(ILRC\)](#).

Sanctuary State Status

Oregon is a sanctuary state, meaning that Oregon law does not permit state or local government agencies to participate directly or indirectly in immigration enforcement without a court order (ORS 180.805, ORS 180.810, and ORS 181A.820 to 181A.829). Further, the HECC as an agency does not disclose information concerning a person's citizenship or immigration status unless the disclosure is required by state or federal law, a court order, or a warrant or judicial subpoena authorized by a court.



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Our agency also does not use any public facilities, property, money, equipment, technology or personnel for the purpose of investigating, detecting, apprehending, arresting, detaining or holding individuals for immigration enforcement.

For additional information on Oregon's Sanctuary Promise laws, please visit:

- <https://www.doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/civil-rights/sanctuarypromise/community-toolkit/> (English) or
- <https://www.doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/civil-rights/promesa-de-santuario/> (Spanish)

Contact Us:

If education partners have questions on these programs or the [ORSAA](#), they may contact OSAC at ORSAAHelp@hecc.oregon.gov or (541)687-7400 option 3.