

On The Road To Readiness

Empower
Equip
Elevate



2025 ASPIRE Fall Conference
October, 3rd 2025
Chemeketa Community College

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 Location: Building 6, Lobby
9:30-10:00	Welcome and Introduction Location: Building 6, Lobby
10:00-10:50	Session 1
11:00-11:50	Session 2
11:50-1:00	Lunch Location: Building 8, Room 201
1:00-1:50	Session 3
2:00-2:50	Session 4
2:50-3:10	Break with Snack
3:10-4:00	Session 5
4:00	Adjourn

Schedule

Below is the schedule for the ASPIRE Fall Conference. With 25 workshops offered throughout the day, there’s something for everyone. Please note that workshop times and locations are subject to change. In the unlikely event that adjustments are needed, we will make every effort to notify participants in advance.

Session 1 10:00-10:50	Session 2 11:00-11:50	Session 3 1:00-1:50	Session 4 2:00-2:50	Session 5 3:10-4:00
Paying for College - Building 8 Room 201	Paying for College - Building 8 Room 201	On The Ground: Real Talk About Working With Underrepresented Students - Building 8 Room 201	Youth Panel: Successes In Youth Workforce Development For In-Demand Jobs - Building 8 Room 201	ILP Student Support Panel - Building 8 Room 201
What’s The Scoop With High School- Helping Prepare Middle School.. - Building 8 Room 204	How The Oregon Treasury Can Help You & Your School - Building 8 Room 204	High Interest HS CCR - More Unique Ways To Engage Students - Building 8 Room 204	From Startup To Stand-out: Growing A Thriving ASPIRE Mentor Program - Building 8 Room 204	Stronger Together: Elevating CCR Programming Through ASPIRE Collaboration - Building 8 Room 204
The Ford Family Scholarship: More Than Just The Money - Building 8 Room 206	The Ford Family Scholarship: More Than Just The Money - Building 8 Room 206	Direct Admission In Oregon: Building A Collaborative... - Building 8 Room 206	Preparing Students For The Transition From K-12 To Post-Secondary Education - Building 8 Room 206	OSAC Scholarship Application: Useful Insights - Building 8 Room 203
Hard Corps: Exploring AmeriCorps, Oregon Conservation Corps... - Building 8 Room 210	Pathway Discovery: Introducing High School Students To Guided Pathways - Building 2 Room 210	Pathway Discovery: Introducing High School Students To Guided Pathways - Building 2 Room 210	AHEC Pathway Programs: Delivering Statewide Health Care Career-Based Learning - Building 8 Room 210	Headwinds Or Tailwinds: A Data-Driven Look At The Career Conversation - Building 8 Room 210
ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care Experience - Building 8 Room 217	ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care Experience - Building 8 Room 217	Unlocking Opportunities: Supporting Senate Bill 3’S ... - Building 8 Room 217	Unlocking Opportunities: Supporting Senate Bill 3’S ... - Building 8 Room 217	High Interest HS CCR - More Unique Ways To Engage Students - Building 8 Room 217

Location

Details

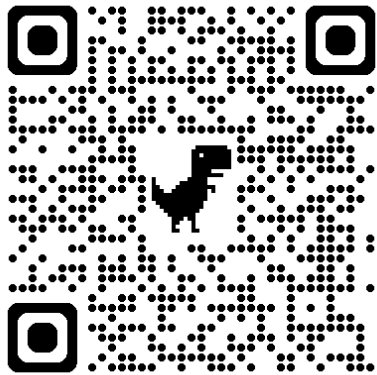
The ASPIRE Fall Conference will take place at Chemeketa Community College- Salem campus located at:
4000 Lancaster Dr NE
Salem, OR
97305

Event check-in, registration, and the opening session will take place in the lobby of Building 6. Most workshops will be held in various rooms within Building 8. However, please note that one workshop offered during Sessions 2 and 3 will be held in Building 2, Room 210, which is approximately a 5-minute walk from Building 8.

Parking

Parking is free, and no permits are required on the day of the event. Attendees are encouraged to park in the Blue lot located near Building 8.

For additional information including a detailed campus map please see the Chemeketa Community College Website:
<https://www.chemeketa.edu/locations/salem-campus>



QR Code: Chemeketa Community College-Salem Map

Tracks

Your Roadmap To The Perfect Conference

Unsure about which conference sessions to attend? We have created six different conference tracks, choose the one that best meets your needs!

Conference Track:

Career and Workforce Exploration

Conference Track:

College Access Resources

Conference Track:

Advancing Equity

Conference Track:

Middle School and Beyond

Conference Track:

Exploring New Workshops

Conference Track:

Back By Popular Demand

Session 1: Hard Corps: Exploring AmeriCorps, Oregon Conservation Corps...
Session 2: Pathway Discovery: Introducing High School Students To Pathways
Session 3: High Interest HS CCR - More Unique Ways To Engage Students
Session 4:Youth Panel: Successes In Youth Workforce Development
Session 5: Headwinds Or Tailwinds: A Data-Driven Look At The Career Conversation
Also Consider: AHEC Pathway Programs: Delivering Statewide Health Care (Session 4)

Session 1: Paying for College
Session 2: The Ford Family Scholarship: More Than Just The Money
Session 3: Direct Admission In Oregon: Building A Collaborative...
Session 4: Preparing Students For The Transition From K-12 To Post-Secondary ED
Session 5: OSAC Scholarship Application: Useful Insights
Also Consider: How The Oregon Treasury Can Help You & Your School (Session 2)

Session 1: ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care Experience
Session 2: Pathway Discovery: Introducing High School Students To Pathways
Session 3: On The Ground: Real Talk About Working With Underrepresented Students
Session 4: Youth Panel: Successes In Youth Workforce Development For...
Session 5: ILP Student Support Panel
Also Consider: Stronger Together: Elevating CCR Programming... (Session 5)

Session 1: What’s The Scoop With High School- Helping Prepare Middle School
Session 2: How The Oregon Treasury Can Help You & Your School
Session 3: On The Ground: Real Talk About Working With Underrepresented Students
Session 4: From Startup To Standout: Growing A Thriving ASPIRE Mentor Program
Session 5: ILP Student Support Panel
Also Consider: Preparing Students For The Transition From K-12 (Session 4)

Session 1: Hard Corps: Exploring AmeriCorps, Oregon Conservation Corps...
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Session 1: ODHS Resources For Young Adults With Foster Care Experience
Session 2: The Ford Family Scholarship: More Than Just The Money
Session 3: High Interest HS CCR - More Unique Ways To Engage Students
Session 4: Unlocking Opportunities: Supporting Senate Bill 3...
Session 5: Stronger Together: Elevating CCR Programming Through ASPIRE
Also Consider: OSAC Scholarship Application: Useful Insights (Session 5)

Session 1

10:00-10:50

Hard Corps: Exploring AmeriCorps, Oregon Conservation Corps, And Oregon Youth Corps Programs Throughout Oregon

Higher Education Coordinating Commission staff will present Oregon-based corps programs available to your students. They will share the unique benefits, program models, and types of service related to both Federal and State-funded corps. Corps programming is available throughout the state, and these staff can help you navigate which are nearest to you and your students as well as which may be the best fit depending on student goals/aspirations.

- Hillary Blackstone, HECC- Office of Workforce Investments
- Madeline Seghers, OregonServes Commission
- Mike Norman, HECC- Office of Workforce Investments
- Building 8 Room 210

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
- Building 8 Room 217

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
- Building 8 Room 201

The Ford Family Scholarships: More Than Just The Money

The Ford Family Foundation’s Postsecondary Success team will cover key things to know about the Ford Scholarship Programs. This session will go over basic application eligibility and how to apply, helpful application and interview tips, and how advisors can provide guidance for their students during the application and selection process. We will also share how we power the potential of our scholars throughout their postsecondary journey.

- Carolyn Dennis, The Ford Family Foundation, Postsecondary Success - Scholarship Programs
- Madeleine Cole, The Ford Family Foundation, Postsecondary Success - Scholarship Programs
- Building 8 Room 206

What’s The Scoop With High School - Helping Prepare Middle School Students To Transition To High School

In this session, I will show how the middle school CTE teacher works with the Graduation Coach to help students transition into high school. I will show you how we get students to choose electives that will help them meet their future post high school goals as well as educating students about transcripts, credits, GPA, class periods, extra curricular activities, and so much more!

- Mary Jo Sharp, Vale School District
- Building 8 Room 204

Session 2

11:00-11:50

How The Oregon Treasury Can Help You & Your School
Treasury staff will explain how the Oregon College Savings Plan and the ABLE program works to those in attendance at the ASPIRE conference. In addition to providing a general overview of each of these programs staff will also share information about how we can partner with ASPIRE members to get information about these programs to appropriate members of their community. With so much focus on students being academically prepared for a post-secondary education future it is important that they and their families also be financially prepared to pay for those post-secondary education expenses, whether that be paying for a higher education or living with a disability as an adult. The information provided about these programs will let ASPIRE members know that there are programs out there to help ease concerns of students and their families about the financial demands of a post-secondary education/life with Treasury staff there to answer questions and provide support.

- John Valley, Oregon Treasury
- Building 8 Room 204

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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.

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Pathway Discovery: Introducing High School Students To Guided Pathways
The Guided Pathways framework is an integrated, college-wide student success approach that guides students with clear and coherent curricular experiences. To date, 15 of Oregon’s 17 community colleges have adopted this model, including Chemeketa. Learn how a small, capacity-building ASPIRE grant has helped us institutional efforts that introduce pathways to high school students via interactive, exploratory activities led by our faculty.

- James McNicholas, Chemeketa Community College
- Building 2 Room 210

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- Carolyn Dennis, The Ford Family Foundation, Postsecondary Success - Scholarship Programs
- Madeleine Cole, The Ford Family Foundation, Postsecondary Success - Scholarship Programs
- Building 8 Room 206

Session 3

1:00-1:50

Direct Admission In Oregon: Building A Collaborative Communications Strategy
Oregon is launching a transformative Direct Admissions initiative to increase postsecondary access and equity across the state. This workshop invites ASPIRE coordinators, school staff, volunteers, mentors, and community-based organization partners to help shape the communications strategy that will ensure the success of this effort.

Join us for an interactive, solutions-oriented session where your insights will directly influence how we roll out communications to support students, families, and educators statewide. Through collaborative brainstorming and small group discussions, we will explore what messages resonate most, which tools and platforms work best in different communities, and how to ensure culturally and linguistically responsive engagement.

Whether you’re guiding students through college planning or supporting families navigating postsecondary options, your voice is essential in co-designing a communications plan that reflects Oregon’s diverse communities.

Participants will:

- Gain a high-level understanding of Oregon’s Direct Admissions initiative and its statewide impact
- Explore how the initiative intersects with ASPIRE’s mission and tools
- Identify communications gaps and needs from their community and school perspectives
- Collaboratively generate ideas for inclusive, effective, and locally relevant messaging strategies
- Provide input to inform a statewide communications rollout in Spring 2025

- Mariana Zaragoza, PhD, HECC-APA
- Erin Rau, HECC- OSAC
- Building 8 Room 206

Session 3 (1:00-1:50) Continued

High Interest HS CCR - More Unique Ways To Engage Students

How to incorporate high interest topics and hands on activities to increase student engagement in Career and College Readiness. Through building an equitable and scaffolded school wide Career & College Readiness employability, and independent living program, Network Charter School has uniquely used their flex days to deliver curriculum that encourages multifaceted student exploration and that provides opportunities for underserved populations. Learn what activities, games, incentives, and topics created the greatest impact. Understand how Senate Bill 3 requirements are met through a Career & College Readiness Program. Come away with easy to incorporate offerings to bring back to your students. New activities provided for those who've previously attended.

- Heather Hickcox Network Charter School
- Denise Velasco Network Charter School
- Building 8 Room 204

On The Ground: Real Talk About Working With Underrepresented Students

Serving underrepresented students takes more than good intentions. It takes listening, flexibility, humility, and a real understanding of the barriers people face every day—barriers like racism, poverty, lack of access, language differences, and broken systems.

This panel brings together people doing the work—in the field, in the community, and sometimes in the margins—to share what they've learned, what's worked (and what hasn't), and how they keep going. Panelists come from different sectors and backgrounds, but all bring deep, on-the-ground experience working alongside populations who are often left out or overlooked.

Expect honest stories, useful strategies, and a chance to reflect on your own role in this work. Whether you're new to working with underrepresented populations or have been at it for years, you'll leave with ideas you can use—and some renewed energy for the challenges ahead.

- Janie Ramirez Manzo- Latino Network
- Rebecca Quintana, HomePlate Youth Services
- Building 8 Room 201

Pathway Discovery: Introducing High School Students To Guided Pathways

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- James McNicholas, Chemeketa Community College
- Building 2 Room 210

Unlocking Opportunities: Supporting Senate Bill 3'S New College & Career Readiness Course

Oregon's Senate Bill 3 introduces an exciting new requirement: a statewide College and Career Readiness class designed to better prepare every student for life after high school. Join us for an interactive session where we'll unpack the latest updates, guidance, and resources to support implementation. Together, we'll explore how this new course expands access and equity, discuss practical strategies for integrating it into existing systems, and share tools to ensure success for all students.

This session is perfect for college and career access professionals ready to deepen their understanding, ask questions, and collaborate on best practices. Leave with actionable insights, connections, and resources to strengthen your work and support the students you serve.

- Dr. Beth Wigham, Oregon Department of Education
- Building 8 Room 217

Session 4

2:00-2:50

AHEC Pathway Programs: Delivering Statewide Health Care Career-Based Learning

This session will highlight how Oregon AHEC's community-based, locally tailored pathway programming supports students from early exploration through entry into health careers. Join us to explore AHEC's role in strengthening and sustaining Oregon's health care workforce and how your organization might partner with ORAHEC.

- Melissent Zumwalt, Oregon Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- Nicole Bales, Oregon Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- Building 8 Room 210

From Startup To Standout: Growing A Thriving ASPIRE Mentor Program

With limited budgets and increasing demands on your time, have you considered starting or expanding your ASPIRE mentor program to better support students? This session offers practical strategies for building or enhancing a mentorship program. Explore creative ways to grow your mentor team by engaging community volunteers, school staff, and peer mentors. Discover ASPIRE resources that can help you recruit, train, and support mentors while building sustainable partnerships that help students succeed.

- Rochelle Farris, HECC- OSAC
- Building 8 Room 204

Preparing Students For The Transition From K-12 To Post-Secondary Education

Preparing students for the transition from K-12 to the post-secondary educational setting is a journey that begins with planning. Identifying the multiple differences between the two settings is essential for successful outcomes. During this session the presenters will explore the differences and impacts between IDEA/FAPE and post-secondary legal regulations and student expectations. The presenters will share tips on how career and readiness professionals can help to prepare students and their families in navigating the changes and challenges ahead. Plenty of time will be allocated for questions and audience participation.

- Karen Alexander, Chemeketa Community College
- Jennifer Cottam, Chemeketa Community College
- Building 8 Room 206

Session 4 workshop descriptions are continued on the next page

Session 4 (2:00-2:50) Continued

Unlocking Opportunities: Supporting Senate Bill 3'S New College & Career Readiness Course

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- Dr. Beth Wigham, Oregon Department of Education
- Building 8 Room 217

Youth Panel: Successes In Youth Workforce Development For In-Demand Jobs

Youth participants from various organizations will share insights from their workforce experiences. They will share what they got out of the experience and what they want youth mentors to know about these opportunities.

- Hillary Blackstone, HECC- Office of Workforce Investments
- Building 8 Room 201

Session 5

3:10-4:00

Headwinds Or Tailwinds: A Data-Driven Look At The Career Conversation

Whether it's a question of opportunity, the pay of a particular career, or deeper insights into a career cluster, labor market information can be used to extend the time a student thinks about skilling up or continuing their education. This session will cover current economic trends, and the many local data resources like QualityInfo.org that can help extend the career conversation with students across Oregon.

- Jason Payton, Oregon Employment Department - Workforce and Economic Research
- Building 8 Room 210

High Interest Hs CCR - More Unique Ways To Engage Students

How to incorporate high interest topics and hands on activities to increase student engagement in Career and College Readiness. Through building an equitable and scaffolded school wide Career & College Readiness employability, and independent living program, Network Charter School has uniquely used their flex days to deliver curriculum that encourages multifaceted student exploration and that provides opportunities for underserved populations. Learn what activities, games, incentives, and topics created the greatest impact. Understand how Senate Bill 3 requirements are met through a Career & College Readiness Program. Come away with easy to incorporate offerings to bring back to your students. New activities provided for those who've previously attended.

- Heather Hickcox Network Charter School
- Denise Velasco Network Charter School
- Building 8 Room 217

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
- Building 8 Room 201

OSAC Scholarship Application: Useful Insights

In this session you will learn how to help your students successfully select and apply for OSAC Scholarships. We will explore ways to navigate the OSAC Scholarship Catalog to find scholarships that are a good fit for each student, uncover some of the most common questions students answer incorrectly on their OSAC Scholarship Applications, and examine Activity Chart and Personal Statement examples to see the scholarship application process through the eyes of a scholarship selection committee member. The goal of this session is to build understanding and confidence around these specific parts of the OSAC Scholarship Application process.

- Kristin Vreeland, HECC-OSAC
- Building 8 Room 203

Stronger Together: Elevating CCR Programming Through ASPIRE Collaboration

Join fellow ASPIRE Coordinators in a collaborative round table designed to spark ideas, share successes, and explore innovative strategies for enhancing career and college readiness (CCR) programs. Together, we'll discuss practical ways to engage students early, involve families, and build impactful CCR initiatives that prepare students for life after high school.

- Shelly Warde, West Salem High School
- Kim Conolly, McNary High School
- Building 8 Room 204

Presenters

Anel Venegas-Trujillo- She/Hers/Ella
**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, which fueled her passion and interest in the Financial Aid world and the surrounding communities to ensure informational resources are accessible to all prospective and current students. 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.

Aujalee Moore
Organization: Oregon Department of Education

Aujalee Moore is the Standards Guidance Program Analyst at Oregon Department of Education. In her role, she coordinates and works to improve the standards and high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) program. This includes the coordination of development, revision, adoption, implementation, and professional learning related to standards and leadership in HQIM. Aujalee is a graduate of University of Oregon with a Bachelor’s of Science in Political Science and Native American Studies. Additionally, she is an enrolled member of the Klamath Modoc Yahooskin tribe.

Dr. 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 - Scholarship Programs

Carolyn Dennis is the Program Associate Scholarship Outreach and Selection for The Ford Family Foundation’s Postsecondary Success office based in Eugene. She works directly with college access partners coordinating and managing the scholarship outreach efforts and assists with the application and selection process for all scholarship programs. Prior to the Foundation, Carolyn worked in higher education for 2 decades in graduate program admissions and enrollment.
<https://www.tfff.org/team/carolyn-dennis/>

Presenters

Denise Velasco
Network Charter School

Denise is the Guidance Counselor, ASPIRE Co-Coordinator, and Co-Coordinator for the Outdoor Credit Recovery Adventure Program at Network Charter School. She has been a foundational part of NCS since 2004 as a teacher and now an administrator. The extent and diversity of her experience have supported all facets of the school for the last 20 years, including but not limited to the transition of many administrations, support of all the teachers, and the development of numerous programs to support students.

Erin Rau
**Higher Education Coordinating Commission-
Office of Student Access and Completion**

Erin Rau currently serves as Deputy Director for the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) in the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission. She originally joined OSAC in 2021 as the Operations and Policy Analyst for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the state’s largest need-based grant. Prior to joining OSAC, she worked in the Office of Admissions at Oregon State University overseeing the undergraduate admissions operations team. She has over 18 years of higher education administration experience and holds a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and French from Purdue University, and a Master’s in Post Secondary Adult Continuing Education from Portland State University.

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

Heather is the Special Education Coordinator, ASPIRE Co-Coordinator, and Co-Coordinator for the Outdoor Credit Recovery Adventure Program at Network Charter School since 2018. She values creating strong positive relationships in the school community and supporting students in exploring all possible postsecondary options, especially working in trades and high value career paths.

PRESENTERS

Hillary Blackstone **Higher Education Coordinating Commission**

Hillary Blackstone is a Youth Program Specialist at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Her work centers on supporting youth workforce development programs primarily through state-funded grants like Oregon Conservation Corps.

James McNicholas **Chemeketa Community College**

James has 30 years of experience working in higher education, primarily in student affairs. He is currently the director of Student Success & Belonging at Chemeketa Community College, leading the college's student outreach and onboarding efforts.

Janie Ramirez Manzo **Latino Network**

Jason Payton **Oregon Employment Department - Workforce and Economic Research**

Jason Payton is currently the occupational economist for the Oregon Employment Department. He has been a researcher for the Workforce and Economic Research Division for over 17 years. His work has included collecting employer data on behalf of national occupational surveys, studying the construction sector, as well as long-term occupational employment trends, and leveraging labor market information for customers across Oregon.

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; Jenn is a Certified Financial Aid Administrator, the highest certification offered by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA).

Jennifer Cottam **Chemeketa Community College**

Jennifer Cottam is an Accommodation Specialist at Chemeketa Community College, where she supports students with disabilities in their transition from high school to college by facilitating access to accommodations and academic support services. With a strong foundation in disability services and advocacy, Jennifer previously worked as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, helping individuals with disabilities secure and sustain meaningful employment. Her work is driven by a commitment to equity, empowerment, and ensuring access to education and employment for all.

Presenters

John Valley **Oregon Treasury**

John Valley has been with Oregon Treasury since September 2014. John has been married to Amanda his wife for over 22 years and they have two children, Parker who is 19 and Bridget who is 16. Before working for Oregon Treasury John worked for U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley in his Portland office as his Clackamas County and Washington County field representative. Before working for the Senator, John was the Oregon Government.

Karen Alexander **Chemeketa Community College**

Ms. Alexander serves as the Director of Student Accessibility & Testing Services, and 504/ADA Coordinator for students at Chemeketa. Karen has over 20 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities in occupational and educational settings and is enthusiastic in promoting and preparing students for successful transitions to higher education.

Kim Conolly **Salem Keizer School District, McNary High School**

Kim Conolly engages with college and career readiness at McNary High School in Keizer, Oregon. She is a past member of the Willamette University Counselor Advisory Board and PNACAC Conference Planning Committee. She is passionate about helping students find and fund a debt free education and career pathway, and has been engaged in this work for over 7 years. She is a mom to one graduate student and one college sophomore, both are debt free.

Kristin Vreeland **Higher Education Coordinating Commission- Office of Student Access and Completion**

Kristin Vreeland is a Scholarship Portfolio Coordinator and State Grant Administrator at the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC), part of the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). She has served Oregon students in numerous roles and coordinated with multiple OSAC programs over the past 14 years. Kristin serves on the Oregon C3 Board of Directors and is an alum of Lane Community College and Bushnell University. Kristin's educational experience as a non-traditional college student, long tenure as an OSAC employee, and collaboration on many state projects provides unique insight on financial aid and scholarship application processes.

Madeleine Cole **The Ford Family Foundation, Postsecondary Success - Scholarship Programs**

Madeleine Cole is the Administrative Associate for The Ford Family Foundation's Postsecondary Success office based in Eugene. She supports the department's outreach and scholarship selection efforts to ensure a positive experience for scholarship applicants and awardees.
<https://www.tfff.org/team/madeleine-cole/>

Presenters

Madeline Seghers
OregonServes Commission

Madeline Seghers works for the OregonServes Commission at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission as a Strategic Programs Analyst. Her work centers on helping partners comply with Federal guidance, building stronger partnership and system transparency, and connecting national efforts with local needs.

Mary Jo Sharp
Vale School District

I retired as a teacher and principal from Vale High School after 32 years but returned to work in the Vale School District as the Graduation Coach. As the Graduation Coach I am fortunate to work with students in grades 7-12 as they transition from one grade to another ensuring all students have the best information which allows them to make wise choices that will help them gain the education and experience necessary to meet their future post high school goals.

Mariana Zaragoza, PhD.
Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Mariana Zaragoza, PhD., is a policy strategist passionate about expanding college access in Oregon. She leads the state’s Direct Admissions initiative and brings a community-centered approach to equity and system change.

Melissent Zumwalt
Oregon Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Melissent Zumwalt serves as the program manager for the ORAHEC program office. Prior to AHEC, she held leadership positions with the Veterans Administration Office of Rural Health, the Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network (ORPRN) at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), and the Department of Neurology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF).

Mike Norman
Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Mike Norman is a Program Analyst for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission’s Oregon Youth Works team. His grants center around providing paid work experiences for youth that complement education attainment and provide a foundation of work readiness skills.

Nicole Bales
Oregon Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Nicole Bales joined the ORAHEC program office in January 2024. Prior to AHEC, she spent several years working as a journalist covering local government, education, public safety and social issues for newspapers on the North Oregon Coast and in Central Oregon. Before journalism, Nicole worked for the Columbia Memorial Hospital Foundation in Astoria.

Presenters

Rochelle Farris
**Higher Education Coordinating Commission-
Office of Student Access and Completion**

Rochelle works for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in the Office of Student Access and Completion as an ASPIRE Access Specialist. During her career she worked at Western Oregon University as a financial aid counselor and assisted with admissions and university residence programs. In addition, she has supported CCR work in the Salem-Keizer School District as a College and Career Advisor/ASPIRE Coordinator at McNary High School. Rochelle has a Master of Arts in Leadership: Higher Education from Bushnell University and is dedicated and passionate about supporting students and assisting MS & HS teachers and administrators as they build career and college ready cultures in their schools.

Rebecca Quintana
HomePlate Youth Services

Rebecca Quintana serves as an Education Coordinator at HomePlate Youth Services supporting youth experiencing houselessness achieve their academic goals. As a first-generation Latina college graduate she’s passionate about making education accessible and inclusive for others.

Shelly Warde
Salem Keizer School District

I am a College and Career Coach at West Salem High School and have been a College and Career Coach in the Salem Area for over 10 years. I am a wife to a trades worker, 3 kids that have gone to college and from a Navy family, love all post high school plans.

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