

## OREGON'S GLARING OPPORTUNITY GAPS: The facts are clear. Oregon has been leaving out communities of color and rural Oregonians.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, during record economic growth and a robust economy in Oregon:

**448,000** adults in Oregon are unemployed or working and making **less than \$15** an hour without post-secondary credentials, equivalent to 9 years of Oregon's high school graduation classes.

*(Jason Payton OED, 2020)*

**279,925** adults 25 and older are without a high school equivalency.

*(American Community Survey, 2018)*

Rural Oregon saw only a **7%** increase in jobs, whereas the Portland Metro area saw **25%** and all other Metro areas a **23%** increase.



### Percentage of all adults 25 and older who need opportunity to complete postsecondary credentials

*(HECC, 2018)*

Alaska Native / Native American

**65.2%**

Asian American

**34.8%**

Black / African American

**53.6%**

Hispanic / Latin X

**69.6%**

Multi-racial

**52%**

Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander

**60.1%**

White

**45.6%**



**42%** of Oregon's college students face college expenses that exceed their sources of support, including financial aid and income. Rates are higher for students of color. *(HECC)*



**63%** of community college students reported some basic needs insecurity in the last year. *(Temple University's HOPE Center)*



**\$6** an hour wage gap between Black and white workers—a gap that has grown and not improved since 1980.

*(Policy Link, National Equity Atlas)*



**17%** of adults are at or below the lowest levels of literacy, **25%** below in numeracy.

*(PIAAC)*

## COVID-19 AND WILDFIRES HAVE MAGNIFIED DISPARITIES

In Oregon, those with a high school diploma or less represent **56%** of the unemployment claims but only comprise **28%** of the workforce.

*(June 2020, OED)*

Oregon is in line with national data that shows those most likely to have experienced income loss are **low-income, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and/or women.**

The unemployment rate for **women** has consistently been 2 to 3 percentage points higher than for men.

*(October 2020, OED)*



# PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

**PROVEN SOLUTIONS:** EDUCATION IS KEY FOR AN INCLUSIVE RECOVERY, THE PROVEN PATHWAY TO END AND PREVENT POVERTY.



Oregon's nationally-recognized Pathways to Opportunity initiative closes opportunity gaps and increases economic mobility across the state by expanding access to federal, state, and local resources available to low-income students so more individuals can attend and complete college to move into careers.

**99%** of the jobs created in the last recession went to individuals with some college education. (*Georgetown CEW*)

**80%** of good jobs will require a post-secondary credential. (*Georgetown CEW*)

*Students are unable to access thousands of dollars in benefits and resources. Oregon is leaving millions in federal and philanthropic funding on the table.*

## PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY MAXIMIZES FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Oregon's 17 community colleges, Department of Human Services, Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon, state agencies, and other anti-poverty groups are partnering to transform policies and programs. Increasing access to benefits and resources is key to addressing basic needs insecurity and increasing economic mobility for low-income, rural, and students of color.

Average benefits of **\$8,504** (SNAP, STEP, EITC) or **\$22,904** for parenting students (with ERDC childcare subsidy) reduces the unmet financial need and rates of student houselessness, food and housing insecurity

More low-income students could progress in their career pathway with college staff available to aid with benefit access and navigation. Increasing enrollment in the Community College STEP (SNAP Training and Employment Program) Consortia would allow more SNAP recipients to enroll in community colleges and earn the credentials that lead to family-wage careers. STEP also brings new federal funding to Oregon, with the 17 community colleges expected to generate

**\$36 million by 2025.**

## TODAY'S ACTIONS DETERMINE OREGON'S FUTURE

A **\$3 million** public and private annual investment in Pathways to Opportunity to create an inclusive Oregon could generate an additional **\$7.5 million** by 2025.  
**Every \$1 investment = \$1.63**

These new resources are in addition to the proven public sector savings and new tax revenue that are generated as a result of individuals completing college certificates and degrees.

The data are clear that education and post-secondary credentials are essential for getting back to work after a recession. They are key to an inclusive recovery that creates economic mobility and moves families out of poverty. Communities of color, low-income, and rural Oregonians have not had equitable access to opportunity. They have been hardest hit by this public health and economic disaster, and stand to be impacted for generations without decisive actions that increase access to community colleges, essential resources, and quality jobs.