

# Oregon Opportunity Grant 2021 Report Brief

Highlights from the 2021 Annual OOG Report, January 2021

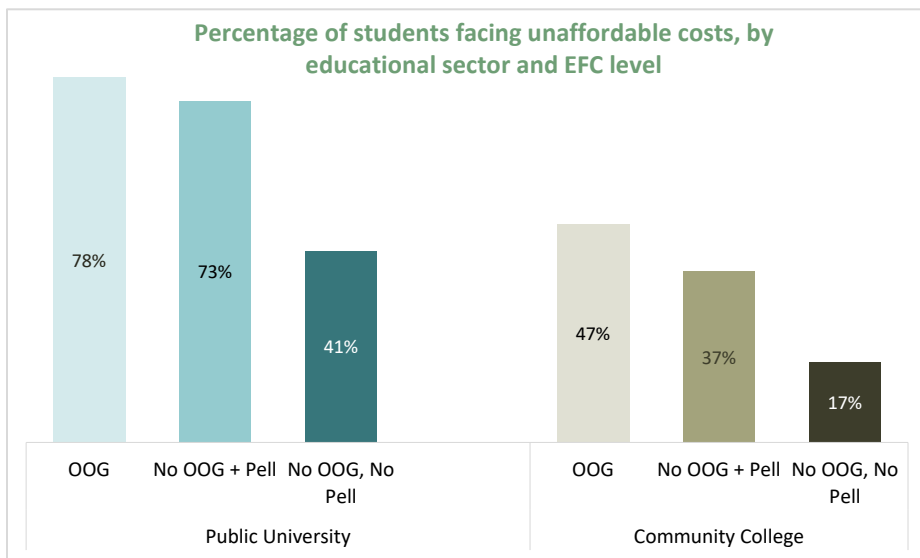
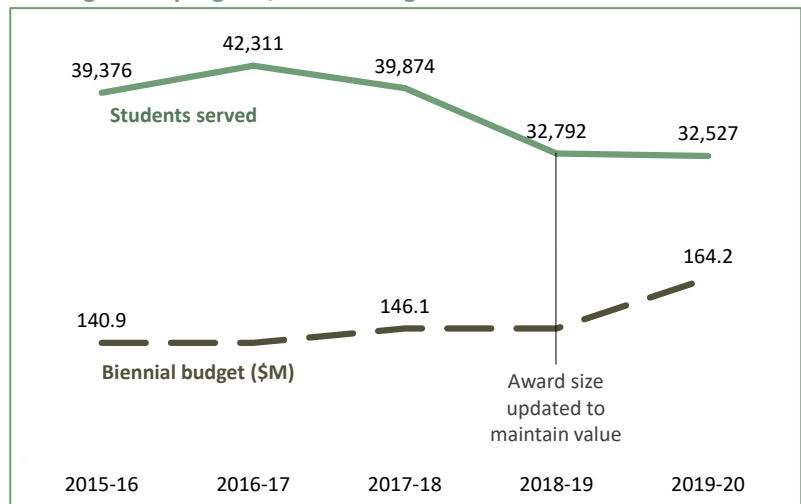
## What is the OOG?

The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based grant program for low-income college students. It is available to eligible students attending Oregon colleges and universities for up to four years at full-time enrollment. In 2019-20, the grant awarded \$3,300 annually for students attending a public university or an independent, private non-profit institution and \$2,700 for students attending a community college.

## Who receives the OOG?

The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) provides financial support to **more than 30,000 students each year**. About half of these students attend one of Oregon's seven public universities, just under half attend one of Oregon's 17 community colleges, and about 4% attend one of 13 private, independent colleges and universities in the state. In addition to supporting students from the lowest income families, the program disproportionately serves students in some of the most marginalized groups in education: historically underserved racial/ethnic groups, women, rural, and first-generation-college students. Among students with financial data, nearly one-third who identify as Asian American, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, or Native American/Alaska Native are served by the OOG, compared to 23% of White students.

Total students receiving an Oregon Opportunity Grant and the biennial funding of the program, 2015 through 2020.



## How much does the OOG help with college affordability?

The OOG does not alleviate all of the hardship of paying for college, but it does have an impact. Students with the OOG **still face significant affordability challenges**: more than three-fourths of OOG recipients at the public universities and half at the community colleges cannot pay the expected cost of their education, even with their grants and scholarships, most

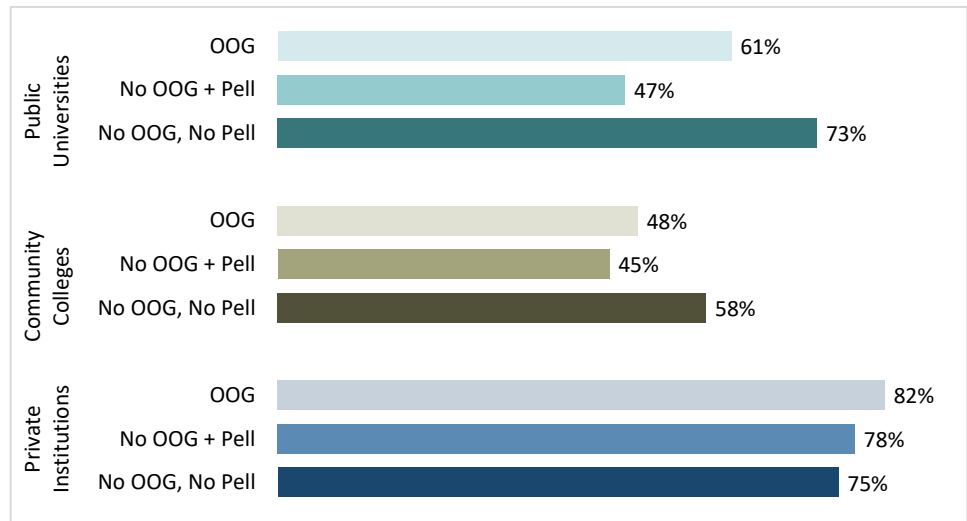
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institutional aid, EFC, and estimated own earnings. These high rates of unaffordability persist across racial/ethnic, gender, age, and rural-urban status. However, if the OOG were not in place, the number of students facing unaffordable costs would increase across all groups, and especially among underserved groups.

## How do OOG recipients progress through college and university?

OOG recipients show **strong progress through college and university**, compared to other low-income students (those who qualify for the federal Pell grant but whose expected family contribution [EFC] is above the OOG limit). Students with the OOG are **slightly more likely to return after their first year** in college and are **more likely to earn a certificate or degree** than other low-income students. These findings hold across educational sector and across nearly all student characteristics. Finally, students with the OOG who complete a degree are also able to **complete their degree slightly faster** than other low-income students.

**Percentage of first-time freshmen who complete a bachelor's degree within six years or an associate degree or transfer to a four-year institution within four years, by educational sector and EFC level**



## Oregon would benefit from increased investment in the Opportunity Grant

The success of OOG recipients in school, combined with the fact that the program disproportionately serves students who face multiple barriers to an equitable postsecondary education, indicates that the main limitation of the OOG is insufficient resources.

Research shows, and our data confirm, that state grants increase the probability that students will complete their degree program. Completion of a postsecondary certificate or degree opens the door to lifelong economic and health benefits. Furthermore, as a key driver of upward mobility, it changes the outlook for future generations. This, in turn, stabilizes communities and yields higher tax revenue for the State.

The continued affordability challenges faced by low-income students point to substantial additional need for the OOG. If Oregon is going to emerge from the pandemic recession equitably, meet its educational goals, and enjoy the economic and social stability that accompany them, expanded state-based financial aid seems not only warranted but required.