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Statewide help now available to adults interested in going to college *State of Oregon opens an Adult Learner Line and website funded by U.S. Dept. of Education*

Portland, OR, July 7, 2009 – The State of Oregon announced today that it has launched a toll-free Adult Learner Resource Line (**1-877-84U-4NOW**) and website (**www.OregonOpportunities.gov**) for Oregonians interested in returning to college, or enrolling for the first time. Funded through a \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the Adult Learner Line is specifically for Oregonians ages 25 and older who are interested in going to college, but need some help and direction on how to enroll, seek financial aid, and generally navigate the process. The Adult Learner Line and website are just one component of the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP) funded last year through the federal government, which is directed at increasing awareness of and access to postsecondary education in Oregon.

“In a time when we’re seeing increased demand for higher education, the Adult Learner Line and website are great resources for Oregonians interested in going to college, but who aren’t quite sure how to get started,” said Joe Holliday, assistance vice chancellor for student success initiatives for the Oregon University System, and the director of the CACGP. “All of Oregon’s public and private, nonprofit colleges and universities are involved in this initiative, and are working collaboratively to reduce the barriers that often hinder prospective students from enrolling in a community college or a 4-year college or university. This is a great resource to help Oregonians meet their education and training goals, and we’re thankful to the U.S. Department of Education for making resources available that directly help people in our state meet their education and training goals.”

Oregonians can access the Adult Learner Line Monday-Friday, between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., at **1-877-84U-4NOW** or **1-877-848-4669**, to get information on enrolling in a 2- or 4-year college or university in Oregon, how to get financial aid, transfer credits, or get specific information on programs for returning or first-time students, childcare options, and other areas. The telephone resource line is supplemented by on-line help at **www.OregonOpportunities.gov**. Several agencies in Oregon are involved in developing and implementing the various components of the CACGP, including the Governor’s Office, the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC), the Oregon University System, and the Oregon Independent Colleges Association.

Holliday said, “As more Oregonians are making employment transitions in the current economy, going back to college is a good option for re-training and re-tooling one’s skills. As state and federal education leaders and advocates often have said, more Americans will need education beyond high school – whether short-term training programs or a 2- or 4-year degree – in order to be flexible and successful in today’s knowledge economy.”

Besides the Adult Learner Line, other components of the CACGP program funded through the federal grant include information outreach on financial aid options through a radio and television advertising effort, and distribution of informational materials on going to college and financial aid through K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and other state agencies and centers, such as the Departments of

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Human Services, Labor, and Employment, and through food banks and other statewide service centers where Oregonians can access this information; and a train-the-trainer program where K-12 guidance counselors, teachers, community resource specialists, and others are provided financial aid training so they can help students and families in their local communities on how to access aid through filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and through other state, federal, and private resources.

The Adult Learner Line and website are supplemented by other Oregon-based resources, such as OSAC's financial aid website, **www.GetCollegeFunds.org**, which helps Oregonians understand the types of aid available to them, deadlines for applying, and other college related information.

The College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP) is a formula grant program that is designed to foster partnerships among Federal, State and local government entities and philanthropic organizations to significantly increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education. CACGP provides two-year grants to States to meet the needs of underrepresented students and families.

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