OTAN *Outreach and Technical Assistance Network*
for Adult Educators

OER Initiatives Help Lower College Textbook Costs

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Two recent articles point to the success that open education resource (OER) initiatives across the country have had in lowering the costs of college textbooks.

An article from Diverse: Issues in Education details OpenStax, a nonprofit initiative started by Rice University in 2012. The university recently announced that more than 2.2 million students and nearly half of U.S. colleges are using the service this year to save about $177 million. The institutions using the service cover quite a range of grade levels and institutions, from high schools to community colleges to larger universities, and textbooks are available in a number of subject areas, mainly in math and science topics.

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) found that the average textbook costs from around the nation are decreasing for the first time in 50 years. Some say the change is due partly to competition from alternatives such as OpenStax. The study, published in May, also concluded that "the average undergraduate student spent $555.60 on required course materials for the academic year" in 2017-18.

A second article from Inside Higher Ed discusses efforts at Lansing Community College in Michigan, Salt Lake Community College in Utah, and the Maricopa Community College District in Arizona to actively implement OER use among the faculty by making grant funding available to develop OER and advocate for its use, with students ultimately benefitting from lower-cost materials. One point repeated throughout is the need for long-term planning and dedication to touting the benefits of OER, especially among faculty who are resistant to change. It is also an opportunity to bring students, faculty, and staff together to collaborate in the process of developing OER for the entire institution.

If you want to learn more about OER, please contact OTAN at support@otan.us ↗ or 916-228-2580 to schedule one of a number of workshops that focus on how to use OER in adult education. https://www.eschoolnews.com/2018/09/06/how-to-find-curate-and-assess-oer/?all ↗ This article also has some ideas on how to find and curate OER if you are just getting started.

Source: Diverse: Issues in Higher Education http://diverseeducation.com/article/121872/ ↗

Source: Inside Higher Ed
https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2018/05/09/two-year-institutions-report-significant-savings-oer-initiatives ↗