



(<https://wvclimb.com>)

□



□

About OER

What is OER & How does it Help Higher Education Students in WV?

OER – Open Educational Resources – are low to no cost course materials (textbooks, for example) – that higher education institutions and their instructors can adopt for their classes so that the materials students need for their classes are as inexpensive as possible. Using OER helps every student because it greatly decreases the cost of textbooks and course materials.

In short, OER can save students hundreds of dollars every year.

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly exacerbated the country's economic challenges, making it even more difficult for many students to afford the costs of higher education, especially high-priced textbooks. To help students, the West Virginia legislature passed legislation encouraging the adoption of OER courses in higher education.

OER materials are considered to be teaching, learning and resource materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that presents "low cost or no cost" access, use, adoption and redistribution by others with limited or no restrictions.

According to Lumen Learning, OER includes:

- Full Courses
- Course Materials
- Modules
- Textbooks
- Streaming Videos
- Tests
- Software
- Any other Tools, Materials or Techniques to Support Access to Knowledge

Purpose of OER

The purpose of OER is to provide high-quality course materials to students at low to no cost, so that more West Virginians have access to higher education.

West Virginia's Higher Education Policy Commission and Community and Technical College System have GRANT OPPORTUNITIES to support faculty who want to create or adopt OER for use in college courses.

OER Grants Help WV Students

Number of Faculty
Adopting OER

278

Total Courses
Converted to OER

459

Number of
Students Impacted

10,868

Each Student
Saved

\$157

Aggregate
Student Savings

\$7.75M

(Since Spring 2021)

Course enrollments compared to the cost of course materials before OER implementation, show that **students experienced an aggregate savings of \$7.75 million. Imagine how much students can save as OER and this grant program continue to grow!**

For everyone one dollar spent on faculty grants, students save seventeen dollars. This is unlike other scholarships or grants, where a one dollar investment saves the student one dollar. Further, the savings will grow every semester, as over 93% of faculty members agree that they plan to convert additional courses to OER in the future.

95% of the faculty who adopted OER strongly agree or agree that switching to OER was worthwhile, and 93% strongly agree or agree that the OER materials they used were high-quality.

OER Grants Help WV Students

DOWNLOAD OER FLYER (<https://wvclimb.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/OER-Student-Flyer-1.pdf>)

1,787 students who took courses in Spring/Summer/Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

in which OER was initially adopted said the following:

85%

of students reported they typically spend more than \$100 on course materials each semester and, of those 47% are typically spending more than \$250 per semester.

70%

of students reported they have delayed or avoided purchasing course materials in the past and, of those, 64% said it was because they didn't have enough money.

90%

of students said it was somewhat or extremely important that they did not have to purchase textbooks for class.

98%

of students reported it was easy to access the course material.

97%

of students thought the OER was of higher quality or the same quality as their normal materials.

79%

of students prefer future courses to have low-cost course materials, and 89% are more likely to take a course with a low-cost option in the future.

Faculty & Student Reviews

Although the OER initiative in West Virginia is still fairly new, participating faculty and students are giving it excellent reviews! See all their quotes below.

Faculty Quotes

"I have several students who are thankful for courses using free online textbooks and other materials."

"I'm impressed with not only the textbook, but the resources that were also provided, which included a test bank, power points and lecture notes. It made the process of transitioning to OER much easier."

"I greatly enjoyed this opportunity to explore ways of meeting course objectives while saving students the cost of a course textbook. This summer, once all the grades are in, I'll evaluate the outcomes a little more carefully. But as far as I can tell, the resources I used worked well. One thing in particular about OER implementation is that it helped me to localize this course- i.e., to find resources produced on campus about campus life and learning."

"The switch to an OER textbook, I feel, made a huge difference in my course, and I am thrilled to have had this opportunity."

"I'm pleased with this OER selection! Anything that saves the students money without sacrificing quality is going to be worth it, and I feel this text is better than other textbooks I've used in the past. They also offer the chance to purchase a physical copy of the book for those that prefer it. I'm really happy with this textbook!"

"Thanks for providing me the opportunity to be part of this OER implementation experience. I very much enjoyed the workshops, as well as the experience, in general. I always tried to use as many free resources as possible for the students but creating a course that only uses OERs was a whole new experience that I enjoyed very much! Thanks again!"

"I'm glad I did this, and I'm thankful for the support. I'd love to see this program continue and have even more opportunities for interaction."

Student Quotes

"I liked having no traditional textbook because I have bought textbooks for other classes and never used them or used them a little. I did not like spending a bunch of money just to not use a traditional textbook so the online was much better."

"I enjoyed having a free resource that had helpful information that was relevant to the material being taught. My electronic book helped me be able to read even when I was nursing my child. I can access it from anywhere including work where I read on breaks."

"I have had semesters before where I had all my classes covered with financial aid, but the books would end up costing like \$800 – so I would not be able to take the classes that I needed. I would have to pick and choose which courses to take that I could afford the books. This class was VERY helpful that the book was online. Classes like this would have enabled me to finish my degree a lot sooner had they been available."

"I saved so much money, which I really appreciate!"

"I loved getting to use OER and learning at a low cost!"

"It was extremely beneficial having the materials that were given in this specific course. I think other courses should consider taking the same or a similar approach. Required textbooks can be very expensive and at times unnecessary. This approach relieves students from the stress and hassle of purchasing textbooks."
