# SBCTC Workforce Pell Updates

WA Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
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# What Is Workforce Pell?

- A new version of the Federal Pell Grant to support students in short-term job-focused programs
- Expands eligibility to programs that traditionally did not qualify for the Federal Pell Grant
- Helps students quickly gain skills for in-demand careers
- Follows most traditional Pell rules
  - Includes expanded eligibility to eligible bachelor's degree holders

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# Program Eligibility

To qualify for Workforce Pell, programs must:

- Be offered by an accredited eligible for Title IV student aid
- Have been offered by the institution for at least one year
- Be 150–599 clock hours (7.5–29.5 credit hours) in length
- Last at least 8 weeks but fewer than 15 weeks.
- Lead to a stackable, portable credential recognized by multiple employers or prepare students for entry-level jobs that require one specific credential
- Transfer credit into future certificate or degree programs.

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# Program Eligibility

Programs must also:

- Be approved by the state governor as aligned to in-demand jobs and the needs of employers

- Meet performance benchmarks:
  - ≥70% completion rate (within 150% of program length)
  - ≥70% job placement rate (within 180 days of completion)

- Program cost must be ≤ value-added earnings of graduates 3 years prior

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# Federal Oversight & Rulemaking

- The Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) Committee, met in Dec 2025 and Jan 2026 to review rulemaking for the Workforce Pell framework
- Committee recommendations are provided to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for consideration but are not final rules
- The Department of ED will consider input from:
  - Committee feedback
  - Public comments from the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)
  - Final rules will determine implementation timelines & guidance

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# Workforce Pell Cross-Agency Implementation Task Force

## Purpose

- To provide multi-stakeholder analysis and recommendation for the implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant program through Federal Title IV Financial Aid funding in Washington State,
- Expand access to short-term, high-demand training programs that support equitable workforce development,
- Intention to meet local labor market needs, and foster pathways to family-sustaining wages.

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# Workforce Pell Cross-Agency Implementation Task Force

## Initial membership

- Governor's Policy Office staff
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board)
- Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)
- Washington Workforce Association (WWA)
- A Workforce Development Council- Spokane
- **Note**: Other agencies and stakeholders have been identified for inclusion going forward.

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# Workforce Pell Cross-Agency Implementation Task Force

## Guiding Principals

- Equity & Access
- Student Protection & Quality
- Data & Accountability
- Employer & Industry Engagement
- Accessibility & Support
- Governance & Collaboration

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# Key Considerations

- Workforce Pell is not new or separate source of federal funding
  - Awards come from the existing Federal Pell Grant budget
- A student can receive traditional Pell OR Workforce Pell in a term, but not both
- Workforce Pell counts toward the 600% Pell Lifetime Eligibility (LEU)
- All standard Pell rules still apply unless otherwise specified
- Workforce Pell cannot be used for:
  - Remedial or developmental education, ESL programs, study-abroad or correspondence courses, programs from unaccredited institutions

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# Key Considerations

- Non-Credit Courses and Registered apprenticeship programs have been identified as eligible, but we've yet to receive specific details relevant to alignment with pathways, credits, credentials, or program length.
- State Board staff continues to carefully monitor the rulemaking process to identify what specific data is required to determine program eligibility, cost of attendance, and other elements necessary to administer the program to avoid risk of federal repayment

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# Capacity and Readiness

- **Training & Professional Development**
  - Financial aid staff need ongoing training to interpret new rules, manage packaging, and communicate changes to students

- **Administration**
  - Additional financial aid staff and support staff may be required to manage increased workload and maintain service levels
  - SBCTC is considering how short-term programs may be informed by existing campus advisory committees and incorporated into the required Program Approval Process.

- **Program Development**
  - The additional student resource is absent program resources to develop new or modify existing workforce development programs suitable to meet this emerging need.

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# Capacity and Readiness

- **Systems & Data Integration**
  - IT and reporting teams will need to adapt systems to track new eligibility, reporting, and outcome requirements, ensuring accurate and seamless data flow between departments

- **Cross-Department Collaboration**
  - Successful implementation will require close coordination among financial aid, academic affairs, Workforce Education, and compliance teams to verify program eligibility and maintain accountability

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# Thank you.

## Any Questions?