Pell for Workforce in Washington

Industry Recommendations

Washington Roundtable · Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board | June 2026

Joint industry recommendations: Pell for Workforce implementation in WA

- In partnership with the Governor’s office, the Washington Roundtable and the Washington State Labor Council developed a full set of recommendations for implementation of Pell for Workforce in Washington.
- Recommendations were submitted to the Governor’s office in May.
- Full document with additional detail is in the Workforce Board meeting packet.
- Today’s presentation will cover key takeaways.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Aligning public investment with workforce demand

- Starting July 1, 2026, Pell Grants will be available for short-term workforce training programs for the first time.
- Washington holds meaningful discretion in determining which programs qualify, and how.
- Rigor in program evaluation and proof of outcomes calls for innovative new thinking about workforce system alignment in Washington.
- **Business and labor agree**: Ensure Pell for Workforce expands access to high-quality training that leads to real workforce outcomes for Washington workers and employers.

OUR PROCESS

Built from employer and labor experience

21
Employers

8
Sector Organizations

20
Labor Leaders

Phase 1
Initial Design Input

→

Phase 2
Detailed Design Choice Feedback

→

Phase 3
Recommendation Development & Review

Sectors:
construction & skilled trades · clean energy · maritime · healthcare · agriculture · manufacturing · hospitality · retail · education

OUR FRAMING

We know there are short-term needs. We're focused on the long-term.

YEAR ONE

- Rely on already-rigorous federal standards.
- Take an expansive view of qualifying programs.
- Set clear quality expectations without adding new barriers.

YEAR TWO & BEYOND

- Build a durable, employer- and labor-driven system for validating workforce demand.
- Sector-driven, regionally responsive, and grounded in real hiring behavior.

1 TAKEAWAY

Start with rigorous federal standards

Rely on already rigorous federal requirements for program eligibility.

Washington should take an expansive view of the types of programs that meet learner and employer needs. Successful programs share common characteristics, which our stakeholders highlighted, and the state should use these characteristics to set clear expectations for high-quality programs.

2 TAKEAWAY

Define demand with sector-driven validation

Job and skill demand should be defined through an employer-led, structured, repeatable process with sector-wide data and insights to create a shared signal to use across programs.

Among other factors, validation should be grounded in employer hiring behavior, incorporate emerging industry needs and projected workforce transitions, and designed for representative employer participation.

3 TAKEAWAY

Optimize support for registered apprenticeship

Opportunities for Pell for Workforce to support registered apprenticeships and recognized pre-apprenticeships should be optimized.

In consultation with labor, seek out ways for Pell for Workforce to optimize support for Washington's high-value registered apprenticeship and recognized pre-apprenticeship education pathways. Ensure short-term, narrower training does not piecemeal apprenticeship pathways.

4 TAKEAWAY

Enabling factors are critical

The success of the policy depends on the infrastructure around it, including:

- **Financial aid and advising staff** capacity and support
- **Wraparound supports** (childcare, transportation, emergency funds, language support)
- **Rural accessibility**, including hybrid and flexible delivery models
- **Program awareness** across students, workers, and employers

5 TAKEAWAY

Employers and labor are committed and ready to partner

These are living recommendations.
The engagement process produced alignment between business and labor, and a commitment to stay engaged as implementation moves forward.

We are ready to partner with the Governor's office, the Workforce Board, and state agencies to define roles and accountability for the demand validation process — and to help build the longer-term infrastructure that makes Pell for Workforce work well for Washington workers and employers over time.

Thank you + Questions

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