



Workforce Pell

What we know so far

Step in the Regulation Process

Final rules released
May 19, 2026.

Goes into effect on
July 1, 2026.

<https://policytracker.wiche.edu/federal-regulation/workforce-pell>



Important to note....

- Strictest accountability requirements attached federal student funds
- Consider it a workforce program...throw out what you know about Pell for program students



What is Workforce Pell

- Expands federal Pell grants to short-term workforce programs
- First time Pell funding applies to programs as short as 8, but less than 15 weeks.
- Created under the Working Families Tax Cuts Act (2025)
- Goal
 - Faster pathways to employment
 - Align education with workforce needs



Key Purpose

- Increase access to affordable, short-term training
- Support high-skill, high-wage, in-demand jobs
- Help students enter the workforce quickly (weeks, not years)
- Address labor shortages in key industries

Who

- WFP is available to **undergraduate students who meet traditional financial need requirements.**
- Key distinctions include: Bachelor's Degree Holders:
 - Unlike traditional Pell Grants, students who already have a baccalaureate degree are eligible for WFP to gain new proficiencies.
- **Eligible Institutions**

What



Duration: Must require at least 8 weeks but less than 15 weeks of instruction.



Hours: Must provide 150 to 599 clock hours (or 4–15 semester hours / 6–23 quarter hours). Just post-secondary hours (not remedial or ESL).



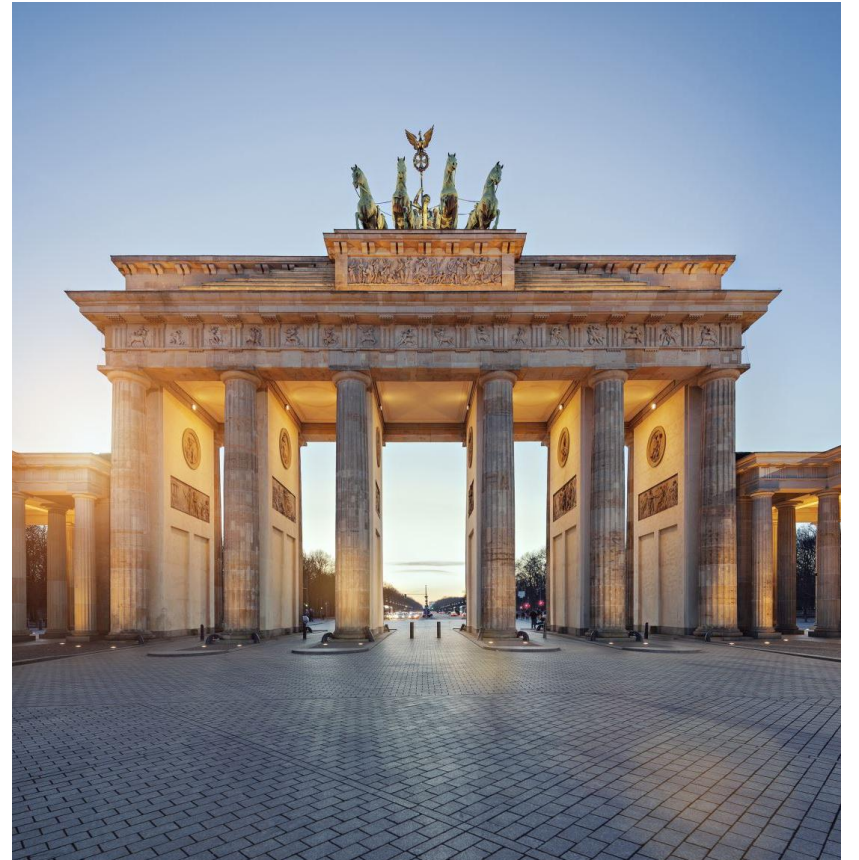
Delivery Restrictions: Programs cannot be offered via correspondence, study abroad, or direct assessment.



Instructional Limits: If an institution partners with an ineligible entity to provide instruction, that entity may provide no more than 25% of the program (Apprenticeship is up to 49%)

How-Heavily Gated

- **Governor Approval (State Level):** The Governor must consult with the State WIOA board to certify that the program aligns with high-skill/high-wage/in-demand jobs, incorporates direct employer input, and leads to a recognized postsecondary credential that is stackable and portable.
- **Secretary Approval (Federal Level):** The U.S. Secretary of Education grants final approval only after the program has existed for at least 12 months and demonstrated it can meet federal performance and earnings metrics



Student Eligibility

- Must meet standards Pell grant requirements
 - Financial need
 - High School diploma or equivalent
 - Meet citizenship requirements
- Enrolled in an approved workforce program
- Aid is prorated based on program length
- Bachelor's degree holders may be eligible under specific conditions
- Counts toward lifetime eligibility with prorated awards
- Cannot:
 - Receive multiple Pell awards simultaneously

Accountability & Outcomes

- **The 70/70 Rule:** Programs must maintain a verified completion rate of at least 70% and a job placement rate of at least 70%
- **Value-Added Earnings (VAE):** This is a critical financial gatekeeper. The program's published tuition and fees must not exceed its VAE. VAE is calculated as the difference between the median earnings of graduates and 150 percent of the federal poverty line (~\$20-25k). If a program's VAE is zero or negative, it is ineligible for Pell funds
 - Graduates who are continuing in higher education are excluded from the VAE metric



W I S C O N S I N

TECHNICAL COLLEGE

S Y S T E M

WTCS's Role

- National Governor's Association on WFP
- WFP Group with DWD
- SCC6 (Advanced Manufacturing & Industry 4.0; Infrastructure & Supply Chain; Healthcare)

Programs that are eligible or colleges hope to make eligible

Cluster	#	Notes
Arts, Entertainment & Design	1	Visual Design
Digital Technology	1	Networking
Energy & Natural Resources	1	Solar Install
Hospitality, Events & Tourism	2	Varied
Financial Services	4	Varied
Marketing & Sales	4	Varied
Agriculture	5	Varied
Construction	5	Varied
Education	7	Childcare
Healthcare	9	Dental Auxiliary
Supply Chain & Transportation	10	Mostly Truck Driving
Public Service & Safety	15	Mostly EMT
Management & Entrepreneurship	19	Varied
Advanced Manufacturing	22	Lots of welding
All	105	


Timeline

- Final rule announced May 18, 2026
- Effective date: July 20, 2026
- Optional early implementation July 1, 2026

Think of July 1 as a starting point
not a deadline



Implications for Institutions

- Opportunity to:
 - Expand short-term workforce offerings
 - Attract new student populations
 - Must
 - Meet strict performance metrics
 - Coordinate with state workforce systems
 - Participate in ongoing data reporting on enrollment, completion, employment, and earnings
 - Increased emphasis on labor market outcomes
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Next Steps

- Identify priority occupations and programs
- Ensure internal systems are in place:
 - Financial aid
 - Academic Advising
 - Career Advising
 - Integrate credit and noncredit student data systems

