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Workforce Pell Update
Interim Joint Committee on Education
June 2, 2026

Workforce Pell Background

- The federal Pell Grant provides financial aid for eligible students to enroll in postsecondary education degree programs. In 2025, the Workforce Pell Grant Program was created by Congress as an expansion of the Pell Grant to include enrollment in short-term credentials at eligible postsecondary institutions.
- The Workforce Pell Grant Program will be administered by the U.S. Department of Education and go into effect on July 1, 2026.
- The federal final rule regarding the program was issued on May 19, 2026.
- For a program to be approved for the Workforce Pell Grant, it must be reviewed and approved by both the Governor, in consultation with the state's workforce development board, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Workforce Pell Eligibility Federal Requirements

For a program to be eligible for the Workforce Pell Grant, federal law requires that it:

- Be offered by a postsecondary institution that is eligible for financial aid through Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965
- Has an instruction period that lasts from 8-14 weeks
- Demonstrates 70% completion and 70% job placement rates
- Leads to a recognized credential that is stackable and portable
- Trains students for in-demand, high-wage and high-skill occupations with demonstrated hiring demand from employers
- Has published tuition and fees that are less than the value-added earnings (VAE) of a program

Next Steps

Kentucky is working on a regulation, including:

- Eligibility
- Application for approval
- Applying in-demand, high-skill, and high-wage to different sectors