

Workforce Pell Grant Program (WPG)

2026-2027

WPG Purpose

- Expand access to workforce education.
- Increase attainment of and enhance credentials of value within in-demand industries and occupations.
- Increase student enrollment, college retention, college completion, and career readiness.
- Reduce student debt.
- Ensure high-quality workforce education and a return on investment (ROI) for students.



WPG Overview

The **Workforce Pell Grant (WPG)** Program expands federal Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term, high-value workforce education training.

By providing financial aid for tuition and fees, this initiative supports accelerated pathways that align with Texas economic priorities.

These programs meet established workforce standards, increasing access to stackable, portable, and industry-recognized credentials that strengthen regional employer partnerships and the talent pipeline.



WPG Requirements – Part 1

To be eligible to become a WPG program, a program must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

Program Criteria

- Program is offered by an accredited institution eligible for Title IV Federal student aid.
- Program has been offered by the institution for at least one year.
- Program must be between 150-599 clock hours or 4-15 semester or trimester hours, or 6-23 quarter hours.
- Program duration is at least 8 weeks but fewer than 15 weeks.
- Program must be taught at least 75% by the offering institution.
- Program must not be offered as part of a correspondence course or study abroad (this does not exclude online programs).
- Program must make tuition and fees publicly available.

WPG Requirements – Part 2

To be eligible to become a WPG program, a program must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

Career Pathways:

- Program leads to a stackable, portable credential recognized by multiple employers, **OR** prepares students for entry-level employment that requires one specific credential.
- Program leads to credit articulation.
- Program leads to a high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupation as defined by the governor.

WPG Requirements – Part 3

To be eligible to become a WPG program, a program must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

Accountability Metrics (determined by state and federal government - institutions must provide student level data for determination of these metrics):

- $\geq 70\%$ program completion rate within 150% of its expected completion time.
- $\geq 70\%$ job placement rate within 180 days of program completion.
- Program Cost \leq value-added earnings of graduates 3 years prior.
 - First value-added earnings calculation would occur during the 2029-30 award year and would apply to the 2030-31 award year.
 - For the interim, we will collect tuition and fees information for each program submitted for eligibility.

WPG Definitions

Program Criteria

- **State Authorization, Accreditation, and Title IV Eligibility:** Institutions must be officially authorized to operate in Texas by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, maintain institutional accreditation from an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), and be eligible to receive Title IV Pell funding to participate in the WPG Program. [Recognition of Accrediting Agencies - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#).
- **Program Existence:** A program must have been in operation for at least one year before the submission of the THECB Eligibility Certification Form.

Program Criteria Continued

- **Program Duration:** Institutions must offer short-term workforce programs leading to a recognized post-secondary credential that consists of
 - at least 8 weeks and less than 15 weeks (8-14 weeks) in length **AND**
 - consist of 150-599 clock or credit hours, or 4-15 semester or trimester hours, or 6-23 quarter hours.
- **Program Instruction:** Program must be taught at least 75% by the offering institution.
- **Program Format:** Program must not be offered as part of a correspondence course or study abroad (this does not exclude online programs).

Career Pathways – Part 1

Stackable: The program must lead to a recognized post-secondary credential (e.g., advanced certification) that provides earned credit toward an advanced certificate or degree program.

Portable: The earned credential must be recognized by various employers and across different geographic locations.

Exceptions: Programs that prepare students for employment that requires a specific credential and grants that credential (i.e., CDL) are excluded from the stackable and portable requirements as they are stand-alone credentials.

Career Pathways – Part 2

Credit Articulation: All programs must ensure program completers receive academic credit applicable toward an additional certificate or degree, accepted by one or more institutions, or registered apprenticeships towards academic credit (i.e., there must be a documented pathway to a credit-bearing program).

- Noncredit programs must prove they create a pathway to further education.
- Registered apprenticeship must lead to an academic credit within a certificate or degree program.
- Examples:
 - CNA to LPN - A student might complete a noncredit CNA certificate, which then articulates into a credit-bearing LPN program)
 - CompTIA A+, Google IT Support, Cisco training → Credit-bearing IT certificates or degrees

Career Pathways – Part 3

High Skill/High Wage or In Demand: Leads to a high-skill/high-wage or in-demand occupation as defined by the governor.

- A list of eligible SOC codes and CIP codes will be made public.

Employer Hiring Needs: The program must meet the specific workforce competencies and skills, and recognized credentials required by in-demand industries and occupations for employment and career advancement.

Accountability Metrics

The following measures are determined by state and federal government - institutions must provide student level data to be considered for approval:

- **Completion Rate:** $\geq 70\%$ program completion rate within 150% of its expected completion time.
- **Job Placement Rate:** $\geq 70\%$ job placement rate within 180 days of program completion.

Future Accountability Metrics

Value-added Earnings are to be calculated three award years following the first award year when the eligible workforce program has graduates.

- First value-added earnings calculation would occur during the 2029-30 award year and would apply to the 2030-31 award year.
- For the interim, we will collect tuition and fees information for each program submitted for eligibility.
- Once value-added earnings are calculated, schools must limit tuition and fees to the value-added earnings calculated by the Department if they want to maintain Workforce Pell Grant eligibility.

WPG Eligibility Requirements

Administrative Capacity: Institutions must have the administrative capability and capacity to manage potential increases in enrollment and complete all required annual reporting and certifications.

Special Cases

Program	Rule Exemptions
Registered Apprenticeship Programs	Exempt from High Skill/High Wage/In Demand Requirements AND Employer Hiring Needs Requirements
Programs that prepare students for an occupation where there is only one recognized postsecondary credential	Exempt from Stackable and Portable Requirements

Required Documentation

Evidence Documentation

- 1. Evidence of Stackability:** How those credits satisfy requirements for subsequent advanced credentials.
- 2. Employer Partner Letter:** The employer partner provides a Letter of Support that lists the specific skills and competencies the program provides.

Data Submission Templates (through MoveIT)

- 1. Program Data**
- 2. Student Data**

Steps to Become a WPG Program

Step 1. Review Eligibility

Review program eligibility requirements to ensure your institution meets all preliminary eligibility criteria.

Step 2. Understand the Process

Review the WPG Program Guidelines and data submission templates.

Step 3. Eligibility Form and Required Documentation

Once you review and understand the WPG program requirements, complete the Eligibility Form during the specified submission period.

Step 4. THECB Conducts an Internal Review

After the submission of the Eligibility Form, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) internal review committee will evaluate each submission for completeness, adherence to requirements, and the institution's capability and capacity for successful implementation.

Step 5. Obtain Final Approvals

THECB will provide the list of eligible programs to the Office of the Governor (OOG). Thereafter, OOG will submit the finalized list to the Department of Education for review and approval.

Important Notice



Final certification and approval will be completed by the Governor and U.S. Department of Education. A formal approval notification must be received from the U.S. Department of Education to begin WPG implementation.

Additionally, it is recommended that financial aid offices prepare for potential WPG program implementation and establish the internal processes necessary, per federal guidance, to support Federal Pell-eligible students and program leads.

Preparing for WPG: Essential Criteria

Financial Aid Collaboration:

- **System Readiness:** Coordinate with your Financial Aid Office to ensure your system can process Short-term Pell awards.
- **Eligibility Tracking:** Financial Aid offices must be prepared to monitor student Pell Lifetime Eligibility (LEU) for these specific clock-hour programs.



Questions

WPG Program Email: WorkforcePellTexas@highered.Texas.gov

WPG Program Webpage:

<https://www.highered.texas.gov/grants/workforce-pell-grant-wpg-program/>