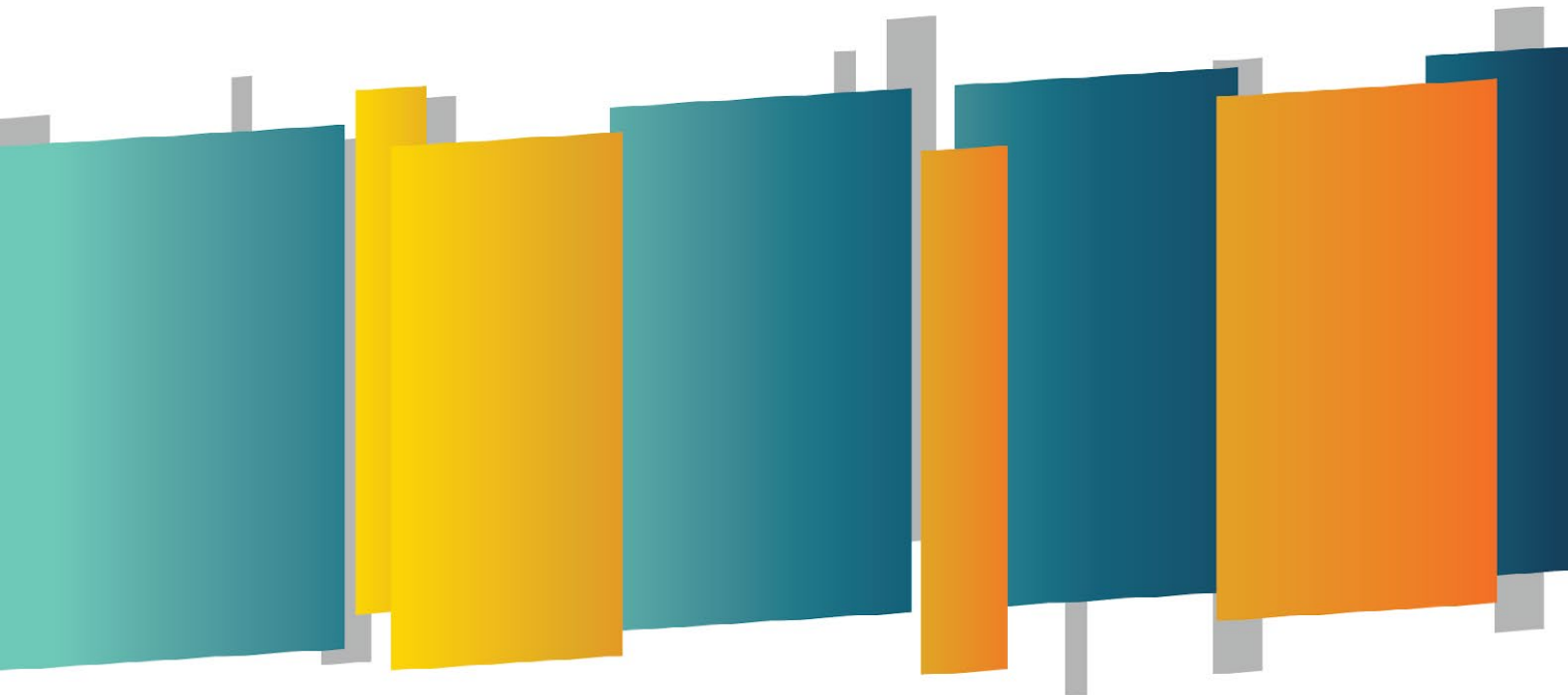


# State of Iowa Workforce Pell Program Policies and Procedures Guide

June 2026



State of Iowa  
Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
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## One Big Beautiful Bill Act

The federal Workforce Pell program officially became law with the passage of H.R. 1, signed on July 4, 2025.

This landmark legislation expanded Pell eligibility to short-term training programs between eight and 15 weeks in length, provided they meet rigorous quality standards regarding completion rates, job placement, and earnings outcomes.

While authorized in 2025, the program is scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2026, marking a significant evolution in federal aid by treating short-term workforce training as a viable, debt-free alternative to traditional academic pathways.

## Introduction

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Workforce Pell Grants expand federal financial aid to cover short-term workforce training programs that prepare students for high-skill, high-wage and high-demand (H3) jobs, which are structured to include 150-599 clock hours with at least 8 but less than 15 weeks of instructional time. Unlike traditional Pell Grants, these are available to students who already have earned a bachelor's degree (but who have not attained a graduate degree), and the award amounts are based on program length and student Pell grant eligibility.

Institutions seeking approval to offer Workforce Pell programs must receive approval by the state of Iowa's Governor and the United States Department of Education (USED). Governor Reynolds established a Statewide Workforce Pell Implementation Team (Implementation team) to establish policies and procedures for Iowa's Workforce Pell program. This guide provides details on the Workforce Pell program requirements and approval process.

To confirm program eligibility, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) will gather both program-level and student-level data from qualifying postsecondary institutions who apply for program approval under Workforce Pell. Application requirements are outlined in this document. Eligible institutions are those authorized to operate in the state of Iowa, accredited by an agency that is recognized by the USED, and approved to receive Title IV funding. Participation in Workforce Pell is voluntary.

To receive approval, institutions must submit program-level data demonstrating that their programs align with Iowa's approved high-demand, high-skill and high-wage (H3) occupation list and satisfy all federal and state Workforce Pell requirements. In addition, institutions must provide student-level data demonstrating that the program meets federally defined student outcome benchmarks.

# Program Eligibility

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The Implementation Team will review the application and evaluate institutional data to preliminarily determine whether programs meet institutional eligibility, program design and student outcome requirements established under federal regulations. The Department reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification as needed to verify eligibility. The Department will share its findings related to program eligibility with the State Workforce Development Board and the Governor's Office for approval consideration. State-approved programs will be submitted to the USED for final review and approval. Approved programs will be included on the Iowa Workforce Pell approved program list for the corresponding academic year.

## Iowa Workforce Pell Program Application

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This section offers information related to completing the Iowa Workforce Pell Program application. Only items requiring further explanation are included in this section.

### Program and Institution Information

#### **Workforce Program Name, Local Program Code (Course Catalog Code) & Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code**

- The Workforce Program Name is the local name of the program that will be listed in catalogs and marketing materials.
- The Local Program Code is the corresponding college catalog code for the program.
- Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code is the standard code associated with the program. CIP alignment with the H3 occupations (SOC) can be found on the [Iowa Workforce Pell website](#). All potential CIP codes have been included in the crosswalk to reference for both existing and new potential Workforce Pell programs, but not all CIP programs are considered workforce-aligned. Only short-term, workforce programs meeting all Workforce Pell eligibility requirements are eligible for program approval.
- CIP code numbers should be listed using the following format: [XX.XXX](#) or 00.0000.

#### **Evidence of program enrollment showing the program has operated at least one year**

A program must have been in existence for at least one year in order to qualify for Workforce Pell. For programs seeking eligibility by the implementation date of July 1, 2026, this means the program must have been actively offering instruction to students for at least one year as of June 30, 2026.

The one-year operational requirement may reset if a program is. Applicants are encouraged to seek consultation from the Department if a program is modified. Potential Evidence of Program History

- Registration or student information system report showing course schedule: class meeting times, class start and end dates that demonstrate sequential weeks of instruction. If non-sequential weeks of instruction were offered, include specific calendar week meeting dates.
- Website screen shot or marketing materials showing course schedule: class meeting times, class start and end dates that demonstrate sequential weeks of instruction. If non-sequential weeks of instruction were offered, include specific calendar week meeting dates.

## Potential Evidence of Program Enrollment

Provide only aggregate data with the application. **Do not include any personally identifiable information (PII) unless it is subsequently requested by the Department.** Examples include:

- Student enrollment or completion records (registration data, student information system reports) showing individuals enrolled in the program.
- Enrollment reports.
- Cohort tracking reports illustrating enrollment trends across multiple start dates.

## Workforce Program Description

Include program descriptions used in college catalogs, program offerings, and/or marketing materials.

## Workforce Program Student Learning Outcomes

List the Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO) assigned to this program.

## Program Overview

This section seeks information related to the program's offerings and structure.

## Arrangements with Ineligible Institutions or Organizations

An ineligible institution or organization cannot provide more than 25% of a program, unless it is a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program (as defined in 29 CFR Part 29.2). RA programs may provide more than 25% but less than 50% of a program. For purposes of Workforce Pell Grants, ineligible institutions or organizations are those that include any of the following:

- are not approved to participate in Title IV programs or has been subject to any suspension emergency or termination action by the Secretary during the preceding five years
- provide more than 25% of a program that is not an RA program
- provide 50% or more of an RA program

## Correspondence Courses

Programs with correspondence courses are not eligible for Workforce Pell. Per 34 CFR 600.2, a correspondence course is one for which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructors. Interaction between instructors and students in a correspondence course is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course. A correspondence course is not distance education.

## Recognized Postsecondary Credential

To qualify for Workforce Pell, a program must show that it results in a recognized postsecondary credential. Under 34 CFR Section 690.91, a "recognized postsecondary credential" includes an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion from a Registered Apprenticeship, a license recognized by a state or the federal government, or an associate or bachelor's degree. Institutions are required to specify in their application which credential the program is designed to deliver.

## Stackability and Portability

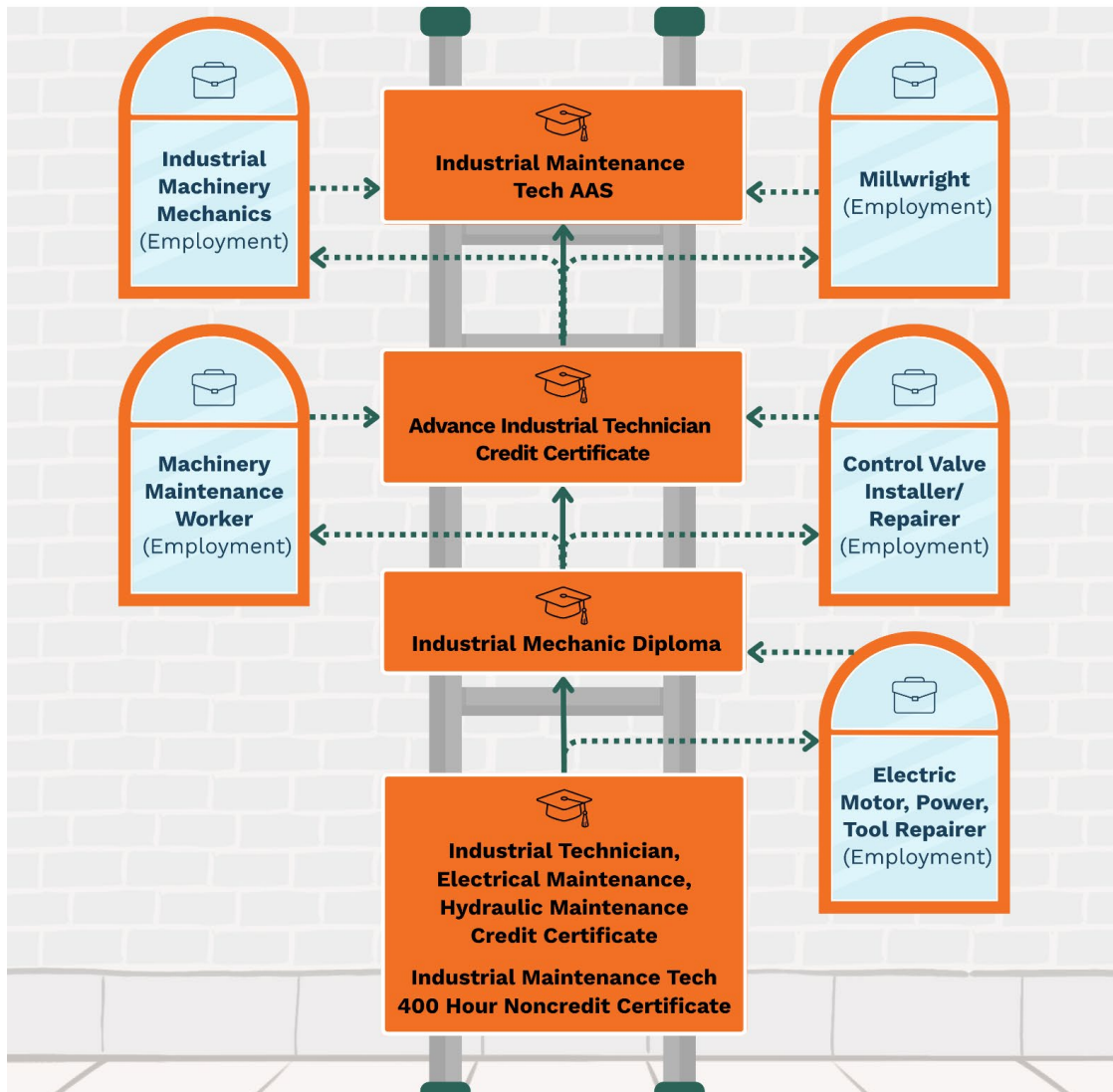
For purposes of Workforce Pell program approval, an Iowa Workforce Pell program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential that is stackable and portable or prepares a student for employment for which there is only one recognized postsecondary credential.

- “Stackable” means the postsecondary credential earned through the program can be combined with other postsecondary credentials to build up an individual's qualifications to help them to move along an academic or career pathway. The intent is that Workforce Pell programs must “stack” into a credit program at an institution to meet the certificate or degree requirements of that program.
- “Portable” means that the postsecondary credential earned is recognized and accepted for credit at other educational institutions, or the postsecondary credential meets employment requirements across other industries or businesses. The intent is for the postsecondary credential to offer both on and off ramps to employment and/or postsecondary education and training across an individual's academic and employment pathways.

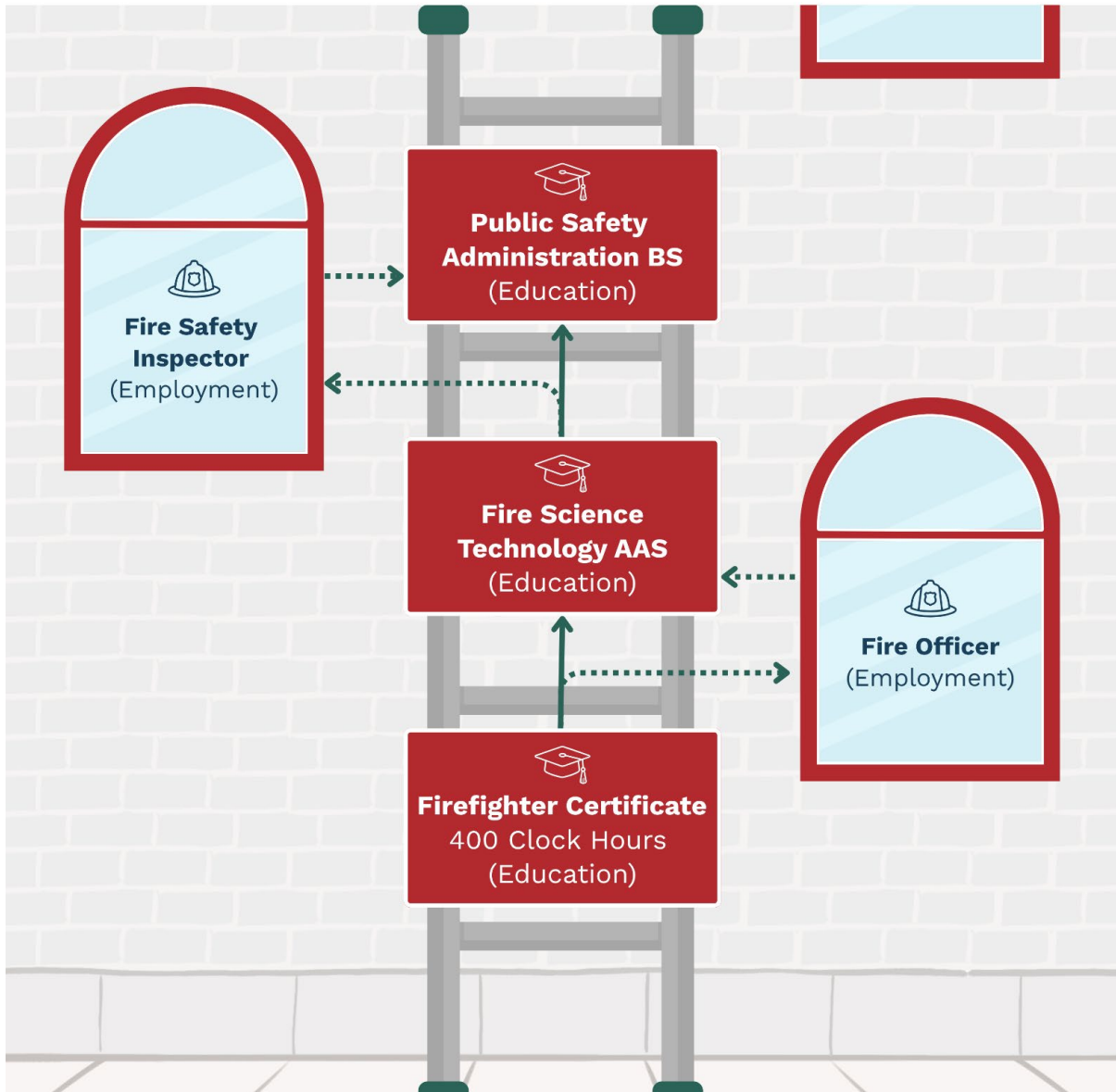
# Stackable Credentials

## How Workforce Pell Programs Build up Successful Career Pathways

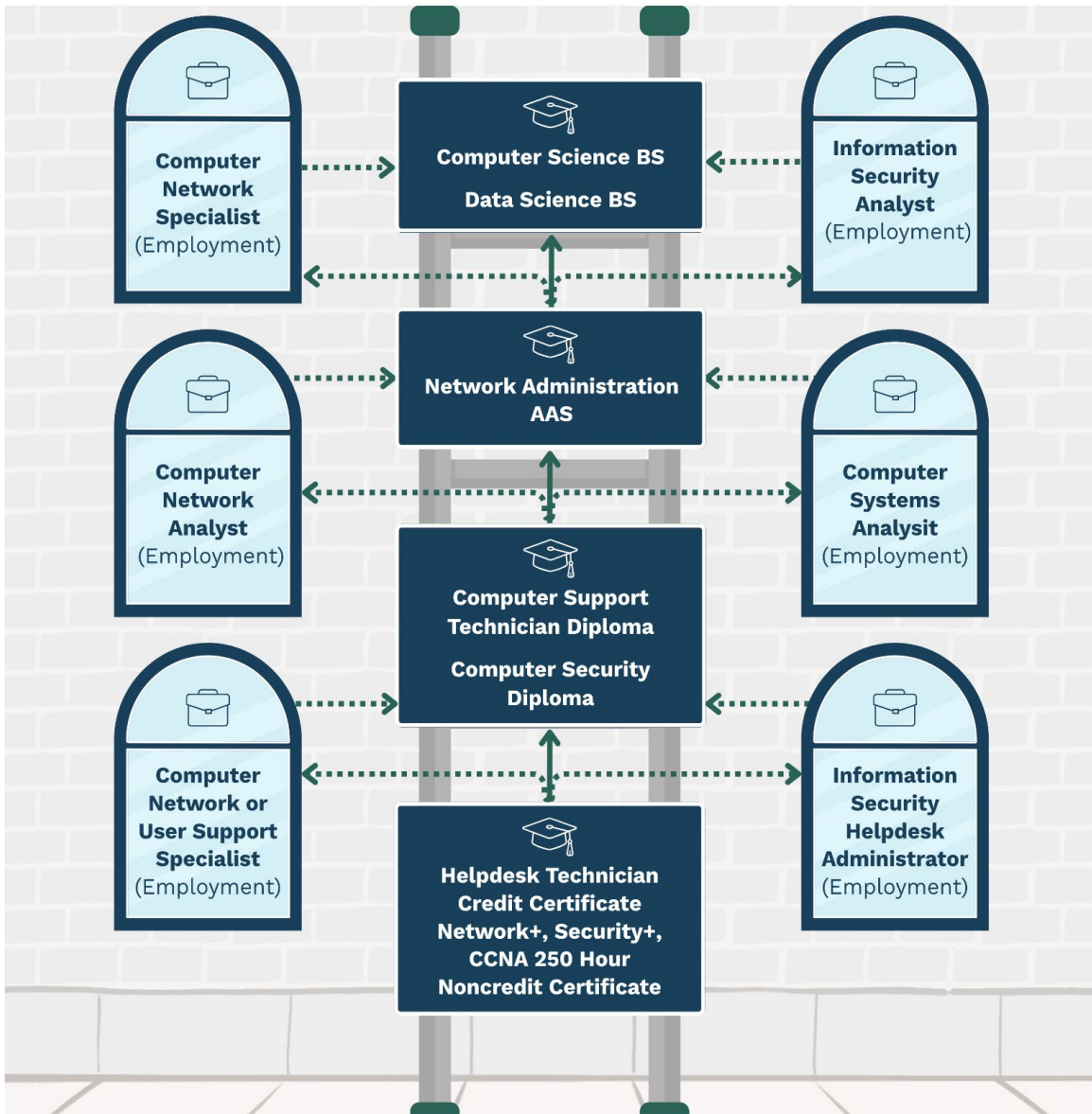
### Example Pathway in the Advanced Manufacturing Profession



### Example Pathway in the Firefighting Profession



### Example Pathway in the Information Technology Profession



### **Potential Stackability Evidence:**

- List the recognized postsecondary credential that students will earn upon workforce program completion.
- Documented connection to additional credentials that may be earned after the workforce program.

### **Potential Portability Evidence:**

- Articulation Agreements specifying the credit earned from a workforce program and applied to a receiving program.
- Credit for Prior Learning crosswalk from workforce program describing credit earned from a workforce program and applied to a receiving program.
- Employer documentation (from at least 2 employers) of occupation competencies (real-time labor market information) required for hiring which has been aligned with workforce program competencies.
- Occupational license available to earn at the completion of the workforce program.

## **Academic Credit Assurance and Articulation**

To be eligible for Workforce Pell, programs may be either credit or noncredit, but must ensure the credential earned will result in the awarding of academic credit applicable toward further postsecondary credentials either at the applicant institution) or at another postsecondary institution.

To demonstrate how Workforce Pell programs apply toward further education, each institution must document at least one of the following:

### **Academic Credit Awarded at the Applicant Institution**

If the institution determines that a Workforce Pell program will articulate into a postsecondary credential within the same institution, it must submit documentation that meets the following conditions:

- Confirms the program has undergone program level review for academic credit articulation.
- Clearly identifies the specific certificate(s) or degree(s) to which the Workforce Pell program credit will apply.
- Demonstrates that the Workforce Pell program, without exception, will be treated uniformly with respect to credit applicability.
- Specifies that no additional assessments, proficiency exams, placement tests, or similar requirements may be imposed for the Workforce Pell credit to count toward the identified certificate(s) or degree(s).

Acceptable documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- A specific intra-institutional articulation agreement that clearly indicates the following:
  - The specific certificate(s) or degree(s) to which the Workforce Pell credit will apply.
  - Course-to-course mappings or program-to-program alignment showing how Workforce Pell content matches receiving institution requirements; may include crosswalk spreadsheets or equivalency tables.
  - Any GPA, credit hour, catalog year, or other eligibility requirements students must meet
    - Term of the agreement.
    - Explicit statement that no additional assessments, competency tests, placement exams, or proficiency requirements may be required by the receiving institution for the Workforce Pell credit to count toward the identified certificate(s) or degree(s).

- A governing board resolution
- A college catalog notation
- Another form of institutional documentation deemed sufficient by the Iowa Department of Education

### **Academic Credit Awarded by Another Institution**

If the applicant institution determines that the Workforce Pell program will articulate into a postsecondary credential at another institution, it must submit:

- A written articulation or transfer-of-credit agreement with the receiving institution that clearly indicates the following:
  - The specific certificate(s) or degree(s) to which the Workforce Pell credit will apply.
  - Course-to-course mappings or program-to-program alignment showing how Workforce Pell content matches receiving institution requirements; may include crosswalk spreadsheets or equivalency tables.
  - Any GPA, credit hour, catalog year, or other eligibility requirements students must meet
    - Term of the agreement.
    - Explicit statement that no additional assessments, competency tests, placement exams, or proficiency requirements may be required by the receiving institution for the Workforce Pell credit to count toward the identified certificate(s) or degree(s).

### **Statewide Articulation Pathway**

Institutions may meet academic credit assurance requirements by demonstrating that the Workforce Pell program leads to a credential included in a statewide articulation pathway. The institution must indicate which statewide articulation pathway that the Workforce Pell programs aligns with for academic credit assurance.

## Alignment with Workforce Needs

To qualify as a Workforce Pell program, a program must prepare students for an occupation that aligns with high-skill, high-demand and high-wage occupations and within industries and occupations that are in demand. The current list is published on the State of Iowa [Workforce Pell website](#). Additionally, the site provides a SOC/CIP crosswalk to help eligible institutions determine whether a program's CIP code corresponds to an approved H3 occupation.

### State Process for Determining High-Demand, High-Wage and High-Skill (H3) Occupation List

Iowa's definitions for high-demand, high-wage, and high-skill (H3) were originally set out in HF 2610 (2026), which established the following definitions:

- **“High-demand occupation”** means an occupation in which state, local, or regional labor market forecast shows occupational demand exceeding overall state, local or regional employer demand metrics (openings, numeric change, growth).
- **“High-skill occupation”** means an occupation with education or training requirements that include, but are not limited to, the completion of an apprenticeship program; industry-recognized credential; short-term college credential, such as a certificate or diploma; non-credit college credential/certification; associate degree or higher; on-the-job training; or on-the-job credential/certification.
- **“High-wage occupation”** means an occupation for which at least three of five hourly wage/annual salary measurements for that occupation exceed the hourly wage/annual salary for all occupations in the state or region.

In developing the state's H3 list, Iowa Workforce Development uses these definitions to draft an initial H3 list for consultation with the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB). The board then forwards any recommendation to the Governor's office for final review and approval. The Governor-approved list, with specifically defined methodology for each H3 element, is available on [Iowa's Workforce Pell website](#). The H3 occupation list is reviewed and approved a minimum of once every two years by both the SWDB and the Governor. The list also includes a crosswalk of occupational codes (SOCs) to academic program codes (CIPs). Only programs with a CIP that aligns to an H3 SOC can be eligible for Workforce Pell approval.

### Identification of In-Demand Occupations and Industry Sectors: H3 SOC Codes

Institutions should review the [approved Workforce Pell H3 Occupation List with SOC-CIP Crosswalk spreadsheet](#) for the list of Iowa's approved H3 occupations. The H3 SOC codes have been matched with corresponding postsecondary programs (CIP) based on the [crosswalk](#) developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics. [Iowa's Workforce Pell website](#) hosts both the statewide H3 list along with regional H3 lists aligned with the state's local workforce development board regions.

## Employer Hiring Requirements

To assess whether a program meets employer hiring requirements, alignment between the program's credential competencies and those needed for occupations within the relevant sector will be evaluated using evidence and input from sources such as state and local workforce development boards, industry sector partnerships, joint-labor management partnerships, employer advisory councils, and other employer engagement activities. Institutions may submit documentation from one or more of these sources as part of their Workforce Pell application. Registered Apprenticeship programs are considered to meet employer hiring requirements without further review.

### Potential Employer Hiring Requirements Documentation

Such documentation should include, but is not limited to:

- Job postings or Lightcast county-region report
- Letters of support from employers (minimum of two)
- Documentation from industry sector partnerships, joint labor-management partnerships, or employer advisory councils
- Program advisory board minutes that clearly document:
  - Alignment between program learning outcomes and employer hiring requirements
  - A summary of advisory board discussions related to employer demand and competencies
  - A list of employer advisory board members

## Program Outcomes and Quality Metrics

### Program Completion Rates

Institutions must attest and demonstrate that the program had a 70% completion rate in the previous 12 months. For purposes of Workforce Pell eligibility and reporting, completion means that a student has successfully fulfilled all academic and programmatic requirements necessary to earn the recognized postsecondary credential associated with the program. This includes:

- Meeting all instructional and program requirements within 150% of the program's normal timeframe.
- Achieving credential attainment, such as a certificate, license, or other recognized postsecondary credential required for the completion of the program.

### Potential Evidence of Program Completion Rates

Provide only de-identified data with the application. **Do not include any personally identifiable information (PII), unless subsequently requested by the Department.** Examples include:

- Program completion reports showing enrolled vs. completed students over the defined period.
- State or accreditor reporting submissions that include completion rate data.

### Job Placement Rates

Institutions must attest and demonstrate that the program has a 70% job placement rate. For award years 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29 the job placement rate is calculated as the number of program exiters who are employed in the 2nd quarter after exiting the program. For award years 2029-30 and beyond, the job placement rate will be calculated as the percentage of students who are employed in the 2nd quarter after exiting the program in an occupation for which the program prepares students (or a comparable H3 occupation, as certified by the Governor).

## Potential Data on Job Placement Rates

- Job placement tracking reports.
- State wage record data.

## Value Benchmark: Median Earnings to Tuition and Fees

Until the federal value-added earnings data is available, the Workforce Pell program approval process will consider the tuition and fees charged for the program and state wage data for program completers. Programs should demonstrate that expected first-year earnings of program completers exceed the sum of 150% of the federal poverty line and the program's tuition and fees.

The Iowa Department of Education will review tuition and mandatory fees, including any additional required costs charged by the institution such as books, supplies, or examination fees. These costs will be compared to the median annual wage for the related occupation, as provided by Iowa Workforce Development. For purposes of this review, anticipated first-year earnings will be calculated using the median annual wage for the occupation.

## Potential Information on Median Earnings of Program Completers

- State wage record data showing post-completion earnings.
- Graduate follow-up surveys that collect self-reported earnings.
- Employer-reported wage data provided through verification forms.

## Institutional Compliance and Accreditation

### Title IV Approval Status

Workforce Pell programs must be offered by an institution that is already Title IV eligible.

### Accreditation

To be eligible for Workforce Pell, the institution's accreditor must be approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education as listed in the Federal Register. Furthermore, the Workforce Pell program must be within the scope of the institution's accreditation.

## Student Support and Services

### Adverse Action History

Institutions must not have been subject to any suspension, emergency action, or termination of programs under Title IV by the U.S. Department of Education in the five years preceding the program's approval.

# Workforce Pell Program Eligibility Requirements

The chart below shows the Workforce Pell eligibility requirements and the requirements that the Implementation Team will review to determine eligibility.

## Determination of Program Eligibility Table

Workforce Pell program eligibility requirement	Process for determining that eligibility requirement has been met
Program length is 150–599 clock hours, OR at least 4 but less than 16 semester or trimester hours, OR at least 6 but less than 24 quarter hours.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant, as well as any other information available to the Department.
Program weeks of instruction is a minimum of 8 weeks but less than 15 weeks.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant, as well as any other information available to the Department.
Program aligns to a state-approved high-demand, high-wage, high-skill (H3) occupation.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant, as well as any other information available to the Department.  Department staff will verify that the program's CIP aligns with the H3 occupation list as published on the <a href="#">state's Workforce Pell website</a> .
Program has a 70% completion rate, defined as the percentage of students that successfully complete all program requirements within 150% of the normal completion time.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant, as well as any other information available to the Department.
Program has a 70% job placement rate, defined as the percentage of students that are employed in the 2nd quarter after exiting the program (for 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29 award years).	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant, as well as any other information available to the Department.
Program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.  The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will consult on the extent to which a program application meets this requirement during the state approval process.
Program meets the hiring requirements of employers.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.  The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will consult on the extent to which a program application meets this requirement during the state approval process.
Program meets all institutional and program requirements outlined by the institution's accreditor.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.

Workforce Pell program eligibility requirement	Process for determining that eligibility requirement has been met
Program is likely to pass a value-added earnings (VAE) test, which requires that completers who received a Pell Grant and are working have annual income (for the first calendar year following program completion) that is greater than the sum of tuition and fees and 150% of the federal poverty line (for a single individual)	This will be verified by the federal government (when applicable data is available), but it is also pre-verified by Department staff using data available to the Department.
Program has been in existence for at least one year prior to the date of the governor's approval of the program, during which time program eligibility requirements were met.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant, as well as any other information available to the Department.
Program articulates to academic credit.	<p>Programs may be either credit or noncredit, but must ensure the awarding of academic credit applicable toward further postsecondary credentials at the applicant institution (if the applicant institution is able to award academic credit) or at another institution.</p> <p>If the applicant institution determines that the Workforce Pell program will articulate into a postsecondary credential at another institution, it must submit a written articulation or transfer-of-credit agreement with the receiving institution.</p>
Program is “ <i>stackable</i> ” (unless the program prepares a student for a field that only recognizes a single, terminal credential). Stackable means that the program is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.	<p>Stackability will be verified via articulation agreements.</p> <p>The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will also consult on the extent to which a program application meets this requirement during the state approval process.</p>
Program is “ <i>portable</i> ” (unless the program prepares a student for a field that only recognizes a single, terminal credential). Portable means the credential earned is recognized and accepted as verifying the qualifications of an individual in other settings such as other educational institutions, other industries or business or other geographic areas.	<p>Portability will be verified via application questions.</p> <p>The Iowa State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will also consult on the extent to which a program application meets this requirement during the state approval process.</p>
A third party does not provide more than 25% of the program's instruction.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.
Program does not include correspondence coursework or coursework offered under a study abroad program.	This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.
The institution providing the Workforce Pell program is approved to participate in Title IV programs	<p>This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.</p> <p>This will be verified by the Bureau of Iowa College Aid at the time of application.</p>
The institution providing the Workforce Pell program has not been subject to any suspension, emergency action, or termination of programs under Title IV by the U.S. Department of Education in the five years preceding the program's approval.	<p>This will be verified via application questions and certification of application data accuracy by the Workforce Pell applicant.</p> <p>This will be verified by the Bureau of Iowa College Aid at the time of application.</p>

# Program Approval Process

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Eligible postsecondary institutions in Iowa who are accredited and eligible to award Title IV Federal financial aid may submit an application to have their programs reviewed for approval for Workforce Pell.

State of Iowa applications open for the 2026-27 award year on April 1, 2026, with anticipation of the law going into effect on July 1, 2026. Interested institutions should:

1. Identify Programs: Evaluate existing noncredit and credit certificate programs for alignment with Iowa's H3 list and federal standards.
2. Complete the State of Iowa's Workforce Pell Application on the state's [Workforce Pell website](#).
3. Program applications will route through the Department for preliminary review by the Implementation Team, and will then be referred to the SWDB for consultation. Applications and SWDB feedback will be forwarded to the Governor's office for final state approval.
4. State-approved programs will be forwarded to the USED for federal approval.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis for review. Deadlines for submission in order for consideration at an upcoming State Workforce Development Board meeting will be published on the state's workforce pell website.

The Implementation Team will screen applications to determine if submitted programs meet Workforce Pell requirements. A summary of application details, along with an initial determination of eligibility based on the committee's review of application materials, will be shared with the SWDB for review. The SWDB will make a recommendation on each application and submit those recommendations to the Governor for a final program approval determination.

State-approved programs will be certified and documented in accordance with federal requirements. The Iowa Workforce Pell website will have the published list of approved programs. Denied programs will receive a response from the Iowa Department of Education documenting the reason for the denial.

## Annual Attestation and Ongoing Compliance Requirements

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Annually, institutions with approved Workforce Pell programs are required to submit documentation and an attestation confirming that the program continues to satisfy all eligibility requirements. Institutions must certify that no material changes have been made to the program's structure, curriculum, delivery method, employer alignment, or credential outcomes without prior notification to and approval from the Governor's Office.

Additionally, institutions must provide verified annual documentation demonstrating that the program maintains a minimum 70% completion rate and must submit the data necessary to establish a 70% job placement rate, as defined in this policy. Failure to provide complete and accurate annual documentation may result in program review and could lead to suspension or revocation of approval.

# Appeal Process

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Applicants who have had Workforce Pell programs denied by the state may appeal the decision. Appeals should be submitted as follows:

1. Within 30 calendar days from the date of the denial notice, the applicant may file an appeal with the Iowa Department of Education by submitting in writing a statement appealing the denial and information why the training program should be eligible.
2. Applicants should include any documentation pertaining to the program that could support the appeal.
3. The written appeal should be submitted to the Iowa Department of Education at [workforcepell@iowa.gov](mailto:workforcepell@iowa.gov).

The Iowa Department of Education will review the appeal using the provided information and issue a written decision within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the appeal.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **Q1. Can programs be removed after approval, or added for future consideration? How will changes be communicated?**

*Per federal law, the Iowa Department of Education will be required to monitor program compliance while programs are Workforce Pell eligible, as well as re-certify each institution's programs when they renew their Program Participation Agreement with Federal Student Aid. The details around this process are still taking shape.*

### **Q2. I am concerned about the data requirements as it will be difficult to collect salary information, etc. from previous students in these programs.**

*The institutions will not be required to collect earnings information from students. Some institutions may need to submit student-level data that allows the state to evaluate program completers' earnings using state data.*

### **Q3. Will students need to apply individually for Workforce Pell?**

*Students complete only the FAFSA to apply for the Federal Pell Grant. If the student enrolls in an approved Workforce Pell Grant program, the school will be responsible for indicating this on the student's FAFSA record.*

*The institution will be required to apply to the Iowa Department of Education for each eligible program that they offer. The Governor will approve individual Workforce Pell programs and submit the list to the U.S. Secretary of Education. The U.S. Department of Education will develop a process to award Workforce Pell grants to individual students through Federal Student Aid.*

### **Q4. If an institution makes minor adjustments to an existing program (such as increasing instructional hours to meet minimum eligibility requirements), will the program still need to be offered for one year before becoming eligible for Workforce Pell funding? Or can modified existing programs qualify without an additional waiting period?**

*A modified existing program will still trigger a new waiting period. If an institution makes adjustments to an existing program to meet Workforce Pell eligibility criteria, the program must operate in its modified format for at least one year before it can be certified.*

**Q5. Is it the expectation that at the time of application we must have a fully developed and thorough articulation agreement that outlines precise credit for prior learning and how a short-term program either prepares a student to enter a continued credential or counts toward that credential? Or, can our articulation agreement be more vague and provide detail on the process?**

*There must be clear evidence that the program articulates to credit, so there needs to be a firm commitment for articulation to at least one program (internal or external to the institution). Any details essential to that commitment must be in place; lesser details can still be in development as long as there is clear documentation of articulation.*

**Q6. What constitutes a program being in existence for a year? Does this mean that the program has to be in the “catalog” and/or published on the website for a year, or that students have been enrolled?**

*In order for a program to be eligible for workforce Pell approval it must have been both active in the college’s catalog and the state STICS system and have students enrolled, in order that the outcomes requirements can be evaluated (e.g. completion, placement, etc.). For this year’s workforce Pell approval cycle, a program must have enrolled students during the period from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. To be eligible in 2027-28, eligible programs would need to enroll students during the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.*

**Q7. We have a competency-based education program, is that eligible for workforce Pell?**

*[Competency-based education \(CBE\)](#) is an innovative approach in higher education that organizes academic content according to competencies - what a student knows and can do - rather than following a more traditional scheme, such as by course. CBE programs are not eligible for workforce Pell. In the final regulations, 690.92(c) explicitly prohibits direct assessment (competency-based) programs from participation in workforce Pell. Discussion of this can be found on p. 181 of the final published regs.*

## Iowa Workforce Pell Application Guidance Manual Change Summary

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There have been no changes included in this version of the 2026-27 Iowa Workforce Pell Application Guidance Manual.

Version	Volume	Section	Change
NONE			