

Docket Item: 8.3 – Overview of HECC’s Role in Implementing the New Workforce Pell Grant

Summary

In July of 2025, Congress passed and the President signed into law H.R. 1. The legislation authorizes Workforce Pell – an expansion of federal Pell Grants to short-term workforce education programs. This program will take effect July 1, 2026.

Under the Workforce Pell provisions of H.R. 1, the Governor, in consultation with the State Workforce Board, is to determine the programs that meet the following eligibility criteria for Workforce Pell:

- Is aligned with requirements of high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations or industries,
- Meets the hiring requirements of employers of those occupations or in those industries,
- Leads to an industry-recognized credential, and
- Is stackable and portable.

In Oregon, the State Workforce Board is called the Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) and is supported by the HECC’s Office of Workforce Investments.

The U.S. Secretary of Education will then determine which of the programs identified by the states meet the following additional eligibility criteria:

- Is offered by a Title IV eligible institution of higher education,
- Is at least 150 clock hours, but less than 600 clock hours,
- Is at least 8 weeks, but less than 15 weeks,
- Has been offered for at least 1 year,
- Has a completion rate $\geq 70\%$ within 150% normal completion time,
- Has a job placement rate $\geq 70\%$ measured 180 days after completion,
- The cost of the program is not greater than value-added earnings of program completers.

The U.S. Department of Education is scheduled to begin a negotiated rulemaking process this week that will provide additional specificity around Workforce Pell.

Julia Pontoni, Director of the HECC’s Office of Workforce Investments, is leading an internal HECC staff workgroup responsible for executing the HECC agency’s role in Workforce Pell implementation.

The WTDB will approve the list of eligible programs, compiled by HECC staff, to recommend for approval to the Governor at its March 2026 quarterly meeting.



HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION
December 11, 2025
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Material

8.3a – Workforce Pell Orientation Presentation

Staff Recommendation

This is an informational item.