

State of Florida

Workforce Pell Program

Policies and Procedures Guide

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
fldoe.org

Florida Workforce Pell Policies and Procedures Guide

State of Florida

Department of Education

Division of Career and Adult Education

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Overview

Beginning July 1, 2026, Workforce Pell expands access to postsecondary funding for eligible short-term workforce education and training programs. Florida is implementing Workforce Pell by building on the state's existing education and workforce systems, including the Florida Master Credentials List (MCL), to ensure eligible programs are aligned with employer demand, provide meaningful economic value for students, and support continued education and career advancement.

Institutions seeking to offer Workforce Pell programs must have their programs approved by both the Governor of Florida and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). This guide provides details on Workforce Pell program requirements and Florida's approval process and should be used alongside the Florida Department of Education (Department) published materials at www.fldoe.org/workforcepell.

Eligible institutions are those authorized to operate in Florida, accredited by an agency recognized by the USDOE, and approved to participate in Title IV federal student financial aid programs. Participation in Workforce Pell is voluntary. To receive approval, institutions must demonstrate that their programs align with Florida's workforce priorities and satisfy all federal and state Workforce Pell requirements.

This policy and procedures manual addresses Florida's implementation for the following program types:

1. Non-Degree Programs of Study offered by Florida College System (FCS) institutions and school district postsecondary Institutions.
2. Registered Apprenticeship Programs with related technical instruction offered through Title IV eligible institutions.

This guide provides eligible institutions with the process for submission, review, and approval for their eligible Workforce Pell programs.

The Department is authorized to accept applications initially for start-up applications for initial approval and anticipates operating two submission periods beginning in 2027 for all potentially eligible programs.

The Department will be expanding approvals for eligible programs offered by postsecondary institutions licensed by the Commission for Independent Education and non-credit programs offered by FCS institutions and school district technical colleges.

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Institutional Accreditation Requirements

Workforce Pell approval applications are limited to institutions that meet the following criteria:

- Title IV Approved
 - Workforce Pell programs must be offered by an institution that is already approved to participate in Title IV federal student financial aid programs.
- Accreditation
 - To be eligible for Workforce Pell, the institution's accreditor must be recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, and the Workforce Pell program must fall within the scope of the institution's accreditation.
- Adverse Action History
 - Institutions must not have been subject to any suspension, emergency action, or termination of programs under Title IV by the USDOE in the five years preceding the program's approval.

Value-Added Earnings

The Governor's certification includes a commitment to take into consideration the cost of the program and the anticipated wages of the industry or occupation prior to the USDOE's determination of the program's value-added earnings under 34 CFR 690.95. Until federal value-added earnings data are available, institutions should be prepared to provide tuition and fee information alongside occupational wage data to support this review. This process is still under development.

Section 1a: Initial Approval for Non-Degree Programs of Study for FCS Institutions and School Districts

To expedite approvals for programs with State Board of Education-approved frameworks, Florida identifies Workforce Pell eligible programs through a state-approved program list developed in cooperation with workforce partners in the REACH Office of the Governor, the Department of Education, FloridaCommerce, and CareerSource Florida. All Workforce Pell eligible programs in Florida must lead to credentials that demonstrate value in the labor market and support career advancement. Factors in the approval include credentials approved on Florida's Master Credentials List (MCL). These programs are established as meeting the Credential Review Committee's framework of quality standards for wage and demand. Information on the MCL is available on CareerSource Florida's site:

<https://careersourceflorida.com/master-credentials-list/>. Florida also recognizes statewide workforce priority occupations identified through other means, including occupations eligible under the Florida Hometown Heroes Program pursuant to section 420.5096, Florida Statutes. Together, these tools help ensure Workforce Pell funding supports training programs that lead to recognized credentials, employment opportunities, and alignment with Florida's statewide workforce priorities, including critical and essential occupations.

The approved **Workforce Pell Eligible Program List for FCS Institutions and School Districts** is published on the state's implementation site at <https://www.fldoe.org/workforcepell>. Only credentials included on this list are eligible for an institution application for Workforce Pell. This list includes the following program and associated program lengths:

- Clock hour programs with a program length of 150 to 599 hours (career certificate and applied technology diplomas)
- College credit programs with a program length of 4 to 16 college credits (applied technology diplomas and college credit certificates)

Review Criteria

The following Workforce Pell Eligibility requirements are pre-determined for non-degree programs of study offered at FCS institutions and school district postsecondary institutions by their presence on the **Workforce Pell Eligible Program List for FCS Institutions and School Districts**:

- Program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.
- Program provides an education aligned with the requirements of high-skill, high-wage (as identified by the State pursuant to section 122 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act [20 U.S.C. 234]2), or in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- Program meets the hiring requirements of employers in the applicable sector or occupation (automatically met for Registered Apprenticeship related instruction).
- Program is stackable and portable (unless it prepares students for an occupation with only one recognized postsecondary credential).

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- 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.

The following requirements are confirmed by the institution when submitting their application:

- Program has been offered for at least 12 months prior to application submission.
- A third party (ineligible institution or organization) does not provide more than 25% of the program's instruction (up to 50% for Registered Apprenticeship programs).¹
- Program does not include correspondence coursework.²
- The following requirements are confirmed through supplementation information provided by the institution on the Supplemental Information Form and the submission of supporting documentation:
 - Program weeks of instruction are a minimum of 8 weeks but less than 15 weeks.
 - Program articulates to academic credit, either at the applicant institution or another institution.

In addition to the review of applications and documentation above, the Department will use enrollment and completion records submitted through state databases to calculate completion rates and will use Florida Education Training & Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data to calculate job placement rates.

Institutional Application Process

FCS institutions and school district postsecondary institutions offering a program included on the approved list must submit an application package to the Department before seeking federal approval for student access to Workforce Pell funding. Through this process, institutions certify that eligible programs meet applicable all requirements.

The application package must include the following:

1. State Workforce Pell Program Certification Form
2. Supplementation Information and Supporting Documentation

Applications must be submitted via email to the Department via email to WorkforcePell@fldoe.org. The Department reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification as needed to verify eligibility.

¹ An ineligible institution or organization cannot provide more than 25% of a program's instruction, unless the program is a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program (as defined at 29 CFR Part 29.2), in which case the ineligible entity may provide more than 25% but less than 50% of the program

² Programs that include correspondence coursework 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 instructor, where interaction between instructor and student is limited, not regular and substantive, and primarily initiated by the student. A course that is part correspondence and part residential training is treated as a correspondence course. A correspondence course is not the same as distance education.

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Following submission, the Department reviews and validates institutional certifications to ensure compliance with Workforce Pell requirements and alignment with Florida's implementation framework.

Application Item 1: State Workforce Pell Program Certification Form

The following table summarizes how to complete the State Workforce Pell Program Certification Form (OMB Control No. 1845-0189).

Institution Information (Section A.1)

a. Name of institution	Name of the Title IV eligible institution submitting the application
b. OPE ID	An OPE ID (Office of Postsecondary Education Identification number) is a unique 8-digit code assigned by the USDOE. It identifies colleges and universities that participate in federal student financial assistance programs under Title IV.
c. Address	Main address for the eligible institution

Workforce Program Information (Section A.2)

a. Program Name	Include the state program title and 10-digit CIP number as listed on the Workforce Pell Program Inventory posted on the Workforce Pell Implementation web page. Do not list any local program title. Abbreviations may be used if title does not fit in the form's cell. An institution may only submit applications for programs offered with weeks of instruction of at least 8 weeks but less than 15 weeks. Additionally, the program must have been in existence for at least 12 months. If an otherwise qualifying program is shortened to 15 weeks or less to comply with the maximum length requirements, the application is acceptable.³
b. CIP Code	6-digit CIP number for (a.)
c. SOC Code	Primary SOC number (must be a SOC number listed on the Master Credentials List for Florida for this 10-digit CIP number)
d. Date Program Met Eligibility Requirement	Provide the date the program met the eligibility requirements for Workforce Pell. This date must be at least 12 months prior to submission and approval to the Department. This may be reported as the date the institution first offered the program.

³ A program may not, however, increase instructional time to attempt immediate eligibility. If a program increases instructional time to fall within the program length requirements, a one-year wait period is required to meet the one year existence policy.

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e. Completion Rate	Leave blank. The Department will calculate this rate using state database records. NOTE: The program completion rate must be at least 70 percent, within 150 percent of the normal time for student completion. ⁴
f. Job Placement Rate	Leave blank. The Department will calculate this rate using state database records. NOTE: The program's job placement rate must be at least 70 percent, measured 180 days after student completion. ⁵
g. Governor Certification of Eligibility	Leave blank. This section is <u>not</u> completed by the institution.

Leave the entirety of Section B blank. This section is not completed by the institution. If certified, the form will be returned to the eligible institution whereby the institution provides a copy of the governor's approval with their application to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs (E-App) to the USDOE for eligible workforce programs.

Application Item 2: Supplemental Documentation

As noted above, there are two areas in the review process when FCS institutions and school districts must demonstrate evidence that confirms the program is being offered within the required weeks and instruction and that there is academic credit and transferability for students completing the short-term program.

Applications must include summary information and supporting documentation which confirm that these requirements are met for the proposed Workforce Pell program at their institution.

Weeks of Instruction

The application must provide narrative that confirms that beginning with the 2026-2027 year the program is offered in at least 8 weeks but less than 15 weeks, as required by the law. This narrative should include a current schedule of cohort entry and exit date, which demonstrates that the first course start date and last course end date occur within this period. Note that breaks of at least 1 week in duration will not count toward the number of weeks and should be noted in the narrative.

An example template will be the following for each program and cohort:

- Program Title and CIP: Firefighter, CIP 0743020304

⁴ For example, if a program normally takes eight weeks to complete, at least 70% of students would need to complete the program within twelve weeks.

⁵ For example, if using FETPIP program outcomes, a student completing a program in May 2024 would need to be found employed in the 2nd quarter after exit, which would be Q4 of 2024.

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- Cohort Term: Fall 2026
- Cohort Start Date: 8/24/26
- Cohort End Date for Program: 12/4/26
- Breaks with at least 1 week duration: 11/23/26 to 11/27/26
- Weeks of Actual Instruction: 14 weeks (adjusted for 1 week break)

Applications should include clear and convincing evidence that the program meets the weeks of instruction requirement.

Academic Credit and Transferability

For each requested program, the application packet should include documentation that supports academic credit and transparency requirements. These agreements may be within the same institution that offers the workforce program or across multiple institutions, but in all cases must be documented in writing to ensure consistency and transparency. This documentation should clearly demonstrate the specific programs into which the Workforce Pell program will articulate and show documented proof of credit and transferability.

To be eligible for Workforce Pell, programs may be either credit or noncredit but must ensure that the credential earned results in the awarding of academic credit, in clock or credit hours that are 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 pathways.

Types of articulation which will satisfy this requirement include the following:

Type	Summary of Information
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: • 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 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 a specific intra-institutional articulation agreement, a governing board resolution, a college catalog notation, or another form of

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Type	Summary of Information
	institutional documentation deemed sufficient by the Department.
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 identifies the specific certificate(s) or degree(s) to which credit will apply, provides course-to-course or program-to-program alignment (e.g., a crosswalk or equivalency table), specifies any GPA, credit-hour, or catalog-year eligibility requirements, states the term of the agreement, and confirms that no additional assessments or proficiency requirements may be imposed by the receiving institution.
Statewide Articulation Pathway	Institutions may also meet academic credit assurance requirements by demonstrating that the Workforce Pell program leads to a credential included in one of Florida's Statewide Articulation Agreements. Where applicable, the institution should indicate which statewide articulation agreement the Workforce Pell program aligns with for academic credit assurance.

Completion and Placement Rate Validation

Implementation of Workforce Pell requires Florida to calculate completion and job placement rate data for the 2026–2027 through 2028–2029 award years and are required to use state administrative data sources and a methodology that the state identifies as appropriate to certify that the program meets the 70% completion threshold within 150% of normal time and 70% job placement rate. After the 2028-2029 award year, that calculation will be determined under 34 CFR 668.8(f).

Program Completion Rate

For the initial application and subsequent renewals through 2028-2029, the Department will calculate completion rates. Completion means a student has successfully fulfilled all academic and programmatic requirements necessary to earn the recognized postsecondary credential associated with the program. The Department produces a Completion Rate Within 150% of Normal Time Report designed to measure the percentage of workforce education students who successfully complete their Career Certificate or Applied Technology Diploma (ATD) program within an allowable timeframe equivalent to 150% of normal time. The Department does not have access to detailed historical information on what normal time in weeks of instruction was for all eligible institutions; therefore, the report uses available information on first enrollment in

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the program and subsequent completion. As of August 2026, the following cohorts have been run for the completion rate report⁶:

- Fall 2024-2025 Entry Cohort
- Spring 2024-2025 Entry Cohort
- Fall 2025-2026 Entry Cohort

For each cohort, a separate row is reported for every eligible program at each school, identified by district, school, program number, CIP code, and program name. Students are included in the cohort only if they are identified as first-time enrollees in a program during the applicable reporting term. First-time enrollment is determined by reviewing the prior four reporting periods. A student is considered first-time enrolled in the program if the student was not reported as enrolled in the same program as an adult during the previous summer term of the same reporting year or in the prior year.

Students who previously participated in the program through dual enrollment may still qualify as first-time program participants if they were not previously enrolled as adult students. However, students who remain dual enrolled during the cohort term are excluded from the report.

For the Fall cohort, to be included in the numerator, a student must have been reported as a program completer in the Fall or subsequent Spring term. Completion may occur at any agency within the educational sector (FCS or district) if the completion is reported in the same program of initial enrollment. For the Spring cohort, to be included in the numerator, a student must have been reported as a full program completer in the Spring or subsequent Summer or Fall term.

Overall, this completion rate report provides a standardized measure of how effectively school districts support first-time workforce students in completing eligible Career Certificate, ATD, and college credit certificate programs within the established reporting window for Workforce Pell eligibility purposes.

This report will be re-run for each fall or spring cohort as more data is available.

Job Placement Rate

For the initial application and subsequent renewals through 2028-2029, the Department will calculate job placement rates using information in state databases. The Workforce Pell Employment Placement Report is designed to measure employment outcomes for students who complete Workforce Pell eligible programs. The report supports Workforce Pell eligibility requirements by focusing exclusively on employment placement outcomes; continuing education outcomes are not included under the current rules. The report measures the percentage of Workforce Pell-eligible program graduates who obtain employment within two quarters after exiting their programs. The report excludes dual-enrolled students, requires valid social security numbers (SSNs) for employment matching, and provides employment rates at

⁶ Earlier cohorts were run for comparison purposes, but only the most recent cohorts were used for approval of eligibility.

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the school and program level to support Workforce Pell accountability and eligibility determinations.

The reporting cohort consists of program completers during the reporting year. Students who were enrolled through dual enrollment are excluded from the cohort. Students who took a dual enrollment course during the same reporting year in which the program completion occurred are excluded from the calculation. Completers are tracked for employment outcomes in the 2nd quarter after exit. The report captures the total number of full program completers and identifies how many of those completers have a valid SSN. Only students with valid SSNs can be matched to employment records and included in the employment rate calculations.

The timing of employment tracking is based on the student's completion term. Completers are included in the numerator if they were found employed in the second quarter following exit. For example, Spring completers are considered to complete in Quarter 2 (Q2). Their first quarter after exit is Quarter 3 (Q3), and their second quarter after exit is Quarter 4 (Q4). Fall completers are considered to complete in Q4 and their second quarter after exit is Q2 of the following year. Summer completers are considered to complete in Q3 and their second quarter after exit is Q1 of the following year.

NOTE: To support these calculations, institutions must maintain accurate program completion dates so that employment can be evaluated in the correct post-exit quarters.

Section 1b: Initial Approval for Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Institutional Application Process

Registered apprenticeship programs will use a separate, application-based approval process. Unlike career certificate, college credit certificate and ATD programs, there is no pre-approved program list.

This different approach reflects the unique structure of registered apprenticeship programs, which may involve an apprenticeship sponsor, one or more employers and a Title IV institution providing the related technical instruction. Eligibility must therefore be evaluated based on the specific program, partnership and instruction being proposed.

Under this process, the Title IV institution, in coordination with the registered apprenticeship sponsor, will submit a separate Workforce Pell apprenticeship application for each requested program. The Department will review the specific program and related technical instruction for compliance with applicable state and federal requirements. The Commissioner and workforce partners in the REACH office and FloridaCommerce, will approve qualifying applications under the authority delegated by the Governor. Following state approval, the institution must complete all applicable federal Title IV requirements before Workforce Pell funds may be disbursed.

Approval will apply only to the specific apprenticeship offering and institutional partnership described in the application. It will not constitute approval of all programs in the same occupation or all related instruction offered by the institution or sponsor.

The separate apprenticeship application and submission instructions will be published on the Florida Workforce Pell implementation webpage when available.

Completion and Placement Rate Validation

Upon review of initial eligibility, institutions will be required to provide student enrollment and completion information to verify that the performance requirements for Workforce Pell have been met.

Section 2: Submission of Approved Programs to the U.S. Department of Education

For all program types, upon approval by the Governor, or designated official, eligible institutions will be provided with a completed State Workforce Pell Program Certification form. Upon receipt, institutions may proceed with the applicable federal processes necessary to make approved programs available for Workforce Pell funding, including ensuring approved programs are reflected in the institution's federal Title IV program inventory (E-App) along with a copy of the Governor's approval.

The information submitted to the federal office must include the following:

1. Signed State Workforce Pell Program Certification Form
2. Governor's Designation of Authority letter

Section 3: Annual Attestation and Ongoing Compliance Requirements

After initial application approval, Florida will review Workforce Pell eligible programs annually to ensure continued alignment with workforce demand and federal eligibility requirements. Programs may be updated over time to reflect changes in labor market demand, updates to credential eligibility, and program performance outcomes

Consistent with the Governor's certification commitments on the State Workforce Pell Program Certification Form, the state commits to providing completion and placement rate data on each eligible workforce program to the Department on an annual basis through the end of the 2028-2029 award year, after which only placement rates will be certified annually. Institutions should expect to provide this underlying data to support the state's annual reporting obligation.

Institutions with approved Workforce Pell programs should be prepared to:

- Certify annually that no material changes have been made to the program which impacts its ability to meet the federal requirements.
- Provide verified annual documentation demonstrating that the program maintains at least a 70% completion rate and submits the data necessary to establish at least a 70% job placement rate, as defined in this guide.
- Support the Department's ability to inform the USDOE and U.S. Department of Labor of any final decision to revoke approval of a program within 15 calendar days, consistent with the Governor's certification commitments.
- Support reassessment of the program prior to the expiration of the institution's Program Participation Agreement.

Failure to provide complete and accurate annual documentation may result in program review and could lead to suspension or revocation of approval.

Section 4: Appeals Process

Applicants whose programs are not included on the state-approved Workforce Pell list, or whose institutional certification is not validated by the Department, may seek reconsideration by:

- Submitting a written request for reconsideration to WorkforcePell@fldoe.org that identifies the program, the basis for the Department's determination, and the specific eligibility criteria the applicant believes have been met.
- Including any additional documentation that supports the program's eligibility, consistent with the categories of evidence described throughout this guide.
- Allowing the Department a reasonable period to review the request and respond in writing with either a revised determination or an explanation of the basis for the original determination.

Institutions should confirm current appeal or reconsideration procedures, including any applicable deadlines, directly with the Division of Career and Adult Education before relying on this section.

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Version	Change
1.0	Initial document approved September 2026.