

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Workforce Pell: 2026-27 Pilot Year
Program Eligibility Pre-Screen

Purpose

This checklist is designed to help institutions and training providers pre-screen program eligibility for the Commonwealth's 2026-27 Workforce Pell pilot year implementation.

Workforce Pell expands Pell Grant eligibility to short-term workforce programs in high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations. Programs must meet both federal and state requirements. **This is an initial screening tool only.**

Step 1: Institutional Eligibility

*If any response is **No**, the institution is **not eligible** to participate.*

- ☐ Institution is accredited by a federally recognized accrediting body
 - ☐ Institution participates in Title IV federal student aid programs
 - ☐ Institution has not been subject to Title IV suspension, emergency action, or termination within the past 5 years
 - ☐ Institution has support from its President, CEO, Superintendent, or equivalent executive leader, for the program submission
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Step 2: Program Eligibility

*If any response is **No**, the program is **not eligible** to participate.*

Core Program Requirements

- ☐ Program length¹ is at least 8 weeks but less than 15 weeks
- ☐ Program is between 150 and 599 clock hours, 4-15 semester or trimester credit hours, or 6-23 quarter credit hours
- ☐ Program is not correspondence, study abroad, or direct assessment²
- ☐ Program does not include preparatory non-credit coursework³, remedial⁴, or English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework
- ☐ Program is within the federally-allowable limits for ineligible third-party providers (less than 50% for Registered Apprenticeship Programs; less than 25% for all other programs) and can provide MOUs as needed

¹ A seven-day period during which scheduled instruction, examinations, or academic engagement activities occur. Instructional weeks do not need to be consecutive (34 C.F.R. § 668.3(b); [Workforce Pell Final Rule](#)).

² A program that, in lieu of credit or clock hours as the measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning (34 C.F.R. § 668.10(a)(1), [Direct Assessment Programs](#)).

³ Coursework that does not award academic credit. While certain clock-hour noncredit programs may qualify for Workforce Pell, noncredit coursework that is preparatory in nature cannot be included (34 C.F.R. § 668.20; [Workforce Pell Final Rule](#)).

⁴ Coursework intended to address academic deficiencies or build foundational skills before a student can participate in postsecondary-level instruction. (34 C.F.R. § 668.20; [Workforce Pell Final Rule](#)).

- ☐ Program has met all length, hour/credit, and delivery requirements for the past 12 consecutive months

Labor Market Alignment (Registered Apprenticeships should skip this section)

- ☐ Program prepares students for an occupation included on the Workforce Pell Pilot Year Eligible Occupation List
- ☐ Program aligns with employer hiring needs and can provide supporting documentation

Credential Stackability, Portability, and Articulation

- ☐ Program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential
- ☐ Credential meets one of the following and can provide supporting documentation:
- ☐ The only recognized credential for that occupation and awarded upon program completion, **or**
 - ☐ Stackable and portable, defined as:
 - Stackable: Supports advancement within an education or training pathway and can demonstrate progression through further education, training, apprenticeship, or credential attainment.
 - Portable: Recognized by multiple employers and supports employment opportunities beyond a single employer or training provider.
- ☐ Program provides academic credit⁵ that is accepted toward a certificate or degree program at one or more eligible institutions and can provide articulation agreements or articulation policy (if articulating at the same institution)

Program Outcomes

- ☐ Program completion rate of at least 70% within 150% of the normal time of completion
- ☐ Program job placement rate of program exiters⁶ of at least 70% (measured in the second quarter after exit)
- ☐ Institution can document placement outcomes for all students included in the reported cohort through wage records, pay stubs, employer verification letters, or other verifiable documentation maintained for audit purposes. If an institution cannot fully document placement outcomes through existing records, they may request DHE/DUA wage-record matching. In such cases, the institution must participate in the HEIRS data collection process and provide the student-level data necessary to facilitate wage matching, including SSNs, for all students whose outcomes require verification.

Value-Added Earnings (VAE)

- ☐ Program's published tuition and fees⁷ for 2026-27 are less than the estimated VAE threshold for the occupation and can provide supporting documentation. VAE thresholds by SOC will be published on the Workforce Pell website once available.

⁵ Credit awarded for completion of the eligible workforce program that can be applied toward a certificate or degree program at one or more eligible institutions. (34 C.F.R. § 690.93(a); [Workforce Pell Final Rule](#)).

⁶ An individual who is no longer enrolled in the program, whether they completed the program or not (34 C.F.R. § 690.94(a)(2)(i); [Workforce Pell Final Rule](#)).

⁷ Institutional charges required for enrollment in an eligible workforce program, including required tuition, fees, and any books, supplies, or course materials that are bundled into institutional charges or that students are required to purchase from the institution (34 C.F.R. § 690.91; [Workforce Pell Final Rule](#)).