

MASFAA 2026 Annual Conference
“On the Same Team”
April 22-24, 2026

Workforce Pell Implementation Committee

Workforce Pell:

- Authorized by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act
- Not a new program - an expansion of Pell to a new population of students in short workforce programs
- Like Pell, awards are prorated based on program length
- Students complete the FAFSA & meet existing Pell eligibility requirements
- Lifetime Pell limits (600%) still apply; WF Pell counts against total
- Students must be enrolled in eligible Workforce Pell program

Workforce Pell Program Eligibility Requirements:

- Undergraduate programs
- Last 8 to 14 weeks 6 days (or 150 to 599 clock hours)
- Excludes correspondence courses, study abroad, direct assessment models
- Be offered by institutions without Title IV sanctions in the past 5 years
- Lead to recognized, stackable, and portable industry credential
- Aligned with WF needs - meet high skill, high wage, in demand criteria
- Connect to academic pathways; allow credit transfer/articulation
- Meet employer demand
 - Require employer validation and input
 - Must reflect real hiring requirements and industry needs
- Undergo 3-level approval process
 - Governor Approval - Must demonstrate alignment with high skill, high wage, in demand occupations (this requires employer validation); must document the credential has value and is stackable and portable
 - SWIB Consultation – Identify priority sectors/occupations; ensure employer alignment; assist with data and performance requirements; AccelerateMS will act as the governor’s designee and manage application intake and review, coordinate with SWIB, and ensure transparency regarding the program review process
 - Dept. Of Education - Primarily verifies compliance and annual reporting
- Meet ongoing performance and accountability benchmarks
 - 70% completion rate
 - 70% employment rate
 - Must pass Value Added Earnings test

WFP Implementation Committee:

- Purpose: To develop a statewide system for approving, tracking, and managing Workforce Pell programs at all institution types (community colleges, 4-year universities, proprietary/private institutions).
- The statewide process needs to be in place by July 1.
- Committee includes staff from community colleges, universities, MS Department of Employment Security, Accelerate MS (Office of Workforce Development), and Governor's Office
- Convened in late February
- Five Workgroups:
 - Workforce Alignment
 - Employer and Credential Validation
 - Data and Outcomes Workgroup
 - Institutional Implementation Committee
 - Governance and Approval

Workforce Alignment Work Group:

- Focused on defining “high skill, high wage, and in demand” occupations
- Developing methodology for identifying priority occupations:
 - Data Sources: labor market data from Lightcast and MIT Living Wage Calculator to determine wage thresholds
 - Occupations must meet 3 requirements:
 - High demand – Occupations with at least 10 annual job openings in a single workforce ecosystem (8 in MS); a state priority occupation must exist in at least 4 of the 8 ecosystems.
 - Priority Occupations – important statewide roles: Nursing, Teaching, Accounting
 - Targeted Priority Occupations – Jobs that will receive priority for SWIB funding: Welders; Electricians; Truck drivers; Machinists; LPNs
 - High wage – must meet or exceed \$20.75 per hour
 - High skill – requires training beyond high school (such as certificates, credentials, apprenticeships, degrees)
 - Exclusions: managerial/supervisory roles, government specific occupations, and retail occupations

Data and Outcomes Workgroup:

- MS already has strong infrastructure (wage records, SLDS)
- Programs must submit detailed participant data for tracking outcomes
- No need to reinvent systems. Focus is on standardizing and integrating existing data processes

Employer and Credential Validation Workgroup:

- Formal process is being built for employer verification of programs and credential validation (not approval, but process for approval) - Accelerate

Institutional Implementation Workgroup:

- Strengthening Community Colleges 6 (SCC6) Grant application team
- Trying to address challenges/open questions:
 - How to handle noncredit programs when students aren't "enrolled"
 - How to ensure students earn required credentials
 - How to manage cases where students fail credential exams
 - Need for standardized PLA and credit transfer policies
 - Need to identify eligible short-term programs within priority sectors

Governance and Approval Workgroup:

- Compiling work of other workgroups
- Creating published policies and procedures manual, application process, forms, appeal process, etc.
- Oversee creation of a public-facing website that includes eligible programs, requirements, contacts, policies and guidance