



Workforce Pell

Why Workforce Pell matters to New Hampshire

Workforce Pell creates a new federal funding pathway for short-term, high-quality workforce programs that previously fell outside traditional Pell eligibility.

New Hampshire now has a defined state role: the Governor, in coordination with the SWIB, approves programs that meet the federal Workforce Pell requirements.

That makes SWIB's role more than advisory: the Board needs a transparent, repeatable way to determine whether a proposed program meets the state's workforce-alignment standard.

OWO can provide the analysis, process management, data validation, and compliance support needed for the SWIB and the Governor to make those determinations.

Workforce Pell - Timeline



As of September 30, 2026, US Department of Education has approved Workforce Pell programs in Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, North Carolina and Texas. NH can now move from policy design to implementation.

Federal Workforce Pell framework

PROGRAM LENGTH

8–14 weeks of instruction
150–599 clock hours (or equivalent credit hours)

PROGRAM QUALITY

At least 70% completion within 150% of normal time
At least 70% job placement

WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

High-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry
sector/occupation
Employer hiring needs must be addressed

VALUE / PRICE

Tuition and fees must meet federal value requirements
tied to graduate earnings

Important: Workforce Pell is a federal student-aid program. The State does not award Pell dollars; the State determines whether a program meets the state workforce-alignment requirements that support federal approval.

New Hampshire's statutory framework

Governor and SWIB

HB 1774 / Chapter 242 became effective July 1, 2026.

The Governor, in coordination with SWIB, approves Workforce Pell training programs that satisfy federal requirements.

SWIB must adopt an internal procedure, consistent with federal rules, for determining whether a program is eligible.

DBEA/OWO

SWIB is established within OWO under RSA 12-O:44.

RSA 12-O:42 assigns DBEA/OWO responsibility for administering workforce investment activities and the day-to-day operational responsibilities of SWIB.

This creates a natural administrative structure for OWO to support SWIB's Workforce Pell review process.

Proposed NH roles: keeping accountability clear

PROGRAM PROVIDER / COLLEGE

Submits program information and evidence; maintains Title IV eligibility; demonstrates outcomes; provides required documentation.

OWO

Develops application materials; screens submissions; validates workforce alignment and data; coordinates review; maintains records; supports monitoring.

SWIB

Establishes the state procedure; reviews/acts on program determinations; provides workforce-system and employer perspective.

GOVERNOR / DESIGNEE

Makes the state approval/certification required for federal submission, in coordination with SWIB.

Proposed Workforce Pell approval process

- 1 Provider application** Standardized application + required evidence
- 2 OWO screening** Federal eligibility, program length, outcomes, workforce alignment
- 3 OWO recommendation** Document findings and identify any conditions or deficiencies
- 4 SWIB determination** Apply the Board's published procedure consistently
- 5 Governor certification** State approval/certification for institutional federal submission
- 6 Federal submission** Institution submits program through ED's Title IV approval process

What OWO recommends the SWIB evaluate

FEDERAL PROGRAM FIT

8–14 weeks; 150–599 hours; eligible institution; other federal Workforce Pell requirements.

NH WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

Occupation/industry is high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand under the state's documented methodology.

EMPLOYER DEMAND

Evidence of current/projected hiring need, including employer validation where appropriate.

OUTCOMES

Completion and placement performance meets federal thresholds; outcome data are verifiable.

ECONOMIC VALUE

Program tuition/fees and expected earnings satisfy federal value requirements.

ACCESS

Program structure is realistically accessible to NH residents and connects to existing workforce pathways.

Data driven approval process

Existing NH data to leverage

- Labor market demand and projected openings
- Wage levels and wage progression
- Employer/job-posting demand signals
- WIOA participant and training outcomes
- UI wage records and post-exit employment information
- Credential and completion information where available

Documentation required from providers

- Program enrollment and completion history
- Employment/placement results
- Employer partnerships or hiring commitments
- Curriculum-to-occupation crosswalk
- Published tuition and fees
- Credential, licensure, or industry certification outcomes

The goal is a single evidence package that can be used for SWIB review, Governor certification, federal submission, and future monitoring.

Workforce Pell and WIOA: complementary, not interchangeable

Workforce Pell

- Federal Title IV student aid
- Student must meet Pell eligibility requirements
- Supports eligible short-term programs at eligible institutions
- Program must satisfy Workforce Pell performance/value requirements
- Does not replace WIOA eligibility or supportive services

WIOA Title I

- Workforce program funding administered through OWO/NH Works
- Participant eligibility and priority rules apply
- Can support tuition/training when WIOA requirements are met
- Can provide case management and supportive services
- Can be used alongside other resources subject to federal aid coordination rules

Strategic opportunity: Workforce Pell can become another financing layer in NH's workforce system, potentially reducing reliance on limited WIOA training dollars for eligible participants and programs.

Implementation timeline

PY26 Q1

Adopt SWIB procedure

Define criteria, evidence standards, review cycle, appeals/denials, records & conflict-of-interest controls.

PY26 Q1/Q2

Launch provider intake

Publish application, templates, technical assistance & a public list of approved / pending programs.

Ongoing

Build data infrastructure

Establish recurring outcome validation & employer-demand review; integrate wage & program data.

Ongoing

Monitor + refresh

Annual review of demand alignment and provider outcomes; address federal rule changes.

OWO Recommendations

- Use objective, published criteria so providers understand how determinations are made.
- Require documentation sufficient to support the Governor's certification and future federal reviews.
- Establish a recurring review process because labor-market demand, employer needs, program outcomes, and federal requirements can change.
- Use employer input as evidence of demand—not as a substitute for objective labor-market and outcome data.
- Track the full pathway: enrollment → completion → credential → employment → retention/wage progression.
- Approval of the process is a Board item today.

Questions?