

**Workforce Pell Program Frequently Asked Questions**  
**August 2026**

| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Answer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Is participation in the Workforce Pell Program mandatory?                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Participation in the Workforce Pell Program is voluntary. Institutions that are interested in participating must complete the RI Workforce Pell Program Application found at <a href="http://riopc.edu/WorkforcePell">http://riopc.edu/WorkforcePell</a> to confirm program eligibility.                                                                                                                        |
| Does a program need to meet BOTH the 150 to 599 clock hours AND the duration of 8 to 14 weeks to fulfill the requirement?                                                                                                                                    | Yes. The program must be at least 8 weeks and less than 15 weeks (8-14 weeks) in length AND consist of at least 150 but less than 600 clock hours of instruction (150-599).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| If an existing program does not meet one or more of the required criteria and modifications are made to achieve compliance, will the period during which the program operated before those modifications be counted toward the one-year runtime requirement? | If modifications are made to a program to meet eligibility requirements, the program must operate in its revised format for at least one year before it can become an eligible Workforce Pell Grant program.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| What is meant by a pilot process?                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | To ensure a thoughtful and high-quality rollout of Workforce Pell, Rhode Island will implement a pilot process with clear eligibility guardrails. These guardrails are designed to protect students' limited Pell lifetime funding and support workforce pathways that lead to long-term economic mobility. The requirements are subject to revision at the end of the pilot period.                            |
| How will the 70% completion rate be measured? Will it apply to all students in the program, or only to those who receive a Workforce Pell Grant?                                                                                                             | The 70% completion rate is measured by the percentage of students who finish the program within 150% of the normal completion time. This requirement applies to all students enrolled in the program, not only those receiving a Workforce Pell Grant. Exclusions apply for the following reasons: death, medical condition that prevents the student from working, incarceration, and active military service. |
| Must programs be credit-bearing to qualify for participation in the Workforce Pell Grant program, or are non-credit programs also eligible?                                                                                                                  | Both credit and non-credit programs are eligible for Workforce Pell provided that they meet all required criteria. Reference the Workforce Pell Program Eligibility Checklist found at <a href="http://riopc.edu/WorkforcePell">http://riopc.edu/WorkforcePell</a>                                                                                                                                              |
| Are individuals with a bachelor's degree eligible to receive a Workforce Pell grant?                                                                                                                                                                         | Yes, individuals with a bachelor's degree who are enrolled in an approved Workforce Pell program may be eligible to receive a Workforce Pell Grant.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|                                                                                    | Individuals with a graduate degree are not eligible to receive a Workforce Pell Grant.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Are individuals with a master's degree eligible to receive a Workforce Pell grant? | No, individuals who already have earned a master's degree are not eligible to receive Pell funding for a Workforce Pell approved program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| How do students apply for a Workforce Pell Grant?                                  | Students enrolled in a Workforce Pell eligible program will need to complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Once the FAFSA is processed, the institution at which the student is enrolled will confirm Workforce Pell Grant eligibility.<br>Note: students may not receive a regular Pell Grant and a Workforce Pell Grant concurrently. |
| Does a Workforce Pell Grant award apply to a student's Pell Lifetime Eligibility?  | Yes. Any Workforce Pell Grant funds a student receives will count toward their Lifetime Eligibility Used (LEU), which is the lifetime limit on Federal Pell Grant eligibility.                                                                                                                                                                                |