

Arizona Accepting Workforce Pell State Certification Applications

Short-term workforce training programs have until Aug. 24 to apply for certification

PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity](#) (OEO), Arizona's lead state agency for workforce strategy and economic data, has opened the

[Workforce Pell state certification application](#) process. Workforce Pell will enable federal Pell Grants to be used for short-term training programs for the first time. Federal Pell Grant program-eligible institutions offering qualified workforce training programs in Arizona may submit applications through Aug. 24, 2026 for review.

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Mary Foote, Director of the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity



Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity logo

Workforce Pell, created by federal legislation passed in 2025, expands the existing Pell Grant program to include short-term education and training programs that prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand jobs. The program extends financial aid access to Pell-eligible Arizonans facing financial barriers to postsecondary education.

Arizona institutions seeking state certification will complete a two-phase application process that includes an online application and a secure student records submission. To qualify, programs must be short-term (less than 15 weeks) and lead to portable, stackable credentials aligned with Arizona's in-demand occupations. Programs

will need to demonstrate a 70% completion rate and a 70% job placement rate, along with measurable wage gains for students one year after completing the program. Applications cover institution eligibility, labor market alignment, employer engagement and validation, student outcomes, and consumer disclosures.

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gives Pell-eligible Arizonans another tool to earn postsecondary credentials and build pathways to high-demand, fulfilling careers," said Mary Foote, Director, Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity. "Arizona's workforce strategy centers on aligning credential attainment with the occupations where employers are hiring, and Workforce Pell extends financial aid to the short-term programs that make that connection possible for Arizonans who could not otherwise afford them."

Arizona's certification process, developed by OEO in coordination with the Workforce Arizona Council and informed by a statewide working group representing higher education, business, community-based organizations, and federal financial aid experts, ensures that every program submitted for consideration aligns with real employer demand and delivers measurable outcomes for Arizonans.

"We appreciate being asked to participate in the design and launch of this program," said David Borofsky, Executive Director, Arizona Community College Coordinating Council (AC4). "Our community colleges serve all fifteen counties in Arizona and offer workforce programs as a part of the Eligible Training Provider List for WIOA. Our colleges have been planning and working to create shorter training programs for our students that will be eligible for Workforce Pell."

"We are proud to participate in the design and launch of this state's Workforce Pell program," said Susan Ciardullo, Executive Director, Arizona Private School Association. "Many of our members have already offered workforce programs as a part of the Eligible Training Provider List for WIOA, but this now gives students an additional resource through Pell eligibility with our shorter accredited programs."

Programs that receive state certification will be notified after September 17, 2026. From there, certified institutions submit their programs to the U.S. Department of Education for federal Workforce Pell program designation. The U.S. Department of Education makes the final determination on federal approval, and programs may only accept Workforce Pell Grants once both the state certification and federal designation are in hand.

"Arizona's program is built to be stakeholder-led, and we are committed to a process that prioritizes collaboration, transparency, and meaningful input from the programs serving our communities," said Foote.

OEO recently closed a public comment period that ran from July 1 through July 20, 2026, inviting stakeholder input on the [draft Workforce Pell policy](#). The agency gathered feedback from higher education, business, and community stakeholders to formulate the final policy framework.

"Arizona's workforce ecosystem already connects industry, education, and community across the state. Workforce Pell gives Pell-eligible Arizonans one more resource within that system to earn postsecondary credentials, build careers, and strengthen their financial futures," continued Foote.

Workforce Pell programs will enable students to earn postsecondary credentials, which will also advance Arizona's education attainment goal, Achieve60AZ.

Arizona education and training providers have until Aug. 24, 2026, to submit a certification application. Institutions can access the application at oeo.az.gov/workforce-pell.

About the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

The Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) strengthens Arizona's workforce and economy. OEO coordinates workforce development strategy and evaluation, monitors the state's tax and regulatory competitiveness, and produces labor market, economic and demographic research and analysis. OEO is also home to the Arizona Finance Authority, which offers innovative, responsible, and sustainable financing solutions for public and private borrowers. For more information, please visit oeo.az.gov.

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