Workforce Pell and State Legislatures

WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee

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Workforce Pell Program Basics

Eligible Programs

- Run 8-14 weeks and 150-599 clock hours, includes credit and noncredit
- Prepare students for high-skill, high-wage or in-demand occupations
- Lead to a recognized, stackable postsecondary credential
- Programs must be college-based, operate for at least one year, provide 75% of instruction/program design

Approval and Governance

- States identify eligible occupations, colleges submit programs for review
- States review and approve programs, U.S. Dept of Ed verifies
- States can enter into bilateral agreements for interstate access

Performance and Accountability

- Programs must maintain 70% completion rate, 70% occupation-aligned occupation rate, provide earnings boost that exceeds program costs

Workforce Pell: Key Details

Award amounts: expected to range from approximately $120 to $4,310

Data Collection: States likely need to collect new data to participate

- Completion data: States collect and report to feds
    - Noncredit course data not widely available or formally collected
- Job placement data: States collect and report to feds
    - Occupation-aligned job placement data required by 2029
        - States must use administrative data to connect program to related and relevant occupations
        - Likely requires detailed enhanced wage records, connecting program classifications (CIP) to occupations codes (SOC)
- Value added earnings: Feds use IRS wage data to calculate
    - Earnings above 150% FPL > listed tuition and fees

NCSL Resource: Legislator's Guide to Workforce Pell

Findings from the Field

- Many existing short-term programs may not initially qualify for Workforce Pell
  - The 25% cap on third-party instruction could limit partnership-driven programs.
- Responsibility for program approval will vary across states
- Bilateral agreements present opportunities for interstate coordination.
- Nearly every state will need to develop its postsecondary and workforce data systems for programs to participate in Workforce Pell.
- Managing the occupation-aligned job placement performance metric will likely be a high-stakes focal point of implementation for states and institutions.
- Workforce Pell may not readily align with existing state investments in short-term education and training programs.
- Students may need additional support and outreach to enroll, complete and succeed beyond graduation.

Early State Legislative Trends

26 Bills | 16 States

Codifying state implementation

- State approval process; federal criteria incorporated

Directing governance

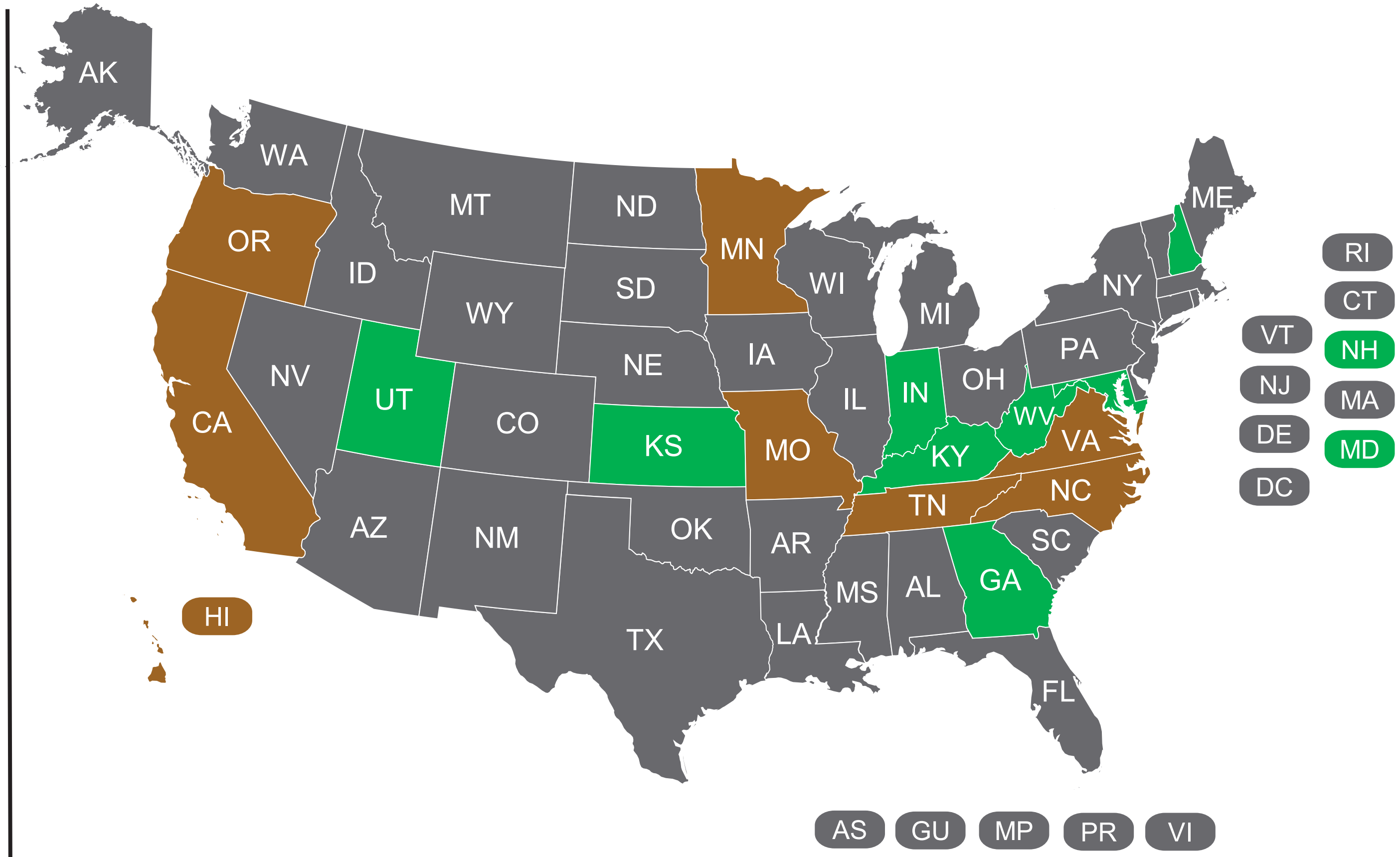
- Governor, workforce board, higher ed or agency roles

Adding state-level oversight

- Reporting, monitoring data, cost or review provisions

Connecting to broader workforce & postsec strategies

- Plan coordination, workforce data, funding alignment



Source: *NCSL Tracking*

Legislator's Guide to Workforce Pell

14 Potential Roles for State Legislatures

1. **Inventory state-funded programs and assess against Pell requirements.**
2. Support program development.
3. Build stackable credential pathways.
4. **Participate in state workforce boards.**
5. Coordinate the state approval structure.
6. Define and align key terms in statute.
7. Provide directives on state approval and oversight responsibilities.
8. Authorize data collection, linkage and sharing.
9. **Invest in enhanced wage records.**
10. Authorize interstate data sharing.
11. Align noncredit data with postsecondary reporting.
12. Design supplemental state aid.
13. **Coordinate funding streams.**
14. Support outreach to expand access.