Workforce Pell Workgroup

Meeting Briefing Book

April 23, 2026

10:00 am – 12:00 pm ET

Location: Education and Labor Cabinet

3rd Floor Main Conference Room

500 Mero Street

Frankfort, KY 40601

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KWIB Workforce Pell Meeting Briefing Book

April 23, 2026, 10:00-12:00 pm ET

Table of Contents

Page

Agenda.....4

Workforce Pell Key Terms Definitions.....5

Workforce Pell – Proposed Governance Structure.....6

Appendix.....7

SB249.....8

KWIB Workforce Pell Workgroup Meeting

AGENDA
April 23, 2026
10:00 am – 12:00 pm ET

Education and Labor Cabinet
3rd Floor Main Conference Room
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601

10:00 am **Welcome** ..... *Alisher Burikhanov*
Executive Director
Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB)

David Potter, Ph.D.
Senior Coordinator, Education Transition Strategist
Kentucky Adult Education

10:05 am **Review of Tasks to Complete**..... *David Potter, Ph.D.*

10:10 am **Workforce Pell National Update**..... *Rajeev Darolia, Ph.D.*
Wendell H. Ford Professor of Public Policy & Economics
Senior Coordinator, Education Transition Strategist
University of Kentucky

10:20 am **Finalizing High Skill, High Wage, & In-Demand Definitions** ..... *Alisher Burikhanov*

10:30 am **Definition Discussion: Stackable & Portable Credentials**..... *David Potter, Ph.D*

12:00 pm **Adjournment**..... *Alisher Burikhanov*

Workforce Pell Key Terms Definitions – DRAFT

1. ***In-Demand*:**
    a. An occupation is considered in-demand if it is:
        i. One whose three-year rolling average employment growth rate exceeds the overall growth rate for all occupations at the statewide level or within a local workforce development area over that same time period OR
        ii. One that is deemed strategically critical by the Governor due to emerging economic development investments
    b. In-Demand Operationalized:
        i. KYSTATS in-demand projections, review of occupations on the state vs. state or LWDA vs LWDA level OR
        ii. Occupations identified by the Governor to be emerging or critical to the state's economic growth as a result of announced investment in the commonwealth
2. ***High-Wage*:**
    a. An occupation is considered high-wage if it is:
        i. One whose median wages exceed the overall median wages for all occupations either at the statewide level or within a local workforce area
    b. High-Wage Operationalized:
        i. KYSTATS Statewide/LWA Occupational Employment and Wages Report. Review of occupation on state vs. state or LWA vs LWA level
    c. Context:
        i. Statewide occupational median wage: $22.99; local occupational median wage range: $18.31 (EKCEP) to $23.20 (KentuckianaWorks)
3. ***High-Skill:***
    a. An occupation is high-skill if it is:
        i. One which requires training in technical or vocational schools, related on-the-job experience, apprenticeship, or an associate's degree
    b. High-Skill Operationalized:
        i. Has an O*NET Job Zone score equal to or greater than 3 (O*NET data files available here.) OR
        ii. Has a registered apprenticeship program in Kentucky

Workforce Pell – Proposed Governance Structure – DRAFT

Background:

Workforce Pell was included in the federal tax and spending legislation passed by Congress and requires every state to implement Workforce Pell by 7/1/26, a very rapid timeline as the US Education Department is yet to provide final ruling. In Kentucky, SB249 relates to Workforce Pell and was signed by the Governor on 4/13/2026.

Workforce Pell allows Pell eligible students to pursue short term credentials, 8-15 week programs. Eligible programs are:

- High-skill, high-wage, and in-demand *(definitions for all three identified by each state)*
- Stackable and portable credentials *(stackable = credit bearing or credit for prior learning; portable = accepted by more than one employer)*
- Have 70% completion rate, and 70% employment rate with wages premiums higher than the cost of tuition and fees

The Governor, in consultation with the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB), will review and approve programs that meet those thresholds to submit to the Secretary of the US Education Department.

Proposed Governance Structure:

1. Institutions submit potential programs to the "Workforce Pell Program Review Workgroup"
2. Workgroup reviews quarterly and submits to the KWIB Education Attainment Committee for review (this structure mirrors the approach currently done with CTE certifications, Perkins Leadership Funds, and In-Demand Certification)
3. Education Attainment submits to KWIB for business approval sought in Workforce Pell
4. Approved recommendations are sent to DWD Commissioner
5. The Governor receives recommended programs via DWD Commissioner or ELC Secretary

Workforce Pell Program Review Workgroup Members:

Voting Stakeholders:

- Kentucky Department of Education
- Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (business member)
- Local Workforce Development Board (business member)
- Council on Postsecondary Education
- Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges & Universities
- Department of Workforce Development - Office of Industry and Apprenticeship Services
- Department of Workforce Development - Office of Adult Education

Non-Voting Observers:

- Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority
- Cabinet for Economic Development
- Kentucky Center for Statistics

Appendix

AN ACT relating to workforce development and declaring an emergency.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 151B IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

(1) As used in this section, "eligible workforce training programs" means programs that meet applicable requirements in section 83002 of Pub. L. No. 119-21.

(2) The Governor, in consultation with the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, shall:

(a) Approve all eligible workforce training programs for purposes of federal Workforce Pell Grants; and

(b) Coordinate approval of eligible workforce training programs with other state and federal workforce programs to avoid duplicative payments for the same student costs that are covered by federal Workforce Pell Grants.

(3) The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board shall establish an internal procedure to:

(a) Determine if a program meets the applicable federal requirements to be an eligible workforce training program; and

(b) Ensure that the implementation of this section does not impose requirements more restrictive than, or inconsistent with, any applicable federal rules or regulations governing Workforce Pell Grants.

➔Section 2. Whereas the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a paramount interest in creating educational opportunities for all citizens, an emergency is declared to exist, and this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law.