

Short-Term / Workforce PELL

The **Bipartisan Workforce Pell Grant Act (BWPA)** is a legislative proposal aimed at expanding Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term, job-focused training programs. Traditionally, Pell Grants have been limited to students pursuing degree programs that are at least 600 hours long and span at least 15 weeks. This bill seeks to make Pell Grants available for shorter programs, which can be as brief as 150 hours over eight weeks and up to 599 clock hours in length, provided they lead to recognized credentials that meet local workforce needs. These credentials might be state licensures or nationally recognized industry certifications.

NCATC Supports These Key Aspects

- **Eligibility Expansion:** The act would allow students enrolled in short-term training programs to qualify for Pell Grants. These programs must be non-degree and focused on workforce development.
- **Focus on Workforce Development:** The intent is to align PELL funding with the needs of the labor market, helping students quickly gain skills that lead to employment immediately upon completion of certificates. These certificates are typically designed to assist low-income and first-generation-to-college students of diverse backgrounds but can also be for workers who find themselves unemployed due to changes in the labor markets in their local areas.
- **Accountability Measures:** The bill includes provisions intended to ensure that these programs are of high quality and can demonstrate positive outcomes such as high job placement rates and earning gains for graduates. In addition, the programs must align to workforce needs that are documented by current employer labor market data.

Bipartisan Support

The bill has garnered support from both Republicans and Democrats, reflecting a shared interest in addressing the skills gap and promoting economic mobility through education and training.

This proposal is part of a broader effort to make postsecondary education more accessible and relevant to today's job market, particularly for nontraditional students who may need to quickly reskill or upskill to meet evolving workforce demands with concrete employment opportunities.