

Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship and Federal Workforce Pell Grant Comparison

Category	Arkansas Workforce Challenge	Federal Workforce Pell Grant
Purpose	State-funded scholarship supporting workforce training in high-demand fields.	Federal need-based financial aid for eligible short-term workforce programs.
Funding Source	Arkansas Lottery proceeds.	Federal Pell Grant funding.
Student Residency Requirement	Must be an Arkansas resident.	Must enroll in a program that meets the requirements determined by the students' state of residence.
Financial Need Requirement	No.	Yes. Students must be Pell-eligible.
Education Eligibility	High School Diploma/GED: Required. Associate Degree Holders: Eligible. Bachelor's Degree Holders: Eligible. Graduate Degree Holders: Eligible.	High School Diploma/GED: Required (or meet the federal Ability to Benefit criteria). Associate Degree Holders: Eligible. Bachelor's Degree Holders: Eligible. Graduate Degree Holders: Not Eligible.
Eligible Fields	Advanced Manufacturing; Healthcare; Information Technology; Construction Trades; Logistics, Distribution, and Transportation.	High-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations identified through the state approval process.
Eligible Program Types	Credit and Professional Skills Training (PST/non-credit) in eligible fields meeting program length requirements.	Credit and non-credit programs meeting stringent federal Workforce Pell requirements.
Program Length	No instructional week requirement. Credit: Certificate of Proficiency (CP) and above, not including Bachelor's degrees. PST: 80 clock hours or more.	150–599 clock hours (or equivalent credit hours) and at least 8 but less than 15 weeks.
Funding Amount	Up to \$1,500 for PST programs 80–179 hours. Up to \$3,000 for PST programs 180+ hours or credit programs CP (6 credit hours) and above.	Based on Pell eligibility and prorated according to program length and cost of attendance (~\$125 - ~\$4,000).

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Eligible Providers	Public and private Arkansas colleges and universities, approved vocational-technical schools, ETPL providers, VA-approved providers, and approved Private Career Education schools.	Title IV-eligible institutions.
Credential Requirement	Must lead to a certificate, certification, license, course completion, or degree in an approved high-demand area.	Must lead to a recognized postsecondary credential that is portable, stackable, and aligned with employer demand.
Credit for Further Education	Not required, though prior learning credit opportunities may exist.	Required. Programs must provide academic credit applicable toward a related certificate or degree program.
Employer Alignment	Programs approved based on five specified state high-demand workforce areas.	Programs must demonstrate alignment with employer hiring requirements and employer-defined competencies.
Outcome Thresholds	No minimum completion, employment, or earnings thresholds established in statute or rule.	Must meet federal performance thresholds, including completion, employment, and value-added earnings requirements to maintain eligibility.
Student Reporting	Institutions report individual student completer data including demographics, completion, CIP/SOC codes, hours completed, credential earned, and program dates.	Extensive federal reporting on enrollment, completion, employment outcomes, earnings, costs, and program performance.
Program Approval	Program eligibility determined by ADHE in collaboration with the Office of Skills Development.	Requires state approval under the Governor's Workforce Pell process and federal approval.

For more information, please refer to the ADHE website.

Arkansas Workforce Challenge: <https://adhe.edu/institutions/arkansas-workforce-challenge>

Workforce Pell: <https://adhe.edu/institutions/workforce-pell>

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