Work Source MAINE | State Workforce Development Board

State of Maine
Department of Labor
45 Commerce Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330

Step-by-Step Submission Guide for Maine's Workforce Pell Program Application

October 2026

How to Use This Guide

This manual provides guidance to Title IV postsecondary institutions applying for Workforce Pell program approval. It outlines Workforce Pell program requirements, eligibility, and the steps to request program approval. Use it to understand the program before applying.

To apply for Workforce Pell program approval, institutions can visit *worksourcemaine.com/pages/workforce-pell*. If you have any questions, please contact Program Staff at workforcepell.dol@maine.gov.

Phone: 207-621-5165 TTY users call Maine Relay 711

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Overview of Workforce Pell

Workforce Pell expands Federal Pell Grant eligibility to approved short-term workforce training programs offered by Title IV institutions (defined as an accredited public, nonprofit, or for-profit entity eligible to participate in student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act). Established under federal law and effective July 20, 2026, Workforce Pell is intended to help eligible students access high-quality, career-focused training that leads to an industry-recognized credential and prepares students for employment in-demand occupations.

Review the Maine Workforce Pell Program Determination Policy for a comprehensive overview of the program and its eligibility requirements.

Workforce Pell Program Eligibility Criteria

Participation by eligible institutions is voluntary. To be eligible for Workforce Pell, a program must meet all Workforce Pell eligibility criteria in federal law (outlined in 34 CFR 690.93(a) and 34 CFR 690.94(a)(2)(i)) for at least 12 months before applying for approval. Under federal law, an eligible program must:

- Be offered by an accredited public, nonprofit, or for-profit entity eligible to participate in student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act;
- Have been in operation for at least the 12-month period immediately preceding the request for program approval;
- Have a duration of 150 - 599 clock hours (or the equivalent credit hours) and at least 8 but fewer than 15 weeks of instruction;
- Have alignment with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations or sectors;
- Meet the hiring requirements of potential employers;
- Lead to a recognized postsecondary credential that is stackable and portable (or prepares students for employment for which there is only one recognized postsecondary credential);
- Ensure that a student is eligible to receive academic credit for at least one certificate or degree program at one or more eligible institutions;
- Demonstrate a 70% completion rate (within 150% of normal time) and 70% job placement rate (second quarter after exiting the program);
- Satisfy U.S. Department of Education's Value-Added Earnings standard;
- Not be a correspondence course, study abroad, or a direct assessment program.

Additionally, under Federal law, an eligible institution:

- Must be offered by an institution that is eligible for Title IV aid and, during the five years preceding the date of the determination, has not been subject to any suspension, emergency action, or termination of programs.
- May contract out a portion of the eligible workforce program to an ineligible provider, but no more than 25% of the program can be offered by the ineligible provider. That flexibility is expanded to up to 49% for the related technical instruction (RTI) of a Registered Apprenticeship program. Title IV institutions must have a written agreement with any non-Title IV training provider for that provider to deliver the portion of the program permitted under federal regulations.

Application Overview

Eligible Title IV postsecondary institutions in Maine who are accredited and eligible to award Title IV Federal financial aid may submit an application to have their program reviewed for approval for Workforce Pell. Institutions should follow the process below to submit their program applications:

Steps to Apply

1. Review the **Workforce Pell Program Determination Policy** to confirm your program meets eligibility criteria, including alignment with **Maine's Workforce Pell Priority Occupation List**.
2. Download, review, and complete the required forms and supporting documentation, including the:
    a. **Signed Data Sharing Agreement:** *Each institution is required to upload a signed Data Sharing Agreement; however, it only needs to be completed and submitted once per institution and does not need to be resubmitted for each program. The data sharing agreement facilitates the secure exchange of participant-level data needed to measure and report Workforce Pell program outcomes and meet federal reporting requirements.*
    b. **Signed Employer Validation Form(s)** and supporting evidence provided by the institution
    c. **Evidence of stackability:** *Evidence must be in place for at least 12 months prior to submitting a Workforce Pell application.*
    d. **Copy of the written agreement,** *if partnering with a non-Title IV provider*
    e. **Participant Data Worksheet:** *After completing the program information in the **Workforce Pell Application**, you will receive an email containing a unique Program ID for the program submitted. Enter the Program ID in Column D of the Participant Data Worksheet. Once the worksheet is complete, upload it through the secure upload portal on **MaineEARNS**. Refer to the Participant Information section of this guide for detailed instructions.*
3. Complete the **Workforce Pell Application**. Institutions should be prepared to upload the required forms and supporting documents from step 2 during the application process for each program applying for Workforce Pell.
4. Completed submissions will be reviewed by Workforce Pell Advisory Committee and the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) for initial eligibility assessment, with recommendations to Governor's Office to make a determination on certification.
5. If approved, the institution will be provided with a completed certification form by the State. When the institution is ready to submit the program to the U.S. Department of Education for approval, the institution will upload the certification into its *Application to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs* (**E-App**) as a part of the program approval process. Institutions should refer to instructions provided in the **Federal Student Aid Electronic Announcement GENERAL-26-44.**
6. Institutions must notify the SWDB via email to **workforcepell.dol@maine.gov** when the U.S. Department of Education issues its determination.

Timeline

Maine will accept applications on a rolling basis, with quarterly eligibility determination cycles. Refer to the Maine Workforce Pell website for the full application review schedule.

Priority Occupations

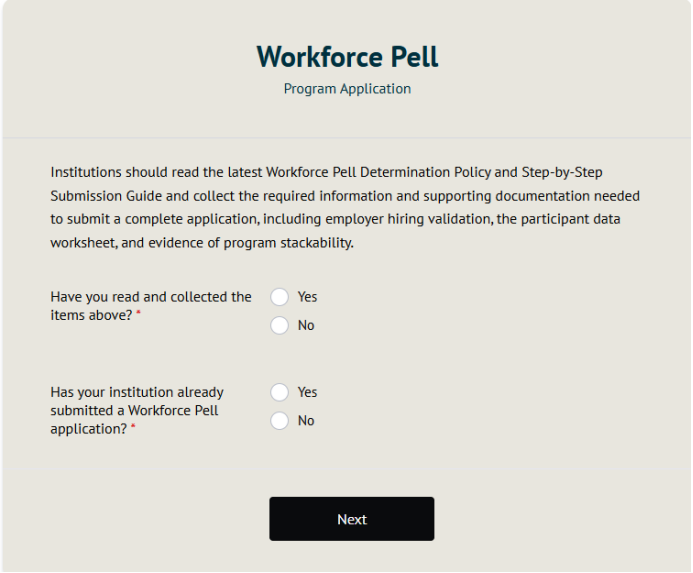
Maine requires Workforce Pell-eligible programs to be aligned with one or more of the occupations on Maine's Workforce Pell Priority Occupation List. The list reflects current and projected labor-market demand and wage opportunities, using data from the MDOL's Center for Workforce Research and Information.

Workforce Pell Application

Institutions will complete the *Workforce Pell Application* to collect the information needed to determine program eligibility. To help prepare, the information required is outlined below step by step.

Welcome Screen

Institutions should read the latest Workforce Pell Determination Policy and Step-by-Step Submission Guide and collect the required information and supporting documentation needed to submit a complete application, including employer validation form, the data sharing agreement, participant data worksheet, and evidence of program stackability.



Form fields include:

- **Have you read and collected the items above?**
- **Has your Institution already completed a Workforce Pell application?**
  If yes, you will be asked to provide your institution's name and a point of contact for email address. You will then be able to bypass the Institution Information section and proceed directly to Program Information. If no, you will be prompted to provide information in the Institution Information section below.
  - **Institution Name**
    The dropdown includes only Title IV-eligible institutions located in Maine. If you don't see your institution listed, please select "Other." A member of our team will reach out to you for additional information.
  - **Point of Contact Email**
    Please identify the primary point of contact at your institution for matters related to Workforce Pell.

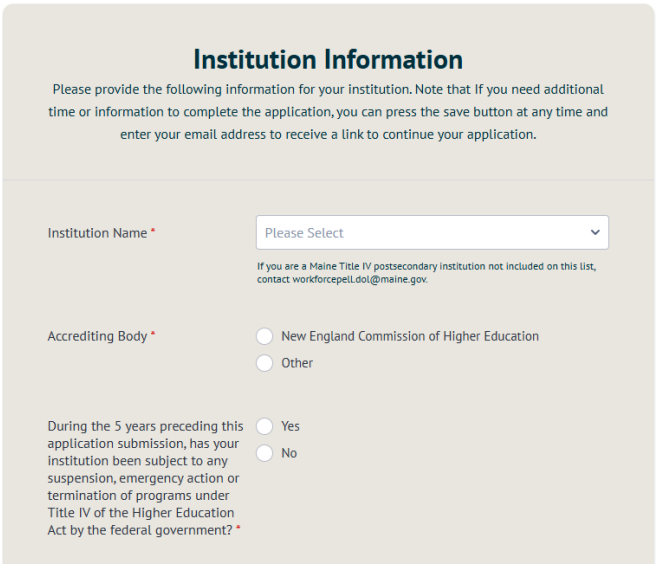
Institution Information

This information is used to verify eligibility. To save the institution time, note that this page will only need to be completed once. If returning to the program later to submit additional programs, institutions should select the option on the welcome screen indicating they have submitted an application previously. If you need additional time or information to complete the application, you can press the save button at any time and enter your email to receive a link to continue your application.

Form fields include:

- **Institution Name**
  The dropdown includes only Title IV-eligible institutions located in Maine. If you are a Maine Title IV postsecondary institution and you are not included on the list of Title IV institutions in the application, you should reach out to workforcepell.dol@maine.gov

- **Accrediting Body**
  While individual programs are not required to be accredited, institutional accreditation is required for Title IV participation.
- **During the 5 years preceding this application submission, has your institution been subject to any suspension, emergency action or termination of programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act by the federal government?**
  Institutions subject to any of the above are inelegible for Workforce Pell under federal regulations.
- **Do your institution's financial aid officers have the information necessary to advise students on the eligibility requirements, financial implications, and other impacts of participating in the Workforce Pell program?**
  This includes information advising students on how participation in Workforce Pell may impact their lifetime Pell Grant eligibility.



- **Please provide the date on which your Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with the U.S. Department of Education will expire.**
  A PPA is an agreement between an eligible institution and the U.S. Department of Education under which the institution agrees to comply with the federal laws governing its participation in Title IV federal student aid programs. An institution must have a valid Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with the U.S. Department of Education to participate. The Governor's approval of an eligible workforce program expires when the institution's PPA expires.
- **Point of Contact Information**
- **Institutions will need to enter into a data sharing agreement with the State to facilitate the secure exchange of program- and participant-level data needed to measure and report Workforce Pell program outcomes and meet federal reporting requirements. Please have an authorized representative complete the data sharing agreement template and upload it.**
  The Data Sharing Agreement only needs to be completed and submitted once per institution and does not need to be resubmitted for each program.

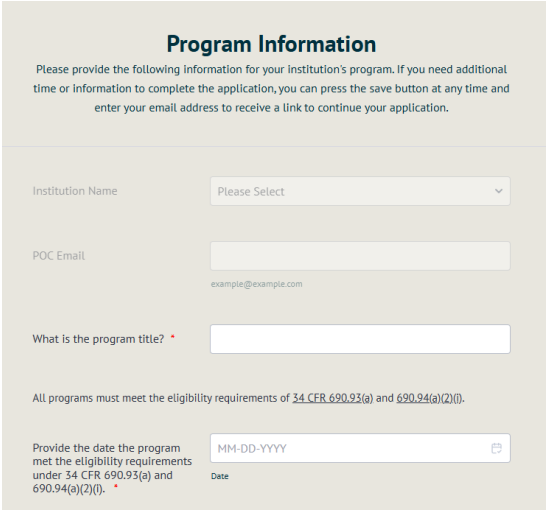
Program Information

Captures program-specific data and must be submitted for each program you are requesting approval for. If you need additional time or information to complete the application, you can press the save button at any time and enter your email address to receive a link to continue your application. Form fields include:

- **What is the program title?**
- **Provide the date the program met the eligibility requirements under *34 CFR 690.93(a)* and *690.94(a)(2)(i)*.**
  The date entered must be at least 12 months preceding the date of application. Under federal rule, programs need to meet the requirements for 12 months prior to submitting an application.
- **Does the program include correspondence, direct assessment, or study abroad coursework?**

Correspondences courses, study abroad, and direct assessment programs are not eligible for Workforce Pell.

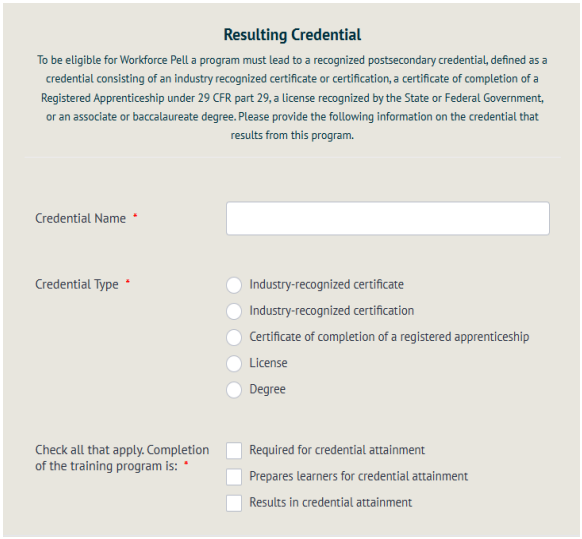
- ***Is this program the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) for a Registered Apprenticeship Program?*** **If so, upload a copy of the Registered Apprenticeship Program's Schedule of Work**
  The RTI component of a Registered Apprenticeship program, when delivered by an eligible Workforce Pell provider and meeting Workforce Pell program length requirements, automatically satisfies the federal Workforce Pell requirements for being high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand. As a result, it is not evaluated under the state's Priority Occupations methodology, and occupations not included on the Priority Occupations List may still be eligible for Workforce Pell when offered through an eligible Registered Apprenticeship program.



- **What is the primary Classification of Instructions Programs (CIP) code for the program?**
  Eligible CIP codes and titles will auto-populate as you type. You must ensure that the CIP code that you enter corresponds to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of one of Maine's Workforce Pell Priority Occupation List. You can access a SOC to CIP crosswalk to see how eligible programs align to priority occupations.
- **Using the search fields below, identify up to three high-wage, high skill, in-demand occupations the program prepares students for. You may search using either the ONET occupation title or SOC code.**
  The occupation/s entered must align with the occupations on Maine's Workforce Pell Priority Occupation List. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) must correspond to the CIP provided in the application. You can access a SOC to CIP crosswalk to see how eligible programs align to priority occupations.
- **What is the length of instruction of the program (weeks)?**
  Eligible Workforce Pell programs must have a minimum instructional length of 8 weeks and a maximum instructional length of fewer than 15 weeks.
- **What is the number of clock/credit hours of the program?**
  Eligible Workforce Pell programs must consist of at least 150 clock hours, but fewer than 600 clock hours of instruction, or an equivalent number of credit hours.
- **Is the program offered as for-credit or non-credit?**
  Both credit and non-credit programs are eligible. Non-credit programs must be eligible to articulate to academic credit.
- **Is any of the program instruction provided by non-Title IV eligible third parties?**
  If yes, you will need to provide a copy of the written agreement between your institution *and the third-party training provider documenting this relationship.* An eligible institution may partner with an ineligible provider to deliver a portion of instruction. The ineligible provider may deliver up to 25% of the program, or up to 49% of the related technical instruction (RTI) for a Registered Apprenticeship program.
- **What are the published tuition and fees?**
  Tuition and fees are defined as the institutional charges for an eligible workforce program.
- **Please provide a website for the training that validates the published tuition and fees number identified above.**

Resulting Credential

Workforce Pell programs must lead to a recognized postsecondary credential, including an industry recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of a Registered Apprenticeship under 29 CFR part 29, a license recognized by the State or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree. Please provide information about the credential awarded upon program completion.



- **Credential Name**
- **Credential Type**
    - Industry-recognized certificate
    - Industry-recognized certification
    - Certificate of completion or a registered apprenticeship
    - License
    - Degree
    - Other

- **Check all that apply. Completion of the program is:**
    - Required for credential attainment
    - Prepares learners for credential attainment
    - Results in credential attainment

Stackability and Articulation to Credit

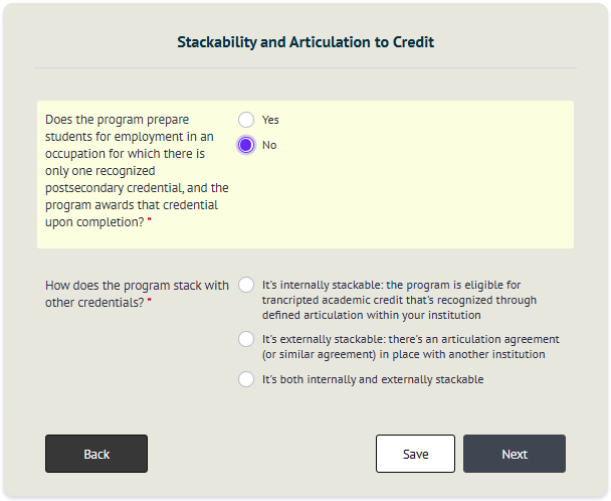
- **Does the program prepare students for employment in an occupation for which there is only one recognized postsecondary credential, and the program awards that credential upon completion?**
    - If yes, terminal programs will be required to provide evidence of there being only one recognized postsecondary credential for the occupation. *Terminal credential programs are ones where the academic degree or professional certification is the highest level you can earn in a specific field. If yes, programs must still upload evidence to reflect that the program articulates to credit either within your institution or with another institution.*
    - If no, institutions will need to answer how does the program stack with other credentials? *A program is internally stackable if it is eligible for transcripted academic credit that's recognized through defined articulation within your institution and it's externally stackable if there's an articulation agreement (or similar agreement) with another institution.*
- **How does the program stack with other credentials?**
    - It's internally stackable: the program is eligible for transcripted academic credit that's recognized through defined articulation withing your institution
    - It's externally stackable: there's an articulation agreement in place with another institution
    - It's both internally and externally stackable

        Internal Stackability:
        - **Name:** *Name or program that Workforce Pell program stacks with*
        - **Credits earned:**
        - **Type:** *Certificate, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree*

- **Upload evidence of internal stackability for the program identified above** (e.g., catalog or curricular documentation, registered apprenticeship schedule of work). *Institutions must upload evidence verifying stackability for at least one of the programs identified above, showing it's been stackable for a minimum of one year prior to this submission for the program to be approved.*

External Stackability:

- **Institution Name:** *Name of receiving institution*
- **Program Name:** *Name of receiving program*
- **Credits earned:**
- **Type:** *Certificate, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree*
- **Credit Award Method:** articulation agreement, transfer-of-credit agreement, consortium or partnership agreement, credit for prior learning, or other

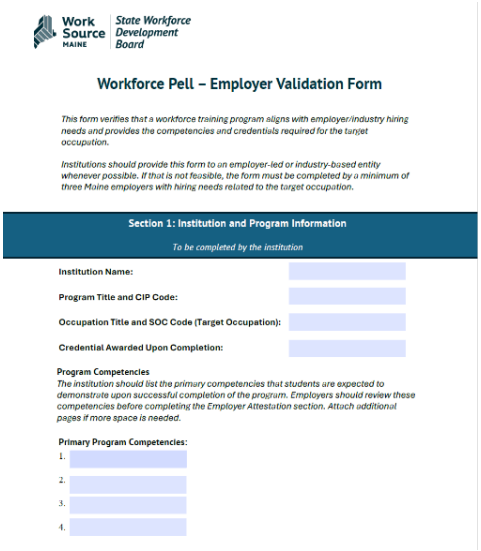


- **Effective Date:** *Effective date must be a minimum of one year prior to this submission if this application.*
- **Upload evidence of internal stackability for the program identified above** (e.g., catalog or curricular documentation, registered apprenticeship schedule of work). *Institutions must upload evidence verifying stackability for at least one of the programs identified above, showing it's been stackable for a minimum of one year prior to this submission for the program to be approved.*

Employer Validation

To meet Workforce Pell requirements, providers must submit a completed **Employer Validation Form**(s) and supporting documentation for each eligible program. Employer validation should primarily be provided through industry-led groups, such as industry associations. If validation through an industry-led group is not feasible, programs may instead provide validation from a minimum of three Maine-based employers. These entities must represent employers that have current or projected hiring demand in the occupation(s) associated with the program and reflect the relevant regional or industry labor market served by the program.

- **For the program's employer validation, will you be providing documentation from an industry-based group or from individual employers?** *Industry-based group could include industry association, advisory board, sector partnership, etc.*
- **Upload completed Employer Validation Form within the application**.
- **Upload supporting documentation:** *All validation—regardless of source—must include additional supporting documentation uploaded by the institution. Supporting documentation provided by the institution may include, but is not limited to:*
    - *Industry-defined career pathways with credential requirements published on WorkSource Maine, or other industry-defined career pathway framework*
    - *Registered apprenticeship schedule of work:*
    - *Employer hiring standards or published occupational qualification requirements;*
    - *Competency or curriculum alignment materials;*
    - *Formal endorsement letters from employers (if submitting a validation form from an industry-based group); and*
    - *Sector partnership, industry association or advisory board meeting minutes reflecting employer participation and curriculum review.*



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Workforce Pell – Employer Validation Form

This form verifies that a workforce training program aligns with employer/industry hiring needs and provides the competencies and credentials required for the target occupation.

Institutions should provide this form to an employer-led or industry-based entity whenever possible. If that is not feasible, the form must be completed by a minimum of three Maine employers with hiring needs related to the target occupation.

Section 1: Institution and Program Information

To be completed by the institution

Institution Name:

Program Title and CIP Code:

Occupation Title and SOC Code (Target Occupation):

Credential Awarded Upon Completion:

Program Competencies

The institution should list the primary competencies that students are expected to demonstrate upon successful completion of the program. Employers should review these competencies before completing the Employer Attestation section. Attach additional pages if more space is needed.

Primary Program Competencies:

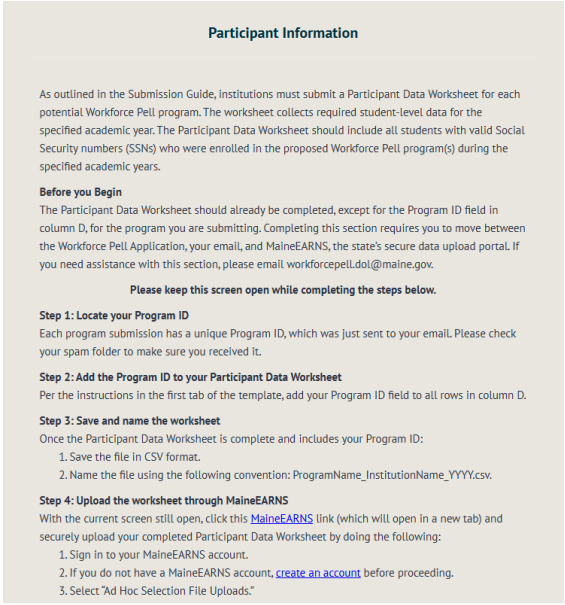
1.
2.
3.
4.

Attestation

- Institutions must attest that, to the best of their knowledge, the program submitted:
    - Has been in operation for at least the 12-month period immediately preceding the request for the program approval;
    - Provides education aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
    - Meets the hiring requirements of employers in such sector or occupations;
    - Leads to a recognized postsecondary credential that is stackable and portable across more than one employer, or prepares students for and awards the sole recognized postsecondary credential required for employment in the occupation;
    - Prepares students to pursue one or more certificate or degree programs at one or more eligible institutions by ensuring that, upon completion and enrollment in a related program, students will receive academic credit that is accepted toward meeting certificate, diploma, or degree requirements; and
    - Aligns with employer-defined competencies for the designated occupation or industry sector.

Participant Information

Institutions must submit a Participant Data Worksheet for each potential Workforce Pell program. The worksheet collects required student-level data for the specified academic year. The Participant Data Worksheet should include all students with valid Social Security numbers (SSNs) who were enrolled in the proposed Workforce Pell program(s) during the specified academic years.



Participant Information

As outlined in the Submission Guide, institutions must submit a Participant Data Worksheet for each potential Workforce Pell program. The worksheet collects required student-level data for the specified academic year. The Participant Data Worksheet should include all students with valid Social Security numbers (SSNs) who were enrolled in the proposed Workforce Pell program(s) during the specified academic years.

Before you Begin

The Participant Data Worksheet should already be completed, except for the Program ID field in column D, for the program you are submitting. Completing this section requires you to move between the Workforce Pell Application, your email, and MaineEARNS, the state's secure data upload portal. If you need assistance with this section, please email workforcepell.dol@maine.gov.

Please keep this screen open while completing the steps below.

Step 1: Locate your Program ID

Each program submission has a unique Program ID, which was just sent to your email. Please check your spam folder to make sure you received it.

Step 2: Add the Program ID to your Participant Data Worksheet

Per the instructions in the first tab of the template, add your Program ID field to all rows in column D.

Step 3: Save and name the worksheet

Once the Participant Data Worksheet is complete and includes your Program ID:

1. Save the file in CSV format.
2. Name the file using the following convention: ProgramName_InstitutionName_YYYY.csv.

Step 4: Upload the worksheet through MaineEARNS

With the current screen still open, click this MaineEARNS link (which will open in a new tab) and securely upload your completed Participant Data Worksheet by doing the following:

1. Sign in to your MaineEARNS account.
2. If you do not have a MaineEARNS account, create an account before proceeding.
3. Select "Ad Hoc Selection File Uploads."

Before you Begin: Completing this section requires you to move between the application portal, your email, and MaineEARNS, the state's secure data upload portal. Please keep your Workforce Pell Application open while completing the steps below.

Step 1: Download and complete the worksheet

Download the Participant Data Worksheet and complete the worksheet using the instructions in the first tab of the template. All fields should be completed, except for the Program ID field in column D, for the program you are submitting.

Data fields include:

- Organization: *Do not enter any data. Leave the existing template data in the column unchanged.*
- Identifier: *Do not enter any data. Leave the existing template data in the column unchanged.*
- Institution OPEID#: *8-digit federal numeric identifier*
- Unique Program Number: *You will receive a numeric identifier in an email from the State after submitting the program-level information through the application portal. Enter this identifier in Column D.*
- Program Title: *The title of the program being reviewed for Workforce Pell eligibility*
- SSN: *The student's 9-digit Social Security Number*
- Unique Institution-Issued Student ID: *Unique institution-issued student identification number*
- Student First Name: *Student's legal first name*
- Student's Last Name: *Student's legal last name*
- DOB: *Student's date of birth*
- Student Zip Code of Residence: *Student's zip code of residence*
- Student Start Date: *The date the student started the program*
- Anticipated Program Completion Date: *The date the program officially ended for the cohort.*
- Actual Student Completion Date: *The date the student actually completed the program*
- Last Date of Attendance: *If the student withdrew, enter the date they withdrew from the program; otherwise, leave this field blank.*
- Student Exclusion Category: *Identify the reason the student did not complete the program. Leave blank if none of these exclusion reasons apply.*
    - *1: Died*
    - *2: Experienced the onset of a medical condition that prevents employment*
    - *3: Ordered to service in the armed forces, for a period of more than 30 days*

    - *4: Became incarcerated*
- Tuition Refund: Did the student receive a refund of 100% of tuition and fees if they withdrew from the program? *Yes, No, or Not Applicable*
- Recognized Postsecondary Credential Attained: Did the student receive a refund of 100% of tuition and fees if they withdrew from the program? *Yes, No, or Not Applicable*

Step 2: Locate your Program ID

After completing the previous sections of the application, you will receive an email containing a unique Program ID for the program you are submitting. Keep your application open and check your email for the Program ID. Once you receive it, return to the completed Participant Data Worksheet and add your Program ID to all rows in column D.

Step 3: Save and name the worksheet

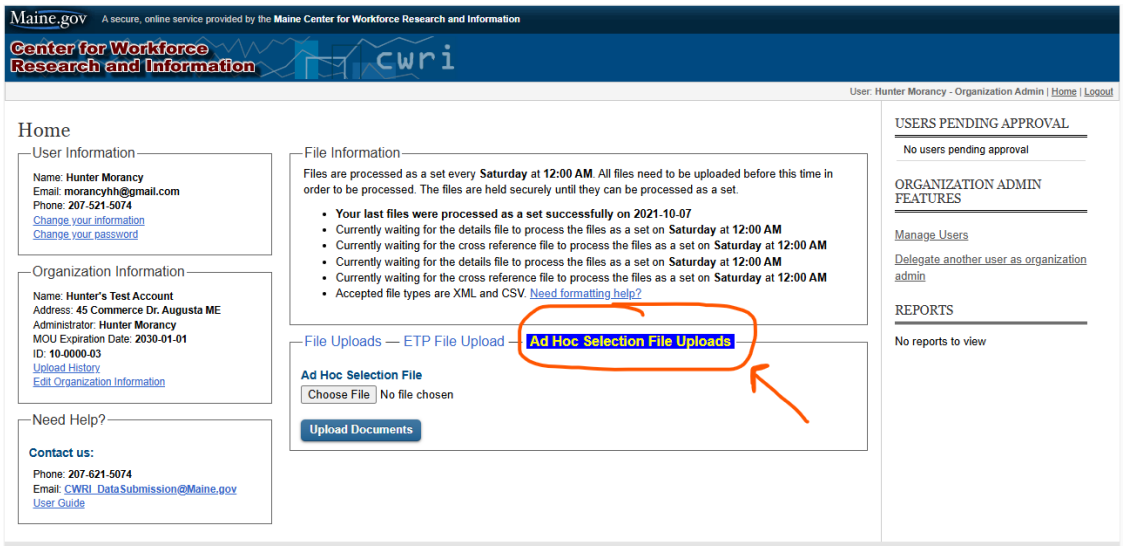
Once the Participant Data Worksheet is complete and includes your Program ID:

- *Save the file in CSV format.*
- Name the file using the following convention: ProgramName_InstitutionName_YYYY.csv.

Step 4: Upload the worksheet through MaineEARNS

With your Workforce Pell Application still open, go to MaineEARNS (which will open in a new tab) and securely upload your completed Participant Data Worksheet.

- Sign in to your MaineEARNS account.
- If you do not have a MaineEARNS account, create an account before proceeding.
- Select “Ad Hoc Selection File Uploads.”
- Click “Choose File” and select your completed CSV file.
- Click “Upload Documents.” After a successful upload, you will receive a file confirmation number



Step 5: Return to the Workforce Pell Program Application

After successfully uploading your Participant Data Worksheet through MaineEARNS, return to your open application to continue.

- **Have you submitted a completed Participant Data Worksheet for this program?** Yes or No

This completes the Workforce Pell Application. At the end of the application, you will have the option to provide information about another program if you are interested in doing so.