

How the Live States Define an Eligible Program

Sources, scope, and interpretive notes for opportunitydata.org/workforce-pell-comparison.html

Occupation-list counts

Counts are distinct occupations on each state's published Workforce Pell eligible-occupation list, retrieved and verified June 18, 2026, except where a later verification date is noted below.

Pennsylvania (19) and North Carolina (364) are the states' own stated figures; Minnesota (22), Iowa (243), and Michigan (267) are counted directly from the published list files.

Texas (25). THECB publishes a "Workforce Pell Eligible Occupations and Programs" file listing 25 occupations crosswalked to 362 eligible programs (363 SOC-CIP pairings), drawn from the Texas Workforce Commission Target Occupations List.

Iowa (243). Iowa's 243 H3 occupations map to exactly 3,338 occupation-program pairings in its SOC-CIP crosswalk.

Ohio (352). Ohio screens against its existing statewide Top Jobs list, which enumerates 363 detailed occupations that roll up to 352 distinct SOC codes.

Arkansas (245). Counted from the statewide tab of Arkansas's 5-Star High-wage and/or In-Demand Occupations List for AY 2026-27, verified June 26, 2026. Its regional tabs add occupations, to 481 distinct across all eleven regions.

Alabama (231). Counted from the ACCCP 2025 Statewide In-Demand Occupations List, verified June 30, 2026. Its regional lists add occupations, and an occupation must appear on at least three regional lists to reach the statewide list.

South Carolina (24). Counted as distinct SOC codes on the Pilot Eligible Occupations List V3, verified July 2, 2026. State Instruction 25-18 describes the pilot set as subject to ongoing evaluation and future refinement.

Nebraska (49). Counted as distinct SOC codes on the 2026-27 Initial Eligible Occupation and Program List posted July 8, 2026 (129 SOC-CIP pairings). Nebraska's documented screening process yields 40 occupations, and its policy allows additions at the Governor's discretion, which accounts for the difference from the state's stated figure.

South Dakota (56). Counted as distinct SOC codes on the Qualifying Occupations List retrieved July 10, 2026. That list covers the labor-market pathway only; occupations can also qualify through Governor strategic designation or as Registered Apprenticeship related instruction.

Florida (no list-size figure). Florida's State Board of Education published a 2025-26 Workforce Pell Program Inventory of 31 programs rather than an occupation list.

Employer alignment

The employer-alignment row summarizes how each state's application guidance or determination policy operationalizes the federal requirement that a program "meet the hiring requirements of employers" (34 CFR 690.93). Each cell was taken from the state instrument (guidance manual, determination policy, or state instruction) and verified against the document text on July 7, 2026;

Nebraska's and South Dakota's cells were verified July 10, 2026.

Framework definitions and screens

Definitions of high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand, the wage thresholds, and the program-level screens are taken from each state's published policy and methodology documents: [Pennsylvania](#), [Minnesota](#), [Iowa](#), [Michigan](#), [North Carolina](#), [Texas](#), [Ohio](#), [Arkansas](#), [Alabama](#), [South Carolina](#), [Nebraska](#), [South Dakota](#), and [Florida](#) (which links its [2025-26 program inventory](#)). Wage benchmarks are not directly comparable across states: Pennsylvania's bar is a poverty-line floor (150 percent of the federal poverty level); Minnesota uses a regional family-sustaining wage; North Carolina and Michigan use median wage; and Iowa requires high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand simultaneously where Michigan and the federal text require one or more.

Capacity check: completions and openings

The capacity-check table compares short-certificate output against projected demand for the four occupations that appear on every published list. Completions are from IPEDS Completions (C2023, academic year 2022-23), first majors only, restricted to certificates of less than one academic year, which IPEDS records as award levels 20 (less than 900 contact hours) and 21 (900 contact hours to under one year). Each occupation is matched to its primary CIP code: electricians 46.0302, HVAC mechanics and installers 47.0201, plumbers and pipefitters 46.0503, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers 49.0205. Counts are summed nationally across institutions. A separate one-to-two-year certificate level (award level 2) exists but is the exception for these trades and is not included in the table figures. Projected annual openings are from the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2024-34 projections ([electricians](#), [truck drivers](#)), which combine projected growth and replacement needs. Pipeline fill is completions divided by projected annual openings.

OCCUPATION	CIP	<1-YR CERTS (2023)	ANNUAL OPENINGS	FILL
Electricians	46.0302	9,791	~81,000	~12%
HVAC mechanics and installers	47.0201	7,736	~40,100	~19%
Plumbers, pipefitters, steamfitters	46.0503	945	~44,000	~2%
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	49.0205	22,624	~237,600	~9%

Why IPEDS undercounts the trades

IPEDS covers Title IV institutions only, so completions trained outside Title IV are invisible in federal data. Commercial driving is the clearest case: most CDL schools, community college workforce divisions, and continuing-education programs do not report completions to IPEDS and sit outside Title IV. Those are exactly the programs most likely to seek Workforce Pell approval. An earlier version of this table counted only the one-to-two-year certificate level, which understated the trades sharply, because most trade and CDL certificates run under a year. Even on the corrected sub-one-year basis, the figures should be read as a floor on training volume, not a complete census.

Legal basis

Workforce Pell was created by [H.R. 1 \(2025\)](#), amending section 401 of the Higher Education Act, and implemented through the U.S. Department of Education's [final rule of May 19, 2026](#), effective July 1,

2026. The state instruments compared on the page are administrative actions adopted under that authority: the NCWorks Commission policy statement (NC), the Governor's Workforce Development Board determination policy (MN), THECB program guidance (TX), LEO program determination policies (MI), PDE application guidance (PA), and Iowa Department of Education program guidance (IA).

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