Alaska Workforce Pell Master Implementation Framework - Condensed Decision-Maker Draft
Working Draft | July 2026

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1. Purpose

This framework summarizes how Alaska should implement Workforce Pell in a way that is clear for state leaders, workforce partners, institutions, employers, and implementation staff.

The purpose is to answer four implementation questions:

1. Who makes each decision?
2. What evidence is needed?
3. Who carries out the work?
4. What written output is required?

This version is intentionally concise. Detailed forms, data dictionaries, source crosswalks, occupational lists, application tools, and technical appendices should be maintained separately as living implementation tools.

2. Federal Context

Workforce Pell creates a new federal Pell Grant pathway for eligible students enrolled in short-term eligible workforce programs. The U.S. Department of Education has published the final Workforce Pell regulations, which establish requirements for eligible workforce programs.

Federal Student Aid has also issued the State Workforce Pell Certification Form process. Under that process, the Governor or designee completes the state certification form for eligible workforce programs, provides the completed form to the institution, and the institution uploads the certification through E-App as part of the federal approval process.

State certification does not replace federal approval. Alaska's role is to determine whether a program should be certified by the state based on workforce alignment, employer demand, credential quality, data readiness, and state review criteria.

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3. Core Alaska Operating Model

Alaska should implement Workforce Pell through existing workforce infrastructure rather than creating a separate stand-alone approval system.

Component	Alaska Implementation Role
Workforce Pell	Tuition and short-term training access mechanism for federally eligible students in eligible workforce programs.
ETPL / AlaskaJobs	Operational platform for provider intake, program listing, public information, performance tracking, and material-change management.

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AWIB	State workforce board consultation, workforce alignment review, HHI methodology, employer-validation standards, and certification recommendation.
DETS	Operational administrator for intake, ETPL/AlaskaJobs workflow, provider communication, public listing, technical assistance, monitoring, and reporting operations.
ACPE	Postsecondary authorization, institutional readiness, Title IV/OPEID/PPA coordination support, and credential/credit pathway input.
R&A	Labor market, wage, occupational demand, regional need, HHI evidence, and outcome analysis.
Governor or Designee	Final state certification authority for Workforce Pell program certification and continued approval decisions.
WIOA / Workforce Partners	Participant navigation, supportive services, case management, completion support, work experience, OJT, and employment transition where allowable.

4. Guiding Principles

Principle	Implementation Meaning
Use existing infrastructure first.	Build on ETPL, AlaskaJobs, AWIB, DETS, ACPE, R&A, WIOA, and existing provider communication channels.
Make decision rights explicit.	Every major decision must identify the decision owner, evidence owner, implementation lead, and written output.
Keep the process lean.	Use one application record, one decision package, one certification workflow, and separate operating tools.
Use evidence, not preference.	R&A and employer evidence should support decisions; policy bodies make policy judgments.
Fair and transparent provider access	First-wave readiness should be open to all eligible Title IV institutions using common criteria, common templates, and documented review sequencing. Institutional readiness or advocacy does not guarantee certification approval.
Keep approval program- and occupation-specific	Priority-sector alignment supports review but does not automatically make a program eligible.
Protect rural access	Regional demand, small cohorts, hybrid delivery, and rural support needs may be considered, but federal requirements are not waived.
Phase data requirements	Start with essential certification and reporting data; add deeper analytics after launch.

5. Decisions Alaska Must Make Before Routine Implementation

Decision Needed	Final / Primary Owner	Required Output
Designate state certifying authority.	Governor	Written designation of Governor or designee and backup signature process.
Approve state Workforce Pell criteria.	Governor or Designee after AWIB consultation	Public certification criteria covering HHI, employer validation, credential quality, data, appeal, and continued approval.
Establish AWIB review process.	AWIB	Review committee/process, meeting cadence, recommendation format.
Approve HHI methodology	AWIB with R&A support; Governor/Designee accepts for certification use	HHI methodology, occupation review process, regional-flexibility rules, review cycle.
Approve ETPL-integrated intake process.	DETS with AWIB and ACPE input	ETPL application addendum or equivalent electronic intake tool.
Approve minimum data requirements.	DETS/R&A with ACPE, institutions, and privacy/legal review	Launch data dictionary, reporting calendar, validation process, secure submission method.
Approve appeal and reconsideration process.	Governor/Designee with AWIB, DETS, and legal support	Written appeal process, timelines, record requirements, final decision authority.

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Approve material-change and continued-approval process.	DETS with AWIB, ACPE, R&A, and Governor/Designee role where certification is affected	Change triggers, review paths, provider notice requirements, effect on certification.
Authorize first-wave Title IV institutional readiness process and pilot sequencing.	Governor/Designee with AWIB and DOLWD leadership; Workforce Pell Governance Group implements	Public readiness invitation, common readiness template, technical-assistance schedule, readiness criteria, conflict-of-interest/recusal protocol, pilot list, review schedule, decision log, and provider communication plan.

6. Decision Rights and Responsibility Matrix

Function	Final Decision Authority	Implementation Lead	Evidence / Consultation
Governor certification designation	Governor	Governor's Office / DOLWD leadership	AWIB, DETS, ACPE, legal/policy staff.
State certification policy	Governor or Designee after State Board consultation	AWIB	DETS, ACPE, R&A, employers, institutions, federal guidance.
ETPL / AlaskaJobs intake workflow	DETS	DETS ETPL / AlaskaJobs staff	AWIB, ACPE, R&A, institutions.
Institutional readiness / Title IV coordination	Institution and ED for federal approval; ACPE supports state coordination	ACPE with institution	OPEID, PPA, authorization/exemption, accreditation, federal readiness documentation.
First-wave institutional readiness process	Governor/Designee approves launch approach; Governance Group manages sequencing.	DETS with ACPE, AWIB, and R&A	Common readiness template; Title IV/OPEID/PPA information; program list; CIP/SOC; length; credential; employer validation; data capacity; input from UA and other eligible Title IV institutions.
HHI methodology	AWIB	AWIB with R&A	Wage data, projections, regional evidence, SOC/CIP mapping, employer demand.
Employer-validation standards	AWIB	AWIB / DETS	Employers, sector partners, apprenticeship sponsors, competency evidence.
Program completeness review	DETS	DETS	Institution application, ETPL fields, Workforce Pell addendum, required documentation.
Workforce alignment recommendation	AWIB	AWIB review body	R&A evidence, employer validation, ACPE input, DETS application record.
Provider-specific conflict disclosure/recusal	AWIB and applicable state ethics/legal process	AWIB chair/staff with legal or policy support	Disclosure of institutional affiliation; provider-specific agenda item; documented recusal, abstention, or participation limits where required.
State certification decision	Governor or Designee	Governor/Designee supported by decision package	AWIB recommendation, DETS record, ACPE and R&A inputs.
Federal program submission	Institution	Institution Title IV / financial aid office	Signed state certification form and federal E-App materials.
Public listing and status updates	DETS	DETS	Federal approval status, ETPL/AlaskaJobs records, public information fields.
Participant support coordination	Each funding source retains authority	DETS, WIOA partners, institutions	WIOA eligibility, IEP/service plan, supportive service rules, nonduplication.
Continued eligibility	Governor/Designee for certification; AWIB for	DETS/R&A/AWIB	Annual data, outcomes, employer feedback, HHI review, material changes.

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	workforce recommendation; DETS for operational monitoring		

7. Certification Workflow

Workforce Pell should operate as an ETPL-integrated certification layer.

Step	Primary Owner	Decision Question	Output
1. Provider readiness self-screen	Institution/provider	Is the institution and program likely ready for Workforce Pell review?	Readiness checklist, first-wave readiness template where applicable, and decision to apply, prepare, defer, or enter pilot review.
2. ETPL / Workforce Pell intake	DETS	Is the submission complete and in the correct format?	Complete/incomplete notice and application record.
3. Postsecondary / Title IV coordination	ACPE with institution	Is the institution/program authorized or otherwise documented for state/federal readiness review?	Authorization / Title IV coordination memo or checklist.
4. Labor market and HHI evidence	R&A	Does the target occupation show high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand alignment under Alaska methodology?	R&A evidence summary.
5. Employer and credential validation	AWIB with DETS, ACPE, employers	Does the program align with hiring needs, competencies, credential value, stackability, portability, and credit pathway expectations?	Workforce alignment review package.
6. AWIB recommendation	AWIB	Should the program be recommended for certification, certification with conditions, deferral, or denial?	Formal AWIB recommendation.
7. State certification	Governor or Designee	Should Alaska certify the program for federal submission?	Signed State Workforce Pell Certification Form or written denial/deferral.
8. Federal submission	Institution	Is the institution ready to submit through E-App?	E-App submission with state certification attached.
9. Activation / public listing	DETS	Has state and federal status been confirmed for listing?	ETPL/AlaskaJobs listing or status flag.
10. Monitoring / continued approval	DETS, R&A, AWIB, Governor/Designee	Does the program continue to meet state and federal requirements?	Annual review, continued approval, condition, corrective action, suspension, or withdrawal.

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8. Minimum Certification Standards

A program should not be recommended for state Workforce Pell certification unless the decision package addresses each of the areas below.

Review Area	Minimum Standard	Primary Reviewer
Federal program baseline	Program documentation supports review of applicable federal eligible workforce program requirements, including length, instructional time, credential, modality, written arrangement, and federal submission readiness.	DETS, ACPE, institution, legal/Title IV review as needed.
State certification requirement	The program is reviewed under the published Alaska criteria after State Board consultation.	Governor/Designee with AWIB recommendation.

HHI alignment	Program maps to an occupation or pathway that meets Alaska's high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand methodology, including regional/rural evidence where appropriate.	AWIB with R&A.
Employer hiring need	Employers, sector partners, or apprenticeship sponsors validate demand, competencies, and hiring relevance.	AWIB with employers and DETS.
Credential quality	Program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or prepares students for an occupation with a recognized credential.	AWIB, ACPE, DETS.
Stackability, portability, and credit	Program supports credit articulation, portability, stackability, apprenticeship progression, or documented pathway value where applicable.	ACPE with AWIB/DETS.
Data readiness	Institution can report required program-level, participant-level, and outcome data.	DETS/R&A.
Rural access	Program design considers rural delivery, small cohorts, regional need, and participant support without waiving federal requirements.	AWIB, DETS, R&A.
Continued approval	Provider agrees to annual reporting, material-change notice, corrective action, and continued eligibility review.	DETS, AWIB, Governor/Designee.

Participation in a first-wave readiness process, technical-assistance session, provider inventory, or pilot review does not guarantee state certification or federal approval. Each program must still meet published state criteria, applicable federal requirements, HHI alignment, employer validation, credential quality, data readiness, and continued approval standards.

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9. HHI Methodology Summary

Alaska should maintain a written HHI methodology that is state-specific, data-informed, occupationally grounded, and flexible enough to recognize regional and rural labor market conditions.

Step	Requirement	Evidence
Sector screen	Determine whether the program aligns with AWIB priority sectors, WIOA/Perkins priorities, or documented regional workforce need.	AWIB priority-sector list, WIOA State Plan, employer demand, regional evidence.
CIP/SOC mapping	Identify the instructional program and target occupation.	CIP code, SOC code, program-to-job narrative.
High-skill test	Confirm specialized skill, licensure, technical competency, apprenticeship preparation, credential, or postsecondary training.	Credential requirements, licensing, competency map, employer requirements.
High-wage test	Confirm wage potential relative to Alaska statewide or regional thresholds and cost/wage reasonableness.	R&A wage data, median/entry wage, regional wage variation.
In-demand test	Confirm current or projected demand, replacement need, shortage, strategic importance, or employer demand.	Projections, job openings, employer evidence, nonresident-worker or shortage evidence where relevant.
Employer validation	Confirm hiring requirements and competency alignment.	Employer letters, advisory minutes, apprenticeship sponsor input, hiring commitments.
Regional/rural flexibility	Recognize small cohorts, geographic isolation, regional shortages, hybrid delivery, and local employer need.	Regional labor market evidence, Tribal/community input, local employer validation.
Continued review	Reassess methodology and occupation alignment as labor markets change.	At least every two years with WIOA State Plan development/modification, and sooner if material changes occur.

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10. ETPL and Provider Operations

Alaska should use ETPL and AlaskaJobs as the operational foundation for Workforce Pell.

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Existing ETPL Asset	Workforce Pell Use	Needed Adjustment
Provider application	Base intake structure for provider and program information.	Add Workforce Pell fields: Title IV/OPEID/PPA, length/hours/weeks, CIP/SOC, credential, employer validation, federal readiness assurances.
ACPE status check	Institutional authorization readiness screen.	Clarify treatment for Title IV institutions, exempt providers, and Registered Apprenticeship/RTI providers.
In-demand / labor market review	Baseline for workforce alignment.	Add high-skill, high-wage, employer hiring requirements, and AWIB priority-sector crosswalk.
Performance collection	Completion, placement, and continued-eligibility support.	Align cohort definitions, annual reporting, and Workforce Pell data expectations.
Public ETPL listing	Consumer information and public transparency.	Add Workforce Pell status, certification date, federal status, cost, credential, and review date.
Program change process	Material-change management.	Define changes requiring Workforce Pell re-review or recertification.
Appeals/removal process	Accountability and due process.	Add Workforce Pell-specific appeal and withdrawal process.

11. Data Governance and Reporting

Alaska should implement Workforce Pell reporting in phases.

Phase	Focus	Core Data Elements
Phase 1: Certification minimum	Collect enough to decide whether a program can be certified and submitted federally.	Institution/OPEID/PPA, program name/ID, CIP/SOC, length, cost, delivery mode, credential, employer validation, HHI evidence, certification status, reporting assurances.
Phase 2: Participant reporting	Collect participant-level data needed for completion, credential, funding, and outcome tracking.	Participant identifiers, residency, enrollment/exit dates, completion, credential earned, withdrawal reason, funding source, program ID.
Phase 3: Outcome validation	Use administrative and provider records to validate employment, wage, and pathway outcomes.	UI wage records, where authorized; supplemental wage data; employment quarter; occupation/industry; further education; apprenticeship progression.
Phase 4: Public transparency and improvement	Publish appropriate program information and use outcomes for improvement.	Approved list, cost, credential, delivery, outcomes where reliable and suppressible, corrective actions, annual summary.

12. Funding and Participant Support

Workforce Pell expands access to tuition but does not replace Alaska's workforce system.

Funding / Resource	Primary Use	Control Point
Workforce Pell	Pell support for eligible students enrolled in approved eligible workforce programs.	Institutional financial-aid process, federal/state rules, aid coordination.
WIOA Title I	Career services, ITAs where appropriate, supportive services, case management, completion support, employment transition.	WIOA eligibility, IEP/service strategy, local policy, ETPL status.
STEP	State workforce training, employer-responsive training, workforce expansion, gap-filling where allowable.	Program rules, sector priorities, participant/program eligibility.
TVEP	Technical and vocational education capacity, training delivery support, institutional capacity where allowable.	TVEP statutory/program requirements.
Apprenticeship funding	Registered Apprenticeship, RTI, pre-apprenticeship, OJT, work-based learning.	Sponsor/RTI requirements, USDOL/State Apprenticeship rules.
Employer contributions	Tuition support, paid work experience, equipment, instructors, worksites, hiring commitments.	Written agreement, nonduplication, aid coordination.

13. Rural Access

Rural access should be built into the implementation model from the start.

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Rural Challenge	Implementation Response
Small cohorts	Allow regional demand evidence and employer commitments when statewide data understate local need.
Geographic isolation	Support hybrid, distance, mobile, cohort-based, and employer-site delivery where allowed.
Limited employer count	Allow sector, regional, Tribal, municipal, or industry validation where a single small employer is insufficient.
Support-service barriers	Use WIOA and partner funds for transportation, lodging, technology, childcare, tools, and completion supports where allowable.
Data suppression/privacy	Use careful public reporting where small cohorts create privacy risks; use internal data for accountability.

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14. Launch Roadmap

First-Wave Institutional Readiness Sprint

Alaska should conduct a short, transparent readiness process for eligible Title IV institutions with existing short-term workforce programs. The purpose is to identify programs that may be ready for early Workforce Pell review once Alaska's certification authority, AWIB consultation process, HHI methodology, ETPL-integrated application process, data requirements, and appeal/material-change procedures are finalized.

The readiness sprint should be open to all eligible Title IV institutions under the same criteria. The University of Alaska's July 2026 letter indicates substantial institutional readiness and existing short-term program capacity. Still, first-wave selection should be based on published readiness standards rather than institutional status or informal advocacy.

The readiness inventory should collect, at minimum: institution/campus, OPEID, PPA status, program name, CIP/SOC, credential, program length, hours/credits, delivery mode, ETPL/AlaskaJobs status, employer validation, target occupation, completion and placement data, academic credit or stackability information, data-reporting contact, and anticipated federal E-App readiness.

Period	Priority Work	Completion Marker
0–30 days	Designate the certifying authority; approve the decision matrix; identify the federal monitoring owner; confirm the launch governance cadence.	Add: "authorize first-wave readiness sprint; approve common readiness template and provider fairness/recusal safeguards."
31–60 days	Publish draft state certification policy, HHI methodology, ETPL addendum, readiness checklist, minimum data elements, and provider FAQ.	Add: "issue readiness invitation to eligible Title IV institutions; hold office hours; collect readiness inventories."
61–90 days	Run provider technical assistance; pilot 2–5 programs through readiness review; test decision package and data submission process.	Revise to: "pilot 2–5 programs through readiness review using the common template; test decision package and data submission process."
91–180 days	Process first-wave applications; prepare AWIB recommendations; submit certifications to Governor/Designee; support institutional E-App submissions.	Keep current concept, but clarify: "process first-wave applications only after state criteria, review procedures, and certification authority are finalized."
After launch	Monitor outcomes, material changes, data quality, provider questions, employer feedback, and rural access.	Add: "authorize first-wave readiness sprint; approve common readiness

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		template and provider fairness/recusal safeguards.”

15. Immediate Products to Complete

Product	Owner
Governor/Designee designation memo	Governor’s Office / DOLWD
State Workforce Pell certification policy	AWIB with Governor/Designee approval
HHI methodology and occupation review process	AWIB with R&A
ETPL Workforce Pell addendum	DETS with AWIB/ACPE/R&A
Provider readiness checklist	DETS with ACPE/AWIB
Employer validation template	AWIB/DETS
Certification decision package template	Workforce Pell Governance Group
Data dictionary and reporting calendar	DETS/R&A
Appeal and reconsideration procedure	Governor/Designee with AWIB/DETS/legal
Material-change and continued-approval procedure	DETS/AWIB/Governor/ACPE/R&A
Provider FAQ and technical-assistance plan	DETS with partner input
First-wave institutional readiness invitation and template	DETS with ACPE, AWIB, and R&A
Provider-specific conflict-of-interest / recusal protocol	AWIB with Governor/Designee, DOLWD, and legal/policy support

16. Recommended Stakeholder Message

Alaska is not adopting North Carolina’s framework wholesale. Alaska is using national and state examples to build an Alaska-specific Workforce Pell model that fits Alaska’s ETPL, AlaskaJobs, AWIB, DETS, ACPE, R&A, WIOA, apprenticeship, employer, and rural workforce context.

Early provider readiness, including readiness information offered by the University of Alaska or any other eligible Title IV institution, will be handled through common statewide criteria, transparent sequencing, and documented review procedures.

The implementation strategy is to keep the core framework concise, clarify decision rights, use existing systems first, and maintain detailed technical materials as separate tools.

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