

August 27, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

**Business Roundtable Comments on
Implementation of Workforce Pell Grants
U.S. Department of Education Docket No. ED-2025-OPE-0151**

Business Roundtable appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Department of Education’s notice of intent to establish negotiated rulemaking committees to implement the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA).¹ These comments focus on launching Workforce Pell Grants, a critical new tool to expand access to short-term, high-quality education and training programs.

Business Roundtable is an association of more than 200 chief executive officers (CEOs) of America’s leading companies, representing every sector of the U.S. economy. Business Roundtable CEOs lead U.S.-based companies that support one in four American jobs and almost a quarter of the U.S. GDP. Our organization’s mission is to promote a thriving U.S. economy and expanded opportunity for all Americans. Ensuring U.S. workers have the training and skills for in-demand careers is a top priority for Business Roundtable CEOs and their companies.

Business Roundtable has long championed expanding Pell Grants to include short-term, high-quality workforce programs and supported their inclusion in the OBBA. By making programs of 8 to 15 weeks and 150 to 600 clock hours eligible for federal aid, Workforce Pell Grants will enable students and workers to gain in-demand skills more quickly and affordably — helping employers fill critical talent gaps and more American workers turn skills into successful career pathways and greater upward mobility.

Business Roundtable appreciates that the Department has included “employers and groups representing the business community, including small, medium, and large businesses” in the

¹ Public Hearing; Negotiated Rulemaking Committees, 90 Fed. Reg. 35261 (July 25, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/25/2025-13998/public-hearing-negotiated-rulemaking-committees>, corrected at 90 Fed. Reg. 35652 (July 29, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/29/2025-14333/intent-to-establish-negotiated-rulemaking-committees-correction>.

negotiated rulemaking committee responsible for implementing Workforce Pell Grants. Employer input is critical throughout implementation, as businesses are both the destination for the talent these programs produce and a source of the demand signal that should guide program design and approval.

As the Department begins developing regulations for Workforce Pell Grants, Business Roundtable offers the following recommendations:

Advance Smart Regulation of Workforce Pell Grants

Developing clear, efficient regulations will be essential to the success of Workforce Pell Grants. Complex regulatory requirements can create administrative burdens that slow implementation and deter participation, ultimately reducing employers' ability to meet workforce needs and limiting access for students and workers. The Department should ensure that requirements and restrictions remain consistent with the law, encourage states and institutions to offer high-quality programs and expand opportunities for students and workers to gain in-demand skills.

The law appropriately charges Governors with ensuring programs meet workforce needs, requiring collaboration with employer-driven state workforce boards to align training with current and future industry demand. Federal regulations should encourage states to set efficient rules and, where appropriate, discourage them from imposing additional requirements, such as new eligibility criteria, that could inappropriately limit participation or reduce program availability.

Promote Interstate Coordination for Multistate Workforce Pell Grant Programs

Many institutions offer short-term, high-quality workforce programs to students and workers nationwide. Regulations should address ways that institutions offering the same program in multiple states can navigate approval through a streamlined process — provided the program meets workforce needs in each state where it is offered. Streamlined approval will reduce administrative burdens, support program growth and help more students and workers gain skills for in-demand careers.

Align Workforce Pell Grants with the Workforce System

Many training programs eligible under Workforce Pell Grants are similar to those approved under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Regulations should incentivize and promote coordination among Governors on policies, funding, approval processes, data collection and participant information across WIOA and Workforce Pell programs to avoid duplication and inefficient siloed systems. This coordination will reduce costs for institutions, help participants better understand and access their options and ensure federal and state resources are used effectively.

Business Roundtable appreciates your consideration of these comments and looks forward to working with the Department to ensure Workforce Pell Grants are implemented successfully to

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equip more Americans with the skills needed for in-demand careers. Please contact Donald McIntosh, Vice President, Business Roundtable, at dmcintosh@brt.org with questions.