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## Workforce Pell Advisory Group Meeting

April 22, 2026

### Attendance

Mark Chisholm, Dina Advani, Dr. Brittany Gallegos, Heather Romero, Dr. Patricia Trujillo, Dr. Amber Gallup, Secretary Stephanie Rodriguez, Dr. Vanessa Hawker, James Johnston, Mitch Hibbard, Michael Weinberg, Joy Forehand, Dr. Mary Ulrich, Bernadette Panteah, Carla Kugler, Mindi-Kim Schrum, Coda Omness, Steve Saucedo, Ana Greif, Dr. Becky Rowley, Scott Groginsky, Daisy Lira, and Secretary Sarita Nair.

### 1. Introductions

Secretary Stephanie Rodriguez welcomed participants and thanked members for joining the inaugural Workforce Pell Advisory Group meeting. Participants introduced themselves and discussed their roles in higher education, workforce development, business, and community organizations. Secretary Rodriguez noted that implementation of Workforce Pell presents an important opportunity for New Mexico and emphasized the need for collaboration among state agencies, institutions, employers, and community partners.

### 2. Overview of Pell Grants and Workforce Pell Grants

Mark Chisholm and Dr. Brittany Gallegos provided an overview of Workforce Pell and reviewed key distinctions between traditional Pell Grants and Workforce Pell Grants. Key topics included Workforce Pell eligibility for short-term workforce training programs, program length requirements, student eligibility requirements, alignment with high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations, stackability requirements, and completion and employment outcome expectations. Secretary Rodriguez noted that final federal regulations have not yet been released and that HED and DWS continue to monitor federal guidance. Participants discussed potential benefits for adult learners, employers, workforce development, and economic mobility.

### 3. Group Tasks / Decisions to Be Made

Mark Chisholm reviewed the purpose of the advisory group and outlined the state's preliminary implementation strategy. Discussion focused on development of a pilot phase, identification of eligible programs, establishment of statewide standards, and preparation for future federal guidance.

### 3a. Statewide Definitions

The group discussed the need to establish common statewide definitions for high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations; industry-recognized credentials; stackable pathways; completion rates; and employment outcomes.

### 3b. Review Process and Approval for Eligible Programs

Participants discussed development of a transparent review and approval process for Workforce Pell programs and emphasized the importance of clear guidance for institutions.

### 3c. Non-Accredited Eligible Institutions (25%)

The group acknowledged that additional federal guidance is needed regarding participation by non-accredited eligible institutions and any applicable limitations.

### 3d. Data

Discussion focused on data collection responsibilities, reporting requirements, coordination between HED and DWS, and opportunities to leverage existing workforce data systems.

### 3e. Employment Outcomes

Participants discussed employment outcome measures, including completion rates, placement rates, wage outcomes, return-on-investment measures, and employer validation of workforce outcomes.

## 4. Higher Education Institutions Internal Planning

Representatives from San Juan College, ENMU-Ruidoso, New Mexico Junior College, Doña Ana Community College, CNM, and other institutions shared preliminary planning efforts. Potential Workforce Pell programs discussed included allied health programs, CNA, phlebotomy, EMT, pharmacy technician, project management, business-related credentials, and early childhood education. Institutions expressed interest in Workforce Pell while noting concerns regarding instructional-hour requirements, stackability requirements, and pending federal regulations.

## 5. Plan Future Meetings

The advisory group agreed to meet on a biweekly basis. Future meetings will focus on statewide definitions, industry-recognized credentials, data collection requirements, employment outcome measures, program review processes, and stackable credential pathways. HED and DWS will continue monitoring federal guidance and developing implementation recommendations.