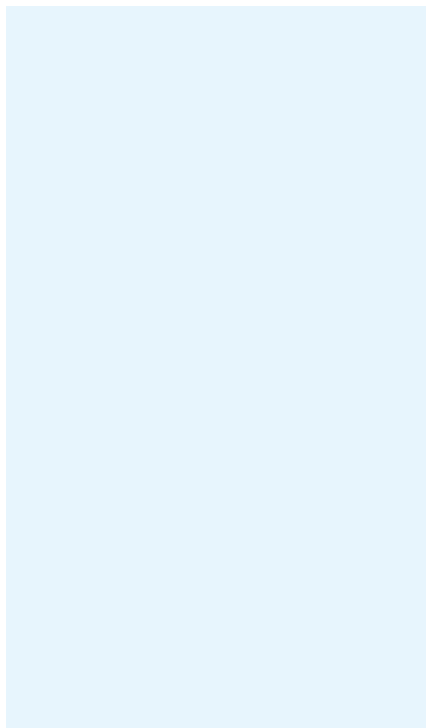


During this Congressional session, short-term Pell—expanded Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term training programs—has received widespread attention. Multiple bills have been introduced in both the House and the Senate, by both Democrats and Republicans. While Pell Grants can currently be used for programs lasting 15 weeks or more, pending legislation would extend Pell eligibility to programs of at least eight weeks. Proponents of short-term Pell believe the added financial support can help more students obtain valuable, career-relevant skills. However, there is also concern that shorter programs are prime targets for bad actors, who will develop programs that do not translate to increased income or career success. To protect students from predatory and poor-performing programs, many short-term Pell supporters urge the implementation of guardrails that ensure quality, cost-effective course offerings.

Each of the current short-term Pell bills includes a set of requirements a program must meet to be eligible. These requirements are based on either outcomes or inputs. Outcomes-based requirements focus on how students fare in the





## Issue B: Effectiveness of Shorter-Term Programs That Would Become Eligible for Pell (8-week+)

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### POINT

THERE IS A LACK OF EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF 8-WEEK PROGRAMS.

### COUNTERPOINTS

- “In theory, it is not the length of a program that determines an individual’s earnings but rather the job or occupation to which a program provides access. In other words, shorter programs that provide access to higher-wage jobs—such as trade professions, engineering, or information technology—will lead to higher earnings than longer programs that provide access to lower-wage jobs, such as cosmetology or education.” ([Strada](#))
- “While seat time (clock or credit hours) is commonly used as an indicator of quality and a criterion for financial aid eligibility, our analysis suggests that the length of a certificate program is a poor predictor of its outcomes. Comparing certificate programs of varied lengths does not reveal a clear or consistent pattern. In several cases, shorter programs lead to better outcomes than longer programs.” ([Strada](#))



## Issue C: Equity Implications

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### POINT

SHORT-TERM PELL COULD TRACK LOW-INCOME STUDENTS—WHO ARE MOSTLY BLACK AND LATINO—AWAY FROM OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT WOULD ALLOW THEM TO EARN DEGREES THAT PROVIDE AN ENTRY TO THE MIDDLE CLASS.

### COUNTERPOINT

- This is critical and understudied; however: “[M]any institutional and state leaders see a path for reversing the marginalization of high-quality short-term non-degree credentials—and the students who enroll in them—by aligning and integrating these credentials with college degree programs, a strategy often referred to as ‘stackable credentials.’” ([Community College Research Center](#))

## Issue D: Excluding Online Providers

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MUCH OF THE  
LEARNING IN THE  
SHORT-TERM TRAINING  
SPACE NEEDS TO BE  
HANDS-ON (E.G.,  
PHLEBOTOMISTS, TRUCK  
DRIVERS, HEALTH AIDES).

## Issue E: Excluding For-Profit Providers

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THE VETERAN  
RAPID RETRAINING  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
(VRRAP) SUPPORTED  
SHORT-TERM

