

Blueprint for Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant Success

Your Trusted Partners for Statewide
Workforce Pell Implementation



Executive Summary

The Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants support the development of Workforce Pell-eligible programs that are stackable, aligned with employer demand, and connected directly to employment outcomes. **These grants are designed to help states and institutions build lasting capacity** that allows credentials and competencies to function across education and workforce systems while supporting workforce mobility and long-term economic development.

Community college systems will be able to use these grants to establish infrastructure that enables credential transparency, workforce alignment, and reporting readiness for federal workforce programs governed by the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Eligible Training Provider List**. A central component of this federal strategy is the development of talent marketplace infrastructure. **Federal guidance** defines **a Talent Marketplace as a publicly available platform that includes Learning and Employment Records** that allow individuals to share verified, portable resumes; credential registries that make degree and non-degree credentials transparent and linked to validated competencies; and skills-based job definition tools that enable employers to define positions based on required skills rather than relying solely on traditional degree proxies.

Territorium, in partnership with Center for Skills by C-BEN, CAEL, and QualSurance, provides the integrated implementation support, infrastructure, and applied systems required to operationalize Workforce Pell at scale and pursue federal grant initiatives. **Territorium delivers the Learning and Employment Record platform that captures validated competencies,** academic achievement, and prior learning in a portable format. QualSurance ensures competencies are defined, employer-validated, and quality-assured to meet Workforce Pell requirements. **CAEL advances pathway design,** Credit for Prior Learning integration, and employer-connected program development across institutions and systems. The Center for **Skills by C-BEN leads** statewide talent marketplace alignment, coordination with state agencies and employers, and the development of institution-based skills validation practices that translate verified evidence into Learning and Employment Records. Together, **this partnership supports both infrastructure deployment and sustainable workforce system integration.**

Full funding announcement:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/skills-training-grants/sc>

Full funding opportunity document:

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/grants/2026%20PDFs/SCC6%20FOA-ETA-26-40.pdf>



The Federal Mandate

Workforce Pell and Talent Marketplace Infrastructure

Federal workforce policy is shifting toward an ecosystem in which competencies and credentials function as verified indicators of workforce capability within transparent, interoperable systems. **Workforce Pell eligibility and workforce funding participation now depend** on whether institutions can define competencies, recognize prior learning, publish credential data using national standards, and report employment outcomes through systems that connect education to hiring.

The Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants accelerate this transition by supporting coordinated infrastructure that connects learner records, competency frameworks, credential transparency systems, and employer hiring environments.

Institutions must demonstrate the ability to define and validate workforce competencies, operationalize Credit for Prior Learning and credit for competency, publish credential data **using the Credential Transparency Description Language, support ETPL eligibility, and meet WIOA reporting requirements**. These expectations ensure workforce programs produce credentials that are understandable, portable, and usable across workforce systems.

Territorium's infrastructure, combined with QualSurance's quality assurance model based on skills, Center for Skills by C-BEN's technical assistance in quality skills validation, and building statewide talent marketplaces, and CAEL's applied technical assistance and statewide coordination expertise, enables institutions to meet these federal expectations while aligning credential programs with labor market demand.

Talent Marketplaces Use Skills as Currency

Collaboration that Results in *Credentials with Validated Skills* Tied Directly to Employment

Talent marketplaces are where learning infrastructure connects to employment opportunities. Within this environment, validated competencies and evidence of **skills are captured in Learning and Employment Records**, where **learners can share them with employers and workforce agencies** in a format that supports hiring decisions, program evaluation, and workforce mobility.

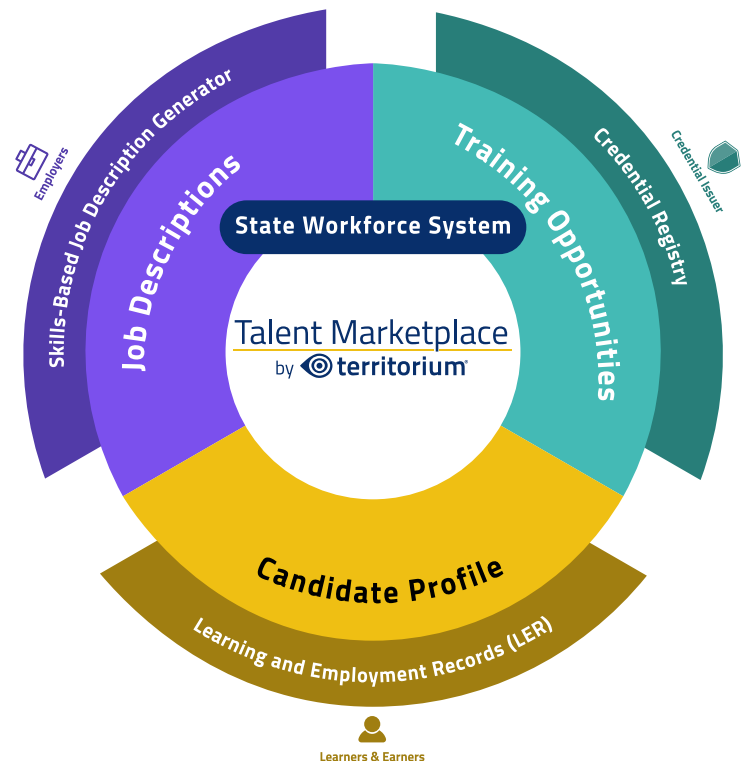
Because **competencies are validated through QualSurances** quality assurance processes and embedded within stackable pathways **supported by CAEL**, the data surfaced in the marketplace reflect employer-aligned capabilities tied to real workforce demand. This ensures that **credential transparency translates into hiring confidence and measurable workforce impact**.



Territorium's Role

Talent Marketplace Infrastructure for *Workforce Pell*, WIOA, and ETPL Alignment

Territorium provides national and state talent marketplace infrastructure that enables institutions to move beyond issuing credentials and toward activating them within workforce systems. This infrastructure aligns directly with the federally defined components of a Talent Marketplace and supports Workforce Pell implementation, ETPL eligibility, and WIOA reporting.



Learning and Employment Records

Through the Learning and Employment Record, each learner gains a portable and verifiable record that captures academic achievement, workforce training, validated competencies, credit for competency, and Credit for Prior Learning. These structured records function as verified, portable resumes that individuals can share across institutions and workforce systems. Employers gain access to demonstrated capability rather than relying solely on degree proxies, and workforce agencies gain clearer visibility into program alignment and learner outcomes.

Credential Transparency and Registry Integration

The platform structures credential and competency data using national data standards, enabling institutions to publish credentials to state and national registries in alignment with the Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL). This ensures degree and non-degree credentials are transparent, linked to validated competencies, and usable across workforce systems. Publishing credential data in this way supports ETPL eligibility, WIOA reporting requirements, and participation in broader workforce funding programs.

Skills-Based Job Alignment

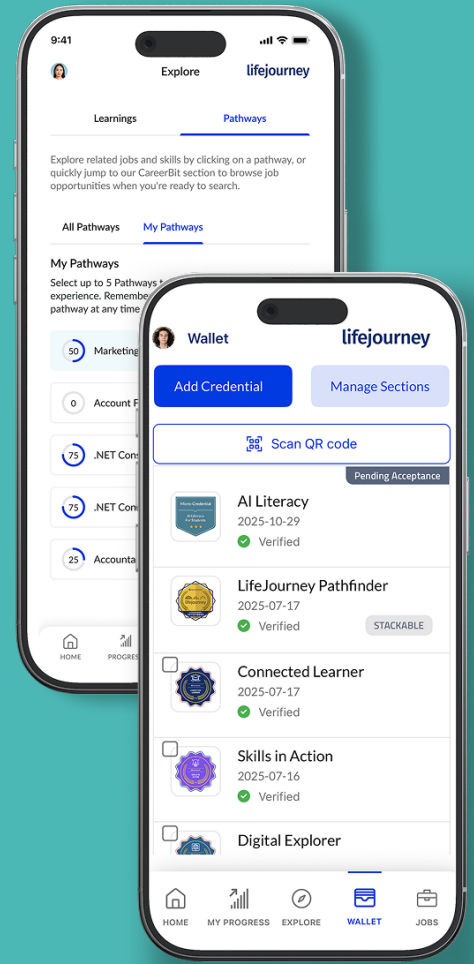
Territorium's infrastructure enables validated competencies captured within the Learning and Employment Record to connect directly to workforce demand. By structuring competency data to reflect employer-validated skills, the platform supports skills-based job definition and evaluation. Employers can define roles based on required competencies and evaluate candidates against verified capabilities, enabling hiring decisions grounded in demonstrated skills rather than relying solely on traditional proxies.

Together, these integrated components allow institutions to connect programs directly to employment outcomes within publicly accessible talent marketplace systems while supporting federal workforce requirements.

National Workforce Credential Ecosystem Partners

Supporting *Workforce Pell* Implementation

Territorium's infrastructure integrates with national partners that provide complementary capabilities essential to **Workforce Pell** implementation.



Competency Validation and Quality Assurance

QualSurance supports institutions in defining competencies and implementing quality assurance frameworks to ensure that credentials reflect validated workforce capabilities. Through its QualSurance framework, **competencies are aligned with employer demand** and supported by structured validation processes.

QualSurance also advances **credit for competency** by aligning validated skills with academic progression and credential pathways. **Territorium captures these validated competencies** within the Learning and Employment Record so they can be used in reporting systems and talent marketplaces.



Connected Learner

 Territorium Credential Academy
<https://territorium.com>

Learner

Natalia Casas Ramirez

Center for *Skills by C-BEN*

Center for Skills by C-BEN partners with governors and cross-agency leaders to design and implement high-quality, skills-based talent marketplace systems that connect learning and work. Our approach is grounded in hands-on partnership with states like Alabama and Arkansas, which have built the nation's most advanced statewide talent marketplaces to date. **We have since brought this expertise to tribal governments** (including the Navajo Nation Talent Transformation Initiative), statewide educator pathways (Tennessee "Grow Your Own"), and multiple states developing skills validation centers and credential-of-value frameworks.

States that partner with the Center for Skills by C-BEN gain a validated governance model that can be customized to any context, supporting states, territories, and Tribal nations to pursue federal funding priorities such as the **Connecting Talent to Opportunity challenge, Workforce Pell and Strengthening Community Colleges grants, and RESTART grants.**



Credit for Prior Learning, Pathway Activation, and *Workforce Coordination*

CAEL supports institutions in implementing Credit for Prior Learning policies that recognize learning gained through work and life experience and align workforce programs with academic progression.

In addition to pathway design, **CAEL provides technical assistance, employer engagement strategy, and change management support** that ensures institutions and states are prepared for **Workforce Pell participation and statewide coordination.** This activation work ensures credential infrastructure translates into measurable workforce and mobility outcomes.

Together, **C-BEN, CAEL, and Territorium provide coordinated support** for competency validation, prior learning recognition, and Workforce Pell readiness.



Implementation Model

Applying Infrastructure Across *Statewide Systems*

Territorium, C-BEN, and CAEL implement Workforce Pell infrastructure through a coordinated activation model that moves institutions from readiness assessment to full participation in state and national talent marketplace systems. Each phase reflects a defined division of responsibility across competency validation, pathway activation, infrastructure deployment, and employer adoption.

Pre-Planning: Workforce Pell and Systems Readiness Assessment

CAEL leads a statewide diagnostic assessment focused on institutional and system readiness for Workforce Pell implementation. This includes evaluation of governance structures, Credit for Prior Learning policies, articulation and stackability frameworks, ETPL alignment, WIOA integration, employer engagement capacity, and cross-agency coordination.

C-BEN leads readiness related to competency validation and quality assurance, ensuring that competency frameworks, employer validation processes, and assessment methodologies align with workforce expectations and federal standards. This includes preparation for QualSurance review, where applicable.

Territorium conducts technical architecture review and data mapping to ensure validated competencies, prior learning recognition, and credential metadata can be captured and structured within the Learning and Employment Record environment.



Phase 1

Competency Validation and Pathway Alignment

C-BEN leads competency definition and employer validation processes. Employer engagement in this phase focuses on confirming that competencies reflect labor market demand and serve as measurable indicators of workforce capability. For institutions implementing competency-based education models, C-BEN supports alignment of program design with validated competencies and quality assurance standards.

CAEL leads pathway alignment across traditional and hybrid academic models, ensuring stackability, articulation, and integration of Credit for Prior Learning policies. CAEL's employer engagement work focuses on aligning pathways with workforce system expectations and strengthening coordination between institutions, employers, and state workforce agencies.

Territorium prepares the Learning and Employment Record environment to capture validated competencies, performance evidence, and recognized prior learning in structured and portable form.



Phase 2

Credential Infrastructure Deployment

Territorium deploys the Learning and Employment Record platform and digital credential wallet, enabling institutions to issue verifiable credentials linked to validated competencies and learning outcomes.

C-BEN ensures that competencies embedded within credentials maintain validation integrity and alignment with employer-reviewed standards. CAEL ensures credential deployment aligns with pathway structure, CPL operationalization, articulation policies, and workforce coordination frameworks.



Phase 3

Workforce System Integration and Credential Publishing

Credential data is structured using Credential Engine's Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) and prepared for publication to state and national registries aligned with CTDL standards. This ensures credentials are interoperable, transparent, and usable across workforce systems.

Territorium enables institutions to publish credential data into state-designated credential registries and workforce reporting systems, supporting ETPL eligibility and WIOA reporting.

C-BEN ensures that competencies linked to published credentials maintain validated workforce alignment. CAEL facilitates coordination across institutions, workforce boards, and state agencies to ensure registry publication supports statewide workforce strategy and funding participation.



Phase 4

State Talent Marketplace Activation and Employer Adoption

Territorium integrates with state or regional talent marketplace platforms, ensuring that Learning and Employment Records and credential data are visible and usable within publicly accessible workforce systems.

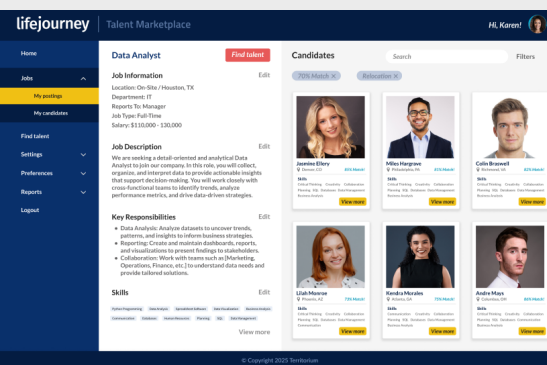
C-BEN ensures that competencies surfaced within the marketplace reflect employer-validated capability and maintain quality assurance standards consistent with validated competency frameworks. CAEL supports employers' adoption of skills-based hiring practices by helping them integrate validated competency data into recruitment, screening, and talent acquisition processes. Together, these functions enable credentials and validated competencies to operate effectively within state-designated talent marketplace environments in alignment with federal guidance.



Credential Transparency and Registry Integration

Credential data captured within the Learning and Employment Record is structured using the Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) developed by Credential Engine. This common data language enables credentials to be published across state and national registries while ensuring they remain interoperable and linked to validated competencies.

States maintain their own credential registries, and alignment with CTDL standards ensures credentials can be shared across systems without being confined to a single platform. Territorium enables institutions to structure and publish credential data in ways that support transparency, workforce funding participation, and talent marketplace functionality.



The Result

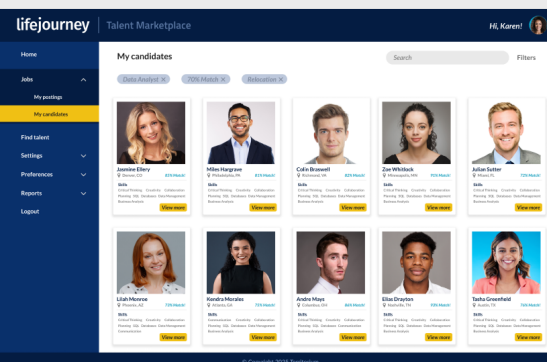
A Connected Workforce Credential Ecosystem

Community college systems gain infrastructure that supports Workforce Pell participation, federal workforce funding eligibility, and measurable alignment between education programs and labor market demand.

Learners gain portable, verifiable records of competencies and prior learning that connect directly to employment opportunities.

Employers gain access to structured, validated workforce capability data to support skills-based hiring.

States gain coordinated talent marketplace infrastructure that strengthens workforce mobility and supports economic development.



Summary

Territorium, in partnership with C-BEN and CAEL, and aligned with Credential Engine's national data standards, provides the integrated infrastructure and systems support required to advance the goals of the **Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant and operationalize Workforce Pell** at scale. By combining competency validation, activation of Credit for Prior Learning, credential transparency, and the deployment of an employer-connected talent marketplace, this partnership enables states and institutions to move from policy compliance to measurable workforce outcomes and durable system alignment.



