



United States EMS Compact

The Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice

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PRESS RELEASE | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Federal Workforce Pell Grant Program Extends Pell Funding to EMT Training, Opening Federal Financial Aid for Short-Term EMS Education for the First Time

WASHINGTON, DC. The Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice, the governing body of the U.S. EMS Compact, today released initial guidance for member states following publication of the [Workforce Pell Grant final rule](#) by the U.S. Department of Education on May 19, 2026. The final rule, which implements provisions of the Working Families Tax Cuts Act of 2025, extends Federal Pell Grant eligibility for the first time to high-quality, short-term workforce training programs of 8 to 15 weeks. The Department of Education specifically identified Emergency Medical Technician training as among the credential programs the new funding is designed to support.

The EMS Compact includes 25 Participating States and approximately 450,000 EMS clinicians whose certifications and state licenses are recognized across Participating States through a privilege-to-practice framework. The Commission's interest in the Workforce Pell rule is operational: the rule directly affects the training pipeline that produces the EMS clinicians whose interstate mobility the Compact facilitates.

"This is a meaningful federal investment in the EMT workforce pipeline, and the success of the program in any state will depend on how well EMS is understood by State Workforce Boards making approval recommendations," said Donnie Woodyard Jr., Executive Director of the Commission.

Key Facts

The Workforce Pell Grant program takes effect 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, with optional early implementation beginning July 1, 2026. Key points:

- Pell Grants do not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are federal grants, not loans.
- EMT training at accredited institutions is eligible. Programs of 8 to 15 weeks offered by accredited colleges and universities can qualify. Paramedic education is not eligible.
- Awards are based on financial need. Students apply through the FAFSA. Award amounts are prorated for short-term programs.
- Career-changers with bachelor's degrees can qualify. Workforce Pell extends federal financial aid to individuals who already hold a four-year degree, opening EMS as a second-career pathway.
- State approval is required. Each state's Governor, in consultation with the State Workforce Board, must approve eligible programs before they can receive Workforce Pell funding.



"Expanding Pell Grant eligibility to short-term EMT training opens doors for those who feel called to serve but lack the resources to begin. This support strengthens our workforce, creates pathways for career-changers and veterans, and brings new hope for the future of EMS" says Christy Kresse, the Public Health Section Chief for the Arkansas Office of Preparedness and Emergency Response Systems, EMS

The EMS Compact is law in the following states:

Alabama • Arkansas • Colorado • Delaware • Georgia • Idaho • Indiana • Iowa • Kansas • Louisiana • Mississippi • Missouri • Nebraska • Nevada • North Dakota • Oklahoma • Pennsylvania • South Carolina • South Dakota • Tennessee • Texas • Utah • Virginia • West Virginia • Wyoming



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"The Workforce Pell Grant program presents a timely and consequential opportunity for Mississippi to reinforce the stability of its EMS workforce. With more than 50 percent of Mississippi EMS agencies serving predominantly rural populations, extending federal financial aid to short-term EMT training creates, for the first time, a structured pathway for Mississippians to enter the profession without incurring debt. The Office of EMS is committed to working with accredited institutions, workforce leaders, and EMS agencies to ensure this program is implemented with the rigor, accountability, and operational clarity our communities deserve." Teresa Windham, the State EMS Director for the Mississippi State Department of Health.

The Commission has published a policy discussion paper for the EMS Compact states that outlines specific operational steps for state-level engagement in Workforce Pell implementation. The Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice will monitor state-level program approvals and report to the Executive Committee on EMS program approval rates, denial patterns, and any cross-state developments in distance education.

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About the Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice

The Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice is the governing body of the EMS Compact, a 25-state interstate compact that enables licensed EMS personnel to provide care across member state lines through a privilege-to-practice framework. The Commission was established by congressional consent under Public Law 115-91 and operates under enabling legislation enacted in each member state. The Commission serves approximately 450,000 EMS clinicians and works in coordination with state EMS offices, the National Registry of EMTs, and federal partners to support a national EMS workforce.

For additional information, visit emscompact.gov.

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