



I. EMPLOYER ALIGNMENT PILLAR

Category	Essential or Important / Regulatory or Other Source Reference	Implementation & Timing
High-skill, High-wage, or In-demand: Methodology, definitions, and listing of high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand (HHI) industry sectors or occupations.	Essential: The Governor must determine that a program provides an education aligned with the requirements of high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations (34 CFR 690.91(1); 690.93(a)(1)). ¹	(i) The methodology and listing of HHI sectors or occupations must be done not less than every two years concurrent with development and modification of the WIOA State Plan (34 CFR 690.93(b)(1)(i)). The WFP Proposed Rules provide flexibility for more frequent updates, and/or states establishing more targeted priorities (e.g., aligned to economic development goals, or requiring programs to be high-wage <i>and</i> in-demand). (ii) Governor’s program approval process must determine that each program provides an education aligned with requirements of HHI sectors or occupations (34 CFR 690.93(a)(1)). (iii) States should reconsider HHI alignment as part of the Governor’s continued approval process prior to the expiration of an institution’s Program Participation Agreement² (34 CFR 690.93(f)).³

¹ “High-wage” under WFP is the same as identified by the State pursuant to section 122 of the Perkins Act (690.93(a)(1)).

² An institution’s Title IV Program Participation Agreement (PPA) is typically for a six-year period (34 CFR § 668.13(b)(1)). States may have institutional PPAs expiring in any year, meaning Governors must establish continued approval processes as soon as the year after initial program approval.

³ A Governor’s process to provide a certification of continued approval is to be “determined by the Secretary.” The requirements for this process have not yet been proposed by ED.

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Employer Hiring Requirements: Methodology for determining and description of the hiring requirements of potential employers in the HHI sectors or occupations.	Essential: The Governor must determine that a program meets the hiring requirements of multiple potential employers, with a written policy that considers expected competencies (see following element) and incorporates direct input from employers (34 CFR 690.93(a)(2); (b)(1)(ii)). If the program prepares students for employment in an occupation for which there is only one recognized postsecondary credential, the program must provide students with such a credential upon completion (34 CFR 690.93(a)(3)).	(i) The Governor’s program approval process must include a written policy describing how this determination will be made (34 CFR 690.93(b)(1)(ii)). The WFP Proposed Rules provide flexibility regarding how employer input is obtained. Input could be at the sector or occupational level, not necessarily program-by-program. Input should include direct employer engagement; not overreliance on proxy labor market information. (ii) The Governor’s program approval process must determine if <i>each program</i> provides an education aligned with the hiring requirements of employers in the HHI sectors or occupations (34 CFR 690.93(a)(2)). (iii) States should reconsider alignment to employer hiring requirements as part of the Governor’s continued approval process.
Competencies: Methodology for determining the expected competencies for which a program’s credential intends, and the competencies needed for HHI sectors or occupations.	Essential: In determining whether a program meets employer hiring requirements, the Governor must consider the alignment of the competencies validated by the program’s credential with those needed in HHI sectors or occupations (34 CFR 690.93(a)(2); (b)(1)(ii)(A)).	(i) The Governor’s program approval process must include a written policy for how the state will determine competency alignment (34 CFR 690.93(b)(1)(ii)). The WFP Proposed Rules provide flexibility for how competencies are defined and how alignment is determined. (ii) The Governor’s program approval process must determine each program provides an education aligned with the hiring requirements of employers in the HHI sectors or occupations that considers the expected competencies for which the program’s recognized credential intends (690.93(a)(2)). (iii) Competency alignment should be reassessed during the Governor’s continued approval process.
<i>* Note on Registered Apprenticeship-related technical instruction (RTI):</i>		Under the WFP Proposed Rules, RTI is deemed to meet the above Employer Alignment requirements as RTI has already been employer-validated. However, the RTI must independently meet other WFP regulatory requirements (length, leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, employment outcomes, etc.).