WHAT IS PELL LEU?
Federal law limits the amount of Pell Grant funds students can receive over their lifetime to the equivalent of six academic years (12 semesters) of Pell Grant funding—also known as your Pell Lifetime Eligibility Usage (LEU).

HOW DOES PELL LEU IMPACT TODAY’S STUDENTS?
Today’s students are more diverse in age, race, and income and have different experiences and financial realities than students of the past. Twenty-four percent of students are parents. Forty percent attend school part-time, and sixty-four percent work while in college. For some of today’s students, the credits, credential, or degree they earned within the time allotted by the Pell LEU no longer holds enough value in the workforce. Many of these students need to obtain new credentials, very often without the ability to access Pell, in order to learn new skills or retrain for a new industry if their previous job has been displaced.

HOW CAN PELL LEU BE IMPROVED TO BENEFIT TODAY’S STUDENTS?
In today’s workforce, lifelong learning, and periodic upskilling has become the norm, as many adults will have to change jobs as many as seven times over a lifetime. To strengthen lifelong learning as a tool for promoting workforce participation, Pell LEU requirements should be reset after a period of time for students who otherwise would be eligible to receive a Pell Grant and require education in addition to their existing degree or credential. This change would benefit today’s students by allowing them to receive the retraining, upskilling, or additional education needed to be successful in our 21st century economy and achieve upward mobility.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION: Create a Pell LEU reset
Pell LEU should be reset for students who have reached the maximum amount of the Pell Grants, already hold a degree or credential, and have been employed in the workforce for the majority of the past ten years. A student who receives a Pell LEU reset will only remain eligible for Pell Grants for a maximum of four additional semesters’ worth of credits.

CHECK OUT OUR POLICY TOOLKIT FOR TODAY’S STUDENTS TO LEARN MORE.

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