

# Federal Programs for Tech Upskilling

## For Underemployed or Unemployed Persons

### Introduction

This document summarizes key federal grants and programs designed to help underemployed or unemployed individuals gain skills for high-demand technology careers. The government primarily provides funding through state and local partners, not via direct checks to individuals.

## 1 Primary Pathway: The Public Workforce System

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The main federal program for job training funding.

- **Purpose:** Provides funding to states to operate **American Job Centers** (AJCs), also known as One-Stop Career Centers.
- **For:** Adults, dislocated workers, and youth.
- **Mechanism:** Provides **Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)**, which are vouchers that pay tuition at approved training providers.
- **Tech Training Covered:**
  - Coding Bootcamps (Web Development, Data Science)
  - IT Certifications (CompTIA, Google IT Support)
  - Cloud Computing (AWS, Azure)
  - Cybersecurity
- **How to Access:**
  1. Find your local AJC: [CareerOneStop Finder](#)
  2. Meet with a career counselor.
  3. Determine eligibility and create an employment plan.

## 2 Pathway Through Education: Federal Student Aid

For those considering degree programs (e.g., Associate's in Computer Science).

## Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The application for all federal student aid, including grants and loans.

- **Key Grant: Pell Grant**
  - A **need-based grant** that does not need to be repaid.
  - Maximum award (2023-2024): **\$7,395**.
  - Can cover most/all of a community college tuition for a tech degree.
- **How to Access:**
  1. Complete the **FAFSA** online: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
  2. List your schools of interest.
  3. Schools will provide a financial aid offer.

## 3 Other Key Programs & Opportunities

- **Registered Apprenticeships:**
  - **Earn while you learn.** Receive a salary from an employer while training.
  - Find opportunities: [Apprenticeship.gov](https://apprenticeship.gov)
- **Department of Labor (DOL) Grants:** Large grants awarded to organizations to provide training. Individuals benefit by enrolling in these funded programs.

## 4 Summary of Key Options

Program Name	Best For	How it Works	Key Benefit
<b>WIOA (ITAs)</b>	Unemployed persons seeking short-term, intensive training (bootcamps, certs).	Voucher granted through your local American Job Center for approved training.	<b>Pays full tuition</b> for in-demand programs.
<b>Pell Grant (via FAFSA)</b>	Individuals pursuing a degree (e.g., Associate's) at a community college.	Need-based grant applied to tuition after completing the FAFSA.	<b>Does not require repayment.</b>
<b>Registered Apprenticeships</b>	Those who want to earn a wage while learning on the job.	Get hired by an employer as an apprentice. Work and receive training.	<b>Earn a salary</b> with no student debt.

## Actionable Steps to Take

1. **Contact Your Local American Job Center.** This is the most important step.
2. **Complete the FAFSA.** It doesn't commit you to anything and shows all your options.

3. **Research Approved Training Providers.** Ask your AJC counselor for the WIOA Eligible Training Provider List.
4. **Explore Free Resources First** to build foundational knowledge:
  - [Coursera](#) / [edX](#) (audit courses)
  - [freeCodeCamp](#)
  - [The Odin Project](#)
  - [Google Career Certificates](#) (financial aid available)