
HOUSE BILL 2630

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2010 Regular Session

By Representatives Probst, Kenney, Conway, Maxwell, Jacks, White, Simpson, Seaquist, Sells, Goodman, Ormsby, and Santos

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1 AN ACT Relating to creating the opportunity express program;
2 amending RCW 28C.04.390; adding new sections to chapter 28B.50 RCW;
3 creating a new section; and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that in times of
6 severe economic recession, the state has a special obligation to help
7 unemployed and low-income citizens access the training and education
8 necessary to help them find and keep living wage jobs. The legislature
9 also finds that during times of recession, when state revenues are at
10 their lowest, demand for education and training are at their highest,
11 making it especially important for the legislature to set clear goals
12 and make the most efficient use of limited state resources.

13 The legislature therefore intends to expand training and education
14 programs, which have proven to be successful, to ensure that Washington
15 citizens can get the training they need. These programs include the
16 worker retraining program, the opportunity grant program, and the
17 opportunity internship program. The legislature further intends to
18 create more effective intake and outreach systems to reach the greatest
19 number of citizens and connect them to the resources they need.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28C.04.390 and 1999 c 121 s 1 are each amended to read
2 as follows:

3 (1) The college board worker retraining program funds shall be used
4 for training programs and related support services, including financial
5 aid, counseling, referral to training resources, job referral, and job
6 development that:

7 (a) Are consistent with the unified plan for workforce development;

8 (b) Provide increased enrollments for dislocated workers;

9 (c) Provide customized training opportunities for dislocated
10 workers; and

11 (d) Provide increased enrollments and support services, including
12 financial aid for those students not receiving unemployment insurance
13 benefits, that do not replace or supplant any existing enrollments,
14 programs, support services, or funding sources.

15 (2) The college board shall develop a plan for use of the worker
16 retraining program funds in conjunction with the workforce training
17 customer advisory committee established in subsection (3) of this
18 section. In developing the plan the college board shall:

19 (a) Provide that applicants for worker retraining program funds
20 shall solicit financial support for training programs and give priority
21 in receipt of funds to those applicants which are most successful in
22 matching public dollars with financial support;

23 (b) Provide that applicants for worker retraining program funds
24 shall develop training programs in partnership with local businesses,
25 industry associations, labor, and other partners as appropriate and
26 give priority in receipt of funds to those applicants who develop
27 customized training programs in partnership with local businesses,
28 industry associations, and labor organizations;

29 (c) Give priority in receipt of funds to those applicants serving
30 rural areas;

31 (d) Ensure that applicants receiving worker retraining program
32 funds gather information from local workforce development councils on
33 employer workforce needs, including the needs of businesses with less
34 than twenty-five employees; (~~and~~)

35 (e) Provide for specialized vocational training at a private career
36 school or college at the request of a recipient eligible under
37 subsection (1)(b) of this section. Available tuition for the training

1 is limited to the amount that would otherwise be payable per enrolled
2 quarter to a public institution; and

3 (f) Give priority in receipt of funds to those applicants serving
4 the aerospace, healthcare, high technology manufacturing, or renewable
5 energy industries. The local partnerships established in subsection
6 (5) of this section may prioritize additional programs of study for
7 receipt of funds, if those programs are linked to industries that are
8 part of the overall economic development strategy of the college's
9 region.

10 (3) The executive director of the college board shall appoint a
11 workforce training customer advisory committee by July 1, 1999, to:

12 (a) Assist in the development of the plan for the use of the
13 college board worker retraining program funds and recommend guidelines
14 to the college board for the operation of worker retraining programs;

15 (b) Recommend selection criteria for worker retraining programs and
16 grant applicants for receipt of worker retraining program grants;

17 (c) Provide advice to the college board on other workforce
18 development activities of the community and technical colleges;

19 (d) Recommend selection criteria for job skills grants, consistent
20 with criteria established in this chapter and chapter 121, Laws of
21 1999. Such criteria shall include a prioritization of job skills
22 applicants in rural areas;

23 (e) Recommend guidelines to the college board for the operation of
24 the job skills program; and

25 (f) Recommend grant applicants for receipt of job skills program
26 grants.

27 (4) Members of the workforce training customer advisory committee
28 shall consist of three college system representatives selected by the
29 executive director of the college board, three representatives of
30 business selected from nominations provided by statewide business
31 organizations, and three representatives of labor selected from
32 nominations provided by a statewide labor organization representing a
33 cross-section of workers in the state.

34 (5)(a) Each community and technical college shall establish a
35 partnership with the workforce development council for its respective
36 region. The purpose of the partnership is to link the programs and
37 services targeted for worker retraining funding with overall regional

1 economic development strategy as determined by the local workforce
2 development council.

3 (b) Each college must annually prepare a worker retraining plan, in
4 collaboration with the local workforce development council, that
5 demonstrates how the programs of study targeted to receive worker
6 retraining funding align with the training needs for its region. The
7 plan may also include evidence that training will lead to living wage
8 jobs, a description of student support services, a description of
9 activities or items used for program administration, and appropriate
10 budget materials. The plan must be approved by the college president
11 and submitted to the local workforce development council for review and
12 approval.

13 (c) The college board may not authorize colleges to use worker
14 retraining funds until the local workforce development council has
15 approved the college's worker retraining plan.

16 (6) Current recipients of unemployment insurance, food stamps,
17 temporary assistance for needy families, or free and reduced price
18 lunches are automatically eligible to receive worker retraining
19 benefits. Colleges shall implement appropriate policies and procedures
20 to verify participation in these programs prior to authorizing worker
21 retraining benefits.

22 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW
23 to read as follows:

24 (1) By July 1, 2010, and within existing resources, the college
25 board shall create a single web site for the purpose of advertising the
26 availability of workforce education and training resources to
27 Washington citizens who are unemployed, underemployed, or are in need
28 of additional training. The web site shall provide:

29 (a) A screening component to determine initial eligibility for the
30 worker retraining program, the opportunity internship program, and the
31 opportunity grant program;

32 (b) Comprehensive information on the worker retraining, opportunity
33 internship, and opportunity grant programs, including but not limited
34 to, application information, financial aid eligibility and benefit
35 levels, and eligible programs of study; and

36 (c) Customized referral to a local community or technical college,

1 based on preferences entered into the web-based screening component
2 created in this section.

3 (2) By December 1, 2010, and annually thereafter, the college board
4 shall report to the governor and appropriate committees of the
5 legislature on the outcomes of the worker retraining program. The data
6 shall be disaggregated by college and include data from previous years
7 to facilitate year-to-year comparisons. The report shall include, but
8 not be limited to, the following information:

9 (a) A list of the programs of study approved for use of worker
10 retraining funds;

11 (b) The number of worker retraining students enrolled in the
12 college;

13 (c) The number of worker retraining students who earned a degree or
14 certificate, disaggregated by program of study;

15 (d) The number and percent of worker retraining students who are
16 employed six to nine months after leaving training, disaggregated by
17 program of study if feasible;

18 (e) A qualitative measure of industry satisfaction with worker
19 retraining students;

20 (f) The total amount of funding used to increase enrollment
21 capacity for each program of study.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW
23 to read as follows:

24 The opportunity express account is established as a special fund,
25 separate and apart from all public moneys or funds of this state. Up
26 to one hundred million dollars in the account may be spent only after
27 appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used only for the
28 worker retraining, opportunity internship, and opportunity grant
29 programs described in sections 1 through 3 of this act.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate
31 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
32 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
33 immediately.

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