

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5909

C 121 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Modifying the job skills program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senator Fairley).

Senate Committee on Labor & Workforce Development

House Committee on Commerce & Labor

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Job Skills Program was created by the Legislature in 1983 to provide customized job training to meet the needs of employers while serving dislocated and disadvantaged individuals. Customized training helps ensure that new and existing businesses can employ highly-skilled workers and that trainees have jobs. About \$1 million is allocated for this program during the current biennium. Washington ranks last in funding amounts among the 47 states that support this type of training.

Since 1993, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has received worker retraining funds to support retraining of dislocated or displaced workers. Initial funds were collected through the unemployment insurance system (sometimes called 1988 funds for the bill number that authorized them) and they now come from the general fund. \$57.7 million is available for this worker retraining in the current biennium. The original language controlling the use of these funds sunsets this year and no other statutory guidance exists on the use of these funds.

Summary: The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges must develop a plan for distribution of worker retraining funds. The use of the funds must be consistent with the unified plan for workforce development and provide increased enrollments for dislocated workers.

Applicants for funds must gather information on employers' workforce needs, including small business employers. Priority in receipt of funds is to be given to applicants successful in garnering matching funds, entering into partnerships, and serving rural areas.

The college board operates the Job Skills Program.

A workforce training customer advisory committee is appointed by the executive director of the college board to help develop the plan for the use of worker retraining funds, recommend selection criteria and applicants for receipt of worker retraining and Job Skills grants, recommend guidelines for program operation, and provide advice on other workforce development activities. The committee consists of three business, three labor, and three college system representatives.

Streamlining changes to the existing job skills statute are made.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	97	0

Effective: July 25, 1999