
Higher Education Committee

HB 2684

Brief Description: Establishing opportunity centers at community colleges.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Sullivan, Liias, Hasegawa, Simpson, Nelson, Goodman and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates an Opportunity Employment and Education Center within the Seattle Community College district required to co-house and integrate various education, employment, and social service programs.
- Establishes a workgroup that is charged with developing policies and procedures to govern the center.
- Stipulates the types of programs and services that the center will offer.
- Requires the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to evaluate the center and report to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2011 and annually thereafter.
- Requires the SBCTC to make recommendations on the location of an additional center by December 1, 2010.

Hearing Date: 1/20/10

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

The state Legislature's Capital Budget of 2003 called for "the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to conduct a study, with input from an advisory committee, on the feasibility and benefits of establishing one-stop satellite offices co-locating the Employment Security Department (ESD) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) on community college campuses."

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Legislature's intent was to improve service delivery to shared clients/students of the two-year colleges, the DSHS, and the ESD; to improve employment outcomes for people struggling to achieve self-sufficiency and prosperity for their families; and to make better use of tax dollars by locating these services in facilities owned by the state rather than in leased buildings.

The SBCTC formed an advisory committee that included representatives from the ESD, the DSHS, and the Workforce Development Councils and worked throughout 2004 to conduct focus groups and interviews with various stakeholder groups. The advisory committee recommended moving forward with a pilot at North Seattle Community College. Based on their study, the advisory group indicated that this co-location model had the potential to use state resources more effectively and to enhance service delivery through the integration of services needed by working-age adults.

Summary of Bill:

An Opportunity Education and Employment Center (Center) is established within the Seattle Community College district. The Center will house various educational and social service providers that will integrate access to employment, counseling, and public benefit programs as well as education, training, financial aid, and counseling offered through community colleges. The Center is required to form partnerships that will enhance service provision.

The Center is required to provide the following services: Employment Security and Workforce Development Council Worksource services; job listing, referral, and placement; job coaching; employment counseling, testing, and career planning; Unemployment Insurance claim filing assistance; cash grant programs run by the Department of Social and Health Services; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; housing assistance; child support assistance; child care subsidies; WorkFirst and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; state General Assistance and Supplemental Security Income facilitation; Vocational Rehabilitation services and referrals; Medicaid and medical services; alcoholism and drug addiction treatment and support act referrals; case management and mental health referrals; community college financial aid; support services; college counseling services related to career pathways and basic skills resources for English language learners; high school completion; and adult basic education.

The Center is additionally responsible for jointly developing evaluation criteria with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). By December 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, the SBCTC must provide an evaluation of existing centers based on these criteria. The report must also include data on any federal and state legislative barriers to integration.

The Chancellor of the Seattle Community College district must convene a workgroup (Workgroup) that is charged with governing the Center. The Workgroup must include representatives of the King County Workforce Development Council, North Seattle Community College, the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Social and Health Services. Each year a chair will be chosen from among the Workgroup's membership, with the chairmanship rotating among participating agencies.

The Workgroup is tasked with determining protocols and policies for service delivery and general operation, developing cross-agency training for agency employees located at the center, and establishing a common information technology framework that allows interagency access to

files and information, including any common application and screening systems that facilitate access.

In addition, the Workgroup must also develop a release of information form that may be voluntarily completed by Center clients to facilitate sharing information and compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Agencies are required to apply for any applicable waivers of federal and state law to facilitate the intended goals of the Center.

By December 1, 2010, the SBCTC must make recommendations on the location of a new Opportunity Employment and Education Center. If future centers are created, they will be governed by the Workgroup.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2010.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.