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## Labor & Workforce Development Committee

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### HB 1072

**Brief Description:** Creating the agricultural labor skills and safety grant program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Chandler, Sells, Ormsby, Reykdal, Freeman, Fagan and Morrell.

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| <p><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creates the Agricultural Labor Skills and Safety Grant Program, administered by the Department of Commerce.</li></ul> |
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**Hearing Date:** 1/23/13

**Staff:** Trudes Tango (786-7384).

**Background:**

The Department of Commerce (Department) administers a number of programs through its five operating divisions with the goal of "enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington." Examples of programs that it administers include: (1) the Farmworker Housing Program, which provides loans and grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to develop community-based housing for migrant and seasonal farmworkers; and (2) the Associate Development Organizations (ADO), which is a partnership with other organizations to provide technical assistance and funding for local economic development activities.

In recent years, Senate and House bills were introduced to create an agricultural training grant program. Those bills were not enacted; however, funding was provided in the state's operating budget for agricultural training.

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In the 2007-09 Operating Budget, \$500,000 was appropriated from the State General Fund as pass through funding to the Opportunities Industrialization Center, a nonprofit organization, to provide training to agricultural workers related to farm skills, English as a second language, and other skills. In the 2009-11 Operating Budget, the Legislature appropriated \$500,000 (\$424,000 from the Accident Account and \$76,000 from the Medical Aid Account) for the implementation of a community agricultural worker safety grant. The Department of Labor and Industries was required to enter into an interagency agreement with the Department of Agriculture to implement the grant. The Legislature did not provide funding to the Department of Labor and Industries for that grant program in the 2011-13 Operating Budget.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Legislature recognizes that providing skills and safety training for agricultural workers helps ensure the workers' success and safety and the continued success of Washington's agricultural industry.

Subject to funds appropriated for this purpose, the Department of Commerce must create and administer the Agricultural Labor Skills and Safety Grant Program.

The Department must select one grant recipient that has a community-based organization with the ability to carry out the objectives of the program. The grant recipient must provide workforce skills and safety training to agricultural workers by:

- designing and implementing an agricultural skills development program and providing health and safety training;
- developing a plan to increase the number of skilled agricultural workers through a recruitment process;
- evaluating trainings and service delivery strategies for agricultural workers and employers;
- partnering with an agricultural association in developing and providing the training curriculum. The association must have focused exclusively on agricultural labor and employment issues and services for at least 10 years and have experience in providing training to agricultural employees; and
- using a training delivery system that is sensitive to the needs of agricultural employers and the barriers agricultural workers face to employment.

The grant recipient may receive up to \$750,000 per year. The provisions creating the grant program expire July 1, 2016.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 1/17/13.

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