
Transportation Committee

HB 1922

Brief Description: Concerning highway construction workforce development.

Sponsors: Representatives Moscoso, Angel, Sells, Ryu, Upthegrove, Fitzgibbon, Zeiger, Freeman, Bergquist, Farrell, Takko, Tarleton, Kochmar, Riccelli, Moeller, Fey, Santos and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to expend \$1,900,000 or .5 percent of federal highway surface transportation program capital funds, whichever is less, for apprenticeship preparation and support services.
- Adds recruitment of women and persons of color to participate in the apprenticeship program at the WSDOT to the list of services that the WSDOT must provide in coordination with the apprenticeship and training council.

Hearing Date: 2/26/13

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

On-the-Job Training Programs.

The Federal Highway Administration On-the-Job Training (OJT) program is established in federal law. It requires state transportation agencies receiving certain federal funds to establish apprenticeship and training programs aimed at increasing the number of women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals in journey-level highway construction positions. The stated goal is to ensure a competent workforce to meet highway construction hiring needs and to address the historical under-representation of these groups in highway construction skilled crafts.

The OJT/Supportive Services program was created in federal regulation to supplement the OJT program by providing services to highway construction contractors and assistance to highway construction apprentices and trainees. Under federal law, the federal Secretary of Transportation

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may fund the OJT/Supportive Services in an amount not to exceed \$10 million annually. These funds are distributed through a competitive grant process. State transportation agencies may also use up to one-half of 1 percent of funds apportioned to the state under the federal Surface Transportation Program and the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program for the OJT/Supportive Services. The OJT/Supportive Services may fund recruitment, skills training, job placement, child care, outreach, transportation to work sites, post-graduation follow-up, and job-site mentoring.

In Washington, the OJT/Support Services Unit is within the Office of Equal Opportunity at the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The OJT/Supportive Services Unit's stated goal is to provide support services to increase the number of minorities and women participating in the federal-aid highway construction industry. It is currently funded through funds received through the competitive grant process.

Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council.

The Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (Council) oversees the state apprenticeship program within the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). The Council establishes apprenticeship program standards, approves apprenticeship training programs, and otherwise governs apprenticeship programs.

Washington State Department of Transportation.

The WSDOT is required to expend federal funds received under the federal OJT program to increase diversity in the highway construction workforce and prepare individuals interested in entering the highway construction workforce by providing certain OJT/Supportive Services. The WSDOT must also coordinate with the Council to provide any portion of these OJT/Supportive Services:

- preapprenticeship programs;
- preemployment counseling;
- orientations on the highway construction industry, including outreach to women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals;
- basic skills improvement classes;
- career counseling;
- remedial training;
- entry requirements for training programs;
- supportive services and assistance with transportation;
- child care and special needs;
- job-site mentoring and retention services; and
- assistance with tools, protective clothing, and other related support for employment costs.

The WSDOT is also required, in coordination with the Council and to the extent practicable, to expend moneys from other sources to provide these activities. The requirements for the WSDOT related to these activities do not apply or reduce funds that would otherwise be allocated to local governments.

The WSDOT, in coordination with the Council, must submit a report to the Transportation committees of the Legislature by December 1 of each year. The report must contain:

- an analysis of the results of providing these services;

- the amount available to the WSDOT from federal funds for the services and the amount expended for those services; and
- the performance outcomes achieved from each activity, including the number of persons receiving services, training, and employment.

Summary of Bill:

The WSDOT is required to expend \$1,900,000 or .5 percent of federal highway surface transportation program capital funds, whichever is less, for apprenticeship preparation and support services. This amount may be reduced by the amount of other funds expended for this purpose, except for federal funds provided for these purposes.

The recruitment of women and persons of color to participate in the apprenticeship program at the WSDOT is added to the list of services that the WSDOT must provide in coordination with the apprenticeship and training council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2013.

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