
Labor Committee

HB 1127

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

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler and Sells.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Agricultural Labor Skills and Safety Grant Program, administered by the Department of Commerce.

Hearing Date: 2/2/15

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

The Department of Labor and Industries (Agency) is responsible for regulating safety in the workplace. The Agency creates educational materials, such as safety videos, and makes those available on its website. Some materials, such as videos on tractor safety and heat exposure, focus on the agricultural industry.

Five years ago, the Legislature appropriated money to implement a community agricultural worker safety grant to provide agricultural workers training related to farm skills, English as a second language and other skills. The grant was administered by the Agency with the Department of Agriculture. Funding for that grant program was not renewed.

Summary of Bill:

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

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

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 Department must select one grant recipient that has a community-based organization to carry out the objectives of the program. The grant recipient must work with agricultural employee and employer organizations to:

- design and implement an agricultural skills program and provide health and safety training;
- develop a plan to increase the number of skilled agricultural workers through a recruitment process;
- evaluate trainings and service delivery strategies for agricultural workers and employers;
- partner with an agricultural employee and an agricultural employer organization that has focused on agricultural labor and employment issues and services for at least 10 years and has experience in providing training to agricultural employees; and
- use a training delivery system that is sensitive to the needs of agricultural employees and employers.

The grant recipient may receive up to \$1 million per year. The provisions creating the grant program expire July 1, 2018.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2015.

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