
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2177

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By House Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Chapman, Steele, Frame, and Tharinger)

READ FIRST TIME 01/19/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating the rural county high employer demand
2 jobs program; adding new sections to chapter 28B.50 RCW; and creating
3 a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that:

6 (a) According to research from Georgetown University, by the year
7 2020, seventy percent of jobs in Washington state will require at
8 least some education and training beyond high school, which aligns
9 with Washington's educational attainment goals established under RCW
10 28B.77.020; and

11 (b) Research by the state board for community and technical
12 colleges and other entities has found that attending college for at
13 least one year and earning a credential results in a substantial
14 boost in earnings for adults who enter a community college with a
15 high school diploma or less.

16 (2) In addition, the legislature finds that:

17 (a) Rural counties face unique challenges to achieving full
18 economic and community development in the face of societal trends
19 that concentrate job and population growth in larger metropolitan
20 areas. For example, seventy-five percent of the job growth in
21 Washington by 2018 is projected to be confined to just five large

1 counties. In addition, two-thirds of the state's recent population
2 growth has occurred in the three largest counties and seven counties
3 have actually lost population in recent years.

4 (b) One barrier to economic growth and investment in many rural
5 counties is the lack of a trained, qualified workforce for the
6 opportunities present in rural areas. These opportunities often
7 require specialized skills tailored for specific, regional employer
8 needs. In many cases, employment opportunities are available in rural
9 communities; however, some assistance is needed to help local
10 residents acquire the skills necessary to access the opportunities in
11 their own backyards.

12 (3) The legislature declares that opportunity, community
13 vitality, quality of life, and prosperity are essential for all
14 Washington communities. Therefore, the legislature intends to create
15 a program to assist rural communities in growing the workforce the
16 community needs to meet its specific industry sector demands.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
20 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

21 (a) "Eligible county" has the same meaning as "rural county"
22 defined in RCW 82.14.370.

23 (b) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell
24 grant, the state need grant program in chapter 28B.92 RCW, the
25 college bound scholarship program in chapter 28B.118 RCW, the
26 opportunity grant program in this chapter, the opportunity
27 scholarship program in chapter 28B.145 RCW, or any other state grant,
28 scholarship, or worker retraining program that provides funds for
29 educational purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid" does
30 not include student loans, work-study programs, the basic food
31 employment and training program administered by the department of
32 social and health services, or other employment assistance programs
33 that provide job readiness opportunities and support beyond the costs
34 of tuition, books, and fees.

35 (c) "High employer demand field" means an industry sector, as
36 identified by the college board, within an eligible county in which
37 there is or will likely be a shortage of skilled labor to meet job
38 demands.

1 (d) "Rural jobs program" means the rural county high employer
2 demand jobs program created in this section.

3 (2)(a) The rural county high employer demand jobs program is
4 created to meet the workforce needs of business and industry in rural
5 counties by assisting students in earning certificates, associate
6 degrees, or other industry-recognized credentials necessary for
7 employment in high employer demand fields.

8 (b) Subject to the requirements of this section, the rural jobs
9 program provides qualifying students awards in the amount equal to
10 tuition fees and required services and activities fees, as defined in
11 RCW 28B.15.020 and 28B.15.041, for up to forty-five credits or the
12 equivalent of one year of full-time study when the qualifying student
13 enrolls in a community or technical college program that prepares
14 students for a high employer demand field.

15 (3)(a) The college board must administer the rural jobs program
16 and may adopt rules necessary to implement the rural jobs program.
17 The source of funds for the program shall be a combination of private
18 grants and contributions and state matching funds. A state match may
19 be earned under this section for private contributions made on or
20 after the effective date of this section. A state match, up to a
21 maximum of fifty million dollars annually, shall be provided
22 beginning January 1, 2020. The state match must be based on donations
23 and pledges received as of the date each official state caseload
24 forecast is submitted by the caseload forecast council to the
25 legislative fiscal committees, as provided under RCW 43.88C.020.
26 Nothing in this section expands or modifies the responsibilities of
27 the caseload forecast council.

28 (b) No later than January 1, 2019, the college board, in
29 consultation with any interested community or technical college
30 located in an eligible county and the county's workforce development
31 council, shall identify high employer demand fields within the
32 eligible counties. When identifying high employer demand fields, the
33 college board must consider:

34 (i) County-specific employer demand reports issued by the
35 employment security department or the list of statewide high-demand
36 programs for secondary career and technical education established
37 under RCW 28A.700.020; and

38 (ii) The ability and capacity of the community and technical
39 college to meet the needs of qualifying students and industry in the
40 eligible county.

1 (c) To the extent funds are available for distribution, the
2 college board shall begin awarding grants under the rural jobs
3 program no later than the fall term of the 2020 academic year.

4 (d) The college board or the community or technical college may
5 publicize the identified high employer demand fields as part of
6 existing community outreach efforts.

7 (e) The college board must seek and accept funds from private
8 sources, including private contributions and private foundation or
9 community grants.

10 (4) To the extent funds are available for distribution and
11 subject to the limits established in this section, the college board
12 shall award to students who meet the criteria in subsection (5) of
13 this section grants in the amount equal to the cost of tuition fees
14 and required services and activities fees as defined in RCW
15 28B.15.020 and 28B.15.041, less any gift aid received. An award under
16 the rural jobs program may not result in a reduction of any gift aid.
17 Nothing in this section creates any right or entitlement.

18 (5) To be eligible for a grant award under the rural jobs
19 program, a student must:

20 (a) Be a resident of an eligible county;

21 (b) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012;

22 (c) Be enrolled in a community or technical college located in an
23 eligible county;

24 (d) Be in a certificate, degree, or other industry-recognized
25 credential or training program that has been identified by the
26 college board as a program that prepares students for a high employer
27 demand field;

28 (e) Have a family income that does not exceed seventy percent of
29 the state median family income adjusted for family size, as
30 determined by the college board; and

31 (f) Demonstrate financial need according to the free application
32 for federal student aid (FAFSA) or the Washington application for
33 state financial aid (WASFA).

34 (6) To remain eligible to receive grant awards under the rural
35 jobs program, the student must maintain a cumulative grade point
36 average of 2.0.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50
38 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) The rural jobs program account is created in the custody of
2 the state treasurer as a nonappropriated account to be used solely
3 and exclusively for the rural county high employer demand jobs
4 program created under section 2 of this act. The purpose of the
5 account is to provide funds for the implementation and administration
6 of the rural jobs program.

7 (2) Revenues to the account shall consist of appropriations by
8 the legislature into the account and any gifts, grants, or donations
9 received by the executive director of the college board for the rural
10 jobs program. For private contributions deposited in the account, the
11 state acts in a fiduciary rather than ownership capacity with regard
12 to those assets, and private contributions are not considered state
13 money, common cash, or revenue to the state.

14 (3) No expenditures from the account to provide grants to
15 students may be made except upon receipt of proof of private
16 contributions to the rural jobs program. Expenditures, in the form of
17 matching funds, may not exceed the total amount of private
18 contributions.

19 (4) Only the executive director of the college board or the
20 executive director's designee may authorize expenditures from the
21 rural jobs program account. For the purposes of awarding grants,
22 authorization must be made as soon as practicable following receipt
23 of proof as required under subsection (3) of this section.

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