
College & Workforce Development Committee

E2SSB 5764

Brief Description: Concerning apprenticeships and higher education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Sheldon, Conway, Das, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kuderer, Liias, Nguyen, Nobles, Saldaña, Wellman, Wilson, C. and Wilson, J.).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Aligns the Washington College Grant (WCG) award for apprentices to match the maximum award amount received by students attending community and technical colleges.
- Requires the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to verify access to the WCG for registered apprentices not receiving related supplemental instruction at a community or technical college.
- Requires the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the WSAC to establish a student information technology interface to simplify the WCG apprenticeship application, verification, and award process.
- Requires the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to evaluate, examine, consult with stakeholders, and report on options for further developing opportunities for apprentices to receive credit towards degrees.
- Requires public higher education institutions to establish policies for awarding credits for related supplemental instruction received by apprentices in registered apprenticeship programs by the 2028-29 school year.

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

Hearing Date: 2/17/22

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Registered Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship programs enable individuals to learn trades and occupations through on-the-job training and related supplemental instruction (RSI). Journey-level craft persons or trade professionals generally supervise on-the-job training. Employer- or union-sponsored schools or community or technical colleges offer the technical instruction. Registered apprenticeship programs must have the following elements:

- a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job training; and
- at least 144 hours of classroom instruction per 2,000 hours of on-the-job training per year.

Most registered apprenticeship programs take around two to five years to complete, and apprentices earn wages while learning their trade or occupation. Upon completing apprenticeship programs, apprentices receive completion certificates and are recognized nationwide as qualified journey-level workers. The certificates are issued by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, which is the entity that establishes standards and registers apprenticeship programs.

Many registered apprenticeship programs contract with a local community or technical college to provide the RSI. The nature of these contracts vary. Some registered apprenticeship programs will hire their own instructors, but use college facilities. Others will rely on the college to provide instruction, facilities, administration, and record-keeping. Apprentices who receive their RSI at a community or technical college may also receive college credit to be applied towards an associate's degree. There are 22 colleges with 179 active apprenticeship programs in the state. One degree offered by several institutions is the Multi-Occupational Trades associate degree, which is currently available through South Seattle College, Spokane Community College, Renton Technical College, Skagit Valley College, Everett Community College, Wenatchee Valley College, and Columbia Basin College.

Washington College Grant Apprenticeship Award.

In 2019 the Washington College Grant (WCG) program was established to replace the State Need Grant, and one of the changes to the need-based financial aid program was the addition of approved, registered apprenticeship programs. Apprentices enrolled in approved, registered apprenticeship programs are eligible to receive a WCG award for tuition and fees, in addition to required program supplies and equipment if they meet the other eligibility requirements for the WCG. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) has set the current maximum award for a full-time registered apprentice at \$3,000. Registered apprenticeship programs that would like to participate in the WCG need to be approved by the WSAC by demonstrating that they have the administrative capability to do so.

Summary of Bill:

Washington College Grant Apprenticeship Awards.

Beginning in the 2022-23 academic year, the WCG apprenticeship award amount is changed to the same amount as the community and technical college rate to be used for tuition and fees, supplies and equipment, and other costs that facilitate educational endeavors.

A goal is specified that students enrolled in registered apprenticeship programs who are receiving their RSI at a community or technical college should be able to access the WCG through the college's financial aid office. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is required to fully implement this goal by the 2025-26 academic year. The WSAC must verify access to the WCG for those students in registered apprenticeship programs who are not receiving their RSI at a college. The SBCTC must collaborate with the WSAC to create a student information technology interface to simplify the WCG apprenticeship application, verification, eligibility, and award process. The SBCTC and the WSAC must enter into data-sharing agreements with other state agencies to verify student data.

The William D. Ruckelshaus Center Evaluation.

The WSAC is required to contract with the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Ruckelshaus) to:

- evaluate paths to credentials for apprentices, including recommendations on requirements and benefits of expanding the Multi-Occupational Trades degree;
- examine best practices in delivery and award of educational credentials for apprentices, including an assessment of the governance structures and operational models for apprenticeship delivery;
- research apprentices' demand for degrees;
- review the current funding model for apprentices within the community and technical college system with consideration on the use of state funds for apprenticeships and national funding structures that could be applied to Washington;
- consult with agencies and stakeholders with interest and expertise in apprenticeship training and higher education mobility; and
- identify and remove barriers for apprentices to access the WCG and other student supports and programs.

The WSAC is required to report annually by December 1, 2023, on the Ruckelshaus' progress, findings, and recommendations. The annual report in 2026 must provide viable policy options for degree pathways for individuals who complete registered apprenticeship programs. The Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, in consultation with the SBCTC, WSAC, an organization representing the presidents of the public four-year institutions of higher education, and any other relevant or impacted parties must explore whether the state should establish an institution, or centralized program, for apprentices to receive RSI for credit towards a degree. A report on the findings and recommendations must be included in the December 1, 2023 report by WSAC. The requirements associated with the Ruckelshaus evaluation expire July 1, 2028.

Credits for Related Supplemental Instruction.

By the 2028-29 school year, public institutions of higher education must establish a policy for granting as many credits as possible and appropriate for RSI in active registered apprenticeship programs registered during or before July 1, 2022. For state registered apprenticeship programs approved after July 1, 2022, institutions of higher education must establish a policy for granting as many credits as possible and appropriate for RSI within six years of the program's registration. While establishing credits, faculty representatives must be consulted. Credits established are not intended to impact the possible revision of previously approved RSI in a registered apprenticeship program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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