
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2019

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By House College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Boehnke, Graham, J. Johnson, Leavitt, and Sutherland)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/22.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing educational and training
2 opportunities for careers in retail; creating new sections; and
3 providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the retail
6 industry is vital to the state's economy, providing 42 percent of the
7 state's total tax collections in 2019, employing approximately
8 385,000 people across the state, and paying nearly \$24 billion in
9 annual wages. Nationally, one in four jobs are in retail, 34 percent
10 of the retail workforce consists of people of color, and the retail
11 industry is the fourth largest employer of immigrants.

12 (2) Workers with retail experience acquire transferrable and
13 stackable job skills needed in all industries and careers. Retail
14 work offers foundational training for strong customer service skills,
15 which is the single most essential skill employers are looking for in
16 new hires, according to research from the Washington employment
17 security department. Sixty-two percent of retail store managers
18 earned promotions through training programs that enabled them to move
19 up the ranks of the retail industry. The legislature finds that the
20 majority of retail employers in Washington are small businesses who
21 would benefit greatly from a pipeline of entry-level employees with

1 job readiness skills. A few other states have successfully adopted
2 entry-level retail customer service, retail operations, and warehouse
3 logistics courses, such as the national retail foundation's retail
4 industry skills and education certification program.

5 (3) The legislature further finds that Washington has developed
6 strong career and technical education programs and has invested in
7 career connected learning. The career connected learning cross-agency
8 work group is charged with creating work-based and academic programs
9 for young people to explore, learn, and earn money and college-level
10 credit. However, the current career and technical education clusters
11 and career connected learning programs do not adequately identify and
12 promote working in retail as a career. Although some career clusters
13 and pathways may include courses that are relevant to a career in
14 retail, there are not pathways specific to retail nor are students
15 encouraged to participate for the purpose of a career in retail.
16 Additionally, the legislature recognizes that there is a positive
17 correlation between educational opportunities available to
18 incarcerated individuals and reduced recidivism, especially when
19 incarcerated individuals participate in education and training
20 programs focused on job opportunities that are available upon
21 release.

22 (4) It is the legislature's intent to help employees be
23 successful in retail and to provide a skilled workforce for retail
24 employers by increasing and clearly identifying education and
25 training opportunities for careers in the retail industry.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The workforce training and education
27 coordinating board, in consultation with the state board for
28 community and technical colleges and statewide retail employer
29 organizations, shall:

30 (a) Identify core skills needed for employment in the retail
31 industry;

32 (b) Identify existing courses, educational pathways, and
33 apprenticeships for students and entry-level job seekers to gain the
34 core skills identified;

35 (c) Map educational pathways, including apprenticeship programs,
36 that retail workers may use to pursue promotions and job advancement
37 opportunities;

38 (d) Identify where there are gaps in educational courses,
39 trainings, and apprenticeships for retail workers; and

1 (e) Identify in demand, higher wage, nonindustry specific
2 professions within the retail industry that experience and education
3 in retail may lead to, such as professions in accounting, human
4 resources, or information technology.

5 (2) The workforce training and education coordinating board shall
6 use the information gathered from subsection (1) of this section to
7 engage stakeholders, including the state board for community and
8 technical colleges, the office of the superintendent of public
9 instruction, the department of corrections, the employment security
10 department, the career connected learning cross-agency work group
11 under chapter 28C.30 RCW, and statewide retail employer organizations
12 to make recommendations to the legislature on the following:

13 (a) Strategies to develop additional courses, pathways, and
14 apprenticeships to make retail certifications and credentials
15 available for job seekers and current retail employees;

16 (b) Strategies to build a network for students and job seekers
17 who complete retail certification courses to connect with potential
18 employers;

19 (c) Options for engaging and partnering with retail employers to
20 provide courses to incumbent frontline workers for the purpose of
21 upskilling and promotions, including for in demand, higher paid,
22 nonindustry specific positions within the retail industry; and

23 (d) Options for increasing training and job opportunities in the
24 retail industry for underserved communities and previously
25 incarcerated individuals.

26 (3) The workforce training and education coordinating board shall
27 report on the progress of this section to the appropriate committees
28 of the legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by December 1,
29 2022, and submit a final report with recommendations by December 1,
30 2023.

31 (4) This section expires July 1, 2024.

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