

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2019

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 21, 2024

Title: An act relating to establishing a Native American apprentice assistance program.

Brief Description: Establishing a Native American apprentice assistance program.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Stearns, Fosse, Berry, Ryu, Ramos, Ramel, Cortes, Morgan, Simmons, Reed, Ormsby, Peterson, Callan, Timmons, Kloba, Street, Donaghy, Gregerson, Orwall, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, Lekanoff, Riccelli, Reeves, Santos, Hackney, Pollet and Davis).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/9/24, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/16/24, 2/21/24 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Native American apprentice assistance program for members of federally recognized Indian tribes whose traditional lands and territories included parts of Washington.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Nobles, Chair; Hansen, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Hawkins and Randall.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council. The Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC) regulates apprenticeships for state

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and federal purposes. WSATC is administered by the Department of Labor and Industries. Apprenticeship preparation programs that meet the requirements of WSATC, including having working relationships with one or more registered apprenticeship program sponsors, are designated as officially recognized programs.

Washington Grant-Apprenticeships. The Washington College Grant (WCG) includes funding for qualified apprentices if they:

- are a resident of Washington State;
- are working in a participating Washington Grant-Apprenticeship (WG-A) program; and
- meet family income requirements.

WG-A funding can be used for tuition and fees as well as occupational costs.

Passport to Apprenticeships. Passport to apprenticeship supports youth and young adults, ages 13 to 21, who have experienced foster care or unaccompanied homelessness. The program supports people in registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs. Funds can cover tuition and fees for classes, and occupational costs like work clothes and tools.

Summary of Bill: Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the Native American apprentice assistance program is established. To be eligible a participant must be a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe whose traditional lands and territories included parts of Washington, must file a FAFSA, and must be enrolled in a state-registered apprenticeship program. Funding must be prioritized to cover any tuition costs for related supplemental instruction. Additional funds may be used for occupational costs including but not limited to: supplies, tools, materials, and living expenses.

The Office of Student Financial Assistance (office) must administer the program. This includes publicizing the program and awarding assistance to eligible participants. The office must establish rules for administration of the program in consultation with tribes and state-registered apprenticeship programs.

The office must annually report on the program to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1st of each year until 2025. The report must include:

- the total number of eligible participants and the number of eligible participants who received an assistance grant;
- the award amount and how it was determined; and
- number of members of federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington who received assistance versus members of federally recognized Indian tribes from other states.

Appropriation: The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Native American communities suffer from the highest rates of unemployment and poverty. This bill was brought to me by the tribes who are seeking to build a strong workforce. The Tulalip Tribe supports the creation of the Native American apprenticeship assistance program. This bill will help us create additional opportunities for tribal members. Starting and completing an apprenticeship is no easy feat. Tools, books, and materials are expensive. This bill helps streamline the process.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Chris Stearns, Prime Sponsor; Charles Adkins, The Tulalip Tribes; Matthew Hepner, IBEW/ceww.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.