

RCW 43.70.452 Agricultural industry workforce behavioral health improvement and suicide prevention—Pilot program. (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars per fiscal year, the department shall establish a pilot program to support behavioral health improvement and suicide prevention efforts for members of the agricultural industry workforce. By March 1, 2019, the pilot program shall be established in a county west of the Cascade crest that is reliant on the agricultural industry.

(2) When implementing the pilot program, the department shall consider the report of the task force on behavioral health and suicide prevention in the agricultural industry established in section 2, chapter 95, Laws of 2018.

(3) In implementing the pilot program, the department shall contract with an entity that has behavioral health and suicide prevention expertise to develop a free resource for workers in the agricultural industry. When selecting an entity, the department shall seek to use an entity that has an existing telephonic and web-based resource, including entities that have prepared similar resources for other states. The contracting entity must be responsible for constructing and hosting the free resource and linking the free resource to the websites of the department, the department of agriculture, and other relevant stakeholders.

(4) At a minimum, the free resource must:

(a) Be made publicly available through a web-based portal or a telephone support line;

(b) Provide a resource to train agricultural industry management, workers, and their family members in suicide risk recognition and referral skills;

(c) Provide a resource to build capacity within the agricultural industry to train individuals to deliver training in person;

(d) Contain model crisis protocols that address behavioral health crisis and suicide risk identification, intervention, reentry, and postvention;

(e) Contain model marketing materials and messages that promote behavioral health in the agricultural industry; and

(f) Be made available in English and Spanish.

(5) A preliminary report shall be made to the legislature on the elements and implementation of the pilot program by December 1, 2019. A final report containing information about results of the pilot program and recommendations for improving the pilot program and expanding its availability to other counties shall be made to the legislature by December 1, 2020. [2018 c 95 s 3.]

Findings—2018 c 95: "(1) The legislature finds that the agricultural industry is an integral part of Washington's economy and sense of common identity, and that the behavioral health of workers in the industry and their family members is a statewide concern.

(2) Several factors related to the agricultural industry may affect the behavioral health of workers in the agricultural industry, including job-related isolation and demands, stressful work environments, the heightened potential for financial losses, lack of access to behavioral health services, and barriers to or unwillingness to seek mental health services.

(3) A 2016 report from the federal centers for disease control and prevention studied suicide data from the year 2012 and found that

workers in the farming, fishing, and forestry industries had the highest rate of suicide, eighty-four and one-half suicides per one hundred thousand workers, among the occupational groups that it studied.

(4) The legislature finds that there is an urgent need to develop resources and interventions specifically targeted to helping workers in the agricultural industry and their family members manage their behavioral health needs." [2018 c 95 s 1.]