

Chapter 74.25A RCW
EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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RCW 74.25A.005 Legislative findings. The legislature finds that the restructuring in the Washington economy has created rising public assistance caseloads and declining real wages for Washington workers. There is a profound need to develop partnership programs between the private and public sectors to create new jobs with adequate salaries and promotional opportunities for chronically unemployed and underemployed citizens of the state. Most public assistance recipients want to become financially independent through paid employment. A voluntary program which utilizes public wage subsidies and employer matching salaries has provided a beneficial financial incentive allowing public assistance recipients transition to permanent full-time employment. [1994 c 299 s 19; 1986 c 172 s 1. Formerly RCW 50.63.010.]

Report—1994 c 299: "The department of social and health services shall report to the appropriate committees of the house of representatives and senate on the implementation of this employment partnership program for recipients of aid to families with dependent children by October 1, 1995." [1994 c 299 s 27.]

RCW 74.25A.010 Employment partnership program—Created—Goals. The employment partnership program is created to develop a series of geographically distributed model projects to provide permanent full-time employment for low-income and unemployed persons. The program shall be administered by the department of social and health services. The department shall contract for the program through local public or private nonprofit organizations. The goals of the program are as follows:

(1) To reduce inefficiencies in administration and provide model coordination of agencies with responsibilities for employment and human service delivery to unemployed persons;

(2) To create voluntary financial incentives to simultaneously reduce unemployment and welfare caseloads;

(3) To provide other state and federal support services to the client population to enable economic independence;

(4) To improve partnerships between the public and private sectors designed to move recipients of public assistance into productive employment; and

(5) To provide employers with information on federal targeted jobs tax credit and other state and federal tax incentives for participation in the program. [1994 c 299 s 20; 1986 c 172 s 2. Formerly RCW 50.63.020.]

RCW 74.25A.020 Pilot projects—Grants to be used as wage subsidies—Criteria. The secretary of the department of social and health services shall establish pilot projects that enable grants to be used as a wage subsidy. The department of social and health services shall comply with applicable federal statutes and regulations, and shall seek any waivers from the federal government necessary to operate the employment partnership program. The projects shall be available on an individual case-by-case basis or subject to the limitations outlined in RCW 74.25A.040 for the start-up or reopening of a plant under worker ownership. The projects shall be subject to the following criteria:

(1) It shall be a voluntary program and no person may have any sanction applied for failure to participate.

(2) Employment positions established by this chapter shall not be created as the result of, nor result in, any of the following:

(a) Displacement of current employees, including overtime currently worked by these employees;

(b) The filling of positions that would otherwise be promotional opportunities for current employees;

(c) The filling of a position, before compliance with applicable personnel procedures or provisions of collective bargaining agreements;

(d) The filling of a position created by termination, layoff, or reduction in workforce;

(e) The filling of a work assignment customarily performed by a worker in a job classification within a recognized collective bargaining unit in that specific worksite, or the filling of a work assignment in any bargaining unit in which funded positions are vacant or in which regular employees are on layoff;

(f) A strike, lockout, or other bona fide labor dispute, or violation of any existing collective bargaining agreement between employees and employers;

(g) Decertification of any collective bargaining unit.

(3) Wages shall be paid at the usual and customary rate of comparable jobs and may include a training wage if permitted by applicable federal statutes and regulations;

(4) A recoupment process shall recover state supplemented wages from an employer when a job does not last six months following the subsidization period for reasons other than the employee voluntarily quitting or being fired for good cause as determined by the local employment partnership council under rules prescribed by the secretary;

(5) Job placements shall have promotional opportunities or reasonable opportunities for wage increases;

(6) Other necessary support services such as training, day care, medical insurance, and transportation shall be provided to the extent possible;

(7) Employers shall provide monetary matching funds of at least fifty percent of total wages;

(8) Wages paid to participants shall be a minimum of five dollars an hour; and

(9) The projects shall target the populations in the priority and for the purposes set forth in *RCW 74.25.020, to the extent that necessary support services are available. [1994 c 299 s 21; 1986 c 172 s 3. Formerly RCW 50.63.030.]

***Reviser's note:** The 1994 c 299 amendments to RCW 74.25.020 were vetoed by the governor. RCW 74.25.020 was subsequently repealed by 1997 c 58 s 322.

RCW 74.25A.030 Employer eligibility—Conditions. An employer, before becoming eligible to fill a position under the employment partnership program, shall certify to the local employment partnership council that the employment, offer of employment, or work activity complies with the following conditions:

(1) The conditions of work are reasonable and not in violation of applicable federal, state, or local safety and health standards;

(2) The assignments are not in any way related to political, electoral, or partisan activities;

(3) The employer shall provide industrial insurance coverage as required by Title 51 RCW;

(4) The employer shall provide unemployment compensation coverage as required by Title 50 RCW;

(5) The employment partnership program participants hired following the completion of the program shall be provided benefits equal to those provided to other employees including social security coverage, sick leave, the opportunity to join a collective bargaining unit, and medical benefits. [1994 c 299 s 22; 1986 c 172 s 4. Formerly RCW 50.63.040.]

RCW 74.25A.040 Diversion of grants to worker-owned businesses. Grants may be diverted for the start-up or retention of worker-owned businesses if:

(1) A feasibility study or business plan is completed on the proposed business; and

(2) The project is approved by the loan committee of the *Washington state development loan fund as created by RCW 43.168.110. [1986 c 172 s 5. Formerly RCW 50.63.050.]

***Reviser's note:** The "Washington state development loan fund" was renamed the "rural Washington loan fund" pursuant to 1999 c 164 s 504.

RCW 74.25A.045 Local employment partnership council. A local employment partnership council shall be established in each pilot project area to assist the department of social and health services in the administration of this chapter and to allow local flexibility in

dealing with the particular needs of each pilot project area. Each council shall be primarily responsible for recruiting and encouraging participation of employment providers in the project site. Each council shall be composed of nine members who shall be appointed by the county legislative authority of the county in which the pilot project operates. Councilmembers shall be residents of or employers in the pilot project area in which they are appointed and shall serve three-year terms. The council shall have two members who are current or former recipients of the aid to families with dependent children or temporary assistance for needy families programs or food stamp or benefits program, two members who represent labor, and five members who represent the local business community. In addition, one person representing the local community service office of the department of social and health services, one person representing a community action agency or other nonprofit service provider, and one person from a local city or county government shall serve as nonvoting members. [1998 c 79 s 17; 1997 c 59 s 31; 1994 c 299 s 23.]

RCW 74.25A.050 Program participants—Eligibility for assistance programs. Participants shall be considered recipients of temporary assistance for needy families and remain eligible for medicaid benefits even if the participant does not receive a residual grant. Work supplementation participants shall be eligible for (1) the thirty-dollar plus one-third of earned income exclusion from income, (2) the work related expense disregard, and (3) any applicable child care expense disregard deemed available to recipient of aid in computing his or her grant under this chapter, unless prohibited by federal law. [1997 c 59 s 32; 1994 c 299 s 24; 1986 c 172 s 6. Formerly RCW 50.63.060.]

RCW 74.25A.060 Program participants—Benefits and salary not to be diminished. An applicant or recipient of aid under this chapter who participates in the employment partnership program shall be guaranteed that the value of the benefits available to him or her before entry into the program shall not be diminished. In addition, a participant employed under this chapter shall be treated in the same manner as are regular employees, and the participant's salary shall be the amount that he or she would have received if employed in that position and not participating under this chapter. [1986 c 172 s 7. Formerly RCW 50.63.070.]

RCW 74.25A.070 Program participants—Classification under federal job training law. Applicants for and recipients of aid under this chapter are "individuals in special need" of training as described in section 2 of the federal job training partnership act, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1501 et seq., "individuals who require special assistance" as provided in section 123 of that act, and "most in need" of employment and training opportunities as described in section 141 of that act. [1986 c 172 s 8. Formerly RCW 50.63.080.]

RCW 74.25A.080 Department of social and health services to seek federal funds. The department of social and health services shall

seek any federal funds available for implementation of this chapter, including, but not limited to, funds available under Title IV of the federal social security act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 601 et seq.) for the job opportunities and basic skills program. [1994 c 299 s 25; 1986 c 172 s 9. Formerly RCW 50.63.090.]

RCW 74.25A.900 Intent—Finding—Severability—Conflict with federal requirements—1994 c 299. See notes following RCW 74.12.400.