
HOUSE BILL 1777

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Schmidt, Walen, Reed, Rule, Tharinger, Ybarra, Nance, Doglio, Pollet, Gregerson, Reeves, Stonier, Griffey, Eslick, Volz, Dent, Stuebe, Ley, Klicker, Mendoza, Schmick, Connors, Rude, Keaton, and Couture

1 AN ACT Relating to the requirements and process for approving and
2 registering apprenticeship programs; adding a new chapter to Title
3 28B RCW; creating a new section; and recodifying RCW 49.04.010,
4 49.04.030, 49.04.035, 49.04.040, 49.04.050, 49.04.060, 49.04.065,
5 49.04.070, 49.04.080, 49.04.090, 49.04.100, 49.04.110, 49.04.120,
6 49.04.130, 49.04.141, 49.04.150, 49.04.160, 49.04.170, 49.04.180,
7 49.04.190, 49.04.200, 49.04.210, 49.04.220, 49.04.230, 49.04.240,
8 49.04.250, 49.04.260, 49.04.270, 49.04.280, 49.04.290, 49.04.300, and
9 49.04.910.

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

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that, according
12 to the Washington Roundtable, over the next decade, 20 percent of
13 projected job openings (or 313,000 jobs) will require
14 apprenticeships, certificates, and other industry-aligned training
15 credentials. However, of those, only 86,000 jobs can be filled
16 through Washington's current education and training systems and in-
17 migration, leaving a shortage of 228,000 workers with these
18 credentials. In 2022, Senate Bill No. 5600 was signed into law with
19 the stated intent of increasing new apprenticeship opportunities in
20 our state, and specifically that apprenticeship programs seeking
21 state registration receive prompt consideration with minimum delay

1 for more apprenticeship opportunities to be available for workers and
2 employers. However, in 2024, 17 new programs applied for approval. Of
3 those, nine were approved, four withdrew their application, and four
4 are awaiting an adjudicative hearing. Competitor objections were
5 filed against 10 applications. An additional six applications were
6 left over from 2023. Of those, four were approved, one was denied,
7 and one is awaiting an adjudicative hearing on an objection. For
8 comparison purposes, in federal fiscal year 2021, 2,879 new
9 apprenticeship programs were approved for a total of 27,385 approved
10 programs across all states. The excessive delays in the state's
11 approval process have proved particularly burdensome for those
12 programs that have already received federal approval based on
13 substantially similar standards, including programs administered by
14 established tribal and nontribal businesses and organizations.

15 (2) It is therefore the legislature's intent to expand the
16 availability of apprenticeship programs by expediting consideration
17 of state approval of apprenticeship programs that have current
18 approval by the federal government, reforming the competitor
19 objection process, and updating the apprenticeship council reporting
20 requirements to include information on how Washington compares to
21 other states and the federal government in approving new
22 apprenticeship programs.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** In the annual report required by RCW
24 49.04.050 (as recodified by this act), the apprenticeship council
25 must include the following:

26 (1) A list of apprenticeship programs that have applied for state
27 approval, including the status of provisional or permanent approval
28 for each program, the reasons for any denials, and the status of
29 competitor objections; and

30 (2) An analysis of the state's approval rate of proposed
31 apprenticeship programs, including a comparison to the approval rate
32 of the federal office of apprenticeship and the approval rate of all
33 states with federally recognized state apprenticeship agencies during
34 the same time period.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The apprenticeship council shall
36 approve and register an apprenticeship program when the
37 apprenticeship committee and program standards conform to this
38 chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter. Initial

1 registration is provisional for 12 months. Following the initial
2 provisional year, the registration must be made permanent unless:

3 (a) The provisional registration status is extended to allow for
4 adjudication or mediation of an objection under subsection (2) of
5 this section;

6 (b) The department of labor and industries identified
7 deficiencies in a performance review, in which case provisional
8 approval may be extended through the training term; or

9 (c) The registration is rescinded based on a compliance review.

10 (2) The apprenticeship council must expedite consideration of
11 state approval of any apprenticeship program that has current
12 approval by the federal government, including those administered by
13 tribal or nontribal entities and organizations. For purposes of
14 expedited consideration, the council must limit its review of the
15 program, including consideration of competitor objections, to those
16 elements where state law and rules specifically impose greater or
17 unique requirements as compared to federal law. The council shall
18 adopt policies and practices for expediting approval of programs
19 under this subsection.

20 (3)(a) A competitor may file an objection within 30 days of the
21 apprenticeship council's provisional approval of a new apprenticeship
22 committee or standards. A competitor objection may not be filed or
23 considered until provisional approval has been granted by the
24 council. An objection must comply with standards adopted by the
25 council and the department of labor and industries. The provisional
26 status of a program may be extended in six-month intervals to
27 accommodate the objection process, which may include voluntary
28 mediation. Registration may not be made permanent until the objection
29 has been adjudicated or otherwise resolved or withdrawn.

30 (b) The apprenticeship council or an administrative law judge may
31 require a competitor to pay the applicant's reasonable attorneys'
32 fees and costs if it finds that the competitor's objection was not
33 substantially justified. For the purposes of this section, an
34 objection is "substantially justified" if it had a reasonable basis
35 in law or fact at the time that it was filed.

36 (c) The apprenticeship council may impose sanctions if it finds
37 that a competitor has filed two or more frivolous objections under
38 this section. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to: Payment
39 of the applicant's or applicants' reasonable attorneys' fees and
40 costs; a monetary penalty not to exceed \$10,000 payable to the

1 department of labor and industries; or other appropriate sanctions as
2 determined by the council. An objection may be considered frivolous
3 if: The objection is not substantially justified; the objection does
4 not comply with the council's requirements for objections including,
5 but not limited to, failing to identify the specific standards
6 proposed by the applicant in relation to a specific administrative
7 rule or standard; or the competitor knowingly objected to a standard
8 that is identical or substantively the same as an approved standard
9 of an existing apprenticeship committee.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** RCW 49.04.010, 49.04.030, 49.04.035,
11 49.04.040, 49.04.050, 49.04.060, 49.04.065, 49.04.070, 49.04.080,
12 49.04.090, 49.04.100, 49.04.110, 49.04.120, 49.04.130, 49.04.141,
13 49.04.150, 49.04.160, 49.04.170, 49.04.180, 49.04.190, 49.04.200,
14 49.04.210, 49.04.220, 49.04.230, 49.04.240, 49.04.250, 49.04.260,
15 49.04.270, 49.04.280, 49.04.290, 49.04.300, and 49.04.910 are each
16 recodified as a new chapter in Title 28B RCW. The code reviser is
17 directed, in the next technical corrections bill, to correct all
18 references to chapter 49.04 RCW to the corresponding reference in the
19 new chapter in Title 28B RCW created by this act.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 2 and 3 of this act are each
21 added to the new chapter created in section 4 of this act.

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