

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2367

Title: An act relating to public assistance recipients participating in higher education programs.

Brief Description: Including higher education programs in the work activity definition.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Carlson, Tokuda, Edmonds, Lovick, Stensen, Lantz, Veloria, Doumit, Dickerson, Kagi, Murray, Wolfe, Ogden, Schual-Berke, Kessler, Regala and Santos.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Meeting Date: January 17, 2000.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

Background: Under the WorkFirst program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are required to engage in job-related activities. There are certain work-related activities that fulfill this requirement, including subsidized paid employment, on-the-job training and some vocational education. In 1999, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services adopted Washington Administrative Code (WAC) section 388-310-0400 which permits an exemption from the work requirement if the recipient works sixteen or more hours in the federal or state work study program and attends a Washington state community or technical college at least half-time.–

Work-study is a need-based financial aid program that subsidizes the wages of students employed through the program. Under the state program, employers who hire work-study participants get partially reimbursed by the state for the students' wages. If it is an on-campus employer, the employer gets reimbursed eighty percent of the wages paid; and if it is an off-campus employer, the employer gets reimbursed 64 percent of the wages paid. The statutes establishing the state work-study program prohibit the displacement of existing employees in order to employ a work-study student and receive the subsidy.

Internships and practicums are supervised practical training. In vocational programs, nearly all the degree and certificate programs require some form of an internship or practicum, as do the majority of programs in the medical fields. However, not all programs at the institutions of higher education require an internship or practicum, thus it may be an elective. Also, the terms of the internship or practicum, including the hours, length and whether it is paid or unpaid, are up to the individual institutions of higher education.

Summary of Bill: The types of activities that fulfill the work requirement under TANF are expanded to include some internships and practicums. The current department practice regarding work-study is limited from federal and state to a state work-study program only, with a twenty-four month ceiling. To qualify for the work requirement exemption, the recipient can be attending a baccalaureate institution as well as a technical or community college.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2000.

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