

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1458

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning unemployment insurance benefits for apprenticeship program participants.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Shavers, Fosse, Santos, Berry, Simmons, Alvarado, Doglio, Ormsby, Gregerson and Pollet).

**House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards**  
**Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce**

### **Background:**

The unemployment insurance (UI) system, administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD), is designed to provide partial wage replacement for unemployed workers. Eligible unemployed workers receive benefits based on their earnings in their base year, which is typically the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters. A person who is seeking benefits, referred to as a "claimant," is eligible if he or she: (1) worked at least 680 hours in the base year; (2) voluntarily quit for good cause or was otherwise separated from employment through no fault of his or her own; and (3) is available to work and is actively searching for work. Funding for UI benefits are sourced from payroll taxes paid by employers. An employer's tax rate is experience-rated so that the rate is determined, in part, by the UI benefits paid to its employees.

Individuals who leave work to enter certain apprenticeship programs are considered to have left work for good cause and, therefore, are not disqualified from receiving UI benefits. The apprenticeship program must be approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council. Benefits are payable beginning the Sunday of the week prior to the week in which the claimant begins active participation in the apprenticeship program. These UI benefits are not charged to employers' experience rating accounts.

### **Summary:**

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The ESD must convene a work group for the purpose of identifying and addressing legal and procedural barriers faced by eligible claimants participating in apprenticeship programs when those claimants seek timely access to UI benefits. The work group must include representatives of apprenticeship programs and ESD staff, as well as other appropriate stakeholders. The ESD must submit a report with findings and recommendations, including a status update on applicable administrative efforts to reduce procedural barriers identified by the work group, to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2023.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	86	11
Senate	41	7

**Effective:** July 23, 2023