AN ACT Relating to the sustainability and expansion of state registered apprenticeship programs; amending RCW 49.04.050; adding new sections to chapter 49.04 RCW; creating new sections; providing an effective date; and providing expiration dates.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. Washington state has maintained a robust registered apprenticeship system that has created tens of thousands of high-skill, high-wage careers in traditional apprenticeship programs that are financially stable and jointly managed to ensure future generations of apprentices for high demand occupations. The earn while you learn apprenticeship model opens opportunities to diverse groups and communities that have not been able to access traditional higher education and traditional apprenticeship programs in the past. The legislature recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has also created a significant dislocation and disruption of our workforce that can be repaired in part by reconnecting workers with innovative apprenticeships that lead to new career pathways. The legislature intends to encourage and foster new apprenticeship opportunities through programs sponsored by public and private entities. It is the intent of the legislature that apprenticeship programs seeking state registration receive prompt consideration with
minimum delay. To achieve the goals of rebuilding a robust postpandemic workforce and undertaking active efforts to provide equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in apprenticeship programs will take sustained effort and support.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) For any existing active registered apprenticeship programs, or when a new program gains approval, the apprenticeship council must establish an economic or industry sector-based platform.

(2) The economic or industry sector-based platforms may be in the following areas: Building trades, manufacturing and engineering, health care and behavioral health, education and early learning, information and communications technology, biotechnology and life sciences, hospitality, and maritime. Any platform established under this section must have an equal number of employer and employee organization representatives. All platforms established under this section must:

(a) Promote collaboration within their economic or industry sector;

(b) Periodically review the required classroom and on-the-job training standards for apprenticeship programs within their economic or industry sector;

(c) Collaborate with any relevant centers of excellence in RCW 28B.50.902; and

(d) Review applications for new apprenticeship programs in the platform's economic or industry sector and make recommendations on the approval or rejection of the applications, or suggested modifications to the applicant apprenticeship programs, to the apprenticeship council.

(3) The department of labor and industries must assign an industry liaison to support each platform.

(4) The platform must report at least annually to the apprenticeship council on the following within their economic or industry sector:

(a) Participation in existing approved apprenticeship programs;

(b) Progress in developing new apprenticeship programs; and

(c) Any review of required classroom and on-the-job training standards.
(5) The department must consult with the United States department of labor about opportunities for Washington state employers to participate in apprenticeship programs, and to pursue federal grants on behalf of state registered apprentices and apprenticeships programs.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

The governor shall establish a committee of state agency human resources managers to undertake the development of appropriate apprenticeship programs for state agencies. The committee will involve the exclusive collective bargaining representatives and public sector agencies conducting work study programs that enable high school graduates to achieve entry-level employment and placement in registered apprenticeship programs as potential apprenticeship pathways are considered and developed. The current registered apprenticeship program for industrial insurance at the department of labor and industries shall be consulted as a model for other agencies.

Sec. 4. RCW 49.04.050 and 2011 c 308 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) To be eligible for registration, apprenticeship program standards must conform to the rules adopted under this chapter.

(2) The apprenticeship council must require new apprenticeship programs seeking approval to provide an assessment for future sustainability of the program.

(3) When evaluating applications for new apprenticeship programs, the apprenticeship council must consider whether graduating apprentices will move toward a living wage, the availability of a career ladder to graduating apprentices, or the existence of other nonwage benefits as factors in the approval process.

(4) The apprenticeship council must annually report to the appropriate committees of the legislature a list of apprenticeship programs that have applied for state approval, whether those applicant apprenticeship programs have been approved or not approved, and the reasons for any denials of approval by the apprenticeship council. The apprenticeship council must provide its first report to the legislature by December 15, 2022.
NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A grant program for technology and remote learning infrastructure modernization of state registered apprenticeships is established.

(2) The department of labor and industries must manage and oversee the grant program and may establish application procedures and criteria for the receipt of grants. The department of labor and industries must require grant applications to include a plan to sustain the technology and remote learning infrastructure over time.

(3) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of labor and industries may award one-time grants to state registered apprenticeship programs for modernizing technology and remote learning infrastructure.

(4) No funds from the accident fund established in RCW 51.44.010 or the medical aid fund established in RCW 51.44.020 may be used in funding the grant program established under this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A grant program for wrap-around support services to mitigate barriers to beginning or participating in state registered apprenticeship programs is established. Support services shall include provisions for child care, health care, transportation to job sites, and other support services necessary to mitigate barriers to beginning or participating in state registered apprenticeship programs.

(2) The department of labor and industries must manage and oversee the grant program and may establish application procedures and criteria for the receipt of grants.

(3) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of labor and industries may award grants to nonprofit organizations and state registered apprenticeship training committees that support individuals currently in, or seeking to enter, state registered apprenticeship programs or apprenticeship council recognized apprenticeship preparation programs by providing, or connecting apprentices to, wrap-around services, including child care, professional clothing, required tools, or transportation.
NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A grant program for updating equipment in state registered apprenticeship programs is established.

(2) The department of labor and industries must manage and oversee the grant program and may establish application procedures and criteria for the receipt of grants.

(3) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of labor and industries may award grants to state registered apprenticeship programs to upgrade equipment necessary for the program.

(4) No funds from the accident fund established in RCW 51.44.010 or the medical aid fund established in RCW 51.44.020 may be used in funding the grant program established under this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of labor and industries must provide vouchers to cover the cost of driver's education courses for minors enrolled in a state registered apprenticeship program.

(2) The department of labor and industries may establish application and award procedures for implementing this section.

(3) No funds from the accident fund established in RCW 51.44.010 or the medical aid fund established in RCW 51.44.020 may be used in funding the voucher program established under this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 9. A new section is added to chapter 49.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department of labor and industries must conduct an apprentice retention study of state registered apprentices. The study must collect data from apprentices that are six months into their apprenticeships on the barriers and challenges new apprentices encounter that may prevent them from continuing their apprenticeships.
(2) The department of labor and industries must aggregate the data collected in subsection (1) of this section by trade and post the data on a dashboard on its public website annually.

(3) The department of labor and industries must use the data collected under this section to work with apprenticeship coordinators to implement an early alert response system to connect apprentices with needed support and wrap-around services.

(4) By December 1, 2026, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department of labor and industries must submit a report to the legislature on its key findings on the barriers and challenges in retaining apprentices and its recommendations.

(5) This section expires December 31, 2027.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 10. (1) The department of labor and industries must develop a list of options for incentivizing apprenticeship utilization in the private sector, especially in nontraditional industries or smaller employers that have lower apprenticeship utilization rates. The department must also assess the lack of local apprenticeship programs in rural communities and the logistical burdens, including travel time, apprentices in rural communities encounter when participating in approved apprenticeship programs and develop policy options for alleviating these issues.

(2) By September 30, 2023, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department of labor and industries must submit a report to the legislature detailing the list of options for incentivizing apprenticeship utilization and the policy option recommendations addressing apprenticeship issues in rural communities developed in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) This section expires December 31, 2023.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 11. (1) By December 1, 2022, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with career connect Washington, must submit a report to the legislature detailing the requirements and options for, and any barriers to, high schools in this state having a career pathways day once per year for students in their junior year of high school, including any recommendations on necessary legislative actions.

(2) By December 1, 2022, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
collaboration with the apprenticeship section of the department of labor and industries, must submit a report to the legislature to identify opportunities and challenges for expansion, enhancement, and sustainability of high quality career and technical education. The report must identify existing state registered preapprenticeship programs and existing high school career and technical education programs that could be eligible to become state registered preapprenticeship programs.

(3) This section expires December 31, 2023.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 12. Section 2 of this act takes effect July 1, 2023.

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