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**ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2019**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Stearns, Fosse, Berry, Ryu, Ramos, Ramel, Cortes, Morgan, Simmons, Reed, Ormsby, Peterson, Callan, Timmons, Kloba, Street, Donaghy, Gregerson, Orwall, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, Lekanoff, Riccelli, Reeves, Santos, Hackney, Pollet, and Davis)

AN ACT Relating to establishing a Native American apprentice assistance program; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes that Native American people have faced historical traumas that have had a lasting impact in many facets of life, including educational attainment. Historically, education was used as a reformation tactic to strip away Native identity and culture to whitewash the indigenous population and destroy a nation's own first people by separating Native children from their families. The legislature acknowledges the historical use of education as a weapon and the opportunity to partner with federally recognized Indian tribes to establish truth and reconciliation regarding boarding school traumas in order to facilitate change and remove stigmas of how Native Americans view education.

Native Americans face additional challenges in attaining higher education, such as high rates of poverty and lack of postsecondary educational access near reservations. When the state invests in an educated Native workforce, Native communities become more economically resilient, stronger, healthier, and empowered. Robust Native communities help make a more resilient and vigorous Washington state and contribute to alleviating workforce demand by tapping into historically underutilized talent. Therefore, the legislature intends to establish the Native American apprentice assistance program with the recognition that indigenous populations need additional assistance to pursue postsecondary education because of historical actions that have left lasting impacts.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Eligible participant" means a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe as defined in RCW 43.376.010 who files a financial aid application approved by the office and enrolls in a state-registered apprenticeship program.

(2) "Gift aid" has the same definition as in RCW 28B.145.010.

(3) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance within the student achievement council.

(4) "State-registered apprenticeship program" means an approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW that has been approved to participate in state financial aid programs.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the Native American apprentice assistance program is established and shall be administered by the office. In administering the program, the office has the following duties:

(a) Publicize the program;

(b) Award assistance to eligible participants according to rules and guidelines adopted beginning with the year 2025; and

(c) Adopt any necessary rules and guidelines for the program in consultation with tribes and state-registered apprenticeship programs.

(2) The office shall determine apprenticeship assistance awarding priorities and award amounts for eligible participants in collaboration with the tribes and state-registered apprenticeship programs.

(a) For eligible participants attending a state-registered apprenticeship program, the office shall prioritize funding to cover any tuition costs for related supplemental instruction. Additional funding may be used to provide a grant to cover required supplies, tools, materials, work clothing, and living expenses.

(b) The office may also prioritize funding that secures an eligible participant's grant for the entire length of the participant's program.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The office of student financial assistance shall submit annual reports to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 on the Native American apprentice assistance program by December 1st of each year until 2025. The report must include:

(a) The total number of eligible participants and the number of eligible participants who received an assistance grant;

(b) The amount that the office determined the assistance award to be;

(c) How the office determined what the assistance award should be; and

(d) How many members of federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington received assistance versus members of federally recognized Indian tribes from other states.

(2) This section expires December 31, 2025.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 3 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2024, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.

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