

RCW 28C.18.160 Opportunity internship program—Purpose—Program incentives—Rules. (1) The opportunity internship program is created under this section and RCW 28C.18.162 through 28C.18.168. The purpose of the program is to provide incentives for opportunity internship consortia to use existing resources to build educational and employment pipelines to high-demand occupations in targeted industries for low-income high school students. Three types of incentives are provided through the program:

(a) Each opportunity internship graduate shall be eligible for up to one year of financial assistance for postsecondary education as provided in *RCW 28B.92.084;

(b) Each opportunity internship graduate who completes a postsecondary program of study shall receive a job interview with an employer participating in an opportunity internship consortium that has agreed to provide such interviews; and

(c) For each opportunity internship graduate who completes a postsecondary program of study, obtains employment in a high-demand occupation that pays a starting salary or wages of not less than thirty thousand dollars per year, and remains employed for at least six months, the participating opportunity internship consortium shall be eligible to receive an incentive payment as provided in RCW 28C.18.168.

(2) The opportunity internship program shall be administered by the board and the board may adopt rules to implement the program. [2009 c 238 § 2.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 28B.94.084 was repealed by 2019 c 406 § 79.

Findings—Intent—2009 c 238: "(1) The legislature finds that moving low-income high school students efficiently through a progression of career exploration, internships or preapprenticeships in high-demand occupations, and completion of postsecondary education benefits these students by increasing the relevance of their high school education, increasing their connection to the working world, accelerating their entry into a high-demand occupation, and increasing their earnings and opportunities.

(2) The legislature further finds that in a difficult economy, youth unemployment rates increase sharply. Providing paid internships and preapprenticeships to high school students creates not only an immediate short-term economic stimulus in local communities, but also creates the potential to sustain that economic recovery by making students better prepared for postsecondary education and employment in the types of occupations that will generate economic growth over the long term.

(3) The legislature further finds that moving students efficiently through secondary and postsecondary education reduces state expenditures by improving on-time graduation and postsecondary retention and increases state revenues by providing for graduates with higher lifelong earnings and taxpaying potential.

(4) Employers and local economies benefit from the development of a long-term relationship with potential employees and a more consistent pipeline of skilled workers into the occupations for which they are having the most trouble finding skilled workers.

(5) Therefore the legislature intends to provide incentives for local consortia of employers, labor organizations, educational institutions, and workforce and economic development councils to use existing funds to build educational and employment pipelines to high-

demand occupations for low-income high school students." [2009 c 238 §
1.]