

House Engrossed

agricultural workforce program; apprentices; appropriation.

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-sixth Legislature  
First Regular Session  
2023

# HOUSE BILL 2598

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 3-127, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL  
EXTENSION WORK.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 3-127, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to  
3 read:

4 3-127. Agricultural workforce development program; rules;  
5 apprentices; costs; appropriation; annual report;  
6 definitions

7 A. The university of Arizona cooperative extension office shall  
8 establish the agricultural workforce development program to provide  
9 incentives to food-producing agricultural organizations to hire  
10 apprentices by partially reimbursing apprenticeship costs.

11 B. The director of the university of Arizona cooperative extension  
12 office shall adopt rules to carry out this section. At a minimum, the  
13 rules shall do all of the following:

14 1. Establish qualifications for food-producing agricultural  
15 organizations to participate in the program, including need and the  
16 ability to effectively supervise apprentices and provide the apprentices  
17 with meaningful work experience that is focused on agricultural food  
18 production.

19 2. Provide a preference for food-producing agricultural  
20 organizations owned or operated by farmers and ranchers who are located in  
21 rural or tribal areas or who are historically underserved.

22 3. Require participating food-producing agricultural organizations  
23 to pay apprentices an hourly wage rate that is at least the minimum wage  
24 established by this state pursuant to section 23-363.

25 4. Establish criteria for participating food-producing agricultural  
26 organizations to select qualified apprentices, including required  
27 educational experience and the ability to perform meaningful work.

28 5. Establish the process and time frame for selecting qualified  
29 food-producing agricultural organizations and qualified apprentices.

30 6. Establish accounting requirements for tracking apprenticeship  
31 costs.

32 7. Establish the process for participating food-producing  
33 agricultural organizations to seek reimbursement.

34 8. Seek input from community stakeholders to establish and  
35 administer the program.

36 C. ~~Subject to legislative appropriation,~~ The cooperative extension  
37 office may reimburse a participating food-producing agricultural  
38 organization up to the amount of the actual cost to the food-producing  
39 agricultural organization to employ an apprentice. Based on the annual  
40 legislative appropriation for the program, the director shall determine  
41 the number of apprenticeships to approve, the amount of reimbursement per  
42 apprenticeship and whether a participating food-producing agricultural  
43 organization may be reimbursed for more than one apprenticeship in the  
44 same fiscal year.

- 1           D. THE SUM OF \$500,000 IS APPROPRIATED FROM THE STATE GENERAL FUND  
2 IN EACH FISCAL YEAR TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
3 OFFICE TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM AND IS EXEMPT FROM THE PROVISIONS OF  
4 SECTION 35-190 RELATING TO LAPSING OF APPROPRIATIONS.
- 5           ~~D.~~ E. The cooperative extension office may use up to ten percent  
6 of the monies appropriated for the program PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION D OF  
7 THIS SECTION for the administrative costs of this section.
- 8           ~~E.~~ F. On or before December 1 each year, the cooperative extension  
9 office shall submit a report regarding the effectiveness of the program in  
10 achieving the program's purpose to the governor, the president of the  
11 senate and the speaker of the house of representatives and provide a copy  
12 of this report to the secretary of state.
- 13           ~~F.~~ G. For the purposes of this section:
- 14           1. "Actual cost" means the wages paid to an apprentice, a  
15 reasonable allocation of fixed overhead expenses and all incidental costs  
16 directly related to the apprenticeship.
- 17           2. "Agricultural organization" means a business, nonprofit  
18 organization, community college or state university program related to  
19 agriculture.
- 20           3. "Historically underserved":
- 21           (a) Means a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially disadvantaged  
22 farmer or rancher or a veteran farmer or rancher as defined in 7 United  
23 States Code section 2279.
- 24           (b) Includes other limited-resource farmers or ranchers.