

**HOUSE BILL 1539**  
**PRINTER'S NO. 3689**

**SPONSOR: Rep. Saylor**

The legislation amends the Act of December 18, 2001 (P.L. 949, No. 114), known as the Workforce Development Act, to implement the Keystone Works Program. Chapter 14 is added to the Act to establish the program. The Department of Labor and Industry will administer the program and may promulgate regulations necessary for implementation.

A claimant collecting regular Unemployment Compensation benefits may voluntarily enroll in the program if:

- The claimant is an appropriate match for a job opening at a participating business;
- The unexpended balance of regular benefits equals or exceeds the product of the claimants weekly benefit rate and number of weeks remaining;
- Certifies in writing that he/she will not accept any form of compensation from the participating business, will provide information and documentation to the Department as requested and will cooperate with the Department to evaluate the program.

Businesses may provide training under the program if:

- There is a suitable job opening;
- The business is registered with CareerLink;
- The business will provide bona fide training to the claimant;
- Upon completion of training, the business will consider the claimant for the job opening;
- If hired, the claimant will perform services as an employee, not as an independent contractor or in a self-employment capacity for the business;
- The business will not provide compensation to the claimant during the training period;

- The business is not required to provide training during a work stoppage attributable to a labor dispute;
- The business will not provide training while concurrently participating in Work Share;
- The training and hiring of a claimant would not violate a collective bargaining agreement or displace or adversely affect existing employees;
- The business has no outstanding tax liabilities to the United States or the Commonwealth, nor is the business or any of its subcontractors debarred by the Commonwealth;
- The business certifies in writing that all requirements are satisfied.

The Department will match claimants with businesses that have openings and are willing to provide training for high priority occupations. When matched with a business, a claimant shall receive a maximum of 24 hours of training per week, up to a maximum of eight weeks. Following the training period, the business shall consider the claimant for employment. The business is not required to provide employment, and a claimant is not required to accept an offer of employment.

In addition to the administrative duties under the act, the Department shall purchase or arrange for Workers' Compensation coverage for the claimant during the training period. A claimant's participation does not establish an employment relationship with the Department for the purposes of Workers' Compensation.

Subject to the availability of funding, businesses which hire claimants following the training period are eligible to receive incentive payments in the amount of \$375 for each period of four consecutive work weeks the claimant remains employed for at least 35 hours per week. The maximum incentive payment is \$1,500 for 16 weeks.

Fifteen percent of funds appropriated for the program will be reserved for businesses with fewer than 100 employees.

The Department shall develop and implement a performance evaluation system for the program and annual reports are due to the General Assembly by July 1 of each year. The chapter will expire on June 30, 2017.

Effective immediately.

Todd B. Roup  
June 8, 2012

