ST A T E   O F   R H O D E   I S L A N D

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N   A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- HUMAN RESOURCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

Introduced By: Representatives Blazejewski, Tanzi, Tobon, Barros, and Abney

Date Introduced: January 29, 2015

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 42-102-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-102 entitled “Governor’s Workforce Board Rhode Island [Effective February 1, 2015]” is hereby amended to read as follows:

42-102-11. State Work Immersion Program. [Effective February 1, 2015.] -- (a) (1) The workforce board (“board”) shall develop a state, work-immersion program and a non-trade, apprenticeship program. For the purposes of this section, work-immersion shall mean a temporary, paid, work experience that provides a meaningful learning opportunity and increases the employability of the participant. The programs shall be designed in order to provide post-secondary school students, recent college graduates, and unemployed adults with a meaningful work experience, and to assist employers by training individuals for potential employment.

(2) Funding for the work immersion program will be allocated from the job development fund account and/or from funds appropriated in the annual appropriations act. Appropriated funds will match investments made by employers in providing meaningful work immersion positions and non-trade apprenticeships.

(b) For each participant in the work immersion program, the program shall reimburse eligible employers up to fifty percent (50%) of the cost of not more than four hundred (400) hours of work experience and during a period of ten (10) weeks. If an eligible employer hires a program participant at the completion of such a program, the state may provide reimbursement for a total
of seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost of the work-immersion position.

(e) The board shall create a non-trade apprenticeship program and annually award funding on a competitive basis to at least one new initiative proposed and operated by the governor's workforce board industry partnerships. This program shall meet the standards of apprenticeship programs defined pursuant to § 28-45-9. The board shall present the program to the state apprenticeship council, established pursuant to chapter 45 of title 28, for review and consideration.

An eligible participant in the programs established in subsections subsection (b) and (c) must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and must be a Rhode Island resident. Provided, however, any non-Rhode Island resident, who is enrolled in a college or university located in Rhode Island, is eligible to participate while enrolled at the college or university.

(d) In order to fully implement the provisions of this section, the workforce board is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations. The rules and regulations shall define eligible employers that can participate in the programs created by this section.

SECTION 2. Chapter 42-102 of the General Laws entitled "Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island" [Effective February 1, 2015] is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

42-102-12.1. Non-trade apprenticeship program. -- (a) Program establishment. The workforce board shall create a non-trade apprenticeship program and annually award funding on a competitive basis to at least one new initiative proposed and operated by the governor's workforce board industry partnerships. This program shall meet the standards of apprenticeship programs defined pursuant to § 28-45-9. The workforce board shall present the program to the state apprenticeship council, established pursuant to chapter 45 of title 28, for review and consideration.

(b) Program incentive. Contingent upon annual appropriation, for each apprentice enrolled in a non-trade apprenticeship program established pursuant to this section, the workforce board shall establish a wage reimbursement incentive, in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) Reimbursement would be allowed for the participating business of up to fifty percent (50%) of actual wages paid to the apprentice, or one thousand dollars ($1,000), whichever is less;

(2) The maximum that any one employer may receive within any twelve (12) month period under the terms of this section is five thousand dollars ($5,000); and

(3) An employer shall not be eligible for the wage reimbursement for an apprentice under the terms of this section until after the completion of the probationary period required pursuant to
§ 28-45-9(2)(viii).

(c) In order to fully implement the provisions of this section, the workforce board is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations. The rules and regulations shall define eligible employers that can participate in the program created by this section.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.
This act would provide for a wage reimbursement incentive for employers participating in the non-trade apprenticeship program and would permit the governor's workforce board to establish rules and regulations for the program.

This act would take effect upon passage.