

HB 1659 -- MISSOURI URBAN RENEWAL WORKFORCE ACT

SPONSOR: Proudie

The bill establishes the "Missouri Urban and Rural Renewal Workforce Act", and creates a "Missouri Urban and Rural Renewal Workforce", for providing employability skills training, and meaningful work experience leading to credentials and employment necessary to better prepare the citizens in urban and rural areas for meeting basic work requirements (Sections 620.608 and 620.609, RSMo).

The program will be a year-round community employment program administered under the Division of Workforce Development within the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. The program will consist of projects that offer paid work experience integrated with educational activities. The division shall give preference to persons whose income is at or below poverty level. The director may segregate programs to take advantage of federal funds.

The division can contract with any state agency, local unit of government, governor's advisory council or commission, private not-for-profit organization, or other private entity to be a project sponsor in order to find employment opportunities.

A project sponsor shall administer projects funded under the provisions specified in the bill. Participants shall be paid at least the minimum wage and shall be exempt from merit system requirements and benefits. No more than 10% of the funds distributed to a project sponsor used for paying such participants may be expended for administrative expenses and no funds shall be awarded for any program that replaces or supersedes employees engaged in any authorized work stoppage, or that replaces or supersedes currently employed workers, or that impairs existing contracts for services provided by other workers.

The division shall establish and promote the recruitment of "Show-Me Employers", which shall consist of Missouri-based corporations and businesses agreeing to interview participants completing any of the corps' programs (Section 620.617).

This bill creates within the State Treasury, the "Urban and Rural Renewal Workforce Fund", which shall be a designated fund to solely be used for the purposes set forth in Sections 620.608 to 620.619; the State Treasurer shall be the custodian of the fund.

This bill is the same as HCB 8 (2019).