

HB 2142 ● SB 1150

Agriculture Workforce Development Program



What does this bill do?

This bill appropriates \$1 million to the Arizona Department of Agriculture to run a 2-year pilot apprenticeship program for beginning farmers and ranchers in Arizona.

THE AVERAGE AGE
OF AN ARIZONA
FARMER IS

61

Why is this bill important?

- Our agriculture workforce is aging: 93% of farmers are 35 years old or older.
- Apprenticeships are a recognized way to build talent and a career pipeline. Arizona has over 60 registered workforce programs from healthcare to construction.
- This program will not only help beginning farmers and ranchers enter a critical industry in Arizona, it will also help sustain farms and ranches of all sizes across the state.
- In some communities, farmers are the only source of fresh produce in their community, a critical part of the community's health and well-being.

AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTES

\$23 BILLION

TO ARIZONA'S ECONOMY

Why is a state program needed?

There is a need for a formalized program at the state level so that agriculture apprenticeships can be better coordinated and evaluated under one umbrella.

A formalized program with adequate, steady funding will also result in a broader impact across the state.

"AGRICULTURE IS AN INDUSTRY THAT REQUIRES HANDS-ON, ON-THE-JOB TRAINING OVER SEVERAL MONTHS AND EVEN YEARS IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO ENTER AND THRIVE SUCCESSFULLY."

CINDY GENTRY
SUN PRODUCE COOPERATIVE



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Who would be eligible for this program?

Food producing agricultural businesses, non-profits, and community and state colleges would be eligible for this program and would receive reimbursement for providing internships to interested individuals.

Preference will be provided for food-producing agricultural organizations owned or operated by farmers and ranchers who are located in rural or tribal areas or who are historically underserved, including beginning, social disadvantaged, or veteran farmers or ranchers as defined by the US Department of Agriculture.



"Growing up in my culture, there wasn't much agriculture. My father before me never had any experience in agriculture. I got to be a part of an apprentice program. I also get to train the next generation who's behind me. Because all the elders that I know, that farm, are no longer here. So, for me, this is a way of keeping culture alive but also preparing us for what's coming in the future."

STERLING JOHNSON, FARM MANAGER
AJO CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Bill Sponsorship

Representative Pratt (R-Dist 8) is serving as the prime sponsor on the House bill, and Senator Shope (R-Dist 8) is serving as the prime sponsor on the Senate bill.

Then Senator Pratt sponsored the bill during the 2020 legislative session (SB1206), which was moving forward before COVID-19 promptly ended session.

Are there similar programs in other states?

Yes. States are increasingly considering farmer apprenticeships and recently Colorado and New Mexico passed formal programs.

It takes
1-3 YEARS
to learn how to farm

