



Contact:

Eric Terry, President
Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association
eric@vrlta.org | 804.288.3065

Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association Launches New Training Program for Hospitality Workers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Richmond, Va. – May 17, 2021 – The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA) has launched a new workforce training program for restaurant and lodging workers.

The program is supported by a grant from [GO Virginia Region 4](#) and other funds from regional partners including the City of Richmond, Chesterfield County, Henrico County, and Hanover County. The \$255,500 in funding is underwriting free training for workers in GO Virginia Region 4 (includes the cities of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond; and the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, Prince George, Surry, and Sussex) and will help support the enhancement and reach of VRLTA’s industry-specific job board, which connects hospitality employers with job seekers.

The upskilling training program offers free training courses, available through the National Restaurant Association and the American Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Institute, to currently employed, underemployed, and out of work restaurant and hotel employees. Participants must take a short COVID-related training and will be able to choose from a variety of online classes designed to help them grow in their current job or train for their next job. The list of available courses provides multiple options for employees from entry level jobs to management.

“The courses offered are recognized within the industry as high quality training options, and they give workers not only a chance to improve their skills in their current job or become more marketable when seeking work, but also set themselves up for career growth,” shared Jim Wilson, VRLTA’s Vice President of Education and Workforce Development. “Employers can also recommend their employees for training, which helps to raise the knowledge and quality of service across the organization.”

Funds are also being used to build utilization of VRLTA’s industry-specific job board, which went live in October 2020. Before the introduction of the job board, there was no single place that hospitality and tourism job seekers could go to see industry jobs across the Commonwealth. Grant funds are being used to generate awareness of the resource among job seekers and employers. Over the last few months, staffing has become the number one concern of hospitality and tourism businesses, and the VRLTA job board has become a go-to resource for many.

“As hospitality and tourism begin to rebound, it is critical that we remain focused on doing everything we can to support them. The upskilling program and the job board are allowing VRLTA to address key needs of these businesses: hiring, training, and ensuring that Virginia’s hospitality workforce is second to none,” stated Eric Terry, President of VRLTA. “The support of GO Virginia and the regional funding partners is critical, and we’re thankful that the need was recognized.”

- To learn more about the program, visit VRLTA’s website: <https://www.vrlta.org/free-hospitality-training.html>
- To register for training (as a business or an individual), visit this page: <https://training.vrlta.org/>

The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association is the unified voice of the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. For more information on the VRLTA, visit www.vrlta.org or call 800-552-2225.

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