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## **Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association Receives Workforce Grant Funding from GO Virginia Region 4 and Regional Partners**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Richmond, Va. – April 13, 2021** – The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association has received \$255,500 in grant funding for a new workforce project designed to train restaurant and hotel workers in Virginia. The project has two parts: an upskilling and training program for unemployed and underemployed restaurant and hotel employees, and the enhancement of VRLTA’s industry-specific job board, which connects hospitality employers with job seekers.

Funding partners include [GO Virginia Region 4](#) along with Henrico County, Chesterfield County, the City of Richmond, and Hanover County. The project will serve GO Virginia Region 4, which includes the cities 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.

“We are grateful for the support of GO Virginia, the regional funding partners, hospitality businesses, and other localities for the project,” stated Eric Terry, President of VRLTA. “From the first discussion, it was clear that there was not only a need, but significant support for, the project. Area businesses will benefit greatly from a better trained workforce and these efforts will help the area’s hospitality industry recover more quickly.”

The upskilling training program will offer free training courses, administered by the National Restaurant Association and the American Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Institute, to currently employed and out of work restaurant and hotel employees. Participants will be required to take 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 courses offer restaurant and hotel workers an opportunity to enhance their skills to become more valuable to their current employer and more marketable to future employers,” shared Jim Wilson, VRLTA’s Vice President of Education and Workforce Development. “The training offers basics on COVID, food handling, and guest services, plus additional options such as the Certified Restaurant Professional and other designations, courses in preventing sexual harassment and understanding unconscious bias, and training related to allergens and serving alcohol.”

The project will also focus on building utilization of VRLTA's industry-specific job board. Before the introduction of this job board in October 2020, there was no single place that hospitality and tourism job seekers could go to see Virginia jobs in the industry. Grant funds will be used to generate awareness of the resource among job seekers and employers. Work is currently being done to prepare for the launch of the program.

*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](http://www.vrlta.org) or call 800-552-2225.*

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