



**Request for Proposals for New FY19 – TRAIN Grant Projects**


**COVER PAGE**

Applicant Information			
<b>Lead Applicant (Campus):</b> <b>Berkshire Community College</b>		<b>Grant Focus (check):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term unemployed, underemployed and new entrant adult workers	
<b>Name of Project/Project Title:</b> <b>Supporting the Culinary and Hospitality Workforce in Berkshire County.</b>		<b>Type of Grant (check):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce Development	
<b>Program Partners (list all):</b> <b>Mezze Restaurant Group, Main Street Hospitality Group, Tourists, Inc.</b>			
<b>Grant Administrator:</b>  <b>Name: Denise Johns</b> <b>Title: Director of Corporate Training</b> <b>Telephone: 413-236-2125</b> <b>E-mail: djohns@berkshirecc.edu</b>		<b>Institution:</b>  <b>Berkshire Community College</b>  <b>Mailing Address:</b> <b>1350 West St.</b> <b>Pittsfield, MA 01201</b>	
Program Information			
<b>Total Number of Students Served Upon Implementation:</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>Target Population:</b>	<b>Long-term unemployed, underemployed, and new entrant adult workers in culinary and hospitality industry.</b>
<b>Brief Summary of Project Outcomes:</b> BCC proposes to offer a <i>Certificate in Hospitality Core Skills</i> for Front-of-the-House (FOH) staff, a <i>Certificate in Culinary Core Skills</i> for Back-of-the-House (BOH) staff, and a <i>Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills</i> to support the employment needs of small and medium-sized businesses throughout Berkshire County in the Accommodation and Food Service industries. It is anticipated that 45 participants (unduplicated) will enroll in the Certificate programs and up to 12 (unduplicated) will enroll in the industry related externships. A minimum of 40 individuals will complete one or more of the industry training components; and of those program completers at least 40 will assume more advanced and/or newly created job responsibilities in their current workplace. Positive employer training outcomes will include an increase in productivity; reduced employee turnover; and improved team building, and interpersonal skills.			
Budget			
<b>Total Funds Requested:</b> \$125,000	<b>Total Matching Funds:</b> \$22,166	<b>Total Project Cost:</b> \$146,884	
<b>Authorizing/Fiscal Agent:</b>  <b>Name: John Law</b> <b>Title: VP for Administration &amp; Finance, CFO</b> <b>Phone: 413-236-3001</b> <b>Email: jlaw@berkshirecc.edu</b>		<b>For DHE Office Use:</b>	

I certify that the information reported herein is accurate and complete.

Authorized Agent Signature: John L. Law Date: 9/19/18

TRAIN Grant  
State

Expense	Requested Funds	Matching Funds (BCC)	Total Requested & Matching Funds	Budget Narrative
Salaries		\$ 22,166	\$ 22,166	
Administrative		\$ 3,580	\$ 3,580	Administrative support from the Community Education, Engagement and Workforce Development Department at 5 hours per week x \$20.14 per hour for 26 weeks = \$2,613. Plus 37% fringe = \$3,580.
Support Staff		\$ 18,586	\$ 18,586	Program Coordination and Program Oversight: A) Director of Corporate Training, 12 hours per week x \$38 per hour for 26 weeks = 11,856. Plus 37% fringe = \$16,243; B) Dean of Community Education, Engagement and Workforce Development, 5 hours per month x \$57 per hour for 6 months = \$1,710. Plus 37% fringe = \$2,343.
Payroll Tax*	\$ 283			
Indirect**				
Travel	\$ 718		\$ 718	Travel by support staff for county wide travel related to program coordination.
Supplies and Materials	\$ 9,500		\$ 9,500	
Curriculum Books & Supplies	\$ 9,500		\$ 9,500	Support items necessary for training program : culinary tools and items (knife set, chef coats, chef shoes, business dress).
Subcontracts				
Consultants	\$ 16,350		\$ 16,350	
Instructional Program Faculty	\$ 16,350		\$ 16,350	Curriculum development and pilot for three certificates: Hospitality Core Skills, Culinary Core Skills and Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills (218 hours at \$75 per hour).
Tuition and Fees	\$ 59,955		\$ 59,955	Tuition and fees: Hospitality Core Skills, Culinary Core Skills and Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills. 15 students enrolled per program.
Equipment				
Food				
Transportation				
Other	\$ 38,195		\$ 38,195	Externship stipends for 12 students - 160 hours at \$12 per hour, plus 1.73% payroll tax (\$23,439), student tutoring and remediation (\$5,000), support services including transportation (\$4,756) and child care (\$5,000).
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 125,000</b>	<b>\$ 22,166</b>	<b>\$ 146,884</b>	
* Any state entity applying for these grants is expected to submit payroll tax costs in alignment with the rates set by the Massachusetts State Comptroller. The FY19 payroll tax rate is 1.73%.				
** This program is funded by state appropriation. Indirect costs are allowed up to 10%. If funds are transferred to awardees via a child account in MMARS, applicants should plan to charge overhead expenses to this funding source up to the dollar value that is equivalent to the cost calculated by applying the indirect rate.				
Authorizing Signature:			Date:	9/19/18

## Project Abstract

### Lead Applicant Information:

- Community College: Berkshire Community College (BCC)
- Contact Person: Denise Johns, Director of Corporate Training
- Telephone Number: 413-236-2115
- Email Address: djohns@berkshirecc.edu

**Names and roles of other committed partner organizations:** The partners for this project include BCC, the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Berkshire Works One-Stop Career Center, and area employers including Mezze Restaurant Group (comprised of Allium Restaurant & Bar; Mezze Bistro & Bar; Mezze Catering & Events); Main Street Hospitality Group (a consortium of six major hotels including the Red Lion Inn and nine area restaurants); and Tourists (comprised of the Tourist Hotel and Loom Restaurant, opening in early 2019).

**Summary description of the project:** BCC proposes to offer a *Certificate in Hospitality Core Skills* for Front-of-the-House (FOH) employees and a *Certificate in Culinary Core Skills* for Back-of-the-House (BOH) staff to support the employment needs of small and medium-sized businesses throughout Berkshire County in the Accommodation and Food Service industries. These training programs are designed for individuals interested in starting and/or advancing a career in hospitality and/or food service, and will provide essential skills for bartenders, food preparers, chefs, hotel front desk workers, hostesses and wait staff. Students completing all courses in one of the certificates will receive a *Certificate in Hospitality Core Skills* or a *Certificate in Culinary Core Skills* from BCC. *Externship:* Based on successful completion of the classroom portion of either track, students will be eligible to interview for a two month, 160 hour, paid, externship at a participating company, which upon completion, has the potential to turn into permanent employment. As a means of providing continuing education opportunities to underemployed individuals, BCC also proposes to offer a *Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills*. As part of this certificate, students will participate in a mentoring component allowing them to experience different facets of the hospitality sector. BCC anticipates serving 45 individuals through the proposed training program. Approximately 95% of participants are estimated to successfully complete the training program and receive a job interview. The training program will be held from January – June 2019. Denise Johns, BCC’s Director of Corporate Training, will administer the program. Ms. Johns is well-versed in corporate training needs and has run successful grant programs during her 16 years at the college. She will be overseen by BCC’s Dean of Community Engagement, Education and Workforce Development.

**Total TRAIN budget request:** \$125,000 (see attached budget narrative for more information).

## Project Narrative

BCC proposes to offer a *Certificate in Hospitality Core Skills* for Front-of-the-House (FOH) staff, a *Certificate in Culinary Core Skills* for Back-of-the-House (BOH) staff, and a *Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills* to support the employment needs of small and medium-sized businesses throughout Berkshire County in the Accommodation and Food Service industries. These workforce training programs are designed for individuals interested in starting and/or advancing a career in hospitality and/or food service, and will provide essential skills for bartenders, food preparers, chefs, hotel front desk workers, hostesses and wait staff. Students completing all courses in one of the certificates will receive a certificate in their designated area of study from BCC.

The Accommodation and Food Service industry represents one of the largest employer sectors in Berkshire County, an area well-known as a major tourist destination. County-wide, the Leisure/Hospitality sector comprises 14% of jobs in the region (*Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, 2017*). In Great Barrington, the employment share in Accommodation and Food Services (13.2%) exceeds the overall share in Berkshire County of 11.7%, (*Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, 2016*). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, several career opportunities in the accommodation and food service industries are expected to grow in Massachusetts and Berkshire County, including chefs and head cooks, food service managers, and lodging managers. A recent report by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation (2016) noted that regional employment growth in the food industry sector has grown by 7.8%, more than twice the overall job growth.

Industries within the region, however, continue to have difficulties finding skilled employees. This is particularly acute in the hospitality and tourism sector as these jobs traditionally have a high turnover rate. These issues are compounded in Berkshire County due to significant population declines over the past ten years. Youth and adults are leaving the area because of a perceived lack of available jobs. With the right training opportunities, BCC will be able to provide the region with a skilled workforce that will assist with economic growth and connect youth to job opportunities that provide sustainable wages.

This project ties directly to the Berkshire County Regional Skills Blueprint and the Berkshire Blueprint 2.0 (1Berkshire), both of which identified leisure, hospitality, and tourism as major economic drivers in the region. The Berkshire Blueprint 2.0 report identified BCC as one of the prime entities to move food and hospitality initiatives forward within the County. BCC anticipates the training program options

will help to provide a much needed and economically viable cadre of skilled workforce members for the hospitality and culinary sectors.

Collectively, the project partners are dedicated to enhancing the economic growth of Berkshire County and increasing career and educational opportunities for the workforce. The leisure and hospitality sector is a critical part of the economy of Berkshire County and the public interest in food, agriculture, and leisure activities is at an all-time high. In early 2018, the partners (including Mezza Restaurant Group, Main Street Hospitality Group, and Tourists) began exploring potential remedies to the current labor shortage within the culinary and hospitality industry and develop a solution to the problem. As a result, the proposed series of non-credit, stackable certificate programs were created as a viable means to improve the skills of incumbent and underemployed workers and to provide educational and career advancement opportunities for unemployed, dislocated, and older workers.

## **Recruiting**

The proposed program will provide educational training options and support services to incumbent workers, the unemployed, and underemployed adult workers. Targeted individuals may be under-prepared in basic skills (reading, writing and mathematics) and/or lacking a credential or associate's degree. The certificate programs will prepare workers for more advanced employment opportunities while upgrading their basic skills. BCC anticipates that 45 individuals will participate in the program.

The primary employer partners (Mezza Restaurant Group, Main Street Hospitality Group, and Tourists), as well as the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Berkshire Works One-Stop Career Center will help to identify individuals that will participate in the program. It is anticipated that the program will engage a range of workers from entry level to advanced (supervisors/managers). BCC will work with the Workforce Board and Career Center as well as the adult community learning centers in the County in order to identify and screen potential unemployed, dislocated and older workers to participate in the program.

## **Academic, Work Place Readiness and Industry Skills Training**

**Describe the training objectives to be achieved during the project period:** BCC anticipates serving 45 individuals through the proposed training program. Approximately 95% of participants are estimated to successfully complete the training program and receive a job interview.

**Instructional format:** The training program will be held both onsite at BCC as well as on location at employer partners. The programs are comprised of the following modules:

***Certificate in Hospitality Core Skills (Front of the House Staff)***

- **Introduction to Hospitality** – An introductory exploration of careers available in the hospitality industry in Berkshire County and beyond with a focus on sustainable agriculture and the farm-to-table movement. This workshop will cover careers available in lodging, food service, event planning, cultural institutions, travel and tourism and also presents basic concepts of food systems issues (12 hours).
- **Customer Engagement** – A thought provoking ‘experiential’ customer engagement program uniquely designed to give individuals the jump-start they need for a career in hospitality and other customer centered industries. This 21-hour non-credit certificate program will introduce students to the nuances of customer engagement. Discussions will explore what it takes to go beyond great customer service. The class will focus on the identification of techniques to guide day-to-day actions along with discussions on values, service customization, heroic acts, and the art and creation of great memories. This class will also highlight how appropriate dress, actions, attitude and problem solving skills can lead to a successful career. Cost includes instruction and classroom materials. Concepts of Danny Myer’s enlightened hospitality philosophy and other philosophies will be covered as well as etiquette basics (21 hours).
- **Steps of Service** – A three (3) hour workshop on the “Steps of Service” for hostesses and wait staff to ensure a high quality customer experience (3 hours).
- **Intro to Wine** – Students will learn the history of winemaking and discover the grapes beyond Chardonnay and Merlot. Students will come away with an understanding of the grape varieties used to make wine, the regions in which they are produced and how wine is made and stored and proper serving etiquette (6 hours).

**TOTAL TRAINING HOURS – 42**

***Certificate in Culinary Core Skills (Back of the House Staff)***

- **Introduction to Hospitality** – See previous description (12 hours).
- **ServSafe Certification** – Certification in food safety and sanitation that is required by Massachusetts Food Code. After taking this course, students will have the knowledge you need to ensure your workplace meets industry standards for cleanliness along with proper safety

requirements for food handling and preparation. Price includes class hours, exam and textbook (8 hours).

- **Knife Skills** – A three hour foundational program that teaches participants how to determine the knife by use, protecting and using knives, making basic knife cuts, and using simple garnishing techniques. Focus of the course is also on knife sanitation, safety and storage (3 hours).
- **Food Prep** – An overview of the fundamental concepts involved in basic cookery. Prerequisite: Knife Skills 101 (16 hours).

**TOTAL TRAINING HOURS – 39**

***Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills***

- **Introduction to Hospitality** – See previous description (12 hours).
- **Customer Engagement** – See previous description (21 hours).
- **Business Basics for Hospitality** – A mix of classroom and hands-on learning, the goal of this class is to provide training on the operations and economics of a hotel and lodging operation and the basic math involved. Case studies will be presented for small, medium and large establishments (30 hours).
- **Hospitality Leadership** – In this course, students learn about their leadership styles, explore a range of effective and ineffective leader behaviors, understand the importance of both formal and informal leadership in the hospitality industry, and work on developing leadership skills. Instructional modalities include: assessment, case analyses, and experiential exercises (30 hours).
- **HR for Hospitality** – An overview of the main HR issues in the hospitality/restaurant industry, including, recruitment, retention, effective training, motivation, loss prevention, legal liabilities, and connecting employees with needed resources (30 hours).

**TOTAL HOURS – 123**

Each participant enrolled in the certificate program will be assessed utilizing the College's ACCUPLACER test to determine basic skill levels in reading, writing, and mathematics. ACCUPLACER scores (including ESOL), will be analyzed by BCC's Testing Center staff to ensure individuals have the educational base needed to successfully complete the training. BCC's Disabilities Resource Center will coordinate diagnostic testing when needed to certify students who may possess a learning disability and will coordinate special advisement and adaptive services.

As determined by assessment results, students may be placed in Developmental Reading, Writing or Mathematics courses designed to help them achieve basic skills competency. The Project Coordinator will meet with each participant to determine other support services needed (such as transportation or childcare) and help to enroll the participant in an appropriate program. The Project Coordinator and employer partner will then meet to approve a training plan for each participant.

**Adult student learning needs addressed through experiential learning, tryout employment:** Based on successful completion of the classroom portion of either the *Certificate in Hospitality* or the *Certificate in Culinary Core Skills*, students will be eligible to interview for a two month, 160 hour, paid, externship at one of the participating employer partners. At the end of the externship, based on positive evaluation by company, the externship has the potential to turn into permanent employment. As part of the *Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills* program, students will participate in rotational and/or mentoring component that will enable students to experience different facets of the hospitality organization and work directly with professionals in the field.

**Start and end dates of training and/or number of cycles of training, as well as required minimum hours per week, length and schedule of training:** The Certificate program courses will commence in the spring of 2019 and will be held at BCC's main campus in Pittsfield. The externship component will begin in the late spring of 2019 and will take place at BCC and may take place at various restaurants and hotels in Berkshire County including those at Mezze Restaurant Group, Main Street Hospitality Group, Tourists and other area hotels. The days and times of the courses will be determined based on participating employer schedules.

**Credit, non-credit training or a combination of both:** The proposed training programs will all be non-credit courses that can be stackable to either a Culinary or Hospitality Associates Degree at BCC.

**Credentials earned upon completion of the training:** Students completing all courses in one of the certificates will receive a *Certificate in Hospitality Core Skills* or a *Certificate in Culinary Core Skills* or a *Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills* from BCC.

**Certification testing as a prerequisite for employment:** Students completing the Culinary Core Skills Certificate will receive a ServSafe Certification, however, this is not a prerequisite for employment.



**Role of partners, if any, in the delivery of training:** The proposed training program has been designed with the full involvement of employers to assure the training content is appropriate for their current workforce and offers prospective employees with the culinary and hospitality skills that will enable them to obtain job vacancies in the region. Employer partners for this project represent some of the largest and most prestigious hotels and restaurants in Berkshire County. Individuals from participating employer partners may be utilized to provide instruction in some of the workshops and/or courses in the certificate programs.

**Sustainable capabilities and capacities that will be developed and maintained in the region because of this project:** Once the three certificate training tracks are piloted and refined, it is expected that these programs will become part of BCC's regular non-credit professional development offerings. The programs will be entered into the MassHire Training Pro system for approval for ITA and Express Grant funding. If successful, it is anticipated that employers will support externships for future participants.

## **Wrap-around Support Services**

An important incentive for students to remain in a college program and graduate is the desire to enter a suitable and financially rewarding career. Therefore, to prepare participants to make informed and realistic academic and career choices, the Program Coordinator, along with BCC's Career Services Coordinator will provide personalized career services for each participant. Program participants will also be able to utilize a career library, and participate in BCC's *Career Development Speaker Series*, and *Career Fair* exploration and counseling opportunities with regional employers and helps to establish positive workplace connections.

BCC's Career Services Coordinator and College and Career Navigator will both be available to assist project participants requiring career counseling and advisement. The Career Services Advisor will support participants and encourage program retention while coaching students on effective interviewing and resume writing techniques. The Advisor will also be able to refer the participants to other employment and/or career resources in the region. Each participant in the Certificate program option will receive approximately 5 hours of career coaching.

In this rural area of western MA, there is limited available bus transportation and the cost of transportation, when available, can be prohibitive for many students who must travel great distances to

BCC's main campus. Utilizing a small portion of grant funding toward travel will enable BCC to provide additional support for students without adequate transportation. BCC will work to connect students to other support services available in the community including childcare and other social service needs.

## **Internships, apprenticeships, experiential learning**

Main Street Hospitality Group, Mezze Restaurant Group and Tourists have agreed to provide internships/experiential learning opportunities for qualified individuals participating in the training program (see attached letters of support). These learning opportunities will provide valuable, hands-on experiences for adult students where they will be able to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it directly to the workplace, honing their skills at the same time. Managers and supervisors from each of the employer partners will be assigned to mentor groups of students as they undertake their internships. Each internship will be approximately 160 hours and individuals will be paid for their work. After completing the internship, qualified participants may be offered a job interview and will also work with BCC's Career Services and the One-Stop Career Center to be placed in appropriate positions.

## **Program Measures and Outcomes**

It is anticipated that 45 participants (unduplicated) will enroll in the Certificate programs and up to 12 (unduplicated) will enroll in the industry related externships. A minimum of 40 individuals will complete one or more of the industry training components; and of those program completers at least 40 will assume more advanced and/or newly created job responsibilities in their current workplace. Positive employer training outcomes will include an increase in productivity; reduced employee turnover; and improved team building, and interpersonal skills. Employer partners will provide externship learning opportunities including Mezze Restaurant Group, Main Street Hospitality Group and Tourists. The cost per person ranges from \$860 for the *Certificate in Culinary Skills*; to \$914 for the *Certificate in Hospitality*; and \$2,223 for the *Certificate in Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills*.

### **Measurable Outcomes Include:**

#### **Recruitment & Enrollment:**

- The project will meet or exceed the estimated unduplicated enrollment numbers in the training program.

Persistence & Completion:

- At least 95% of students enrolled in the Certificate program will complete the coursework within the project timeframe.
- At least 5% of participants will enter into the Associates Degree program at BCC.

Partnership Benchmarks:

- The partnership and training will be sustained after the grant period.
- Successful implementation of all courses and project components.
- Outreach efforts will engage a broad range of constituents including women and minorities.
- Businesses will report higher productivity and improved employee retention.

## **Evaluation & Reporting**

A BCC Program Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Workforce Board, will assume responsibility for the on-going assessment of the program. The Committee will also be responsible for reviewing the programs' evaluation plan and for making appropriate overall recommendations for program modifications based upon routine assessment reports provided by the Project Coordinator. Both formative and summative evaluation modes will function as tasks for monitoring and assessing the full development of the project and for providing guidance to future efforts. Formative evaluation will measure the quality of the project as it progresses and will be utilized as a building tool to aid in the identification and modification of issues during the implementation. The formative evaluation criteria will measure the actual completion of project activities against the proposed schedule for their completion. Participant and employer evaluations of the training and courses will also be included as part of the formative evaluation.

BCC will complete an annual review of activities. Summative data in combination with a cumulative record of information gathered through the formative process will be collated, analyzed, and presented as part of a comprehensive final report to the MA Department of Higher Education. The program's evaluation methods will include: 1) questions designed to evaluate component of program activities and its overall accomplishments; 2) qualitative and quantitative data gathered throughout the grant period; 3) interpretation of this data; 4) learning outcomes; 5) improved retention in the workplace; and 6) increased options for career and educational mobility.

## Budget Information

Expense	Requested Funds	Matching Funds (BCC)	Total Requested & Matching Funds	Budget Narrative
<b>Salaries</b>		<b>\$22,166</b>	<b>\$22,166</b>	
Administrative		\$3,580	<b>\$3,580</b>	Administrative support from the Community Education, Engagement and Workforce Development Department at 5 hours per week x \$20.14 per hour for 26 weeks = \$2,613. Plus 37% fringe = \$3,580.
Support Staff		\$18,586	<b>\$18,586</b>	Program Coordination and Program Oversight: A) Director of Corporate Training, 12 hours per week x \$38 per hour for 26 weeks = 11,856. Plus 37% fringe = \$16,243; B) Dean of Community Education, Engagement and Workforce Development, 5 hours per month x \$57 per hour for 6 months = \$1,710. Plus 37% fringe = \$2,343.
<b>Payroll Tax*</b>	<b>\$283</b>			
<b>Travel</b>	<b>\$718</b>		<b>\$718</b>	Travel by support staff for county wide travel related to program coordination.
<b>Supplies and Materials</b>	<b>\$9,500</b>		<b>\$9,500</b>	
Books & Supplies	\$9,500		<b>\$9,500</b>	Support items necessary for training program: culinary tools and items (knife set, chef coats, chef shoes, business dress).
<b>Consultants</b>	<b>\$16,350</b>		<b>\$16,350</b>	
Instructional Program Faculty	\$16,350		<b>\$16,350</b>	Curriculum development and pilot for three certificates: Hospitality Core Skills, Culinary Core Skills and Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills (218 hours at \$75/ hr).
<b>Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>\$59,955</b>		<b>\$59,955</b>	Tuition and fees: Hospitality Core Skills, Culinary Core Skills and Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills. 15 students enrolled per program.
<b>Other</b>	<b>\$38,195</b>		<b>\$38,195</b>	Externship stipends for 12 students - 160 hours at \$12 per hour, plus 1.73% payroll tax (\$23,439), student tutoring and remediation (\$5,000), support services including transportation (\$4,756) and child care (\$5,000).
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>\$22,166</b>	<b>\$146,884</b>	



September 9, 2018

David Cedrone  
Associate Commissioner, Workforce Development  
MA Department of Higher Education  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Mr. Cedrone:

The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB) fully supports Berkshire Community College's application for a TRAIN (Training, Resources, and Internship Networks) grant through the MA Department of Higher Education. The grant objectives seek to support long-term unemployed, under-employed, and new entry adult workers by providing training opportunities and wrap-around support services resulting in meaningful employment. These resources would enable the College to develop new programming including certificate programs in *Culinary Core Skills*, *Hospitality Core Skills* and *Hospitality Supervision and Management Core Skills* that will help to support local workforce training needs as identified in the Berkshire Workforce Blueprint.

Berkshire Community College has a long history of developing local curriculum to support the education and training needs of the 32 communities in Berkshire County. BCC has worked with local companies, the BCREB, and many others over the years and is truly a champion for developing programs to meet the needs of the region. The Berkshires also have a long history of agriculture, hospitality and tourism, and have experienced a growth within the hospitality industry and a new influx of interest in farming as a profession and in the local food movement in general in recent years. Supporting a robust local agriculture and tourism system has the potential to support economic development, health and wellness and retain the landscape and rural character valued by residents and visitors alike.

Travel/tourism and hospitality sector investments have been identified as regional economic development priorities in the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and in the Berkshire Regional Skills Blueprint. Connecting people with education and training resources will be critical to help sustain this important sector, and BCC's efforts would help add an important training opportunity and assist in awareness and education throughout Berkshire schools. The BCREB fully supports this new series of non-credit certificate opportunities and job training efforts through BCC.

Berkshire County labor market statistics from 2017 indicates that the Leisure/Hospitality sector, which is a critical component of the Berkshire economy, accounts for 1 in 7 (14.4%) jobs in the region and is growing by 6.3% in the region. The food service and agriculture sectors reflects almost 5,000 direct workers which makes up 55% for the Hospitality sector and is growing by 4% in the Berkshires. There are many other indirect employment opportunities relating to science, transportation, and teaching. There are many regional businesses dependent on tourism and agriculture including biotechnology, insurance companies, banks, and manufacturing industries. According to economic figures, Hospitality/Tourism is \$394M in gross regional product and Food/Agriculture gross \$416M with a jobs multiplier of 1.7.

A vital tourism system enhances regional resilience, and the Berkshire food and agricultural system contributes to the regional economy. The BCREB looks forward to working with BCC to develop additional innovative career pathway opportunities for this sector. Thank you for your consideration and please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

*Heather P. Boulger*

Heather P. Boulger, Executive Director

# MEZZE

BISTRO + BAR

MEZZE RESTAURANT GROUP

September 18, 2018

David Cedrone  
Associate Commissioner, Workforce Development  
MA Department of Higher Education  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Commissioner Cedrone:

On behalf of Mezze Restaurant Group, we are honored to offer support for Berkshire Community College's application for the TRAIN grant program. We believe this program is greatly needed and extremely important to the economic growth and social development of our region.

We are a hospitality business and have been operating in the region for more than twenty years. We currently employ over 100 people between our three outlets, Mezze Bistro and Bar, Allium Restaurant, and Mezze Catering. Every year we face the challenge of recruiting, training and retaining qualified candidates to operate and expand our businesses. A training program such as BCC's would be beneficial to all hospitality operators in the region, which annually face the same labor shortage struggle and the undue hardship this places on running a successful business. With Tourism being of vital importance to the region, it is wise to develop programs to attract and train a suitable workforce and pool of candidates which we can all share.

We, as I suspect many other businesses in the Berkshires, are willing to support such programs by offering internship opportunities for participants, guest lecturing, and assisting instructors whenever possible by whatever means possible. We believe programs such as this will provide opportunities for many residents in the area to consider the hospitality industry as a career opportunity, not simply a part-time summer job, as well as attract new residents to our community.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thomas  
Mezze Restaurant Group  
CEO & Co-Founder

# MAIN STREET HOSPITALITY

September 10, 2018

David Cedrone  
Associate Commissioner, Workforce Development  
MA Department of Higher Education  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Commissioner Cedrone:

On behalf of Main Street Hospitality Group (MSHG), I am pleased to offer my support for Berkshire Community College's application for the TRAIN grant program.

MSHG is a Berkshire-based hotel management company currently operating 4 properties in Berkshire County; The Red Lion Inn, Hotel on North, Briarcliff Motel and The Porches Inn. We employ roughly 300 employees throughout all of our properties and provide food and lodging to visitors and locals alike. Our purpose is "To provide places that enable people to connect in meaningful ways" and we do so by working closely with our communities, local non-profits, and municipalities. As you may already know, hospitality/tourism is one of the top three economic drivers for the Berkshire economy and hiring, training, and retaining a local workforce is essential for the health of the County.

We have a long history of hiring youth on our properties that are introduced to the world of hospitality as their first work experiences. Most continue on through high school and college, honing their hospitality skills and experiencing many facets of the hotel/restaurant industry. We partner with local organizations, like the Railroad Street Youth Project that trains youth in the culinary arts and provides real experiences in local restaurant kitchens. We also collaborate with culinary schools, UMASS's Hospitality Management program, and other schools that seek internship experiences for their students. To have an educational and career building partner such as BCC would be of great benefit to both MSHG and local residents with the passion to work in the hospitality industry. We have found that many successful hospitality careers have been germinated through work experiences and internships with our properties by both Berkshire residents and students. A grant opportunity such as the TRAIN grant would afford our local students a direct pathway into our industry & providing a prepared workforce. BCC will be directly impacting our workforce needs by pairing students with their desire to learn and grow in our industry.

In closing, I hope the MA Department of Higher Education will look favorably upon BCC's request for funding. I am happy to discuss in more detail if needed at your convenience.

Warmly,



Eva Sheridan  
VP People and Human Resource Development  
Main Street Hospitality Group  
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