

**Massachusetts Department of Higher Education: Training Resources and Internship Networks (TRAIN) Program**  
**Bunker Hill Community College: Letter of Inquiry**

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Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) is the largest community college in Massachusetts and highly experienced in teaching learners from diverse backgrounds, including long-term unemployed who are seeking routes back into the job market. The College, internationally recognized for the development of individualized and alternative methods of instruction, is also a leader in the application of distance-learning technologies and computer-based methodologies that enhance and strengthen the learning environment. Below is a summary of a sampling of the many programs, support services, and other factors that help BHCC work with students who are preparing for entry into the job market.

**Certificates**

BHCC currently offers 50 certificate programs that have been developed with the Commonwealth's workforce needs in mind. These programs prepare students for skilled jobs that offer living wages in high-demand professional areas, including: Computer Forensics; Paralegal Studies; Medical Information Management; and PC Hardware Support. For a complete list of certificate options, see: <http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/certificate-programs/index.php>.

Of particular interest to unemployed students are BHCC's short-term certificate options that are one or two semesters in length. These provide the opportunity to retrain and become employable in a relatively short amount of time. In the long-term, many of these certificates are linked to additional training paths once the career changer is ready to advance in his or her new field. For example the College's Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Pharmacy Technician Certificate programs are both four months long and lead to immediate employment. If an EMT wishes to continue his or her education after a year or more of work experience, BHCC's Paramedic certificate is an attractive next step. All three of these options prepare students for careers that are highly in-demand in Massachusetts.

BHCC also offers "fast track" certificate options of 16 credits that provide the most in-demand skills for targeted areas of Computer Information Technology. These are: Computer Forensics, Information Technology Security, and Cisco Systems CCNA (Networking Specialist). These certificates have an added feature of being "stackable;" leading directly to more advanced certificates and degrees.

**Workforce Development**

BHCC's Division of Professional Studies and Workforce Development (WD) oversees the College's workforce-focused partnerships. This Division has a long history of leveraging the College's expertise and resources in order to provide non-traditional educational pathways that connect to personal growth and professional advancement. WD, through corporate, communications, technology and employability training, exam preparation and entrepreneurship programs, contributes to the region's economic development. The Division identifies and closes workforce gaps, empowers professional advancement, promotes academic success, and fosters wellness, growth, and lifelong learning.

The Division has created vibrant partnerships with area businesses in order to train students for high-demand positions. For example, our acclaimed Electric Power Utility Degree Program was created in collaboration with Eversource and Local 369 UWUA. This two-year Associate in Science degree option includes classes at BHCC and continuous hands-on training at Eversource labs and during required internships. Once students complete the program, depending on grades, skills and attitude, employment opportunities exist with Eversource or an Eversource contractor. Current starting wages are approximately \$30 per hour.

Workforce Development also works with unemployed BHCC students to process their Section 30 approval applications. These allow for full-time students in approved training programs to extend their unemployment benefits, helping them finish their studies and shorten the time to reemployment.

### **Community Education ([www.bhcc.edu/ce](http://www.bhcc.edu/ce))**

BHCC's Division of Professional Education and Workforce Development includes a Community Education Program. Its many course options include basic computer classes, ideal for people who need to refresh their skills before entering the workforce. Some of these classes are: Introduction to Personal Computers; Microsoft Word or Excel 2013; Introduction to Windows 8 and Office 2013; and Introduction to Cloud Computing. Through Community Education, job-seekers can also polish in-demand skills, such as: Social Media Marketing; Mobile App Development; YouTube and Google + for Business; Pinterest, and Instagram. Career-focused occupational skill courses are also available: Accounting Fundamentals; Administrative Assistant Fundamentals; Certificate in Nonprofit Management; and Medical Terminology. All of these options will help job-seekers bring their resumes up-to date, helping them to compete in Massachusetts' job market.

### **Partnership with One Stop Centers**

BHCC has a long history of partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development One Stop Centers. For the past four years, a U.S. Department of Labor grant has supported the salary of a Career Navigator in the BHCC Office of Admissions. This staffer is responsible for holding information sessions and conducting on-the-spot admissions at three One Stop Centers in Boston to inform the unemployed about career retraining options. This work will continue through another four-year round of USDOL funding.

### **Prior Learning Assessment Program ([www.bhcc.mass.edu/priorlearningassessment](http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/priorlearningassessment))**

BHCC's Prior Learning Assessment program (PLA) provides a process for evaluation and, when appropriate, the awarding of academic credits for learning acquired outside of the traditional college environment, including workplace experience. In order to receive PLA credits, students must provide evidence that their prior learning is equivalent to college-level learning and it must correspond to courses offered at BHCC. Long-term unemployed students may be able to advance their time to obtaining a certificate or degree through this process.

### **Support Services: LifeMap (<http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/lifemap>)**

BHCC's LifeMap center helps to promote student success in developing educational, career and life goals through a combination of in-person counseling and web-based career tools. LifeMap is available to all BHCC students and offers career, educational, and financial advising and

planning, the creation of an e-portfolio (a digital repository of students' work), links to support services on- and off-campus, and social networking options.

LifeMap provides an extensive range of workshops on study and job-searching skills that are beneficial to people reentering the workforce. These include sessions on: time management; choosing a major; interview preparation and resume writing; and stress management.

### **Learn & Earn**

Through "Learn and Earn," the College places 45-60 students each semester in career-focused internships where they work between 16 and 40 hours per week. Students are paid \$15 per hour, earn three academic credits in their major, and receive transportation stipends from their internship employer. To date, 347 students have participated in Learn and Earn since the program's launch in 2012, and a significant amount of them have received permanent job offers and/or offers to extend their internships. For more information, please see: [http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/media/03-documents/LearnAndEarn\\_FactSheet\\_v6.pdf](http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/media/03-documents/LearnAndEarn_FactSheet_v6.pdf).

### **Tutoring and Academic Support Center (<http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/tasc/>)**

BHCC's "TASC" Center supports and enhances student learning by providing a wide range of traditional and nontraditional services in a professional, friendly, and student-centered atmosphere at no additional cost to the students.

### **Online Classes (<http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/bhconline/welcometobhconline/>)**

BHCC has been a leader in developing innovative methods of instructional delivery by offering the convenience and flexibility and variety of distance education courses. The BHCCOnline curriculum includes web courses (entirely Internet-based), hybrid courses (includes Internet and traditional classroom instruction). Currently there are eight certificate and eight degree options online.

### **Basic English, TOEFL, HiSet**

Some of the long-term unemployed may lack the basic English skills and academic skills needed to enter the Massachusetts job market. BHCC offers many levels of English courses, including: "Basic Speak/Listen and Read/Write (Levels 0-III)," "Social English as a Second Language;" and high-school level options. In addition, BHCC has courses in TOEFL Preparation, and HiSet (formerly GED) Preparation. BHCC also offers a State-funded adult basic education program that offers both ESL and HiSet classes free of charge to the Chelsea community.

### **Single Stop (<http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/singlestop/>)**

BHCC students often face numerous financial barriers connected with returning to school and retraining to enter the workforce. The College's Single Stop center is part of a national initiative, Single Stop USA, which connects students to federal and state financial resources and local community services. The aim is to help students surmount economic barriers, continue with their education, and move towards economic mobility with the ultimate goal toward ending cycles of poverty. Services provided include: screening for benefits such as food stamps, housing, and child care assistance; financial counselling; a monthly mobile food pantry, health insurance assistance; and free tax preparation. In addition, a Matched Savings Programs makes it possible for students to receive a \$2-to-\$1 match up to \$1,500 for educational expenses.

### **Affordability, Location, Flexible Hours**

These three factors are of high importance for people who are considering options for retraining; BHCC meets job-seekers' expectations in all of these areas.

Affordability: BHCC offers some of the most affordable certificate and degree program options in Massachusetts, ideal for people who have been out of work and are concerned about the costs associated with returning to school. In-state residents pay \$149 per credit, which includes the lowest course fees of any community college in Massachusetts. Several tuition waivers are available to veterans, National Guard members, and others.

Location: Most of BHCC students reside in the City of Boston and 84 percent live within 10 miles of the College campuses. BHCC's highly accessible main campus in Charlestown is located steps from the Community College MBTA subway stop and is near three bus routes as well as the North Station commuter rail. The College also has ample student parking at this site. BHCC's Chelsea campus and satellite locations in Malden, East Boston, and in the South End are also close to public transportation.

Flexibility: The College offers courses to fit a wide variety of schedules including day, afternoon, evening, late evening, weekend, and web-based and distance-learning courses and programs. These options ensure that most learners can find a class that fits into his or her other time commitments.

### **Conclusion**

With its extensive, affordable certificate options, accessible locations, and strong supportive services network for students, BHCC is able to meet the job retraining needs of the long-term unemployed. We look forward to the opportunity of partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in order to increase educational opportunities for this population so that more Massachusetts residents can rejoin the workforce.