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Hospitality Training Programs: A review for potential in Minnesota

12/14/2012
Written by Kristen Cici
Sponsored by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota
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Introduction

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition of organizations advocating for public policies that promote equity in urban and suburban development. Our mission is to promote racial, economic and environmental justice in the way economic growth and land development occurs in the Twin Cities region. The Alliance is a member of the HIRE Minnesota coalition, a group of organizations and activists that are working together to end racial disparities in employment in Minnesota.

HIRE Minnesota is considering the potential for a hospitality training program in Minnesota primarily out of consideration of the upcoming Vikings Stadium project in Minneapolis. The Vikings stadium project in Minneapolis is projected to bring 8,000 construction jobs to the city during construction. The project has also been touted as an economic development engine for the city, for its potential ability to bring new development and associated hospitality jobs. HIRE Minnesota believes that hospitality jobs in Minneapolis, especially the well paying high-end hospitality jobs, are disproportionately filled by white workers.

To further explore the potential for a hospitality training program in Minnesota, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs provided funding to research hospitality training programs throughout the country to gather information to inform program need, development, and design.

Purpose

The hospitality industry currently faces a number of challenges fulfilling its growing labor needs. Facing a limited pipeline of employees, high turnover, and an increasing workforce of those with English as a second language, the need is clear for hospitality training. While hospitality training programs exist around the country, Minnesota has yet to address this growing need. According to the United States Department of Labor, there was 18% employment growth between 2002 and 2012 and the National Restaurant Association is projecting an additional growth of 7.5% in the restaurant industry in the next decade (2012 - 2022) – almost 20,000 new jobs. A hospitality training program will be a timely tool to serve unemployed and underemployed people of color in the Twin Cities region.
Hospitality Training Program Overview

Seven programs, located throughout the United States, were interviewed about their hospitality training program. They were selected because of their similarity to the potential hospitality training program that may be developed in Minnesota. Programs were selected due to similarities in program length, focus, and structure. Four programs were started out of nonprofit organizations, one was started out of the state’s hospitality association, one was started out of a local community college, and one was started out of a religious organization. Almost all of the programs offered the training at no cost to participants and all of the programs had developed partnerships in the community to such participants with their employment efforts. Below is the detailed breakdown of each program, and highlights information about the program and their participants, as well as details about their partnerships, funding, and outcomes.

Goodwill Industries – Big Bend, Inc.

About: Goodwill Industries partnered with the American Hotel Lodging Education Institute to develop a 100 hour instructor-led hospitality training program, which was launched in March of 2012. The free training program lasts four weeks and utilizes the Skills, Tasks, and Results Training (START) program. The program takes place Monday through Thursday from 9am – 1pm. According to Goodwill, the program includes:

“The curriculum includes: text, demonstrations, lecture, presentations, guest speakers, class activities, and research. The class is treated as a mock work site and students are assessed accordingly by their instructor. The class includes in-depth coverage of topics that include: excellence in customer service, exceptional telephone skills, salesmanship, rooms division and duties, reservationist and duties, front desk representative duties, PBX Operator duties, and more. When available, the training will include onsite visits to local hotels and restaurants. Upon completion of the training and follow-up activities, both participants and employers may also qualify for certification from the American Hotel and Lodging Education Institute.”

Additionally, Annette Jones (Hospitality Trainer with Goodwill) shared that she “infused my many years of experience in hospitality, sales, retail, food service, and management to expand the material and customize it for our region.” The primary focus of the program is on guest service and soft skills. Much time is spent covering the appropriate way to interact with guests and striving for excellence in guest service. Spawned from this program are two additional
options for participants, a 16-day course focused on hospitality specifically as it related to lodging and a 5-day course focused on hospitality in the food industry.

**Participants:** The hospitality training program draws a large variety of participants. Program staff shared about some of the participants and said, “I have had some who were homeless, some with little education, some who are displaced professionals, some with college degrees, housewives re-entering the workforce, retirees who can’t live comfortably on their fixed income, ex-offenders, people with disabilities, women who have escaped domestic violence, just about every sort of person you can imagine has been in my class.”

**Funding:** The program is funded internally via Goodwill’s retail stores. They do not receive outside funding for the program.

**Partnerships:** The Hospitality Program with Goodwill Industries has developed several important partnerships to further the program. Jones shared that her experience of being a hospitality manager for several years prior to working for Goodwill has been invaluable in developing partnerships with hospitality employers. She has developed partnerships with several hotels, restaurants, and condominiums. For her partnerships she has a written agreement that outlines the benefits for the employer and the worker. It also lays out expectations for interviews, hiring, and follow up long-term (Jones follows up after 3 months of employment and also offers to intervene if there are problems).

**Outcomes:** Program staff shared that although the program is relatively new, they have experienced success thus far. Jones shared that since she started in June 2012 she has taught two hospitality and two restaurant guest service classes. From those classes, she has had 16

“I feel the best decision my company made in developing this program was to hire an experienced hospitality manager, rather than someone with a social work or teaching background. I am NOT blowing my own horn or saying I’m fabulous. I definitely have room for improvement like everyone else. I am speaking objectively. When I say my experience has played a big role in developing partnerships with local hospitality businesses and has added several layers to what the curriculum had to offer. A hospitality professional can teach far more from experience than what is in a text book. And, students seem to remember stories and examples better than they recall what they read. You should consider trying to hire a person with hospitality management experience.”

- Annette Jones, Hospitality Trainer with Goodwill Industries Big Bend
completions with seven being currently employed. Of those that did not find work, there have been some unique situations that have hindered their ability to seek employment. Jones shared that of those she wasn’t able to place, “one went back to college and is working on campus, one lost her ID and Soc Sec Card so she is attempting to get them re-issued, one has not responded to any of my attempts to contact so her file is about to be closed, one has become incarcerated for an extended period, two are simply not seeking employment and took the class solely for self-fulfillment, two are seeking very specific schedules which makes it more difficult to place them, and the last one is dealing with a family crisis and has decided to wait until Spring Break hiring to commence a job search.” There were two classes taught prior to Jones working there, the first program had 4 participants, 2 obtained hospitality jobs within 1 month of graduating and three qualified for certificates of achievement. There was no information available on the second class taught prior to Jones starting.

_Hospitality Career PATH Program – Kingsborough Community College_

**About:** The Hospitality Career PATH Program is located within a New York City community college. The Hospitality Career PATH Program at Kingsborough Community College was discontinued a few years ago due to loss of funding. The five course hospitality certificate program had focused on several important skills. The program includes courses and information on labor relations, customer service, and entrepreneurship. They prided themselves on utilizing innovative learning methodologies including a virtual enterprise in which students own and operate their own fictitious business on a global scale. The virtual enterprise component includes working with students around the globe via conference calls. The program also utilizes learning communities to increase retention and improve academic success. Participants that complete the program earn NRAEF Customer Service Certification and NRAEF Servsafe Alcohol Certification. They also offer an A.A.S. in Tourism and Hospitality and credits earned in the certificate can be applied to the A.A.S. The program was offered at no cost to participants. One of the five courses is an internship in which the participant works at minimum of 100 hours, typically unpaid, in the hospitality industry.

**Participants:** Program staff could not share information about participant demographics for this program.

**Funding:** The program had two large grants from the Department of Labor that paid for the certificate program and when the grants ended the program was discontinued.
**Partnerships:** The program had several partners they worked with regularly to place interns. **Outcomes:** Dr. Anthony Borgese, program contact, shared that he did not have evaluation data available to share but did not feel the program was successful because of its innovative and hands-on components. For example, he shared if the program has a meeting planner component then the participants should plan an event for a local organization to get practical experience.

*Hospitality & Tourism Training – Goodwill Industries of Southern Piedmont*

**About:** When starting their hospitality & tourism training program, Goodwill Industries of Southern Piedmont began by asking hospitality partners in the community what the needs were. Dee Piner, Occupational Skills Training Manager, shared “Our business partners have asked that we focus on Front Desk, Banquet Set-Up and Banquet Serving; however, we cover basic computer skills, and the program includes a HEAVY emphasis on customer service throughout. Basic employability skills/soft skills are also embedded in the curriculum.” Piner shared a detailed copy of their learning objectives and curriculum which can be found in Appendix B. The seven week program is offered tuition-free to participants. The program does require a $10 fee of participants for a background check, background checks are mandatory.

**Participants:** Piner collects demographics on participants and shared her 2011 statistics for participants, which suggested that their participants vary widely in age with the youngest participant being 19 and the oldest being 66, with an average age of 43. Their participants are primarily female (71%) and African American (82%). The remaining participant ethnicity/race breakdown is as follows: 10% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, and 4% other. They also collect information about whether their participants are ex-offenders and are benefit recipients. Piner shared that 30% of their participants are ex-offenders and 26% are benefit recipients.

**Funding:** The hospitality & tourism training program “is approved for both VR and WIA Funding; however, only 5% received outside funding in 2011; 95% of clients were funded from Goodwill Retail Store profits.”

**Partnerships:** The Hospitality Program with Goodwill Industries of Southern Piedmont had a formal Business Advisory Council with members from hotels, but they are restructuring their business relationships to be more reflective of the sector as a whole and have suspended the Council for the time being. They do maintain their partnerships with employers through
“periodic attendance of the Charlotte Area Hotel Association meetings and through the active business volunteers we have participating in each class as Guest Speakers, those who agree to conduct Mock Interviews, assist with Resume refinement, and provide on-site class tours of their facilities.” They also work closely with employers to find them suitable candidates. Many of their partners routinely send them information about open positions and they provide a pre-screening service for their partners. Additionally, they partner with Dress for Success to provide free interview clothing to the participants to assist them with their employment search.

**Outcomes:** The program collects information on participant’s employment success and certificate achievement. Over the past seven years, the average placement rate was 86%. Piner noted that not all participants find employment in positions related to their training, and that approximately 65% find positions directly related to their training. Additional information from 2011 was shared,

“In 2011, 77% of our program graduates also earned the ServSafe Food Certification, 83% earned their ServSafe Alcohol Certification, and 96% earned a Crown Ambassador Certification which includes a full day of training on Tourist attractions, restaurants, events, etc. in Charlotte, including a bus tour of the city, and an online exam upon completion. Most major hotels in our area require their sales staff and key guest contact personnel to participate in this training. The placement rate in 2011 was 100%.”

Their Career Development Specialist follows up with all placed and unplaced graduates for one year at 30 days, 30 days, 90 days, 180 days, and 1 year post-graduation to provide additional employment assistance and track placement rates.

“Although the foundation of our program is based on a textbook developed by the American Hotel and Lodging Association Education Institute, we would recommend establishing a Business Advisory Council to review whatever curriculum you select and ask them to determine the topics they want covered and stressed. Also, much of our curriculum has been supplemented over the years with training curriculum provided directly by the hotels (i.e. training curriculum from the Marriott, Hampton Inn, and several catering companies). Our attendance and “tardiness” policies were developed by our business volunteers based on their expectation. Understanding their policies in terms of employment of ex-offenders; be candid with interested program candidates if assault charges or larceny are on their records employment within the Hospitality Industry is highly unlikely. We do not refuse entrance to ex-offenders, but make it clear that job placement will probably have to occur in another field.”

- Annette Jones, Hospitality Trainer with Goodwill Industries Big Bend
Hospitality Training Program – United Way & Glendale Youth Alliance

About: The Glendale Youth Alliance partnered with the United Way of Greater Los Angeles to provide youth ages 17 – 24 with hospitality training and employment. The program requires that participants are from a low income household, be located in their service area, and obtain a work permit if they are under 18. The 160 hour training program is offered at no cost to participants. The main focus of the program is customer service since the youth are “placed in retail and clerical position in direct contact with the public/consumer.” Participants participate in the program as they are concurrently employed in a hospitality placement. During that time, the employer trains and mentors the youth and their salary is paid for by the training program.

Participants: The hospitality training program is focused on low-income youth ages 17- 24. They currently have 55 youth enrolled in the program. They did not have demographic information to share about their participants.

Funding: The program’s funding comes from two sources; United Way grants they compete for and funding generated from the Workforce Investment Act. The United Way funding they receive pays for the initial 200 hours of employment for the youth.

Partnerships: The program has developed informal partnerships with local retailers and service providers “mostly created by intensive outreach in the community.” They promote to partners that they are offering prescreened and motivated youth, no payroll taxes, and the program covers workers compensation insurance and the first 160 hours of employment. Additionally, the United Way grants act as an incentive for employers to hire their youth participants since many do not have any previous work experience and they are not obligated to continue the employment beyond the 160 hours if the youth is not a good fit.

Outcomes: The most recent cycle of the program experienced a 60% placement rate. Of the 48 participants, 29 were hired on a permanent basis after the 160 hour trial period was completed. The remaining participants, although they did not find permanent employment, did receive valuable work experience to assist them in their employment search. The program did not have any evaluation reports available.

“Try and find private money to operate. The government funding comes with lots of restrictions, immense paperwork and extremely intensive (sometimes unrealistic) requirements. The time spent on paper pushing takes up to 80% of our time, time we can spend with mentoring the youth.”

- Eliza Dzhaneryan, Program Specialist, Glendale Youth
Philadelphia OIC

**About:** Philadelphia OIC began their hospitality training program, Opportunities Inn, in 1989 with the goal of providing the hospitality industry with a skill workforce. They created their own curriculum for the program, which is separated into three different focuses; housekeeping, front desk, and culinary. Supplementary to those employment focuses, they also incorporate life skills such as handling oneself in a business environment, manners, and dealing with high stress situations. The housekeeping program runs 9 weeks, and the front desk/culinary programs run 16 weeks. The program includes a 2 week full-time unpaid internship as a requirement for graduation. They run 3 cycles per year for the culinary (10 participants per cycle) and front desk (15-25 participants per cycle) programs. They run 5 cycles for the housekeeping (around 30 participants per cycle) program. The program is offered at no charge to participants.

**Participants:** Opportunities Inn requires participants to have a diploma or GED, interview, references, and no felony convictions/substance abuse issues. The hospitality training program draws a large variety of participants. Program staff shared that the demographics of their participants varies by class, but overall is about 80% African American, 10-15% Hispanic, and 5-10% White/Asian.

**Funding:** Opportunities Inn was created out of – and is fully funded by the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority. Philadelphia diverts a portion of the tourism/convention center task specifically for tourism/hospitality education, which is the sole funding stream for the program.

**Partnerships:** The program has developed extensive partnerships throughout the community, but all partnerships are informal and do not have written agreements. Program staff shared that there are 47 hotels in Philadelphia and they have partnerships with almost all of them. They send partners interns that are a good fit for the hotel. Additionally, they work with Dress for Success to provide professional clothing to program participants.

**Outcomes:** Opportunities Inn conducts follow up evaluations with participants at 30 days, 60 days, and 90 days post-program to determine employment status and provide additional support/assistance. The placement rate for Opportunities Inn varies by class, but averages around 70%. Program staff shared that they do conduct formal evaluation (focus groups, interviews, etc) but were not willing to share the information as it is proprietary.
Rhode Island Hospitality Association

About: The Rhode Island Hospitality Association’s (RIHA) Hospitality Program uses the American Hotel & Lodging Association’s START (Skills, Tasks, and Results Training) curriculum for their program. They supplement the curriculum with “soft, core skills just as teamwork, conflict resolution, communications, time management and leadership”. The program includes 180 hours of training focused on preparing participants for work in the food service, hotel, and supporting fields. The program does have a cost associated, which is on a sliding scale. The tuition is approximately $3,000 but scholarships are available. They do not have scholarships available for participants – though some participants do receive state assistance.

Participants: The hospitality training program draws a large variety of participants. Singleton shared that classes typically have 10-15 students with 80% female, and 20% male. She noted that “90% will be speakers of other languages with English being a second, third, or even fourth language” and shared that the average age is late 20s to early 30s but has had participants as young as 18 and as old as 60. All students have earned a high school diploma or GED prior to beginning the program.

Funding: RIHA’s program is funded through a variety of funding streams. Heather Singleton, Senior Vice President of Education, shared that “funding is a continuous challenge.” Their funding comes from federal funding trickled down to the state and local community based organizations as well as the Department of Education, local workforce investment boards, and WIA funds.

Partnerships: The training program is run out of RIHA which gives the program a leg up in securing partnerships. Singleton shared that the program works closely with employers that are members of the trade association to assist with participant placement.

Outcomes: Singleton did not have information about placement rates for classes and shared that it “varies each class.”

South Side Mission

About: South Side Mission’s hospitality training program infuses “real world and translatable skills with Biblical truth and a message of Salvation and Hope makes the career training at South Side Mission a little different.” The program is focused on training participants to build their character, integrity, and learning to submit to authority. The program does not use a
curriculum or program model, but uses scripture and a goal to build a “team” to guide it. The trainer shared that one of her goals was to find out what the participant’s passion is and help get them hired and enrolled in a local college/university. The trainer does interviews before allowing individuals into the program, and the program has very strict expectations. Participants must attend in business dress (professional earrings, tattoos concealed, etc) and cannot be late. If they are late more than once they are removed from the program. They are not allowed any behavioral warnings; it results in immediate termination from the program. She also does surprise visits at internship sites and does evaluation of participants with their supervisor present. She gives those that went above and beyond a certificate of excellence and noted that they tend to get better positions. The hospitality training program lasts 16 weeks, 8 of which are spent in class and the other 8 are spent in unpaid internships.

**Participants:** The hospitality training program draws a large variety of participants, though it is primarily focused on individuals that need a second chance in life such as those with criminal records.

**Funding:** The program is funded internally South Side Mission’s donations from individuals. They do not receive outside funding for the program.

**Partnerships:** The South Side Mission’s hospitality program has developed industry partnerships to provide participants with real life experience during the 8 weeks of their unpaid internships. These partnerships include a nursing home, local hotel, and hospital. The partnerships are structured with a formal partnership agreement which outlines the expectations. Expectations include; employer covers insurance, employer needs to notify program immediately if participant has any behavioral issues, participants must pass a drug test – and agree to random drug tests, and employer must agree to meet with trainer as needed to discuss participant evaluation.

**Outcomes:** South Side Mission’s program does not conduct formal evaluation of their program. The trainer shared that she typically accepts about 30 students per class and graduates 8-10. The drop off is primarily a result of people being dismissed from the program for being tardy or behavioral issues. The trainer does not collect any data on participants and could not share demographics. She did note that she has a 100% placement rate. All participants that graduate from her program have been placed in employment. The trainer felt their program has a successful model that holds character building as a foundational
component to employment. She shared that she would enjoy providing input and feedback to those interested in starting a hospitality training program.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The hospitality industry currently faces a number of challenges fulfilling its growing labor needs. Facing a limited pipeline of employees, high turnover, and an increasing workforce of those with English as a second language, the need is clear for hospitality training. Should an organization decide to move forward in developing a hospitality training program, there are several key aspects that should be considered:

- **Funding:** Several of the programs interviewed expressed a difficulty in getting funding for the program – or dealing with onerous requirements by the funder. The ideal approach for Minnesota would be a similar funding structure as Philadelphia OIC’s program – which is fully funded out of a tourism tax. That funding stream is long-term and ongoing and which will provide stability for any potential program.

- **Training:** A key component of hospitality training programs is on-the-job experience. It will be important that any future hospitality training program creates an internship – or on-the-job training requirement for participants. Additionally, the program should include a focus on soft skills, such as taking direction professional presentation, and manners.

- **Partnerships:** As evidenced by interviews with hospitality training programs, developing mutually beneficial partnerships are critical to the success of any hospitality training program. It is important to properly place participants to ensure retention of partners – as well as ensure success of placements.

A hospitality training program will be a timely tool to serve unemployed and underemployed people of color in the Twin Cities region and by using current program knowledge as a foundation, a successful program can be created in Minnesota.
Hospitality & Tourism Training

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  - customer service techniques
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Changing Lives Through the Power of Work!
### HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM 2012 TRAINING CURRICULUM AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM 2012 TRAINING CURRICULUM AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Self Esteem
1. Trainees explore the concept of self-esteem, analyze their personal strengths and weaknesses, learn positive coping mechanisms and consider the role self-esteem plays in their personal and professional development.

Positive Responses to Change
1. Participants learn to explore several reasons why people resist change, learn about the change dilemma, people naturally resist change, yet organizations need flexible people and learn a wide variety of behaviors they can use to respond positively to change.

Getting the Information you need
1. Participants learn why actively seeking information is essential to job success, explore the types of information they need, discover how to encourage others to share through body language and facial expressions, and learn to ask a mix of open and closed questions, then paraphrase what they hear to verify information.

Defusing Emotionally Charged Situations
1. Participants list their own “hot buttons”, learn the two keys to defusing emotionally charged situations, learn coping strategies to cool themselves down when their emotions are high and discover a variety of ways to cool down emotionally charged situations with others.

Workshop **Job Readiness Preparation**

OST - Hospitality and Tourism Workshop

Informational & Panel Training in Achievements, Transferable Skills, Formatting Training Situational Scenario Practice and Identifying Competencies Actual Informational Interview Required

Mock Interviewing Practice Interview Practice

Use of ONET-Career Planning Video of Various Jobs, Wage Research, etc.

Resume Workshop Classroom time to create resumes

Job Search Training on various methods of finding job leads
| Training | ServSafe Certification-Food | Meeting the National Restaurant Requirements for Food Service, Storage, etc. |
| Training | ServSafe Certification-Alcohol | Meeting the National Restaurant Requirements for serving alcohol |
| Training | Crown Ambassador Certification | Learning Tourism Information for customers |
| Workshop | Wine Appreciation | Wine Identification, serving, presentation, etc. |
| Workshop | Banquet Service | Service and Waitering in Banquets, Reading BEO, |
| Workshop | Banquet Set-up | Banquet table set-up, cleaning, measurement of chemicals, etc. |
| Workshop | Waiter/Waitress | Professional Waitering |