



Stockton to Connect Trained Job Seekers With Tourism Industry Employers Through State Grant

Dept. of Labor Grant to Create Retail Hospitality & Tourism Talent Network

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Galloway, NJ – The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey will become the lead agency in South Jersey for a Retail Hospitality and Tourism Talent Network, connecting job seekers with prospective employers in the region's primary industries.

The state Department of Labor and Workforce Development this week announced it was awarding a \$200,000 Talent Network grant to Stockton. Talent Networks reach out to businesses, workforce organizations, training providers and other educational institutions to increase the quality of job placements for workers and to provide businesses with the trained staff they need. Prospective trainers will bid on contracts to be awarded by the Talent Network.

"Stockton College has long been a leader in educating students not only from southern New Jersey, but throughout the state and elsewhere, providing them with the tools they need for continued success in many fields, including the hospitality and tourism industries," said Stockton President Herman Saatkamp.

"Stockton's distinctive resources will enable The Talent Network for Retail, Hospitality and Tourism to connect prospective employees with employers in this vital sector of the New Jersey economy," President Saatkamp said.

Stockton's resources include an undergraduate degree program in Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies (HTMS), an MBA program with a concentration in tourism and hospitality and the Levenson Institute for Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism, which produces an annual survey on tourism issues and conducts research in support of that segment of the state's economy.

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“These two new Talent Networks were created in direct response to Superstorm Sandy and the economic challenges posed by the storm. The Recovery Talent Network is designed to assess the overall needs of impacted employers, while the Retail, Hospitality and Tourism Talent Network will assist employers in a major New Jersey industry cluster that suffered set-backs due to Sandy,” explained Harold Wirths, commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

“The goal of the Retail, Hospitality and Tourism Talent Network will be to provide the employers with opportunities to hire the best trained and most qualified employees through training partnerships,” said Robert McNeill, Stockton’s director of Continuing Studies, who will oversee the development and implementation of the Talent Network.

“We are very excited about this opportunity and the confidence that the state of New Jersey and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development have expressed in us,” McNeill said.

“Stockton has already begun working with experienced partners in the region which include the local Workforce Investment Boards, various Chambers of Commerce and merchant associations, the New Jersey Travel Industry Association and the Hurricane Sandy Recovery Talent Network, which is headquartered at Ocean County College.”

It has been calculated that for every 180 visitors to New Jersey, a new job is created. Tourism and Hospitality spending accounts for nearly \$40 billion of the state gross domestic product, 51 percent of which is produced in South Jersey, McNeill noted.

According to the New Jersey Bureau of Labor and Market Information, the tourism industry is responsible for 8.9 percent of the state’s gross domestic product. This economic activity is a major generator of employment along the Jersey Shore.

About 24.5 percent of the state’s private-sector workers are employed in the leisure, hospitality and retail segment of the economy, with over 54 percent of private-sector workers concentrated in those jobs in Atlantic and Cape May counties.

Some 41.8 percent, or 133,257 workers, out of the 318,560 employees directly related to the New Jersey tourism industry come from Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May counties, according to the 2012 New Jersey Economic Impact Report on tourism economics.

“Clearly the Leisure, Hospitality and Retail Talent Network in South Jersey has a need to fulfill,” said McNeill.

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