



National Network of Sector Partners
Linking Industries, Communities and Workers

Napa Valley Hotel Sector Project

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Introduction

“What would a coherent strategy look like for meeting employer needs by preparing and advancing entry-level hotel workers from communities in need?”

In 2008, the United Way of the Bay Area learned of plans for development of several major new hotels in Napa County. At the same time, their work with community groups in the county had revealed that not all county residents were equally well-positioned to take advantage of the new jobs that would be created.

With the downturn in the economy, many of the planned developments have been postponed and employment growth in hotels has slowed. Nonetheless, in the long term, the industry is expected to remain a growing part of the Napa economy and a major source of employment for area residents.

Meanwhile, the demographics of Napa’s workforce are changing. The county has experienced an influx of older, wealthier, mostly-white residents while its younger Latino population has grown dramatically.ⁱ Income inequality has grown, in large part along similar lines of age and race/ethnicity, such that the jobs that are growing increasingly pay low wages and the pool of available workers is increasingly poor and Latino.ⁱⁱ

Moreover, in spite of its image as a center of wealth, Napa County contains communities in severe economic need, such as Latina mothers in Napa’s McPherson neighborhood or laid-off homeowners facing foreclosure in American Canyon. Residents of these neighborhoods are looking for ways to become, and remain, economically secure.

How can Napa County best address the convergence of these factors? How can stakeholders in the county find good jobs and create opportunities for advancement for low-income residents while simultaneously addressing hotel employers’ needs?

A Sector-Based Approach

To begin to identify strategies to meet emerging industry, resident, and community needs, the United Way convened the Napa Valley Hotel Sector Partnership, including:

- American Canyon Family Resource Center
- Napa County Office of Education
- Napa Valley Adult School
- Napa Valley College
- Napa Workforce Investment Board
- On the Move
- Puertas Abiertas
- San Francisco Labor Council – STEP
- United Way of the Bay Area

The United Way also contracted with the Insight Center for Community Economic Development to research workforce needs and opportunities using a sector-based approach – one which builds on our work in developing and promoting the concept of sector initiatives.

The following characteristics distinguish sector initiatives from conventional workforce programs:

- They focus intensively on a specific industry over a sustained time period, customizing solutions for multiple employers within a regional labor market.
- They strengthen economic growth and industry competitiveness by creating new pathways into targeted industries and toward good jobs and careers. This benefits low-income individuals and creates and sustains middle-class jobs.
- They utilize workforce intermediaries, organizations that have a deep understanding of worker and employer issues in an industry and within a regional labor market. These organizations facilitate the many stakeholders to develop and implement industry-based workforce solutions.
- They promote systemic change that benefits the industry, workers, and the community.

Sector initiatives create regional partnerships of key stakeholders that work with multiple employers within an industry to articulate the specific skill and labor needs of those employers, address obstacles, and develop solutions. Sector initiatives also identify existing and potential labor pools, analyze and overcome barriers to employment in good jobs, and provide workers with enhanced training and employment opportunities. As a result, they have been shown to benefit both businesses and workers.

Methodology

The United Way contracted with the Insight Center to:

Review available labor market information: To develop a baseline for understanding the regional labor market, we reviewed *Napa Hospitality! A Workforce Needs and Characteristics Study of the Napa County Hospitality and Tourism Industry, 2007-2008*, prepared by the Napa County Workforce Investment Board and its partners, as well as economic and labor market data provided by Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. and other sources.

Conduct follow-up interviews with area employers to validate and enrich the data: To learn more about the needs of hotel employers and about jobs and careers in area hotels, we conducted eight interviews with Napa County hotel employers, representing a cross-section of area hotels with respect to size, location, and price point.

Conduct focus groups with community residents and incumbent workers: To learn about the needs and interests of the available workforce, the Insight Center conducted four focus groups with adults, youth, and incumbent hotel workers. Two of the focus groups were conducted in Spanish.

Identify resources available locally for training and employment services: To learn more about potential resources that could be aligned to support a regional, industry-focused initiative, we interviewed area education and training providers, including representatives from the community college, adult school, workforce center, and regional occupational program.

Research national models: To identify program models for consideration by the project partners, we researched hotel sector initiatives from around the country, identifying four, each led by a distinct type of organization: a labor-management partnership, a community college, a local workforce investment board, and a community-based organization.

Develop recommendations for workforce services that would provide benefit to all stakeholders.

About This Report

The following report presents findings from the process described above, as follows:

Section I – Labor Market Information presents information about hotel employment and the lodgings and accommodations sector in Napa County.

Section II – Hotel Employers presents findings from employer interviews.

Section III – Community Residents presents information about the labor pool available to Napa County employers, including the perspectives of job-seeking adults and youth and incumbent workers employed in low-wage hotel occupations.

Section IV – Employment and Training Providers presents findings from interviews with regional employment and training providers.

Section V – Model Programs presents information about model hotel sector initiatives from around the country.

Section VI – Recommendations presents suggestions for actions by community stakeholders based on findings from the research process.

ⁱ Nari Rhee and Dan Acland, *The Limits of Prosperity: Growth, Inequality, and Poverty in the North Bay*, New Economy, Working Solutions, 2005.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

Section I

Labor Market Information

“Given the large role that the industry plays in the overall makeup of the economy, stakeholders in the Napa hospitality industry need to ensure that employers have an ample supply of skilled labor and that residents have access to an abundance of career opportunities necessary to thrive in our community.”ⁱ

Key Findings

A review of available labor market information revealed that as of mid-2008:

- The hospitality sector in Napa County was one of the county’s three largest employment sectors and was the fastest-growing, with strong potential for continued growth.
- Hotel employers had concerns about availability of adequate numbers of workers with the requisite skills, particularly for housekeeping, janitorial, and front desk positions, which were identified as facing workforce shortages.
- Most occupations within the accommodations sector, and particularly those facing workforce shortages, were service jobs paying wages that do not provide family self-sufficiency.

These findings suggested the following areas for validation and further inquiry with employers:

- Given the economic downturn that began in late 2008, how do current employment data and anticipated workforce needs match or vary from the information we reviewed?
- What skills do workers and job candidates need, and where are the current or anticipated skills gaps?
- What career pathways are available to low-wage workers, and how can advancement of these workers be supported?

We will discuss findings from employer interviews in the next section.

Background

For most of the past decade, the accommodations sector in Napa County has boomed. Between 2002 and 2008, the hospitality sector in general contributed more new jobs to Napa County than any other sector, and hospitality employment grew by 14%. Employment in hotels and motels grew even faster in the same time period, increasing by 22%.ⁱⁱ At the same time, building of new hotels accelerated, with more than a thousand hotel rooms added between 2000 and 2007, an increase of 37%.ⁱⁱⁱ The prospects for continued growth remained strong: as of November 2007, in the City of Napa alone, more than 1,200 new rooms were under construction, approved, or pending.^{iv}

With the economic downturn that began in late 2008, the picture changed. New hotel projects were delayed or cancelled. Existing hotels experienced less business and scaled back seasonal hiring or laid off staff. The most pressing questions also changed from “How will hotel employers meet their

need for skilled employees, and how can community residents access the opportunities being created?” to “How will hotels retain their skilled employees through the downturn?” and “Where are the jobs for unemployed residents?”

In the long term, the lodging and accommodations sector will continue to play a major role in the Napa County economy. In 2008, the Napa County Workforce Investment Board and its partners found that hospitality and tourism generated over \$200 million in local wages each year, employed between 13,500 and 15,850 people, and accounted for about 21 percent of the county’s total jobs. Mapping of the accommodations sub-sector revealed more than 90 lodging employers, including major hotels that each employ hundreds of workers.^v Hotels and motels are represented in Napa County at nearly 4 times the national average, a concentration which grew by 19% between 2002 and 2008.^{vi} Even with this concentration, demand for rooms outstrips capacity.^{vii}

Ultimately, the Napa County hotel sector will continue to grow and contribute significantly to the area’s employment, creating opportunities for communities in need.

Labor Market Information

To establish a baseline understanding of the Napa County hotel labor market and the role of accommodations in the regional economy, we reviewed available data and reports, including:

- *Napa Hospitality! A Workforce Needs and Characteristics Study of the Napa County Hospitality and Tourism Industry, 2007-2008*, prepared by the Napa County Workforce Investment Board and its partners
- Reports on industry and occupational employment growth and industry concentration provided by Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.
- A market study on the feasibility of new hotel development conducted by HVS Consulting and Valuation for the City of Napa
- Reports on existing and proposed lodging facilities from the City of Napa Planning Division

The *Napa Hospitality!* report, in particular, provided our main source for validation or enrichment by other sources. The report drew on data from the California Employment Development Department’s Labor Market Information Division and the survey responses of 225 businesses to:

- Describe occupations in the sector
- Identify gaps between supply and demand for those occupations
- Highlight challenges and workforce needs faced by employers

According to the report, occupations in the accommodations sector were composed primarily of service and administrative occupations, together making up approximately 83% of the jobs. Jobs in these categories included:

Service (approximately 65% of jobs)

- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
- Waiters and Waitresses

- Cooks, Restaurant
- Janitors and Cleaners

Administrative (approximately 18% of jobs)

- Hotel/Motel Desk Clerks
- Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
- Supervisors

Using EDD Labor Market Information Division data, the report projected significant employment growth in many of these occupations. For example, the report projected 210 additional maids and housekeepers between 2004 and 2014^{viii} – actually less than the actual growth of such jobs between 2002 and 2008, when 227 jobs were added, an increase of 26%.^{ix} EDD also projected significant growth in supervisors, desk clerks, waiters and waitresses, and restaurant cooks.

The *Napa Hospitality!* report identified two main workforce challenges facing the Napa County hospitality and tourism industry in 2007 and 2008: attracting and recruiting adequate numbers of workers and preparing skilled, qualified workers. The report identified the following hotel jobs as highly likely to experience workforce gaps or shortages:

- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
- Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks
- Janitors and Cleaners

Such gaps present challenges for employers, who must figure out how to fill vacant positions and anticipate staffing difficulties. At the same time, they create opportunities for community residents and training providers to meet the need. Moreover, for entry-level positions, only short-term and/or on-the-job training is typically required, making these jobs accessible even to low-skilled workers.

Unfortunately, entry-level hotel jobs also tend not to pay living wages. According to Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI), as of Fall 2008, maids and housekeeping cleaners in Napa County earned, on average, \$9.63 per hour,^x less than the self-sufficiency standard for a single adult (\$11.64 per hour) and well below the amount needed for a single parent to provide for a school-age child (\$18.06 per hour).^{xi} These wages may contribute to workforce shortages and retention challenges and may pose a challenge to public investment in training for these jobs.

ⁱ *Napa Hospitality! A Workforce Needs and Characteristics Study of the Napa County Hospitality and Tourism Industry, 2007-2008*, Napa County Workforce Investment Board, 2008.

ⁱⁱ *EMSI Covered Employment – Fall 2008*, Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc., 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ Niles Patel, Elaine Sahlins, and Suzanne R. Mellen, *Lodging Market Study: Napa Valley, CA*, HVS Consulting and Valuation, 2008.

^{iv} *Hotel Summary*, City of Napa Community Development Department, 2007.

^v *Napa Hospitality!*

^{vi} *EMSI Covered Employment – Fall 2008*.

^{vii} Patel, Sahlins, and Mellen.

^{viii} Occupational employment projections from the California Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division (www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov) cited in *Napa Hospitality!*

^{ix} *EMSI Covered Employment – Fall 2008*.

^x *Ibid.*

^{xi} *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Napa County, CA, 2008*, Insight Center for Community Economic Development, 2008.

Section II

Hotel Employers

Major Findings

Interviews with representatives of eight Napa County hotels and inns revealed:

Attracting and recruiting workers is not a pressing concern for Napa County hotels. Contrary to the pre-recession finding of the *Napa Hospitality!* report, hotels no longer expect to experience significant growth in their workforces or to face worker shortages, at least through 2010. Some positions, such as night auditor, remain hard to fill.

Preparing skilled, qualified workers remains a major concern for Napa County hotels. Consistent with the *Napa Hospitality!* report, hotels have concerns about their potential workforce's lack of work-readiness, basic skills (including English proficiency), and understanding of the expectations of hospitality sector work.

Napa County hotels want to help employees improve their English proficiency. Nearly every employer interviewed would like housekeeping staff, in particular, to speak better English, so as to provide better service to guests and to communicate more effectively with other hotel staff.

Entry-level workers need help to improve job quality and advance in their careers. With small supervisory staffs, even larger hotels have limited opportunities for low-wage workers to advance. Moreover, language and other barriers make it difficult for many of these workers to transition to jobs leading to advancement opportunities, in spite of the industry's commitment to promoting from within and lack of reliance on formal degrees.

Hotel Employer Interviews

To validate and enrich the labor market information from the *Napa Hospitality!* report and from EMSI, and to learn how labor market demand was affected by the economic downturn, the Insight Center interviewed representatives of eight Napa County hotels. Hotels were selected to provide a range of size (from 20 to 500 employees), price point (from business hotels to luxury resorts), and geographic location (including American Canyon, Napa, Rutherford, and St. Helena). Hotel representatives interviewed – human resources managers, general managers, and owners – were those responsible for oversight of human resources functions at their facilities.

Goals for the interviews included:

- Identify employer needs, including employee skills gaps and hard-to-fill positions.
- Understand the effects of the economic downturn, including on short and long-term plans for hiring and ability to invest in current workers.

- Learn more about career pathways within area hotels, with particular interest in advancement opportunities for low-wage workers.
- Understand recruitment and hiring processes and criteria for new hires.
- Identify current or past training resources provided to employees.

For the employer interview protocol, please see Appendix A.

Overview of Workforce

Hotels interviewed report a range of occupations consistent with that presented in the *Napa Hospitality!* report. Hotel positions with the most employees include:

- Room attendants or housekeepers – the largest occupational group
- Front desk staff
- Maintenance and engineering (in some but not all hotels)
- Landscaping (in some but not all hotels)
- Bell staff (in some but not all hotels)
- Restaurant staff, including waiters and waitresses (in some but not all hotels)

Workforce composition varies somewhat across hotels. Some hotels combine laundry and housekeeping functions, while others cross-train employees in each. Some hotels have no bell staff. Some hotels are connected to restaurants and spas and employ significant staff in those capacities. In some cases, landscaping and laundry functions are contracted out rather than performed by hotel staff. Organizational structures tend to be flat, with few supervisors and managers, posing a challenge for worker advancement.

Consistent with labor market information, starting wages for the occupations with most employees tend to be low, particularly in the case of room attendants, who earn \$8 - \$11.50 per hour. Starting wages for front desk staff tend to be higher, at \$9 - \$14 per hour, with the exception of one hotel that deliberately pays front-of-house and back-of-house employees the same wages.

The following positions were identified as difficult to fill or retain:

- Night auditors – due primarily to hours.
- Retaining front desk – particularly transitional workers, such as college students.

There was wide variation in experience of retaining housekeepers. Some respondents identified retaining housekeepers as a challenge while others said they had no difficulty finding and retaining good housekeepers. Difficulty in retaining housekeepers correlated somewhat – but not absolutely – with starting wage, with lower-paying hotels generally but not always expressing greater difficulty in retaining housekeeping staff. Employers also cited the positive effects of other factors – such as a supportive work environment – on retention.

Most frequently expressed workforce concerns included two issues highly consistent with the *Napa Hospitality!* report’s focus on “preparing skilled and qualified workers.”^{vi}

- Lack of work readiness, professionalism, customer service skills, and understanding of the values of the hospitality sector, particularly among younger job-seekers and employees.
- Limited English proficiency of room attendants, affecting their ability to provide service to guests and to interact with other staff.

Respondents also identified concern about retaining staff off-season, when hours are often reduced and incomes of tip-earners go down. One employer maintains health benefits during the off-season, even with reduced hours, to address this concern. Respondents also expressed concern about the costs of attrition. In addition to compromising work quality, “the cost of training new employees is significant – if you train them and they leave, you’ve lost \$500 to \$1,000.”

Several respondents also noted two categories of employees within their workforces: career employees – those who expect to work in hotels over the long term – and transitional employees, particularly college students who see hotel employment primarily as a way to support themselves while they complete their educations. In spite of concerns about attrition and retraining costs, respondents seemed to accept some combination of workers in these two categories.

Outreach and Recruitment

“I’m getting applications all the time. There isn’t a day I don’t get two or three. I probably got three a week a year ago and one a week a year before that.”

The most notable effects of the economic downturn for hotel employers have been in reduced hiring, even during peak season, coupled with strong, almost overwhelming demand for the few available positions. Demand is so strong that most hotels interviewed do not post entry-level positions, instead receiving applications on an ongoing basis and checking applications on file when openings arise. Referrals of candidates from trusted employees are also highly valued. As one respondent put it, “for entry-level positions, we get employee referrals, walk-in candidates, and other unsolicited applications – we haven’t had to pay to post.”

Hotels do post managerial and professional positions. As one respondent put it, “for executive positions, when open, we will use search firms. For mid-level managers, we’ll go to craigslist, occasionally display ads in local papers.” Other venues mentioned for posting jobs include the Napa Chamber of Commerce and Napa Valley College. Hotel job-seekers, take note: many jobs are not posted! Successful candidates apply directly to hotels, even without posted jobs, and use personal networks to solicit referrals from current employees.

Hiring is seasonal, with peak employment during the late spring and summer months from April and May through August. However, in 2009, many employers did not staff up as much as normal, in response to the down economy and projected slower-than-usual business. Some respondents expressed concern about resulting overtime costs, as well as over-burdening a smaller staff. While high unemployment and weak labor market demand alleviate short-term concerns about retention of staff, some respondents expressed concern that such strategies are not sustainable in the long term. Hiring is not expected to increase next year, either. As one respondent put it, “most people in the hotel industry are predicting pretty flat for 2010 and seeing growth in 2011.”

Screening and Selection

“It’s not the quantity of applicants that is the problem; it’s the quality.”

Although hotels are receiving more job applications than ever, most respondents were not impressed with the job-readiness of candidates they meet. Strikingly, several expressed their concern in virtually the same way:

- *“Someone will come in wearing shorts and flip-flops and expect to work at our front desk. A first impression is a first impression!”*
- *“I’ve got hundreds of applications, the problem being experience. I don’t hardly look twice at anyone who comes in the door in flip-flops and shorts.”*
- *“What surprises me is the low level of professionalism. We bring people in for interviews and they come in jeans, sweat pants, or basketball shorts.”*

To respondents, inappropriate attire not only betrays a general lack of job-readiness; it also suggests a lack of understanding of work in hotels, where professionalism, service, and the maintenance of a special environment for guests are paramount. Experience, in this context, seems to refer more to understanding the nature of the hospitality industry and hotel business than it does to particular occupational skills. Hotel job-seekers, take note: in the hospitality sector, as in job applications, first impressions count! Even when picking up or dropping off applications, job-seekers should dress and act professionally, as if prepared to interview or interact with hotel guests.

Notably, some respondents expressed similar concerns about their employees. One said, “They come in for meetings on their days off looking unprofessional.” Others expressed concern about punctuality, attendance, commitment to guest service, and longer-term commitment to their jobs.

Several respondents linked such concerns to generational changes in the overall workforce, suggesting that younger applicants and employees often have different ethics and attitudes towards work than the workers who preceded them. Other respondents connected what they saw as inappropriate job search behavior to lack of job search skills, in one case commenting:

“For many years, I’ve been beating a dead horse about interviewing skills, which are very important for applicants: professional attire, a smile, a firm hand-shake, and good eye contact. It’s surprising how many people don’t have the basics. I wish we had more classes for people out there looking for work.”

English language proficiency is clearly a factor for positions requiring significant communication with guests, such as at the front desk. Higher English proficiency is also desired for room attendants, but respondents seem resigned to accepting very limited English proficiency among these employees. Other language proficiency – such as in French, German, or Japanese – is a positive factor for front desk candidates, but Spanish proficiency does not seem to be considered an asset, in part perhaps because many Spanish-speaking staff are already available within the hotel to provide language support if needed. Spanish proficiency is an asset, however, for housekeeping candidates, who must be able to communicate with other Spanish-speaking staff.

Prior hotel experience is not mandatory for any entry-level position, particularly if previous employment demonstrates customer-service skills, ability to multi-task, or experience managing transactions. Felony convictions present a barrier to employment at some hotels, which trust their employees to maintain the safety and security of guests and rooms. Questions about criminal convictions are generally included in the application process.

Training and Advancement

“One of the great things about the hotel industry is that you can start from anywhere and become a hotel owner.”

Respondents consistently described the hotel sector as one with real opportunities for advancement of motivated employees, but available career ladders and investment in staff development seem limited. In addition, opportunities do not seem equally accessible to all workers, with college-educated, front-of-house workers generally identified as management candidates. In the words of the same respondent cited above, “Most general managers probably do start at the front desk.”

Relatively flat organizational structures mean a limited number of supervisory positions which turn over infrequently. Some opportunities for advancement do exist: “a great housekeeper who does great work could go up to the supervisory role,” for example, and some properties have gradations of responsibility, such as lead housekeeper or quality control specialist. Moreover, the importance of housekeeping to hotel operations requires that management candidates understand it deeply and spend some time in their careers working in this area.

Computer skills are necessary for advancement or transition to front-of-house career-ladder positions. A more significant barrier for many entry-level back-of-house workers may be limited English proficiency – and hotel employers expressed strong interest in providing English language training to such workers, primarily to improve their work performance. As one respondent put it:

“I would love to have our employees take English as a Second Language. Their performance would be better, their communication with guests and with other employees would be better, and they’d like their jobs better.”

Several respondents said their hotels had provided ESL classes to employees in the past but had discontinued or suspended them due to tightened budgets. Others described providing tuition reimbursement for employees to attend off-site ESL classes, such as those offered at the Napa Valley Adult School. Nearly all respondents said the costs of providing paid release time for employees to attend ESL classes would be prohibitive, at least in the current economy. The cost of release time was cited by one respondent as a reason for having discontinued such classes on-site.

As one respondent put it, “We’re still keeping track of every penny we spend.” Such financial constraints make off-site classes that do not require paid release time and that are subsidized, at least in part, by third parties the most attractive training option for participating employers. One employer also cited on-the-job, wage-subsidized training as of strong interest.

ⁱ *Napa Hospitality!*

Section III

Community Residents

Major Findings

Focus groups with four groups of Napa County residents found:

- Unemployed adults had a good sense of the occupations, job qualifications, and wages associated with lodgings and accommodations.
- Unemployed adults were most interested in entry-level positions involving customer service and administrative tasks and less interested in back-of house positions, in large part because these were seen as hard, low-paying jobs with limited pathways to advancement.
- Unemployed adults identified logistical barriers to employment in hotels, such as transportation, scheduling, and child care, as well as barriers associated with the job search, such as lack of requisite skills.
- Unemployed adults were familiar with a variety of job search strategies but were eager to receive job search assistance.
- Youth considered employment within the hospitality sector transitional and temporary – jobs, perhaps to sustain them while they went to college, but not careers.
- Youth desired job search services offered in a youth-friendly environment.
- Unemployed adults and youth would be willing to attend training if it were accessible and affordable, provided necessary supports, and led to a job.
- Entry-level back-of-house incumbent workers saw their jobs as difficult and low-paying and identified other job quality issues, such as perceived lack of respect from other employees and lack of training and advancement opportunities.
- Incumbent workers would be willing and eager to attend training if it were accessible and affordable and addressed skills seen as leading to advancement, such as English as a Second Language and computer skills.

Background

The population of Napa County is growing and changing. In 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 124,279 people lived in Napa County. In 2008, according to the Census Bureau's Population Estimate, that population had risen to 133,433, an increase of 7.4%. Most of that growth occurred in American Canyon, the county's second-largest city, whose population rose from 9,774 to 16,315 (estimated), an increase of 66.9%. By contrast, the population of the county's largest city, Napa, rose from 72,585 to 74,547 (estimated), an increase of 2.7%.

Demographics, too, are changing. In 2000, according to the Census Bureau, 23.67% of the population was Latino, up from 14.39% in 1990. 19.5% spoke Spanish as the primary language. In its 2008 Population Estimates, the Census Bureau estimated that the Latino population had risen to 30.1% of the population, and although estimated data for primary language are not available,

presumably, this proportion has risen as well. The proportion of the population between 18 and 44 has dropped, as well, from 40.4% in 1990 to 36.2% in 2000.ⁱ

A 2005 report by New Economy, Working Solutions entitled, *The Limits of Prosperity: Growth, Inequality, and Poverty in the North Bay*, noted not only these trends in the greater North Bay but also an increase in wage disparities and the number of low-wage jobs. Even during times of economic growth, the report noted, “the percentage of working families living in poverty and facing serious economic hardship *increased* in the North Bay.” Moreover:

“Minorities are the most likely to be poor and work in the worst jobs. Latinos, in particular, earn low incomes; experience severe economic hardship; and are concentrated in the lowest-paid, most insecure jobs.”ⁱⁱ

According to the report, in 2005, approximately 45% of Latinos in the North Bay had incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, which still falls short of the income level required for most families to be economically self-sufficient. This was true even though most poor families had at least one wage-earner. According to the 2008 self-sufficiency standard for Napa County, which takes into account county-specific costs for housing, food, and healthcare, as well as costs associated with work such as transportation, child care, and taxes, two adults working full-time would have to earn \$15.11 an hour and work full-time consistently through the year to care for an infant and a schoolage child. Wages of this sort are generally not available in entry-level hotel jobs.

Given these factors, how do community residents feel about employment in the hospitality sector, and what are the barriers and opportunities for engaging them in hotels?

Community Resident Focus Groups

To understand the interests, needs, and assets of community residents, we conducted four focus groups with Napa Valley residents:

- American Canyon
- Napa – McPherson Neighborhood Adults
- Napa – McPherson Neighborhood Youth
- Napa – incumbent workers

The goals of the first three focus groups were to assess community resident:

- Knowledge about and interest in hotel jobs
- Knowledge of and interest in available training and employment resources
- Challenges to employment in hotel jobs and participation in related training

For the focus group protocol, which was the same in each case, please see Appendix B.

Adult Residents

In April 2009, we conducted two focus groups with adult residents of Napa County: one at the American Canyon Family Resource Center and one at McPherson Elementary School in Napa.

Characteristics of the eight American Canyon participants were:

- Gender: 75% female, 25% male
- Ethnicity: 37.5% white, 37.5% black, 12.5% Latina, 12.5% Asian

Nearly all were laid-off workers and active job-seekers; one was a working college student. Age ranged from college-aged to near-retirement. One participant was a single mother.

Characteristics of the thirteen Napa participants were:

- Gender: 100% female
- Ethnicity: 100% Latina

All were unemployed mothers interested in working. Because nearly all were limited English-proficient or monolingual in Spanish, the focus group was conducted in Spanish with facilitation by bilingual participants in On the Move's youth leadership program.

Findings were consistent across populations; findings specific to either group are identified below.

Knowledge about hotel jobs:

Overall, participants were interested in working in hotels and restaurants. Interest was stronger in the Spanish-speaking group than in the American Canyon group, where concerns about low wages in entry-level positions and accessibility of higher-paying jobs were expressed more strongly. Participants in both focus groups displayed knowledge of the range of jobs available, citing many of the occupations identified in the *Napa Hospitality!* study and labor market research. Participants also knew specific hotels where they might be employed, particularly large chain hotels in their geographic area. One had previous hotel experience, having worked as a receptionist in Mexico.

Participant understanding of job requirements for employment in hotels generally matched employer feedback. In particular, participants cited the importance of soft skills and customer service and somewhat deemphasized occupation-specific skills.

Other perceptions about the hotel sector included the following:

- Service jobs (e.g. waiter/waitress, housekeeper) pay low wages, though for some jobs, tips help supplement wages.
- Jobs with administrative responsibilities (e.g. reservations, book-keeping, administrative assistant) pay better than the service jobs listed above.
- Union jobs are desirable, but are not very present.

Interest in hotel jobs:

In both groups, hotel jobs appealed to those who like interacting with people, with an emphasis on jobs seen as less physically strenuous and affording better opportunities for advancement.

Most popular occupations were:

- Desk clerk / receptionist (9 votes)
- Supervisor (7 votes)
- Office clerk / secretary (7 votes)
- Manager (5 votes)

Participants who cited these jobs valued the opportunity to provide customer service and to meet people from around the world. Such positions, they said, also provide transferable experience, such as computer skills and customer service, and connect to advancement opportunities, such as in hotel management – perceptions largely borne out by employer interviews. American Canyon participants felt that bilingualism in Spanish would be valued in such positions, a perception not shared by Napa participants or supported by employer interviews.

Additionally, American Canyon men liked janitor and groundskeeper occupations, which they considered hands-on and active, affording a feeling of usefulness and responsibility and providing a variety of tasks. Napa participants also liked cooking jobs, citing skills they enjoyed using at home.

Least popular occupations in both groups included those in which employment is largest and projected to experience the most growth:

- Waiter or waitress (0 votes)
- Housekeeper – (2 votes, both in Napa)

Participants saw these jobs as tiring and physically demanding as well as requiring some of the more negative aspects of customer service, such as dealing with difficult customers. Two American Canyon participants also cited as a negative factor the similarity of such work to household responsibilities, saying, “I do this at home” and “If I’m serving it, I want to have cooked it.” In spite of these concerns, Napa participants noted that, although they had not listed housekeeping and waitressing jobs as most desirable, they would certainly take those jobs, particularly if they afforded opportunities not only to work but also to learn and advance.

Interestingly, job roles and responsibilities were often cited over wages as reasons for liking or disliking occupations – provided entry-level jobs offered opportunities for advancement. In one participant’s words, “I don’t mind starting at a low wage if I can work my way up.” Napa participants also expressed concerns about other job quality issues, such as encountering racism on the job.

Challenges to employment in hotel jobs:

Participants in both groups described a range of challenges to gaining hotel employment. While some participants cited personal barriers, such as lack of confidence, this report will focus on external barriers which might be addressed programmatically.

Logistical challenges cited included:

- *Schedule:* Those taking college courses expressed a need for flexible work schedules, and those with school-age children preferred schedules that match school schedules. In addition, hotel work schedules were seen by many as unpredictable, making planning for other responsibilities, such as family care, difficult.

- *Transportation:* Participants described buses as effective for travel within the greater area but also as infrequent and poorly coordinated with work schedules. Driving was seen as the most effective way to get around, with parking widely available, but many did not have cars.
- *Childcare:* Parents expressed the need for quality, affordable child care and cited additional wage pressure created by child care costs: “I don’t want to work just to pay the childcare.”

Challenges associated with the job search included:

- *Age:* Older workers expressed concerns about discrimination and assumptions about their ability, particularly in jobs requiring physical activity, while younger workers felt they hadn’t yet had the chance to develop or demonstrate the skills required to be employed.
- *Experience:* Those who didn’t have experience felt their lack of experience was a barrier, while those with experience in other industries felt it was not valued by employers.
- *Degree:* Some participants felt employers would screen by educational attainment, without regard for skills and experience.
- *Job search skills:* Napa participants also expressed a lack of professional clothing.

Challenges associated with hotel jobs themselves focused on wages and benefits, particularly for those transitioning from other industries:

- *Wages:* Participants, particularly those dislocated from other industries, saw hotel wages as low, saying, “They want you to start low, even with 20 years experience,” and, “Part-time jobs just over minimum wage don’t give you much more than unemployment insurance.”
- *Benefits:* Participants said they needed benefits – particularly healthcare but also retirement – but did not see them as widely available, particularly soon after hire.

Training:

Participants in both groups expressed interest in training, provided it was accessible and affordable, was offered by a known, reputable provider, included supports to address childcare and transportation needs, and led to a good job. The time commitment participants would be willing to make was tied directly to the quality and certainty of the resulting job. Participants also expressed interest in training that would pay them while they learned.

Given transportation concerns, location of training must be convenient, but respondents expressed willingness to travel for the right opportunity. As one American Canyon participant said about the Napa Adult School, “It’s far, but it’s a great venue; if they offered training there, I’d go for it.” Other venues identified as feasible included Napa Valley College, the WorkforceNapa Career Center (though considered far from American Canyon), and hotels.

Asked if they would pay for training, participants in both groups said that, in their current financial circumstances, they could not afford it. One Napa participant expressed concern, for example, about the cost of classes at the Napa Valley Adult School, which she had heard were expensive.

Job Search:

Participants in both groups rely upon a range of job search strategies, including personal networks, door-to-door applications, the Internet, job fairs, temp agencies, ads in such newspapers as the Vallejo Times Herald and the Napa Valley Register, and agencies providing employment services, such as American Canyon Family Resource Center, the unemployment office, the college career center, and WorkforceNapa. American Canyon participants familiar with WorkforceNapa cited valuable help, such as resume assistance, they had received there. As mentioned previously, Napa participants were generally not familiar with WorkforceNapa or did not see it as a resource for them. Participants in both groups expressed desire for job search assistance, including counseling to identify opportunities that use transferable skills from previous experience, help with resumes and cover letters, job listings, and preparation for interviews.

Additional observations:

For laid-off workers, such as the American Canyon participants, security and support are crucial. For the Napa group, improving English proficiency will be extremely important.

In both groups, those considering training will want to know whether it leads to a good job and whether other supports, such as transportation and child care assistance or ability to earn wages while training, are available. While need for a job is pressing (“I’m interested in any job”), long-term career potential is also a significant factor for job-seekers in both groups.

These concerns suggest consideration of on-the-job training strategies, training supports, and investment in career ladders so that participants who are training and placed in entry-level jobs will have the opportunity to gain new skills and improve their earnings.

Youth

To understand the interests and needs of Napa youth, we conducted a focus group in April 2009 at McPherson Elementary School with 15 high school seniors participating in On the Move’s youth leadership program.

Characteristics of the focus group participants included:

- Gender: 87% female, 13% male
- Ethnicity: 87% Latina/o, 13% white

Industry Knowledge:

None of the participants had been employed in the hospitality sector, though several had held related positions, such as food service at a retirement home or baby-sitter with an agency that provided child care to hotel guests. Several also had family members with hospitality experience. Participants had a solid understanding of the types of jobs available. They could articulate a wide range of hospitality occupations and cited characteristics of hotel jobs, including: emphasis on professionalism, interpersonal skills, and customer service; round-the-clock operations of hotels; and occupational skills required for particular jobs. Participants also knew many local places of hotel employment. They also expressed understanding of the importance of hotels within the local economy, exclaiming, “There are so many in Napa!”

Interests and Perceptions:

Asked about their plans for the future, nearly all participants planned to attend college, with 67% planning to begin community college and 20% planning to attend a four-year college in the coming fall. Of those who planned to attend community college, several described it as a stepping-stone to a four-year degree. Many expressed plans to work while they attended college.

While several participants expressed entrepreneurial aspirations in hospitality, such as starting a catering business, most considered employment within the hospitality sector transitional and temporary – jobs, not careers. One participant expressed an interest in hotel management; another expressed an interest in culinary training offered at the community college he planned to attend.

Participants identified the following pros and cons of working in hotels:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting a variety of people from around the world• Working independently• Accessibility of jobs that do not require much formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical demands, such as standing for eight hours• Providing service to difficult customers• Pressure

The most popular occupations cited by participants were:

- Bartender (8 votes)
- Manager (7 votes)
- Desk clerk / Receptionist (7 votes)
- Catering / Events Planning (6 votes)
- Supervisor (5 votes)

Positions other than bar-tender earned their popularity primarily because they are seen as well-paying, career-track jobs. Factors in the popularity of bartending included the chance to earn tips, to work independently, to work at night, and to get a job requiring little formal education.

The least popular occupations cited by participants were:

- Housekeeper (no votes)
- Tech / Maintenance (no votes)
- Cook (1 vote)
- Office clerk (1 vote)
- Driver (1 vote)

Many of these positions, such as cook and driver, were ruled out by some simply because they said they did not have the skills required to perform them. However, working conditions (heat in the kitchen, stress in dealing with pressing technical questions, dirtiness associated with cleaning hotel rooms) and lack of career potential were also identified as primary factors in their lack of popularity.

Participants did express some willingness to consider these jobs as ways to support themselves and as opportunities to learn more about working in the industry.

Employment-Related Challenges:

Participants were asked to identify issues that might prevent them from becoming employed in the hotel sector. While some cited personal characteristics, such as shyness, that made hotel careers unsuitable for them, this report will focus on barriers that can be addressed programmatically.

The most frequently mentioned structural barriers were:

- **Schedule (14 votes)**
Because most participants plan to attend college, many expressed concern about finding hotel jobs with flexible schedules that could accommodate their school hours.
- **Lack of skills and education (11 votes)**
Many participants said they would need training to access the hotel jobs in which they were interested, lacking the occupation-specific skills those jobs require.
- **Age (10 votes) and lack of experience (8 votes)**
Apart from their concern about lack of occupational skills, participants felt that their lack of experience presented a barrier to employers considering them for positions.

Several participants also cited concerns about transportation, suggesting that nearby locations convenient to public transportation would be preferable.

Training:

Participants were willing to put in substantial training – years, if necessary – for a rewarding career. However, most desired training for hotel jobs to be shorter-term, such as six weeks. All agreed that the length of training would depend on the skills gain and the job prospects after graduation. Because most plan to work and attend school, the most often cited challenge for training, as for employment, was schedule. Most desired training and employment in afternoons, leaving mornings for classes and weekends free.

Participants were willing to travel for training, given a familiar and reputable provider. Napa Valley College and the Napa Adult School were well-known and respected; nearly all said they would be willing to go there. The WorkforceNapa Career Center was less well-known; some had heard of it through their parents, but were not generally familiar with its offerings and did not see it as youth-friendly. Training at hotels themselves was seen as desirable.

Although some participants expressed interest in paid on-the-job training or internships, most participants were willing to pay for training, depending on the skills gained and job prospects at the end. Most are already committed to paying for college; others have taken classes for fee, such as cooking training offered by the community college or animation training offered by a private school. Those who had taken training preferred small groups with lots of instructor attention and the opportunity for hands-on learning.

Job search:

Youth were aware of a range of job search strategies, including Internet sites, newspaper listings, and personal networking – by far the most popular strategy. As mentioned above, some participants were aware of the WorkforceNapa Career Center but did not feel that the atmosphere was youth-friendly. Participants also acknowledged that their familiarity with job search processes and resources might not be typical of their peers, due to their participation in On the Move’s youth leadership program and involvement in the development of Explorations, a career center run for youth by youth.

Additional observations:

Participants in the youth focus group clearly had some advantages over the more general youth population, most notably their participation in On the Move’s youth leadership program. At several points in the focus group, participants acknowledged that, as a result of their involvement in the program, they had done reflection on their career development, for example, that non-participating peers had not. A more general youth population is likely to need additional support, particularly in the areas of career exploration, planning, and job search.

Incumbent Workers

In August 2009, we conducted a focus group at Puertas Abiertas in Napa with entry-level hotel employees, ranging in experience from 2 to 12 years. Participants were primarily women working as room or laundry attendants; the exception was a male cook. Because all were Spanish speakers with limited English proficiency, the focus group was conducted in Spanish.

Goals of the focus group were to assess worker perceptions about:

- Working in the hotel sector
- Prospects for advancement within the hotel sector
- Education and training options available to support their advancement

For the focus group protocol, which was translated into Spanish, please see Appendix C.

Perceptions about working in the hotel sector:

When asked whether about how they liked their jobs, participants generally expressed resignation, rather than enthusiasm, as with one comment: “it’s a job.” Dislikes cited included:

- The work is hard and tiring, with low pay.
- Other workers treat them disrespectfully, including yelling at them and subjecting them to inappropriate flirtation.
- Language barriers make it hard to communicate with managers, particularly if only the direct supervisor speaks Spanish.
- One participant said she sometimes gets no lunch break.

When asked what would make them happier in their jobs, participants suggested improved communication with management and protection of their rights. Most important, however, was improving work relationships so that they felt valued and respected. In one participant's words, "The worst thing about my job is I feel as if I'm treated as less than a human being; that's all I really want." Many agreed, adding such comments as "We feel like objects the hotel can throw away" and "Sometimes all it would take is someone saying thank you or a word of inspiration." One participant found it encouraging that upper managers at her property were taking Spanish lessons.

When asked whether particular aspects of their jobs themselves could be improved, housekeepers expressed a desire for a mix of laundry and housekeeping responsibilities, which would be less boring and less tiring. (One participant already enjoyed such a mix of responsibilities and liked it.)

Prospects for advancement:

Half of participants wanted to stay in their jobs long-term; another 25% said they would change to a job in the industry where the work was not so tiring or they felt treated better (for example, receiving breaks or experiencing less pressure). Participants' career goals were uncertain, beyond wanting opportunities to advance and earn higher wages. Positions of interest included supervisor, manager, front desk, and office clerk; participants were very interested in learning more about what it would take to advance to these positions. Participants identified the primary barrier to their advancement as limited English proficiency, but also listed computer skills and knowledge about the regulations and procedures of hotels.

Education and training options:

All participants indicated that they had received initial training in their job responsibilities at hire but had subsequently received no work-provided education and training. Participants said that training was provided at the hotels where they work, but to those already at higher-level or white-collar jobs, such as managers, front desk staff, supervisors, and office workers. They weren't exactly sure what training was offered, having heard about them by word of mouth, but in-house training to these staff was generally on-site and given in English, while off-site classes were also available. Participants were not aware of any training made available to staff in their positions, nor did they identify any education or training benefits available to them at the hotels in which they worked. Also, participants knew of few resources for training, particularly training related to career advancement. They were aware of some opportunities for general English and computer skills training, for example, but did not identify those as clearly leading to advancement. None were accessing education or training specifically related to hotels or the hospitality industry.

The primary challenge identified regarding training was attending classes while tired from work and around family commitments. Other challenges included: transportation, particularly at night; childcare; and lack of literacy skills, even in Spanish. Nearly all participants indicated that they would take classes if offered by the hotel where they work during paid or partially-paid work time. Still others indicated that they would attend such training even if not paid for their time.

Overall, participants expressed a sense that their opportunities for advancement are limited, that the resources made available to them are limited or non-existent, that their sources of information

are constrained, and that their status as employees is low. They were aware of barriers they face, particularly in English proficiency and computer skills, but were not able to identify the means to overcome those barriers.

Additional observations:

Perceived low job quality poses real challenges for retention of entry-level hotel workers, but job quality improvements need not be costly. While undoubtedly focus group participants would appreciate higher earnings, many of their dislikes have to do with subjective aspects of their work experience, such as treatment by other employees and lack of advancement opportunities. Investment in skills upgrade training and in identifying pathways to advancement would likely demonstrate that they are valued and respected employees.

Improvements in supervisor training may be called for, particularly in cases where labor violations, such as unwanted flirtations or denial of lunch breaks, may be involved. These events create legal exposure that hotels have a strong interest in preventing. Other issues cited by participants could be incorporated into supervisor training as a way to improve job quality and retention. Bilingual managers would enhance the work environment for limited English-proficient employees and contribute to ongoing communication that can identify and address problems. A single bilingual supervisor is probably not sufficient to achieve these ends. Spanish language training for managers – not “Command Spanish” but courses that make it possible for managers to discuss work problems and career aspirations of their employees – would no doubt also add value for Spanish-speaking employees.

ⁱ *American Fact Finder*, U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

ⁱⁱ Rhee and Acland.

Section IV

Education and Training Providers

Major Findings

Interviews with Napa County education and training providers revealed resources that may be aligned to support preparation and advancement of hotel workers.

Area education and training resources include:

- Napa Valley Adult Education, which could provide English as a Second Language courses contextualized for entry-level hotel workers.
- Napa Valley College, which enjoys strong employer connections and already provides hotel management training and training customized to employer needs.
- Napa County Office of Education – Regional Occupational Program, which provides hospitality/culinary training at a high school and also offers classes for out-of-school youth.
- WorkforceNapa, which provides basic customer service, work-readiness, and job search skills classes and which could also support on-the-job training.

Existing occupational skills programs focus on incumbent workers, and none are targeted at under-utilized populations, such as out-of-school youth, limited English proficient workers, people with disabilities, or formerly incarcerated persons. Challenges include coordinating these resources to provide a more comprehensive approach to meeting employer, worker, and job-seeker needs and finding funding, particularly for coordination of service provision and for convening of employers.

Education and Training Provider Interviews

To learn more about potential resources that could be aligned to support a regional, industry-focused initiative in the hotel sector, the Insight Center interviewed five area education and training providers, including:

- Napa County Office of Education – Regional Occupational Program
- Napa Valley Adult Education
- Napa Valley College - Hospitality & Tourism Management Program
- Napa Valley College - Hospitality Institute
- WorkforceNapa

We asked each to describe the training they offered and to whom, how students are recruited, where training takes place, how it is paid for, and how training services are connected with other services in the area.

Napa County Office of Education – Regional Occupational Program

The Napa County Office of Education’s Regional Occupation Program (ROP) provides a range of occupationally-focused programs in the high schools, and ROP courses are available on most high school campuses in Napa County. At Vintage High School in Napa, the ROP offers both Hospitality and Tourism and Culinary Arts courses to high school students.

According to the ROP website, the ROP links course offerings to “the key industry sectors contributing to Napa County’s growth and prosperity” and has capacity to add new courses “when funds permit and need dictates.”^{vi} Recent budget cuts, however, resulted in the loss of some programs and have seriously impacted the ROP’s ability to start new classes. While courses are funded by the State of California on the basis of average daily attendance, funding for additional courses is not available. There are no plans to decrease the number of courses currently offered at Vintage High School.

ROP courses often face competition for student hours with academic programs, and students struggling academically may be pulled from ROP courses, posing challenges for student enrollment and retention. Participants in the youth focus group did not identify the ROP as a resource for hotel training, perhaps because they did not attend the high school where such courses are offered.

Napa Valley Adult Education

Napa Valley Adult Education provides a broad range of vocational and non-vocational courses to Napa County residents. Courses relevant to the Napa Valley Hotel Sector Partnership include adult basic education and English as a Second Language (ESL) training, which the school provides to approximately 3,000 students per year. Courses are offered throughout Napa County, including at the school’s main location in central Napa, at McPherson Elementary School, at Puertas Abiertas, and at American Canyon Middle School. The school partners extensively with community groups and can offer courses at new locations. Class schedules are similarly flexible, with many classes offered in the evening.

Funding comes from the State of California on the basis of average daily attendance. For many courses, students also pay a fee: introductory computer classes, for example, cost \$80 for five sessions, while ESL classes require a \$25 annual fee. Although these fees seem modest, some community residents nonetheless expressed concern about the cost of Adult Education courses. Support from the state based on attendance gives Napa Valley Adult Education the ability to offer new courses if adequate numbers of students attend. Depending on the availability of funding, it may be possible for the school to develop and offer new courses for as few as 10-15 students.

The school’s Career and Technical Education courses have focused on business applications, such as computer skills and medical office training. While the school has not offered hospitality training, it does have the capacity to develop new courses and has provided fee-based training to businesses, including on-site ESL training. The school has also collaborated with other training providers to integrate basic skills or English language development into occupational skills courses.

In focus groups, community residents expressed awareness and willingness to attend courses at the Adult School. Employers also expressed awareness of the school, particularly as a resource for English as a Second Language training.

Napa Valley College

Napa Valley College offers two initiatives tailored for the hospitality sector: the Hospitality & Tourism Management Program, housed at the College itself, and the Hospitality Institute, housed at the college's Small Business Development Center. Both are deeply engaged with hotel employers, sharing an active advisory committee. Employers interviewed for this project expressed both awareness of and appreciation for the College's hospitality programs.

The Hospitality & Tourism Management Program provides courses in customer service, supervision, and management, including a certificate program and an associate's degree. Students are mostly incumbent workers, and most classes take place at the college in the evening. Outreach is largely employer-based, drawing on the program's extensive employer contacts. Other outreach, such as ads displayed at local cinemas, has been affected by the end of funding received to develop the program. Courses are supported by state funds on the basis of average daily attendance and by student tuition of \$26 per credit unit.

The Hospitality Institute provides employers a range of hospitality training, such as fundamentals of supervision, a customer service academy, and responsible serving and hosts an annual symposium to help hospitality professionals navigate industry change. Though housed at the Small Business Development Center, the Institute can provide training at employer or other community sites. Courses are paid for through grant funding, now expired, and fees for service.

WorkforceNapa

As the full-service One-Stop center for Napa County, WorkforceNapa (formerly Napa Job Connection) provides a range of employment and business services, including on-site employee recruitment events, a Career Center with resources for job seekers, and Career Readiness Workshops in both English and Spanish. In the past, WorkforceNapa has also offered entry-level customer service and employability skills training, employability skills assessments in both English and Spanish, and an annual hospitality career fair.

Job seekers in American Canyon were generally aware of WorkforceNapa and saw its interviewing skills workshops and resume preparation assistance as helpful. However, Latina moms in Napa's McPherson neighborhood were not aware of the center or did not consider it as a resource for them, in part due to a real or perceived language barrier.

ⁱ Napa County Office of Education Regional Occupational Program website, www.ncoe.k12.ca.us/rop/.

Section V

Model Programs

Hotel Sector Initiatives

The Insight Center identified as models for consideration four sector initiatives meeting the needs of job-seekers, workers, and hotel employers around the country:

- STEP (Support, Training, Employment Program), a project of the San Francisco Labor Council
- Hotel TEACH, a project of the Center for Immigrant Education & Training (CEIT) at La Guardia Community College
- ServiceWorks, a project of the City of Chicago
- Jobs in Community, a project of the Uptown Alliance

Although these initiatives are led by different types of organizations – a labor-management partnership, a community college, a local workforce investment board, and a community-based organization – and although they serve different populations, including incumbent hotel workers, unemployed immigrants, and other job-seekers, they share several key features:

- Each is led by an effective workforce intermediary that has developed broad and deep employer connections, so as to understand and respond to a range of employer needs.
- They involve partnerships among multiple organizations of various types, with each contributing particular expertise and resources.
- They increase access to good jobs, either by helping people gain employment who might otherwise have difficulty or by helping low-wage workers advance in their careers.
- They explicitly intend to create lasting change in industry practices, policy, and the workforce development system to benefit workers, employers, or both.

Following is more information about each model hotel sector initiative.

San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC) – STEP (Support, Training, Employment Program)

After September 11, 2001, tourism in San Francisco dropped dramatically – and hotel employment suffered. Approximately 3,000 hotel workers found themselves out of work, receiving food distributions and needing assistance to maintain health insurance. In order to respond to the need for additional training to increase the self-sufficiency of hotel workers, the San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC) – STEP (Support, Training, Employment Program), in partnership with hotels, UNITE-HERE Local 2, United Way of the Bay Area, and City College of San Francisco, built a citywide hospitality career ladder program benefitting local employers and local workforce.

The results from 2002 to 2009:

- 700 incumbent workers have participated in more than 30 trainings, including server, busser, barista, banquet server, concession, cashier, pantry training, and a variety of Vocational English as a Second Language classes.
- 59% Asian, 38% Latino, 2% African American and 1% other.
- Some workers have changed jobs; many have added part-time jobs and increased hours – essential for self-sufficiency in an industry where employment fluctuates seasonally.
- The most recent group of 240 workers increased an average of 27 points on the Self-Sufficiency scale over a 3-year period. For a family of four with 60% self sufficiency (\$3,136.00\month), that represents an increase to 87% of self sufficiency (\$4,155.00\month), or a difference of about \$12,000 a year.

The program has not only benefited incumbent workers; it has also added to the industry’s pipeline of workers. More than 200 dislocated garment workers and restaurant workers from San Francisco’s Chinatown have participated in training, primarily been placed in unionized hospitality facilities in San Francisco, and increased their self-sufficiency by 20% over a three-year period.

SFLC – STEP identified the following key elements in the program’s success:

Create a hospitality career ladder system. Training is designed around career paths to provide the specific skills needed for participants to take the next step up and to increase their marketability for increased hours or additional work assignments.

Identify an intermediary organization to manage the partnership and systems. SFLC – STEP, with connections to the hotel workers’ union and to most of San Francisco’s large hotels, deeply understands both employer and worker needs and can aggregate those needs across multiple facilities, rather than developing solutions specific to one employer.

Provide a local, highly trained workforce. Understanding that success for San Francisco’s hotels and workers depends on the quality of service they provide, SFLC – STEP invests in high-quality training.

Provide participants wrap-around support. Making an investment in training workers means also providing participants the support they need to succeed.

Build partnerships among stakeholders. SFLC – STEP has built a partnership that has resulted in enduring resources for hotel workers and employers. The program now counts as partners:

- Hospitality employers
- City College of San Francisco, including Contract Education, Vocational Educational, ESL, and Culinary Arts/Hotel Management departments, plus Downtown & Chinatown campuses
- The Joint Union Employer Education Fund, which covers the majority of Class A hotels in San Francisco
- Numerous community organizations, including United Way of the Bay Area

SFLC – STEP has also partnered with specific hotels by brand to deliver customized VESL classes across properties. SFLC – STEP is supported by the education fund, the public workforce system, philanthropic contributions, and employers.

Going forward, SFLC –STEP is working with the City and County of San Francisco to utilize stimulus dollars for job creation and retention efforts. They are also involved in an African American Hospitality Career Ladder initiative to bring more qualified African Americans into the hospitality industry.

For more information, visit <http://www.sflaborcouncil.org/Page/1.5.1>.

Another highly successful labor-management partnership training hotel workers is the Culinary Training Academy in Las Vegas. For more information about their services and partnership with Nevada Partners, a non-profit community-based organization serving North Las Vegas, visit <http://www.theculinaryacademy.org/>.

Hotel TEACH

“Virtually all of our new workforce growth for the foreseeable future will come from immigration, so failure to assist immigrants in improving their language and job skills is likely to hurt workforce productivity in the long term.”ⁱ

In response to the need to improve the English proficiency of immigrant hotel workers and job-seekers looking for hotel employment, the Center for Immigrant Education & Training (CIET) at LaGuardia Community College in New York City formed Hotel TEACH in 2005. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s High Growth Job Training Initiative, the project brought together the local workforce center, the National Retail Federation, the American Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Institute, and area hotels to develop and implement a new language curriculum that integrates Vocational English as a Second Language and occupational skills training and is:

“specifically designed for incumbent workers who have been employed in the "back of the house" and who desire to move up, into "front of the house" positions with more customer interaction and responsibility. The course can also be easily modified for use with non-incumbent workers who are looking to enter the hospitality industry.”ⁱⁱ

The curriculum is informed by principles identified as effective for English language learners by the AFL-CIO in its report, *Getting to Work: A Report on How Workers with Limited English Skills Can Prepare for Good Jobs*, and by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) in its report, *The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Employment Opportunities for Adults with Limited English Skills*. As the CLASP report puts it:

“Language instruction should be tied to training in particular occupations and should incorporate key elements, including general workplace communication skills, job-specific language needed for training, certification and testing, and soft skills to help navigate U.S. workplace culture.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The curriculum, which has been tested with both incumbent workers and new hires, is publicly available and can be found at http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/CIET/workforce_TEACH_curriculum.aspx.

A community college-led initiative, Hotel TEACH brings together multiple implementation partners. The Jamaica Workforce1 center (New York City's one-stop for the borough of Queens) recruits and refers appropriate job-seekers to new hire training, then provides placement services to graduates. The New York City Human Resources Administration performs similar functions for public assistance recipients, while the New York City Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development does the same for Section 8 residents.

Hotel workers who participated in the training experienced significant improvement in their tested English proficiency. As one student put it:

"I learned how to communicate with guests. Before, I couldn't do extra rooms. Now, I take responsibility and can do more work. It is important to work together and have good relationships with co-workers and managers."^v

Because computer skills are included in the course, participants also demonstrated improved computer literacy, and because content is contextualized, they demonstrated improved knowledge of hotel industry standards. Since completing, several graduates have advanced into management positions or been accepted into management training with Sheraton, a partner employer.

Job-seekers also demonstrated skills gains and gained employment in hospitality and retail positions, while employers reported a greater commitment from participating workers:

"The people from this program now have a sense of 'our company,' understanding our guests and our business. They show enthusiasm and passion for their work. I see much more of that. They put in a lot of hard work and effort."^v

ServiceWorks

In 2005, the City of Chicago established within its One Stop system a workforce center focused on the hospitality sector: ServiceWorks. The center, created and sustained with Workforce Investment Act funding, provides a single point of contact for hospitality employers and enables development of specialized, sector-focused services for job-seekers, incumbent workers, and businesses. By integrating hospitality employers and job opportunities into the overall workforce system, ServiceWorks expands opportunities for job-seekers and deepens the pool of candidates for employers.

Originally oriented to the hospitality sector in general and emphasizing general customer service and work readiness skills, Service Works has shifted focus since 2008 towards the hotel sector, with increased emphasis on incumbent worker training and career ladder development. In one example, ServiceWorks worked with a leading chain of full-service hotels to address problems with customer service and retention of new front-line workers. The resulting multi-stage training initiative provides training on soft skills and customer service, career and industry awareness, and leadership skills for emerging supervisory and managerial talent.^{vi}

ServiceWorks provides services to businesses, helping them with such recruitment needs as workforce planning, marketing job openings city-wide, and pre-screening applicants. Because the center is connected to Chicago's workforce network, it draws candidates from over 200 community-based organizations, advocacy agencies, and city agencies to provide employers qualified applicants. ServiceWorks also provides services to job-seekers interested in working in the hospitality sector, including sector-specific job search assistance, job matching, and training ranging from basic pre-employment to job search skills to advanced customer service and leadership. Since its creation in 2005, ServiceWorks has trained and placed over 1,500 Chicago residents.

An independent evaluation of ServiceWorks and Chicago's other sector-focused center, ManufacturingWorks, found that the centers have helped the public workforce system engage with employers, build on strengthened employer relationships to address job quality issues, and drive the system to be more responsive and aligned with industry needs.^{vii}

For more information about ServiceWorks, visit www.chicagoserviceworks.com.

Jobs in Community

The Jobs in Community program of Uptown Alliance in Memphis, Tennessee, trains and places inner-city residents as entry-level workers in the hospitality industry. Serving North Memphis, one of the city's most economically-disadvantaged areas, the program provides contextualized job-readiness training, placement, retention, and advancement services to residents who are overwhelmingly very low-income. Characteristics of the program's participants in 2008 were:

- 96% African American
- Average annual income less than \$7,000
- 80% unemployed
- 50% receiving food stamps
- 30% lacking a high school diploma or GED

The 4-week, 80-hour job-readiness training is contextualized for the hotel industry, addressing life skills (such as goal-setting and self-confidence), basic employability skills (such as workplace communications, problem-solving, and work ethics), introduction to the world of work (including job search skills, workplace expectations, teamwork, and diversity), and introduction to the hospitality industry (including customer service, safety, and hotel operations). In the process, participants are taken on-site at the workplace and assigned an employee to "shadow," in order to experience first-hand the particulars of the position for which they are being trained.

Each graduate is connected with a volunteer mentor who provides support, encouragement, and problem-solving assistance. Uptown Alliance also provides one-on-one coaching and assists graduates to access support services, continuing education, and government benefits after hire. By providing retention support to workers, the program also supports employers, so that they experience less turnover and supervisors spend less time assisting employees with work-life issues.

Partners have included the Downtown Marriott, which helped to launch the program, and the Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality and Resort Management at the University of Memphis, which has provided planning and instructional assistance.

In 2008, the program trained 53 graduates, of whom 40 (81%) were placed at an average hourly wage of \$8.63.

ⁱ Heide Spruck Wrigley, et al., *The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Employment Opportunities for Adults with Limited English Skills*, CLASP, 2003

ⁱⁱ Center for Immigrant Education and Training (CIET) website,
http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/CIET/workforce_TEACH.aspx.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wrigley, et al.

^{iv} CIET website.

^v CIET website.

^{vi} Greg Schrock, *Prioritizing Job Quality in Chicago's Sectoral Workforce Initiatives*, Chicago Workforce Investment Board, 2009.

^{vii} Greg Schrock, *Re-working Workforce Development: Chicago's Sector-Based Workforce Centers*, Chicago Workforce Investment Board, 2009.

Section V

Recommendations

The *Napa Hospitality!* report cited two main challenges faced by hospitality employers in Napa County: filling the pipeline for workers and ensuring that those workers have the necessary skills. Although it is clear that the first of these challenges has been muted by the economic downturn, with reduced hiring demands, a large supply of dislocated workers, and diminished turnover among current workers, in the long run the need to increase the supply of available hospitality workers will return. The second challenge – preparing a skilled workforce – remains pressing.

In addition to listing challenges, the *Napa Hospitality!* report made recommendations, some of which have been validated by this report, including:

- *“Support and expand postsecondary vocational training efforts for the hospitality and tourism industry.*
- *Increase efforts to recruit workers from underutilized labor pools.*
- *Address barriers regarding transportation, family-friendly work scheduling, and language.*
- *Help younger job-seekers who are interested in hospitality jobs develop the necessary workplace readiness skills.”*

Following are more detailed recommendations based on the input from employers, community residents, incumbent workers, and education and training providers.

1) Continue the Napa Valley Hotel Sector Partnership

Napa County – particularly its hotel employers – has already invested significantly in development of a hotel sector partnership. Efforts that have already taken place include:

- The Napa County WIB and its partners gathered labor market information and surveyed area employers to produce the *Napa Hospitality!* report on the state of the area’s hospitality workforce.
- Napa Valley College secured funding for hospitality programs, developed and implemented those programs, and built an engaged cohort of industry leaders.
- The United Way convened a planning group which has become the Napa Valley Hotel Sector Partnership and has grown to include representatives from community groups and the area’s main education and training providers.
- The United Way commissioned this report to gather input from employers, community residents, incumbent workers, and education and training providers.

These activities have laid a foundation for further efforts by bringing together employer input, local employment and training resources, and representatives from communities that need jobs. The partnership also expands the focus of area workforce efforts to include entry-level workers.

An important next step for the partnership is to further engage employers, as employer participation and leadership are essential to the success of sector initiatives. Sharing the findings of this report and developing concrete plans to act upon them may be a useful way to engage more deeply with employer representatives, particularly those who have already contributed to the process.

2) Identify a Workforce Intermediary to Lead the Effort

Napa County is fortunate to have several organizations with strong connections to the hotel industry – most notably, Napa Valley College’s hospitality programs, which regularly convene an employer advisory board, but also the Napa County Workforce Investment Board and the Napa County Regional Occupational Program. There remains a need, however, for an organization to coordinate these efforts and to take the lead in aggregating and responding to the full range of industry needs.

Nationwide, different types of organizations play this role, with workforce investment boards, community-based organizations, labor-management partnerships, and community colleges taking the lead in different regions. What’s important is that the workforce intermediary has or can develop credibility and expertise within the sector with specific and key employers, and has the capacity to convene the full range of stakeholders (in addition to industry) in order to come up with comprehensive solutions, to bring in resources and partners to support these solutions, and to manage complex partnerships to achieve benefits for employers, workers, and the community.

3) Align Education and Training Resources with Industry and Community Needs

Napa County has existing education and training resources that may be aligned to support preparation and advancement of hotel workers. The ROP, for example, is well-positioned to help hotel employers address their concerns about work-readiness, awareness of hospitality careers, and job search skills of young people and to help young people address their concerns about lack of qualifying experience for hotel sector jobs. The ROP may also want to explore broadening enrollment by scheduling courses so as not to conflict with high school academic offerings and linking courses with hospitality courses offered at Napa Valley College, perhaps through dual enrollment or articulation agreements.

Napa Valley Adult Education is well-positioned to offer contextualized Vocational English as a Second Language classes to entry-level hotel workers, such as housekeepers, particularly if hotels can help with outreach to students to ensure full classes. Because of the school’s limited experience providing courses specific to the hotel sector, it may be necessary for the school to partner with a more experienced provider of sector-specific vocational training, such as Napa Valley College, and to engage employers in both the design and implementation of training.

Napa Valley College could develop stronger linkages with other area training providers, such as the ROP, to create pipelines for new students at the college and to support career advancement for more hotel workers. Dual enrollment or articulation agreements that make college credit available to the ROP’s high school participants may be one way to accomplish this goal. It may also be beneficial to provide support or contextualized ESL training for non-native English speakers participating in management courses by partnering with an established ESL provider.

Through the Hospitality Institute, employers already invest in skills training for their employees; more employers may be encouraged to subsidize tuition in the Hospitality & Tourism Management Program for their employees. Moreover, when growth resumes in the hotel industry, the College could build on its strong industry engagement and support to identify and address other industry needs, such as for entry-level workers in housekeeping.

WorkforceNapa is well-positioned to provide job search skills training and employment services targeted to the hospitality sector. To provide services to Spanish-speaking populations, WorkforceNapa should consider partnering with community agencies with deep roots in the Latino community, as it has done in the past in providing services at a homeless shelter.

In addition, as the County's main broker of public workforce funds and services, the Napa County Workforce Investment Board may also play a role in identifying employer and job-seeker needs, convening partners, and aligning available resources, such as on-the-job training subsidies.

4) Develop Contextualized English as a Second Language Training

The most consistent need identified by both hotel employers and prospective and current workers is the need for English as a Second Language training of entry-level workers, particularly housekeepers, to improve workplace communication and customer service and support advancement and access to good jobs. Moreover, Napa County has existing resources that may be aligned to support contextualized ESL training, such as those in the Adult Education system.

To be successful, the training must be contextualized – taught in a way that emphasizes the use of English in actual workplace settings and situations and that prepares workers for those settings and for advancement. Not only is this most effective for learning and application of skills gained, but also for motivating employees to participate, particularly if paid release time is not offered.

The goals of improving English for guest relations and for better communication with co-workers and supervisors are necessary, but not sufficient. To fully engage workers and to help them move up, preparing them to take on new skills and responsibilities needs to be a part of the package, and curriculum development should include more detailed analysis of the pathways and barriers to advancement for limited English proficient hotel staff. Integrating or including computer skills and customer service training may also be beneficial to both employers and employees.

In order to accomplish these ends, training providers with expertise in English language development must partner with experts in the particular hotel jobs held and desired by English language learners. Potential partners include hospitality training providers, employers, and employees who have advanced from these positions.

5) Articulate and Promote Career Pathways

The opportunity for advancement is one of the selling points for employment in the hotel industry, cited by many of the employers interviewed. While it is clear that talented, motivated individuals can advance from such positions as front desk to become General Managers, the barriers for some worker groups – such as limited English-proficient housekeepers – are significant, going beyond

English proficiency. Most hotels have limited pathways to advancement, in that supervisory positions are limited. In addition, there are limited opportunities for some staff, particularly back-of-house staff, to develop new skills, particularly those relevant to careers in hotel management.

Employers interviewed repeatedly cited concerns about the work-readiness of walk-in applicants. Current workers who have already proven themselves reliable and who understand hotel operations should be considered for these jobs, and barriers to their advancement should be identified and addressed. An immediate step that employers can take is to make sure that all employees are aware of advancement opportunities by posting them prominently and in Spanish.

The San Francisco Labor Council's STEP program, in particular, provides useful examples of how a focus on identifying career ladders can translate into training targeting particular skills needed for advancement, with benefits to both workers and employers.

6) Invest in Youth Employment and Training

Many of the employers interviewed cited poor work readiness skills among their applicants, including apparent lack of awareness of workplace expectations regarding self-presentation and punctuality. At the same time, high unemployment among young people means that fewer are getting the experience and exposure to the workplace they need to become effective employees. To develop the hotel sector's workforce of the future, Napa County needs to do as the *Napa Hospitality!* report recommends: "Help younger job-seekers who are interested in hospitality jobs develop the necessary workplace readiness skills."ⁱⁱ

One way to help youth develop industry awareness and work-readiness is through work experience programs, such as summer youth employment. Hotels should be encouraged to find opportunities for young people to participate in the work of hotels by hosting summer interns. Another option to consider is expanding high school-based hospitality sector programs, such as those offered by the ROP, and articulating them with Napa Valley College's Hospitality & Tourism Management Program to provide credits to participating students and develop a pipeline for the college's courses.

In addition, youth leadership programs like those offered by On the Move are successful in helping youth develop career awareness, presentation and job search skills, and other characteristics, such as responsibility and problem-solving skills.

7) Look to the Future

Despite the economic downturn, Napa County's hospitality sector – and particularly lodging and accommodations – will resume its trend of employment growth. Hotel development projects that have stalled will start up again; hiring freezes will be lifted; area hotels that have staffed down will staff up again. When they do, where will they find the workers that they need?

The *Napa Hospitality!* report suggests: "Increase efforts to recruit workers from underutilized labor pools."ⁱⁱⁱ Many of the community residents engaged in this report want to be the industry's future workforce. To be ready, they will need training and supports. In interviews, employers predicted

resumed growth in 2011, and the 2011 hiring season will be here before we know it. How many housekeepers and front desk staff will be needed? What do must be done now to prepare them?

ⁱ *Napa Hospitality!*

ⁱⁱ *Napa Hospitality!*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Napa Hospitality!*

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About the Authors

Insight Center for Community Economic Development

The Insight Center for Community Economic Development, formerly known as the National Economic Development and Law Center (NEDLC), is a national research, consulting and legal organization dedicated to building economic health in vulnerable communities. The Insight Center's multidisciplinary approach utilizes a wide array of community economic development strategies, including industry-focused workforce development, individual and community asset building, establishing the link between early care and education and economic development, and advocating for the adoption of the Self-Sufficiency Standard as a measurement of wage adequacy and an alternative to the Federal Poverty Line.

The Insight Center was among the first proponents of sector-based workforce development, a movement that now includes hundreds of businesses, government agencies and nonprofit organizations. In 1999, the Insight Center founded the National Network of Sector Partners (NNSP), a nation-wide membership organization dedicated to promoting and increasing support for sector initiatives: regional, industry-focused approaches to workforce and economic development that improve access to good jobs and/or increase job quality in ways that strengthen an industry's workforce. Our vision is that, as a result of investment in sector initiatives, regional economies will have good jobs and plentiful advancement opportunities, all people will have access to these jobs and opportunities, industry sectors important to those regions will provide them, and communities will share in the resulting economic vitality.

Jim Torrens

Jim Torrens, Program Manager at the Insight Center for Community Economic Development (Insight Center), works primarily on workforce development projects and in advancing the goals of the National Network of Sector Partners (NNSP). A former sector practitioner himself, Jim has developed and managed sector-focused training programs in healthcare, information technology, and legal services, among other industry sectors. Jim is also a Marano Fellow, having completed the Aspen Institute's Sector Skills Academy.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol – Employers

Questions

Overview of Workforce

1. What is the range of occupations in your workforce?
2. How many workers do you employ in each type of occupation?
3. Which positions are hardest to fill with qualified candidates? Why?
4. What are the starting wages for these positions?
5. What efforts are you making to fill those shortages?
6. What changes have you experienced in your ability to find qualified workers?
7. What do you project for 2010?
8. When thinking about your workforce, what is your major concern?

Outreach and Recruitment

9. Who recruits job applicants at your hotel?
10. How do you recruit job applicants for open positions?
11. What changes in outreach and recruitment practices have you experienced?
12. What changes do you anticipate as the economy recovers?
13. Do you hire seasonally, and if so, what is the hiring season?

Screening and Selection

14. Who screens and selects job applicants at your hotel?
15. What do you look for in an applicant when hiring?
16. How do candidates apply for openings?
17. Who can apply for a position at your hotel, and who cannot?
18. What role does English proficiency play in hiring, and how is it measured?
19. What is the process for internal candidates to apply for open positions?
20. What qualifies internal candidates for advancement?

Training

21. What education or training benefits do you provide to your existing employees?
22. Are you satisfied with existing education and training and how employees are using them?
23. What other education/training are you aware of that is available to employees, such as those provided by unions, proprietary schools, or public educational institutions?
24. What gaps do you see in existing educational/training resources for hospitality careers?
25. What interest, if any, do you have in developing hiring partnerships with local training providers, and what factors would make such partnerships successful?

Appendix B

Focus Group Protocol – Residents

Questions

Industry Knowledge

1. What kind of jobs do people who work in the hospitality industry have?
2. Where do they work?
3. What are the names of some specific places in and around Napa where people work in these jobs?
4. Who here has worked in one of these jobs? Which one?
5. Who here knows someone who has worked in one of these jobs? Which one?
6. What type of experience or skills do you think a person needs to work in this industry?
7. What type of training do you need to be employed in this industry?
8. What would you say the entry-level jobs pay in this industry?

Job Interests & Perceptions

9. What do you think you might like and dislike about working in the Hospitality industry?
10. Which hospitality jobs do you think would be the best jobs for you to have?
11. What is it about the most popular jobs that make them so? What do you like about them?
12. What don't you like about the least popular jobs?
13. For those of you who chose different jobs, what else would you like to say?
14. Are there specific employers that you would like to work for?

Challenges

15. What would prevent you from getting a job in the hospitality industry?
16. What might make it possible for you to get one of these jobs?

Training

17. Who would attend training if it would prepare you for a job?
18. Who would not? Why not?
19. What else might prevent you from attending training?
20. What might make it possible for you to go?
21. For how long would you be willing to attend training?
22. What times or days are better for you than others?
23. If training were available outside of your neighborhood, where would you be willing to go?
24. Where would you not be willing to go?
25. What specific training providers would you be willing to go to?
26. Who would be willing to pay for training? How much?
27. Who would not be willing to pay for training? Why not?

28. Who has attended training to get you ready for a job in the hospitality industry? Who knows someone who has?
29. What did you or they like or dislike about it?

Job Search

30. Where would you go to find out about job openings?
31. How did you find your last job?
32. Where would you go to find out about training?

Appendix C

Focus Group Protocol – Incumbent Workers

Questions

Background

1. How long have you worked in the hospitality industry (hotels)?
2. How did you get your first job in this industry?
3. Did you have previous experience (either here or in your native country) in this industry?
4. What are some of the good things about working in this industry?
5. What are some of the negative things about working in this industry?

Advancement Opportunities

6. Are you interested in continuing to work in the hospitality industry, specifically in hotels? Why or why not?
7. If you are interested in a career in hospitality, what are your specific career goals, if any?
8. What are other career options in the hospitality field for someone in your position?
9. What would it take for you to advance to these other positions?
10. Would you like more information about potential career options and the kinds of experience, skills, and requirements that are needed to qualify?

Education and Training

11. What education and training, in hospitality or otherwise, have you participated in, if any?
12. Where can you go to get education or training to advance in the hospitality industry?
13. How many of you have used these education or training programs? What was your experience like, and what challenges did you face?
14. How many of you have wanted to use education or training programs but have been unable to do so? What were the issues or challenges that made it difficult to participate?
15. What assistance, if any, would you need to be able to go to training?
16. What in-house education and training programs or benefits, if any, does your employer provide to support advancement in the hospitality industry?
17. How do you hear about these employer programs and training opportunities?
18. How many of you have used employer-based programs or benefits? What was your experience like, and what challenges did you face?
19. If you participated in education and training (employer-based or external), what was the effect on your advancement or potential for advancement?



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