

Summary of NCWorks Career Pathways Certification Application
Edited to remove supporting documents and references.



Career Pathways Title: *Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways in Housekeeping & Maintenance Operations, Guest Services Operations, Food & Beverage (Front of the House and Culinary Operations), Sales & Administrative, Entrepreneurship, and Outdoor Recreation & Experiences*

Sector: Hospitality and Tourism Prosperity

Zone: Western Region

Primary Contact: Nathan Ramsey, Director

Agency: Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (MAWDB) Phone:

Direct: (828)251-7473 Mobile: (828)768-3216

Email: nathan@landofsky.org

Table of Contents

Career Pathways Certification Application for Hospitality & Tourism Mountain Area Workforce Development Board

Overview

Narrative

Section 1: Demand Driven and Data

Informed Narrative

Attachment I.A Four-county survey done by hotel group

Attachment 1.B Survey summary sheet

Attachment I.C Survey summary enlarged

Attachment I.D Industry projections;
NCWorks

Attachment 1.E Henderson County survey and summary

Attachment I.F Transylvania County survey and
summary Attachment I.G Draft survey for Buncombe
and Madison Counties Attachment 1 H
Entrepreneurship area of focus

Section 2: Employer

Engagement

Narrative

Attachment 2.A Hospitality & Tourism Sector Work

Group Attachment 2.B Meeting notes

Attachment 2.C Meeting notes

Attachment 2.D WBL Summit

Attachment 2.E Meeting notes

Attachment 2.F Meeting notes

Attachment 2.G Hackathon

Attachment 2.H Meeting notes

Attachment 2 I Regional meeting
notes

Section 3: Collaboration

Narrative

Attachment 3.A Education & training offerings at AB Teck

Attachment 3.B Education & training offerings at BRCC

Section 4: Career

Awareness

Narrative

Attachment 4.A Public school career cluster alignment with employer Attachment 4.B Public and city school system career pathways in H & T

Section 5: Articulation and

Coordination Narrative

Attachment S.A RACE Agreement (3 pages)

Section 6: Work Based

Learning Narrative

Attachment 6.A High school work-based-learning

Section 7: Multiple Entry/ Exit Points

Narrative

Attachment 7.A Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways
Attachment 7.B Certification career pathway for hospitality &

tourism

Section 8: Evaluation

Other Attachments:

Support Letters from

Employers Signatures of

Workforce Partners

Advanced Manufacturing Career Pathways Timeline

Narrative:

The Local Area has recorded the lowest unemployment rate in North Carolina for almost the past two years with over six years of monthly job growth versus the prior year. For many decades Hospitality and Tourism has accounted for a large percentage of our region's job growth. The Local Area served by the Mountain Area Workforce Board has long been known as a destination for travelers from near and far. From the introduction of rail service to the region in 1879, the growth of the Local Area's economy has been driven, in large part, by tourism. The region, located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains is home to beautiful landscapes and vibrant communities.

From the eclectic urban hub of the region in Asheville to small towns like Brevard, Hot Springs, Marshall, Flat Rock, Black Mountain, Weaverville, and Hendersonville, the Local Area attracts over 10 million visitors annually who enjoy the region's breathtaking natural beauty as well as culturally unique attractions. There endless opportunities for outdoor adventures in the over 1 million acres of public lands in Western North Carolina including DuPont State Forest, Pisgah National Forest, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The French Broad River has become a destination in the region for water recreation. Perhaps one of the most dramatic transformations in the region is occurring along the riverfront in Asheville as art galleries, shops, breweries, and residential housing are remaking the traditional industrial center of historic Asheville into a national tourism destination. Over the last decade, the region has become known as the Craft Brewery Capital of the East Coast. National craft brewers have located in the region like Sierra Nevada, Oskar Blues, and New Belgium. Combined with local craft breweries, including NC's largest homegrown brewery Highland Brewery, over fifty craft breweries now call the region home. The region is home to the Biltmore Estate, America's most visited winery and largest private home. Over 1 million people annually visit Biltmore which is one of the most visited attractions in the State of North Carolina.

Based on data from the NC Department of Commerce, the economic impact in the Local Area from direct visitor spending is over \$1.4 billion annually. The total economic impact in Buncombe County alone according to data from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority hospitality and tourism exceeds \$2.6 billion annually.

The Local Area has seen consistent growth in hospitality and tourism employment for decades. Over the last several years, this growth has accelerated. As a result, employers in the sector are experiencing significant workforce shortages in food and beverage, rooms, sales, and other areas. It is anticipated hiring demand will continue with the growth of the hospitality and tourism sector.

Approximately three thousand five hundred hotel rooms are in the planning stages, under construction or recently opened in the region. This growth has resulted in significant job creation by hospitality and tourism sector employers in the region.

Based on data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) it is projected that the hospitality and tourism sector will add over 5,000 jobs between 2010-2020. Based on data from EMSI, it is projected that accommodation and food services will add almost 3,000 jobs from 2014 to 2021. While the average wage for most sectors in the region is below the state and national averages, only hospitality and tourism along with healthcare sector pay wages that exceed the state average. Average wages in the Buncombe County from accommodation employers is seventeen percent higher than the NC average according to 2013 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has organized work groups for each of our region's target sectors. Twenty individuals serve on the Hospitality & Tourism sector work group including representatives from AB Tech, Blue Ridge Community College, local public schools, Asheville Brewers Alliance, Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, Literacy Council of Asheville and Buncombe County, Asheville NCWorks Career Center, Asheville Independent Restaurants, and seven hospitality and tourism employers. Employers represented on the sector work group included Hampton Inns and Homewood Suites of Asheville, Biltmore Estate, Grove Park Inn Resort and Spa, Tupelo Honey, Hampton Inn Brevard, Aloft Hotel Asheville, McKibbin Hotels, Biltmore Farms, Asheville Doubletree by Hilton, and Hilton Asheville. The list of employers represented in the leadership to develop these career pathways includes employers in all four counties.

While many think of our region's larger and iconic Hospitality & Tourism employers like the Biltmore Company (operator of Biltmore Estate) which employs over 2,500 people full time and Grove Park Inn Resort and Spa which employs over 1,300 people full time, this sector is incredibly diversified with employers of all sizes. Many of these firms are entrepreneurial startups which have met the need for unique experiences and offerings. Most of these firms are closely held, family owned businesses with ownership living in the Local Area. Many nationally branded properties are owned by local residents who are working very hard to provide their employees with opportunities for career advancement and higher wages. The ownership of many of these Hospitality & Tourism establishments comprise the local civic and philanthropic leaders of this region.

As part of the development of these career pathways, we recognize that the Local Area is extremely diverse in our region's Hospitality & Tourism sector. These pathways address employer needs of all sizes, of all types and in all four counties. The Local Area's Hospitality & Tourism sector is so large and comprehensive, virtually every career cluster recognized by the NC Department of Public Instruction can be found in this sector. While many may believe that most of the job opportunities in the Hospitality & Tourism sector are low wage with few opportunities for advancement, the proposed career pathways for this sector demonstrate there are many opportunities for personal and financial fulfillment by pursuing a career in this sector.

Hospitality & Tourism employers have cited workforce availability as one of their top challenges. As our Local Area's unemployment rate has declined, the workforce shortages have become even more exacerbated resulting in more limited growth in this sector than what market demand would provide. The efforts of Hospitality & Tourism employers in the Local Area to develop career pathways in Housekeeping & Maintenance, Guest Services Operations, Food & Beverage (both Front of the House and Culinary Operations), and Sales & Administrative, with offshoots to Entrepreneurship and Outdoor Recreation & Experiences, is driven by workforce

projections and the recognition that certification of these career pathways offer the potential to help them meet that growing need. Hospitality & Tourism employers recognize that solutions to their workforce challenges will be found by increasing regional collaboration between employers, educators, and workforce partners to better utilize existing resources to meet the need for these career opportunities. These career pathways will offer dislocated workers and others who are seeking to meet their life goals for higher incomes and personal fulfillment the opportunity to do so by pursuing a career in Hospitality & Tourism.

Demand-Driven and Data Informed:

The MAWDB began collecting data on the hiring needs and projections for hospitality and tourism jobs in February 2016 beginning with informal meetings with the Asheville Chamber Convention & Visitors Bureau and several Buncombe County hotel general managers. In July 2016, this small group took the lead in surveying 75 hotels/motels/resorts in Buncombe County, 11 in Henderson County, 4 in Madison County, and 5 in Transylvania County. The scope included small, medium and large establishments. The survey obtained data on the estimated number of employees, room count, current and future job openings (2016-2018) in six job categories: housekeeping, food & beverage, maintenance, sales, and A & G. Based on the survey results, currently, in the 4-county area, hotels employ around 4,600 individuals across the six job categories and projected job openings FT and PT (2016- 2018) total approximately 4,950. This projection is greater than the data from the NC Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) which projects that the hospitality and tourism sector will add over 5,000 jobs between 2010-2020. EMSI data projects the accommodation and food services will add almost 3,000 jobs between 2014-2021, a low estimate. LEAD and EMSI data indicate a 15% growth in accommodations and food and beverage across the four counties. NCWorks data projects a 15%-20% change in employment between 2012-2022 in this industry group.

In addition to the research conducted by the hotel leadership (Biltmore Farms, and Aloft), the MAWDB in conjunction with the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority and the Transylvania County Chamber of Commerce, developed surveys that were distributed to their businesses in November 2016. These surveys are still open for completion; more responses are anticipated. Wage averages of 15 different jobs surveyed show a range of \$8-\$18/hour, with many in the \$12-\$15/hour range. A draft survey has been developed for Buncombe and Madison Counties to obtain information on projected openings and minimum and maximum wages for jobs within four primary career pathways: housekeeping, front desk, cook, and customer service. This survey will be reviewed by an advisory committee and will be sent out in January 2017 with follow-up phone calls to encourage participation. Additional survey questions will be explored for entrepreneurship and outdoor experience based upon recent and future focus groups.

In addition, information has been collected from employer focus and work group meetings held in all four counties (See Employer Engagement) On December 15, MA WDB hosted a 4-county workgroup for hospitality and tourism businesses at WCU, Biltmore Park, and Asheville. The purpose of the meeting was to review all input from the four counties and discuss the career pathways that have been developed.

While the average wage for most sectors in the region is below the state and national average, only hospitality and tourism along with healthcare, pay wages that exceed the state average. Average wages in Buncombe County from accommodation employers is 17% higher than the NC average according to 2013 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The growth of jobs in the hospitality and tourism sector has helped the region maintain the lowest unemployment rate in NC. The Local Area has maintained the lowest unemployment rate of any Workforce Board region in NC and the Asheville metro has consistently maintained the lowest unemployment rate of any metro in NC.

General public misconceptions about the hospitality & tourism sector is that all jobs are low-wage without advancement opportunity. In reality, many entry level jobs start at \$9-\$11/hour and progression to higher paying jobs can be rapid. Many well paid managers began their career in an entry positions.

Employer Engagement:

The level of employer engagement across the Local Area is increasing on a monthly basis with employer and workforce partner meetings and email communications. Beginning with eleven key hospitality & tourism employers in February 2016, employer engagement continues to be grow as the board develops regional outreach. The MA- WDB organized workgroup meetings in March and April 2016 to gain employer input.

MAWDB and three hotel managers met in August to discuss progress and an RFP for outreach. In September, several hospitality employers attended the WBL Summit to explore internship and apprenticeship possibilities. To broaden the employer base, A-B Tech hosted a meeting in Madison County on September 19. A joint Henderson and Transylvania County meeting was hosted by Sierra Nevada on October 17. MAWDB held a Holiday Hackathon on November 29 which included 20 attendees for the Hospitality & Tourism Workgroup. On December 8, the Transylvania County Chamber hosted an information meeting for 11 businesses. It is estimated that over 50 business representatives have attended one or more hospitality & tourism meetings. On December 15, 34 people (11 from H&T businesses) attended the H-T Career Pathways Meeting at WCU, Biltmore Park. Robert Foster, Biltmore Farms, volunteered to chair an H&T advisory committee. The committee plans to meet on January 10, 2017 at Asheville DoubleTree-by Hilton.

Employers have been responsive to the needs of high school CTE Directors, the community college's workforce and economic development staff, the NC Work's Career Center staff, and the workforce board. There are approximately 50 employers across the four county area that have demonstrated support in promoting the hospitality & tourism pathway initiative. Letters of support from employers and workforce partners for certification of the hospitality & tourism career pathways are attached at the end of this application.

Employers have been willing to participate in the following activities: tours (for students, parents, teachers, career center staff), soft skills workshops, surveys, presentations to civic and professional groups, on-the-job training, work-based-learning (job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, teacher externships), summer camps, advisory councils, event planning, job and career fairs, classroom speakers, company videos, keynote speakers, event sponsors, project-based learning, curriculum development, focus groups, job postings on NCWorks, interviewing candidates, and hiring candidates. Students@Work Week and the Hospitality Leadership Academy expose middle and high school students to careers in hospitality & tourism. For Buncombe County schools, employers post jobs based on career clusters that are aligned with public school career clusters. The number of internships for community college students has risen in this sector. Numerous employers provide paid internships, many of which result in the hiring of students.

Plans to expand employer engagement in Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties will increase with BRCC's Innovative High School and greater outreach to employers, job seekers, students, veterans and community workforce partners.

Collaborative:

Collaboration among employers, the public school systems, economic development, the community colleges, NCWorks Apprenticeship, and the NCWorks Career Centers has existed for several years. With the implementation of NCWorks and Career Pathways there has been a more organized effort to involve more employers and involve a broader base of workforce partners in activities that target high school students, college students, job seekers, dislocated workers, the underemployed and other populations. The NCWorks Career Pathways Planning Grant received by the Mountain Area Board has assisted with expanding outreach to employers and job seekers.

A-B Tech and BRCC have been involved in developing short-term training based upon employer input. A-B Tech has developed new CE classes in Controlling Alcohol Risks Effectives (CARE), Guest Service Professional Certification, Customer Care and Working Smart. The first two courses are in partnership with Goodwill Industries. The college offers other hospitality classes and certifications for the hospitality industry. A-B Tech also offers an Entrepreneurship Certificate, an AAS in Entrepreneurship, an AAS in Culinary Arts, an AAS in Hospitality Management and an AAS, Diploma, and Certificate in Business Administration. In addition, A-B Tech provides curriculum and continuing education courses in brewing, distilling and fermentation through the Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast.

Blue Ridge Community College offers a Certificate Program in Entrepreneurship, an AAS and Diploma in Business Administration/Marketing and Retailing, and will open the Innovative High School fall of 2017. This school is a partnership between Henderson County Schools and BRCC. The school will combine Early College and CTE training programs and offer career pathways in Culinary and Business. BRCC offers the following degrees and certificates in brewing, distilling, and fermentation:

Brewing Equipment, Packaging & Maintenance: Associate in Applied Science

Degree Brewing Equipment, Packaging & Maintenance: Diploma Program

Brewing Equipment, Packaging & Maintenance: Certificate Program

Brewing Equipment, Packaging & Maintenance: Certificate Program - Brewing

Basics Brewing Equipment, Packaging & Maintenance - Winemaking Basics:

Certificate Program Brewing Equipment, Packaging & Maintenance: Certificate Program – Distillation

BRCC has an articulation agreement with Appalachian University for Brewing. Both BRCC and AB Tech have articulation agreements with Western Carolina University.

WCU recently announced their new BS in Hospitality and Tourism Management which will be offered at the WCU Biltmore Park Instructional Site in South Asheville. For additional information on related programs at educational institutions, see the links below:

AB Tech:

Curriculum: "Brewing Culinary and Hospitality" <https://www.abtech.edu/brewing-culinary-hospitality> & "Business Administration Human Resources Pathway", "Business Administration Marketing and Retailing Pathway", and Business Administration Business Administration Pathway" <https://www.abtech.edu/business-administration/business-administration-overview> and "Entrepreneurship" <https://www.abtech.edu/curriculum-breakouts/business-and-hospitality-education/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurship-aas>

Con Ed: <https://www.abtech.edu/content/publications/schedules#coned>

Blue Ridge CC

Curriculum: "Business and Computer Information Technologies" Business Administration/Marketing and Retailing Pathway

<http://blueridge.edu/academics/business-computer-information-technologies/business-administrationmarketing-and-retailing> & General Business Administration Pathway <http://blueridge.edu/academics/business-computer-information-technologies/business-administration-general-business>

Con Ed: Food and Beverage <http://www.blueridge.edu/continuing-education/career-enhancement/occupational-training/culinary-food-beverage> & Craft Beer Academy <http://www.blueridge.edu/craftbeer> & Outdoor Recreation and Leadership <http://www.blueridge.edu/continuing-education/outdoor> & Maintenance <http://www.blueridge.edu/continuing-education/career-enhancement/occupational-training/industrial-maintenance>

Brevard College:

Bachelor of Arts: Wilderness Leadership & Experiential Education <https://www.brevard.edu/academics/WLEE>

Minor: Wilderness Leadership & Experiential Education

WCU College of Business:

Bachelor of Science: Hospitality and Tourism Management

<http://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/cob/academic-departments/market-entr-sm-ht/hospitality-tourism.aspx>

Minor: 18 hours of study in Hospitality & Tourism

Bachelor of Science: Innovation Leadership and Entrepreneurship

<http://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/cob/academic-departments/market-entr-sm-ht/entrepreneurship.aspx>

Minor: 18 hours of study in Entrepreneurship

Mars Hill University

Bachelor of Science: Business Administration <http://www.mhu.edu/business-administration> &

Montreat College Business Management <http://www.mhu.edu/ags/programs-of-study/business-management>

Bachelor of Science: Business Administration

<https://www.montreat.edu/academics/adult-undergraduate/bachelor-business-administration/>

Articulation and Coordination:

There are articulation agreements in place with all five public school systems and the NC Community College System via RACE. This agreement builds on, and enhances, the state-wide articulation between public schools and the community colleges. This agreement allows high school students to earn college credit through CTE classes and apply them in the Career and College Promise Program, or as a stand-alone transfer. The classes for the five school systems are listed in the CTE Course Sheets.

Both A-B Tech and BRCC have an articulation policy between Continuing Education and Curriculum Programs. There are transfer articulation agreements in place between BRCC and Appalachian State University for a degree in Brewing. The community colleges and WCU are in discussions about creating an articulation agreement for Hospitality Management. WCU currently has an articulation agreement for Hospitality Management with Isothermal Community College.

Both colleges and the high school CTE directors evaluate the need for new articulations on a yearly basis.

Work-Based Learning:

Currently all high schools offer work-based learning opportunities for high school students. WIOA provides monies for paid work experience for in-school and out-of-school youth and on- the job training for out-of-school youth. The public schools offer field trips to hospitality employers and sponsor Students@Work and Teachers@Work to expose both to career opportunities in this sector. These programs are a partnership of local public schools and the NC Business Committee for Education.

Green Opportunities and Goodwill also provide work- based learning for WIOA eligible Out-of-School youth. In addition, the workforce board's business services coordinator provides OJT contracts for out-of-school youth, Adults and Dislocated Workers.

Work-based learning is already incorporated into many of the hospitality related programs in the community colleges through paid internships. A-B Tech and BRCC have work-based-learning coordinators who work with businesses to provide internships and co-ops for programs of study aligned with manufacturing and other areas of study. Their success rate of internships leading to employment is high.

A-B Tech's WBL Coordinator manages internships (non-credit), (co-ops) credit, direct hires, referrals, special projects, apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeships. Currently the coordinator has 106 interns, 116 Job Placements, 9 Pre-Apprenticeships, and 2 Apprentices in manufacturing. BRCC has 74 internships this semester. Opportunities for internships are available and curriculum changes in Hospitality & Tourism and Entrepreneurship and Outdoor Recreation & Experiences departments will funnel more students into manufacturing internships in the future.

The hospitality and tourism career pathways will expand on work-based learning opportunities to increase engagement among employers, students and job seekers. The board expects the number of state sponsored apprenticeships to grow slowly and interest in other forms of work-based learning to grow at a faster rate. The board recently conducted a survey to gauge knowledge of and interest in apprenticeships. The Western Region's Apprenticeship Specialist presented the findings to the MAWDB and will be working with the board's business service coordinator to follow-up with the companies requesting information.

Multiple Entry/Exit Points:

The Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways are designed to serve: high school students, high school graduates, high school equivalency students, out-of-school youth, two and four-year college students, college graduates, veterans, the unemployed and underemployed, dislocated workers, individuals with barriers and disabilities, transitional workers and incumbent workers.

The Pathways in Housekeeping, Guest Services, Food & Beverage, Culinary, Sales & Administrative, with offshoots of Entrepreneurship and Outdoor Recreation & Experiences offer many entry and exit points at four levels: entry, intermediate, advanced, and management positions.

Because Mountain Area has such a diverse hospitality sector, employers prefer to illustrate many options for job seekers and incumbents and thus the career pathway is multifaceted. An individual can enter at the entry, intermediate, advanced or management levels if he/she meets the education/credentialing and work experience requirements. They can also exit at any point.

An individual could enter in the following ways:

- 1) From high school into work, continuing education, curriculum or apprenticeship,
- 2) From continuing ed. to curriculum
- 3) From work into continuing ed. or curriculum programs

Points of exit from pathways could be:

- 1) From work-based learning
- 2) From continuing ed. Courses
- 3) From apprenticeships
- 4) From certificate, diploma, or degree programs. Students enrolled in a continuing-ed, class or program could earn a certificate, and then articulate that credit into a diploma or degree program.

The proposed career pathways will focus primarily on placing individuals in entry level jobs with the addition of short-term training and credentials to promote advancement and wage increase. Secondly, the focus will be on referring community college students to intermediate level jobs. And third, the focus will be on advancing incumbent workers through additional education and/or short-term/customized training.

Evaluation:

The Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways will be evaluated on a schedule to be determined by the partners, but at a minimum, yearly. Each partner will be responsible for providing data to the Board's Business Services Coordinator for compilation and distribution. The Hospitality & Tourism Advisory Committee will review the data and offer suggestions for improvement. Each workforce partner was consulted on what they could track.

High School - Traditional CTE students and In-School and Out-of-School students

of CTE concentrators in hospitality & tourism, marketing, culinary and business

of credentials earned

of work-based learning activities

of students that earn articulated credit

of articulated credits earned

Community College

of students enrolled in Career & College Promise in hospitality & tourism, marketing, culinary and business programs

of students enrolled in CE and CU programs

of students that complete CE and CU programs

of internships/co-ops in hospitality & tourism, marketing, culinary and business jobs

of job placements

of events promoting hospitality & tourism careers

NCWorks Career Centers

- # of job postings in hospitality & tourism by ONET Group
- # of referrals to hotels, restaurants, resorts
- # of services provided to businesses
- # of WIOA sponsored short-term and long term training participants
- # of OJTs in hospitality & tourism
- # of events for promoting hospitality & tourism
- # job orders by ONET Group

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board

- # of local hospitality & tourism meetings (per county)
- # of regional meetings (4-county)
- # of businesses participating in hospitality & tourism activities
- # of customer surveys returned
- # of events promoting hospitality & tourism
- # of placements in training or jobs through NEG planning grant

Employers

- # of referrals and hires from programs of study (high school and college)
- # of referrals and hires from NCWorks
- # of college internships, co-ops, and WBL opportunities
- # of NC registered apprenticeships
- # of work-based learning events for high school students job shadowing, Students@Work
- # of events promoting careers in hospitality & tourism job fairs, tours, speakers in schools, social media outreach

The Mountain Area Workforce Board is requesting certification of seven career pathways for hospitality & tourism. The Board has strong support of all workforce partners in its' local area and believes the groundwork has been laid for successful implementation.

Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways Timeline

July 2013: AB Tech Student Culinary Team ranked second in the nation.

<https://www.abtech.edu/content/business-and-hospitality-education/culinary-arts-and-hospitality/culinary-arts/Culinary-Arts-Overview>

November 2013: Henderson County TDA "Destination Research & Strategic Direction" report released by Young Strategies. <http://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/henderson-county-final-research-study.pdf>

2015: Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) along with Hotel General Managers of about ten ownership groups in Buncombe County form the Hotel General Managers working group to address workforce challenges in Hospitality & Tourism sector in light of the growth of the sector and with the addition of about 2000 new hotel rooms being constructed in the community. The Hotel General Managers working group meets on a monthly basis and has met with many workforce partners in the region.

August 4, 2015: AB Tech Student Culinary Team Scores Third Place in 2015 American Culinary Federation national competition. <https://www.abtech.edu/news/a-b-tech-student-culinary-team-scores-third-place-2015-national-competition>

February 2016: Dr. Stephen Morse of Western Carolina University at Henderson County Tourism Conference: Tourism vital to county economy. <http://www.blueridgenow.com/news/20160225/speaker-tourism-vital-to-county-economy>

February 2016: Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's Hospitality & Tourism sector work group is formed, includes individuals representing the following employers: Grove Park Inn Resort and Spa, Biltmore Company, Biltmore Farms Hotels, McKibbin Hotels including Asheville Aloft Hotel, Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, Hampton Inn Brevard, Asheville Brewers Alliance, Tupelo Honey Restaurant, and Hampton Inns/Homewood Suites. Workforce partners included in the H&T sector work group include Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools, Blue Ridge Community College, A-BTech, Asheville NCWorks Career Center, Literacy Council of Asheville and Buncombe County.

March 23, 2016: All-day meeting of Hospitality & Tourism Sector Work Group along with other community workforce partners at Western Carolina University's Biltmore Park Instructional Site.

April 21, 2016: Meeting of Hospitality & Tourism Sector Work Group to develop strategy for growing talent needed for the sector, follow up meeting to the Hackathon "Great Jobs WNC 2020" all-day H&T sector meeting.

May 2016: Goodwill of Northwest NC begins hotel job shadowing program at Goodwill Career Center in West Asheville to recruit and train individuals for careers in hotel management and operations. <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2016/07/08/hotel-job-shadowing-program-provides-intros-managers/86814358/>

May 12, 2016: The University of North Carolina Board of Governors authorizes Western Carolina University to begin offering its bachelor's degree program in Hospitality & Tourism at its instructional site at Biltmore Park Town Square in Asheville. The program "at Asheville is targeted at students with associate degrees and interest in the hospitality and tourism field, especially students in related programs at Asheville - Buncombe Technical, Blue Ridge, and Isothermal Community Colleges. <http://news-prod.wcu.edu/2016/05/wcu-authorized-offer-hospitality-tourism-program-asheville-site/>

June 17, 2016: Mountain Area Workforce Development Board applies to the NC Department of Commerce for a planning grant to develop career pathways for the Hospitality and Tourism sector. Application includes preliminary career paths for hotels based on direction and leadership from the Hotel General Managers working group in collaboration with the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Preliminary career paths include Housekeeping & Maintenance Operations, Guest Service Operations, Food & Beverage (Front of the House), Food & Beverage (Culinary Operations), and Sales & Administrative.

August 2, 2016: NC Department of Commerce approves the planning grant request by Mountain Area Workforce Development Board to develop an NCWorks Certified Career Pathway in the Hospitality and Tourism sector to serve Dislocated Workers.

September 14, 2016: Regional Work-Based Learning Summit held at Western Carolina University's Biltmore Park Instructional Site with several Hospitality and Tourism employers attending to learn and discuss ways of expanding Work-Based Learning at employers in all sectors of our region's economy.

September 19, 2016: Meeting of Madison County Hospitality & Tourism employers and workforce partners at A-B Tech Madison Campus to better understand the unique needs of Madison County H&T employers.

September - December, 2016: Workforce surveys were distributed to Hospitality & Tourism employers in all four counties in the Local Area.

October 17, 2016: Meeting of Henderson County and Transylvania County Hospitality & Tourism employers and workforce partners at Sierra Nevada Brewery in Mills River to better understand the unique needs of H&T employers in those two counties.

October 17, 2016: Conde Nast Traveler names Asheville as the #10 favorite city in the United States of those cities under 150,000 in population.

<http://www.cntraveler.com/galleries/2015-10-08/top-small-cities-in-the-us-readers-choice-awards>

November 3, 2016: Mountain Area Workforce Development Board submits application to the NC Department of Commerce for initial \$150,000 implementation grant to support outreach and for job training for Dislocated Workers for careers in Hospitality and Tourism.

November 15, 2016: Request for Proposals (RFP) released by Mountain Area Workforce Development Board for Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways outreach campaign targeted to Dislocated Workers.

November 29, 2016: Hospitality and Tourism sector work group meets at the "Holiday Hackathon" to discuss the development of H&T career pathways in the region and to develop strategies to reach Dislocated Workers for training for H&T careers.

December 3, 2016: AB Tech culinary team brings home 18th state title.
<http://mountainx.com/blogwire/a-b-tech-culinary-team-brings-horne-18th-state-title/>

December 6, 2016: Travel media company "Lonely Planet" announces that Asheville, NC is the #1 destination the nation as the places they recommend travelers go in 2017.

<https://mountainx.com/blogwire/asheville-tops-lonely-planets-best-in-the-u-s-2017/>

December 8, 2016: Meeting of Transylvania County Hospitality & Tourism employers and workforce partners at the Brevard/Transylvania County Chamber of Commerce to better understand the unique needs of H&T employers in this county.

December 15, 2016: Meeting of Hospitality and Tourism employers in four county Mountain Area Workforce Development Region met at Western Carolina University's Biltmore Park Instructional Site to establish final details of the region's Hospitality and Tourism Career Pathways. Local Area's Hospitality & Tourism employer survey results released.

December 16, 2016: Due Date for Proposals from RFP for Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways outreach campaign targeted to Dislocated Workers.

January 10, 2017: Meeting of our region's Hospitality & Tourism Employer Advisory Group at the Doubletree Hotel hosted by General Manager Robert Foster to lead the implementation of the Local Area's H&T Career Pathways.