

SBS IN THE NEWS

Queens Tribune

Health Workforce Center Open In Boro

By Vladic Ravich
Thursday, November 5, 2009

With unemployment in Queens above 9 percent and rising, the City is using federal stimulus dollars to open a free healthcare career center in Long Island City to give residents a leg up in this expanding field.

The Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center will open within LaGuardia Community College, and will be open to everyone. The center is expected to generate more than 750 job placements or promotions within the first two years of operation.

The center will focus on training New Yorkers to enter careers as patient-care technicians, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses, among other health-related occupations.

"The Center will provide a full range of training and job placement services to new jobseekers, incumbent workers to assist businesses to strengthen the healthcare industry in New York City," said LaGuardia College President Gail Mellow.

According to the center, the healthcare sector has continued to grow despite the recession, with the City gaining almost 14,000 healthcare jobs from August 2008 to August 2009. Workforce1 has seen a 91 percent increase in healthcare placement over the last year.

The field is expected to continue to grow because of factors like an aging population, rising life expectancies and increased reliance on long-term care facilities.

The City has received nearly \$32 million of federal stimulus dollars to provide placement services for 10,000 New Yorkers over the next two years. The total three-year budget for the Workforce1

Healthcare Career Center is \$8.4 million, with \$2.5 million coming from federal coffers.

The Workforce1 center is also tailoring its programs to an immigrant population with a "Welcome Back Center," which will offer services to assist internationally trained healthcare workers to re-enter health careers in New York City.

The Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center is the second of these sector-focused career centers opened by the City in the past year. In June 2008, the City's Center for Economic Opportunity funded a Workforce1 Transportation Career Center in Jamaica, which has already placed over 1,400 workers in jobs.

In the next month, the city will continue this approach and open a third sector-based center in Brooklyn that will focus on placing New Yorkers in jobs in the manufacturing industry.

Anyone interested in utilizing the Workforce1 centers should call 311 for more information.