



Hospitality Center of Excellence

Overview

Thanks to your hard work, the Hospitality Center of Excellence hosted at Columbia Basin College is gearing up and building a team. Now we are working alongside a bipartisan coalition for continued funding to sustain and expand its impact.

Washington state is home to 13 Centers of Excellence, with the Hospitality Center being the newest addition. These centers serve as an intersection of education, business, labor and industry, promoting economic growth and opportunity throughout the state.

Each center focuses on a specific industry that significantly supports the state's economy. Centers of Excellence are based at colleges around the state and collaborate with Washington's 34 community and technical colleges. This brings forth a standardized credential system for the hospitality labor force.

Our great state attracts around 102 million visitors a year, boasting champion sports teams, lively restaurant scenes, and numerous national parks. The hospitality and tourism industries generate \$2.2 billion in B&O sales tax revenue and provide approximately 278,000 jobs annually for Washingtonians.

Talking points

By maintaining funding for the Hospitality Center of Excellence, we can:

- Source and develop top candidates to address workforce shortages.
- Provide opportunities for current employees to upskill and grow within the industry.

- Foster innovation by creating a platform for industry leaders, researchers, and entrepreneurs to share ideas.
- Create a credentialed workforce of passionate employees to ensure Washington remains a leader in the tourism sector and continues to attract visitors from around the world.

When speaking with lawmakers, emphasize that continued funding for the Hospitality Center of Excellence will:

- Highlight and expose participants to diverse career paths they may not have considered.
- Provide a platform for development and guidance, allowing partners to research and develop tactical skills.
- Build networks through collaboration and mentorship.
- Offer insight into one of Washington's most impactful industries.

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