

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NYC DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES ANNOUNCES NEW TRAINING PATHWAY FOR IMMIGRANT NEW YORKERS TO ENTER HEALTH CARE FIELD**

***Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program Helps Immigrant New Yorkers Achieve Higher Wage Career Path Through Tailored Training***

**New York** – The New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) today announced the launch of the Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program which provides tailored training to immigrant New Yorkers with limited English proficiency. This program, launched by SBS's New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (NYACH), will help immigrant workers achieve higher wages and enter a career path as a Medical Assistant. The program is run out of SBS's Workforce1 Career Center in Washington Heights and was developed in partnership with LaGuardia Community College and Robin Hood.

The training program supports New Yorkers in overcoming language barriers and opens up access to career paths in healthcare. The program will also help meet the high demand for a linguistically and culturally competent healthcare workforce to serve an increasingly diverse client population across the city. The two-part training program offers an initial contextualized English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum followed by a newly redesigned, industry-informed medical assistant curriculum that incorporates core competencies required for today's healthcare workforce and will prepare participants to obtain full-time employment as medical assistants in the City's community health centers, hospital-based clinics, and private physician practices.

"New York is proud to welcome and extend opportunities to those who immigrate to our city. The Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program announced today will open a new, higher-wage career path for immigrant New Yorkers," said **Gregg Bishop, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. "This program will also help hospitals and clinics meet the growing demand for linguistically and culturally-competent medical assistants across our city."

"This program opens the door for people who are immigrants to get into a medical setting, serve their communities, and improve the quality of healthcare for non-English speakers," said **Luis Alarcon, a Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program student**.

"In today's fast changing healthcare environment, CHCs have a difficult task recruiting candidates with appropriate skills that meet the needs of our communities. Apicha CHC welcomes the opportunity to be part of an important initiative that helps fulfill that need by recruiting people from the communities we serve, helping them improve their language skills and training them to become the Medical Assistants of the future, ready for the implementation of Meaningful Use, PCMH and DSRIP," said **Mihaela Mihai, Director of Clinic Operations at Apicha Community Health Center (CHC)**.

"The new Workforce1 Center is sure to be a tremendous resource for the Washington Heights community—in particular, those for whom English is a second language. LaGuardia Community College is excited to contribute our expertise helping adults go back to school to better the lives of their families and themselves, to the suite of services offered at the Center. Co-locating our Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program for English language learners at the new Workforce1 Center means that our participants can access free training for this in-demand field, using industry-relevant material that reflects feedback from healthcare employers on the skills they want to see in medical assistant candidates, as well as attend resume writing workshops, hone their interview skills, and connect to a number of invaluable services all in one convenient and easily accessible location," said **Francesca Fiore, Assistant Dean, Workforce Development & Business Services, Division of Adult and Continuing Education, LaGuardia Community College**.

Once participants complete the ESL portion, participants will enter professional skills-based training. Training includes administrative and clinical components, focuses on communication and teamwork skills, preparation for the Clinical Medical Assistant, Electrocardiogram, and Phlebotomy certification exams, and a paid internship. The training is open to New Yorkers across all 5 boroughs.

The pilot cohorts, which are now underway, include 44 students who hail from a wide array of countries including the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, China, Haiti, Bangladesh, Peru, Pakistan, Mexico, Cuba, Burkina Faso, Nepal, Indonesia, Mali, Togo, and Vietnam. The program takes place on a part-time evening and weekend schedule to allow participants to continue their current employment if applicable. The course is currently being offered at the Washington Heights Workforce1 Career Center.

Individuals who are interested in enrolling in future cohorts for the Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program or other services may contact the Washington Heights Workforce1 Career Center at (929) 841-5050 or [washingtonheightswf1@edsolutions.com](mailto:washingtonheightswf1@edsolutions.com).

## **NYACH**

NYACH is an industry partnership, bringing together multiple stakeholders of the healthcare workforce development system in order to address the industry's rapidly changing labor force needs. NYACH is an initiative of the public-private partnership between the NYC Department of Small Business Services and the NYC Workforce Funders. For more information, visit <http://nyachnyc.org/>.

## **About LaGuardia Community College**

LaGuardia Community College located in Long Island City, Queens, educates more than 50,000 New Yorkers annually through degree, certificate, and continuing education programs. Our guiding principle Dare To Do More reflects our belief in the transformative power of education—not just for individuals, but for our community and our country—creating pathways for achievement and safeguarding the middle class. LaGuardia is a national voice on behalf of community colleges, where half of all US college students study. Part of the City University of New York (CUNY), the College reflects the legacy of our namesake, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the former NYC mayor beloved for his championing the underserved. Since our doors opened in 1971, our programs regularly become national models for pushing boundaries to give people of all backgrounds access to a high quality, affordable college education. We invite you to join us in imagining what our students, our community, and our country can become. Visit [www.LaGuardia.edu](http://www.LaGuardia.edu) to learn more.

## **About Robin Hood**

Robin Hood, New York's largest poverty-fighting organization, finds, funds and creates over 200 of the most effective programs, to help 1.8 million New Yorkers learn and earn their way out of poverty.

## **About the Department of Small Business Services (SBS)**

SBS helps unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For more information on all SBS services, go to [nyc.gov/sbs](http://nyc.gov/sbs), call 311, and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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