Education and Training Classes Move Ahead Online

From the Executive Director
Robert J. Delaney

40 years ago, the founders of the Institute for Labor Studies and Research (ILSR) shared a vision of creating an institution that focused on designing and delivering education and training programs targeted at improving and increasing the skills and abilities of working Rhode Islanders. The goal was to help make individuals who completed its programs and services, and Rhode Island as a whole, more competitive and responsive in a changing job market and an ever-changing world.

Over the last 40 years the ILSR has supported both Rhode Islanders and the state through several industrial and economic downturns as well as storms and disasters that required everyone to come together as a larger community. The current COVID-19 crisis challenges us all to think about new and innovative ways to provide our education and training programs and maintain the relationships so important to us at a time when most Rhode Islanders are confined to their homes.

For the last three weeks the Institute Staff has been meeting virtually many times each day to plan and design ways to offer our programs using a variety of technology-based programs. Here are some of the highlights.

ESOL CLASSES

ILSR’s priority is to continually provide quality language education in service to the adult learners in our classes and moving forward, to enroll new learners remotely. The Workplace Adult Education Project (WAEP) instructors and staff have been working very hard to support participants with the transition to distance learning in the eight (8) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes currently in session. A new online ESOL class for Unite Here hospitality workers is scheduled to start in April. We have been working to overcome the sudden challenges, especially for the adult learners with the lowest levels of English proficiency and digital literacy.

Instructors are using a wide variety of distance learning platforms and applications including: WhatsApp, Email, Google Classroom, Zoom video conferencing, Google Meet, as well as a new website developed by Adult Literacy Program Assistant and Digital Literacy Instructor, Margarita Martinez. These platforms allow students to continue their English language learning from home.

For registration contact Margarita Martinez at mmartinez@riilsr.org

TEACHER ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

ILSR successfully transitioned two cohorts of Teacher Assistant (TA) certification program participants to online learning in just one week. This was made possible by Fatima Martin, Pathways Coordinator, and recently hired staff member, Haley De La Rosa, Work Readiness Specialist.

Staff provided program participants and instructors assistance with uploading the application for video conferencing, and a website was specifically designed as an additional resource. Step-by-step instructions were given on how to connect and prepare for class. The Pathways component of the TA program, serving English language learners and youth with barriers to employment, is on track to meet all enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes despite the recent disruptions to class schedules.

For registration contact Fatima Martin at fmartin@riilsr.org
LABOR VISION

Amidst the COVID-19 crisis the fight for working Rhode Islanders continues and with that LaborVision will continue to share their stories. We will continue interviewing political, labor, and community leaders using Zoom meetings. Please reach out to Erica Hammond (ehammond@riilsr.org) if you are interested in joining us on the show.

During this trying time LaborVision cannot be found on your local TV channels. We direct all our viewers to watch our most recent episodes on our new website. We apologize for this inconvenience, and hope all of you are staying safe, positive, and well.

Be sure to check out LaborVision’s new website: www.laborvisionri.org

LEADERSHIP FOR A FUTURE 2020

The Leadership for a Future class of 2020 has transitioned to a virtual classroom. All Monday evenings sessions until further notice will take place through Zoom meetings and all program speakers will be invited to join for their respective session. All sixteen participants have begun discussing topics for their Community Action Projects (CAPs) and this week will begin drafting their Stories of Self, Us, and Now.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, understanding and addressing the issues affecting our communities has become more important than ever. During our first virtual class these were some of the issues we discussed; access to healthcare, lack of employment, access to robust unemployment benefits, food security, political education, civic engagement, social emotional supports for disadvantaged youth and individuals struggling with mental health, and workplace health and safety. Participants plan to address many of these issues through their CAPs.

For questions contact Erica Hammond at ehammond@riilsr.org

INTRODUCTION TO HOSPITALITY APPRENTICESHIP PLANNING

The Introduction to Hospitality Apprenticeship planning team continues to meet virtually. Our partners at UniteHere Local 26 and BEST Corps., as well as our four partner hotels; the Omni Providence, the Graduate Providence, Twin River Casino, and the Renaissance Providence have been hit significantly by the COVID-19 Crisis. Now, more than ever, we must continue this work.

The apprenticeship standards are being developed with our partners and Apprenticeship RI.

For questions contact Erica Hammond at ehammond@riilsr.org

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

We are pleased to announce we have a new member joining our team. Lorina Harte has been hired as a Program Coordinator and will oversee all aspects of the Occupational Health and Safety, Workers’ Compensation, Rights on the Job, and Sexual Harassment Training. We are currently developing a process that would allow us to administer this training virtually. Lorina will also continue strengthening our partnership with RICOSH.

For questions contact Lorina Harte at lharte@riilsr.org