



Workforce Insider

Brought to you by

By Tony Burton • Sep 09, 2026

Smart Brevity® count: 3.5 mins...964 words

In this month's Workforce Insider:

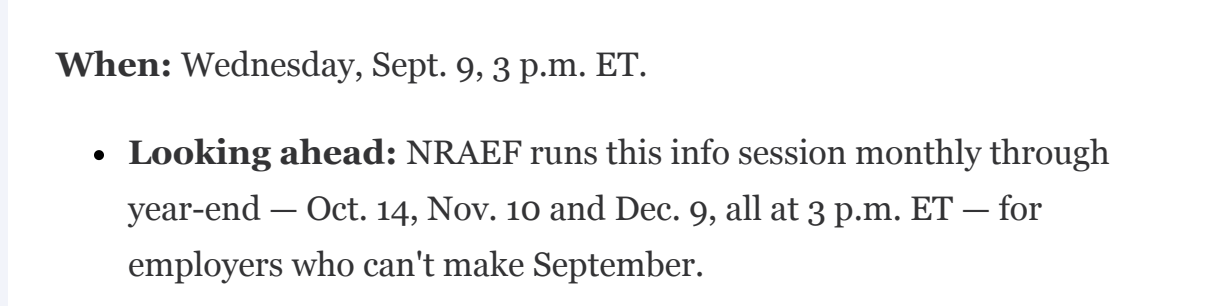
- **Today at 2 PM CST:** [Culinary & Hospitality Apprenticeship Info Session on Employee Retention](#)
- **Discuss Workforce Retention at 2026 Hospitality Conference:** [Chowgirls Catering to Discuss Intentional Training](#) at this month's [2026 Hospitality Conference](#)
- **Oktoberfest Returns October 1:** [Celebrate and Contribute to Foundation Scholarships](#)
- **September Job Fairs:** Employers Encouraged to Contact [Oksana](#) (for September 15 Fair in St. Paul) and [Jennifer](#) (for September 30 Fair in Duluth) to get in front of job candidates
- **The ProStart Pipeline:** New Restaurant Concept [Square Roots](#) Opens This Month
- **Mark Your Calendars for November 19:** [2026 Stars of the Future](#)
- **Ensure Food Safety:** [Get ServSafe Certified At a Class Near You!](#)

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Today at 2 PM CST: Culinary & Hospitality Apprenticeship Info Session



Why it matters: Registered apprenticeships improve retention and upskill employees at no cost to employers, with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) team providing support that makes setup easy.

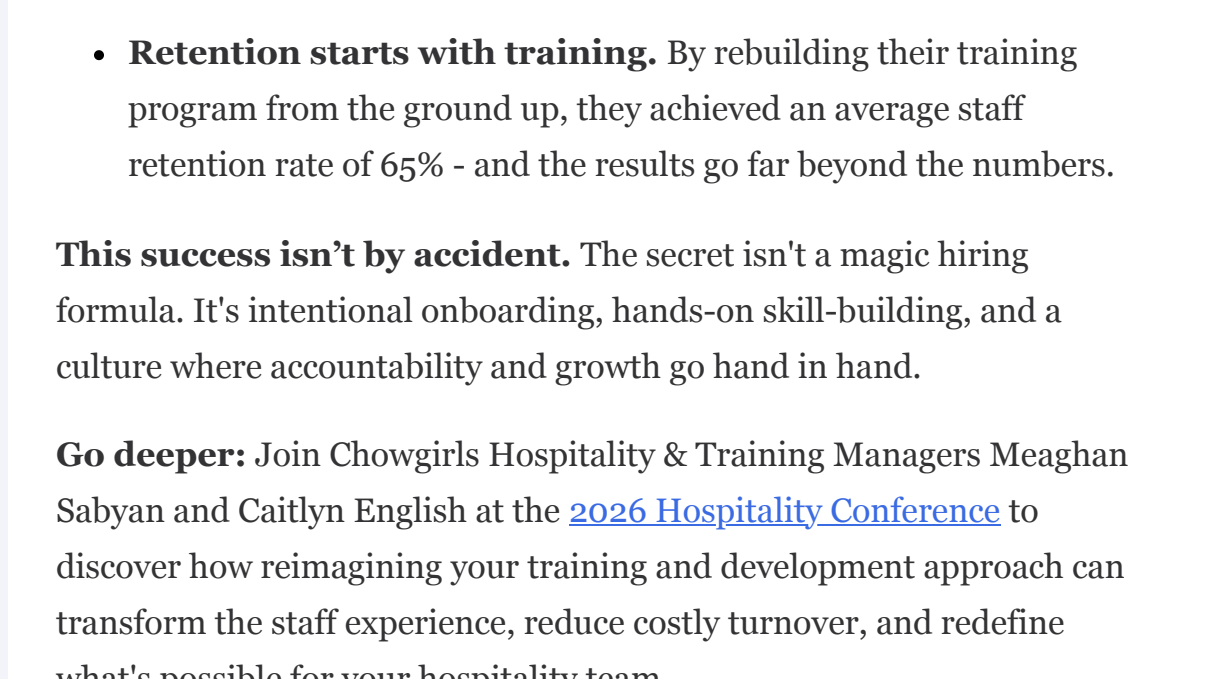
- **The details:** The [virtual info session](#) covers NRAEF's apprenticeship programs for Line Cook, Assistant Kitchen Manager, Kitchen Manager, Assistant Restaurant Manager and Restaurant Manager. Free to attend.

When: Wednesday, Sept. 9, 3 p.m. ET.

- **Looking ahead:** NRAEF runs this info session monthly through year-end — Oct. 14, Nov. 10 and Dec. 9, all at 3 p.m. ET — for employers who can't make September.

[Register Now!](#)

Chowgirls Join Hospitality Conference Line Up to Talk Employee Retention



In Case You Missed It: [Meaghan Sabyan](#) and [Caitlyn English](#) from [Chowgirls](#) will be joining the [2026 Hospitality Conference](#) lineup to talk Workforce Retention.

About their session, "The Power of Intentional Training":

The reality: Hospitality runs on people - yet the industry loses them at a staggering rate, with retention hovering between 10–20%. Chowgirls decided to stop accepting that as inevitable.

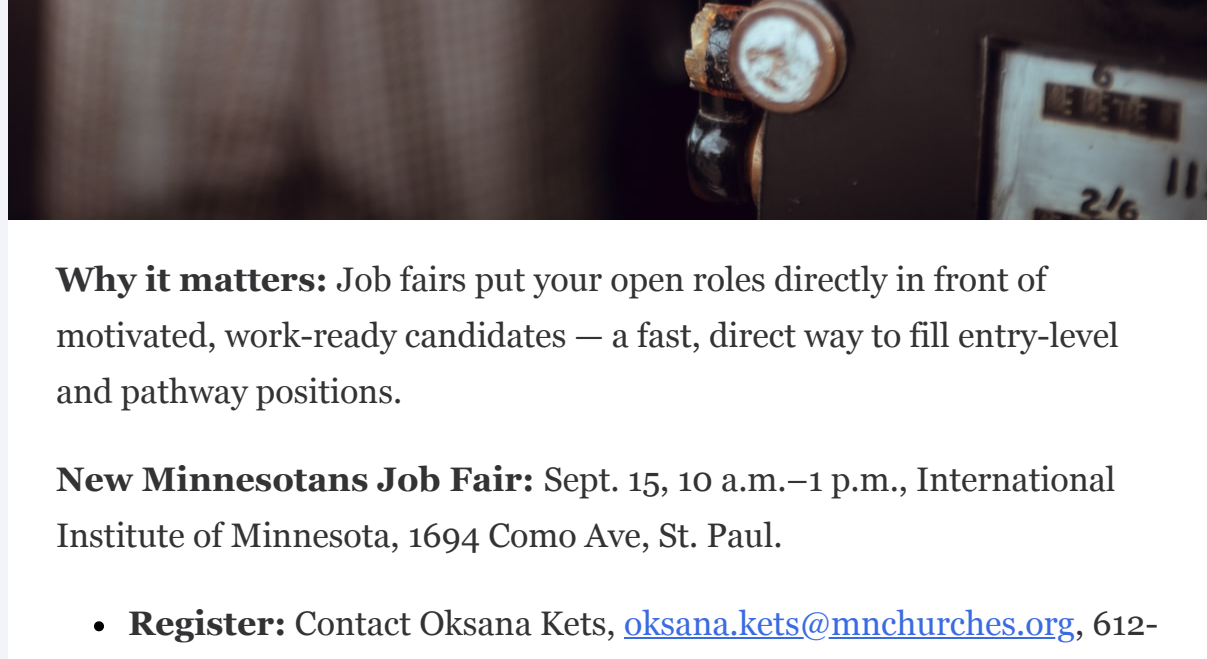
- **Retention starts with training.** By rebuilding their training program from the ground up, they achieved an average staff retention rate of 65% - and the results go far beyond the numbers.

This success isn't by accident. The secret isn't a magic hiring formula. It's intentional onboarding, hands-on skill-building, and a culture where accountability and growth go hand in hand.

Go deeper: Join Chowgirls Hospitality & Training Managers Meaghan Sabyan and Caitlyn English at the [2026 Hospitality Conference](#) to discover how reimagining your training and development approach can transform the staff experience, reduce costly turnover, and redefine what's possible for your hospitality team.

[Register Now!](#)

Oktoberfest Returns: Join Industry Colleagues for a Festive Foundation Fundraiser



Oktoberfest is back! Join Hospitality Minnesota Education Foundation, the Greater Minneapolis Hotel Association and the Minneapolis Tourism Improvement District on October 1, 2026 at the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis as we team up for an Oktoberfest fundraiser to support the Foundation's scholarship fund.

[Register Here!](#)

Get Before Qualified Job Candidates this Month!



Why it matters: Job fairs put your open roles directly in front of motivated, work-ready candidates — a fast, direct way to fill entry-level and pathway positions.

New Minnesotans Job Fair: Sept. 15, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., International Institute of Minnesota, 1694 Como Ave, St. Paul.

- **Register:** Contact Oksana Kets, oksana.kets@mnychurches.org, 612-463-3353.
- Hosted by the Minnesota Resettlement Network's Employment and Career Supports (ECS) program, connecting employers with work-authorized new Minnesotans seeking roles in hospitality, healthcare, warehousing, security and food & beverage. ECS also helps with onboarding, transportation, interpretation, and early job-challenge support.

Fair Chance Reentry Job Fair: Sept. 30, 1–4 p.m., CareerForce Duluth, 402 W. First St.

- **Register:** Registration link available on the event flyer; questions to Jennifer Gast, Jennifer.Gast@state.mn.us, 651-900-0255.
- Co-hosted by the Minnesota Department of Corrections, DEED, True North Goodwill, CareerForce and the City of Duluth, connecting employers with justice-impacted job seekers. Employer registration due Sept. 18.

Square Roots Opens in the Coliseum This Month, Building Its Workforce Pipeline From ProStart



Why it matters: The new Afro-Creole restaurant draws its workforce pipeline directly from Hospitality Minnesota's ProStart program, giving high schoolers a paid, credentialed pathway into the industry — and giving employers a pool of trained, certified graduates.

- **The details:** [Square Roots](#), a 501(c)(3) social enterprise founded by Official Fried Chicken owner Jared Brewington, opens this month in the historic Coliseum at 2708 E. Lake St., Minneapolis.

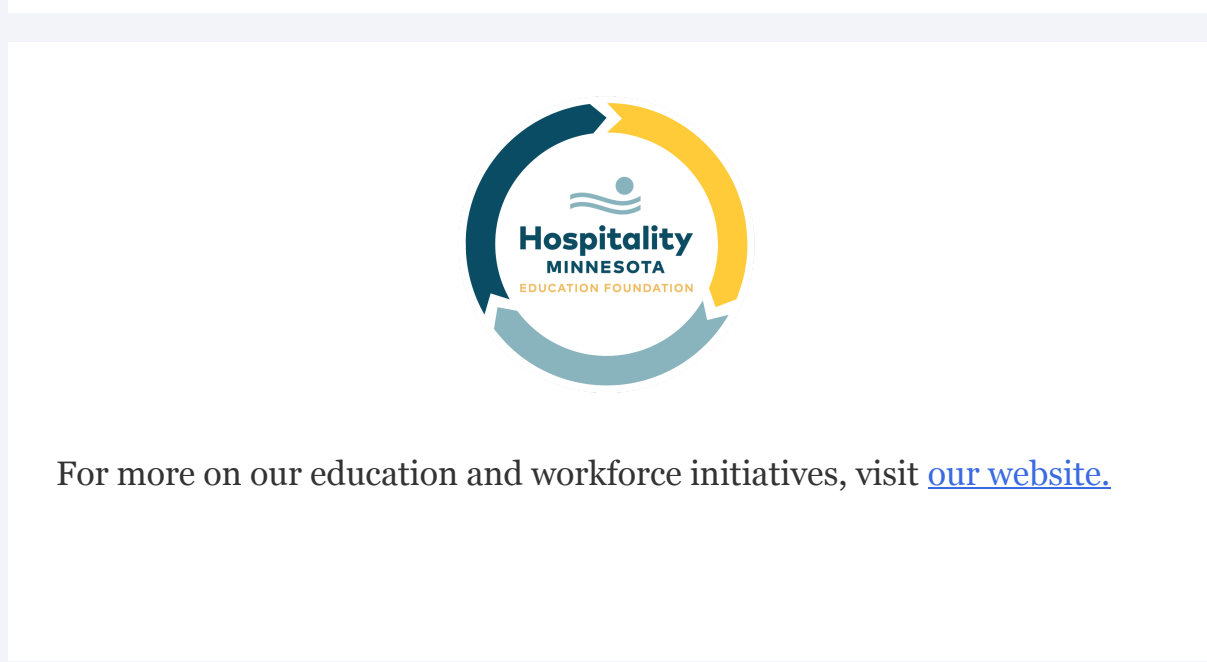
How it works: Restaurant sales cover operating costs; philanthropic dollars fund the Square Roots Hospitality Residency, a six-month, \$18-an-hour program for ages 18–24. Chef Elliott Jones leads 13-person cohorts twice a year, starting in October, drawing residents from ProStart and local youth-serving nonprofits. Graduates earn a ServSafe certificate and guaranteed job placement.

- **By the numbers:** \$150,000 in seed funding from the John and Denise Graves Foundation and the Minneapolis Tourism Improvement District. Workforce programs are expected to make up 40% of the restaurant's annual revenue.

Go deeper: Join the mailing list for opening announcements and program updates.

[Email Jennifer!](#)

Join us for Stars of the Future on November 19, 2026



Stars of the Future Returns! We are excited to announce that Stars of the Future is returning November 19, 2026, at the Renaissance Depot.

- **Why it matters:** This event is more than a fundraiser to support Minnesota students pursuing their dreams in culinary, lodging, tourism, and hospitality management, it's a night to celebrate the spirit, drive, and potential of our industry's future workforce.

Be inspired by our industry's future! Join us this November to invest in the leaders of tomorrow!

[Register today!](#)

Get ServSafe Certified at Your Area's Next Class!

Did you know: Minnesota law requires at least one certified food manager on staff at nearly every food establishment. We've partnered with Food Safety Guy to make certification simple—check our Event Calendar for upcoming ServSafe classes!

- **Go deeper:** [Click here](#) to explore ServSafe products & courses.

For more on our education and workforce initiatives, visit [our website](#).

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