



Workforce Insider

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By Tony Burton • Jan 08, 2025

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You're Invited: Support Hospitality's Workforce at Stars of the Future



You're Invited: Join ProStart Educator Mary Levinski, the award-winning Sauk Rapids-Rice ProStart culinary team, and more workforce development trailblazers for Minnesota's biggest culinary fundraiser of the year, [Stars of the Future](#), at the [Four Seasons Minneapolis](#) on January 22!

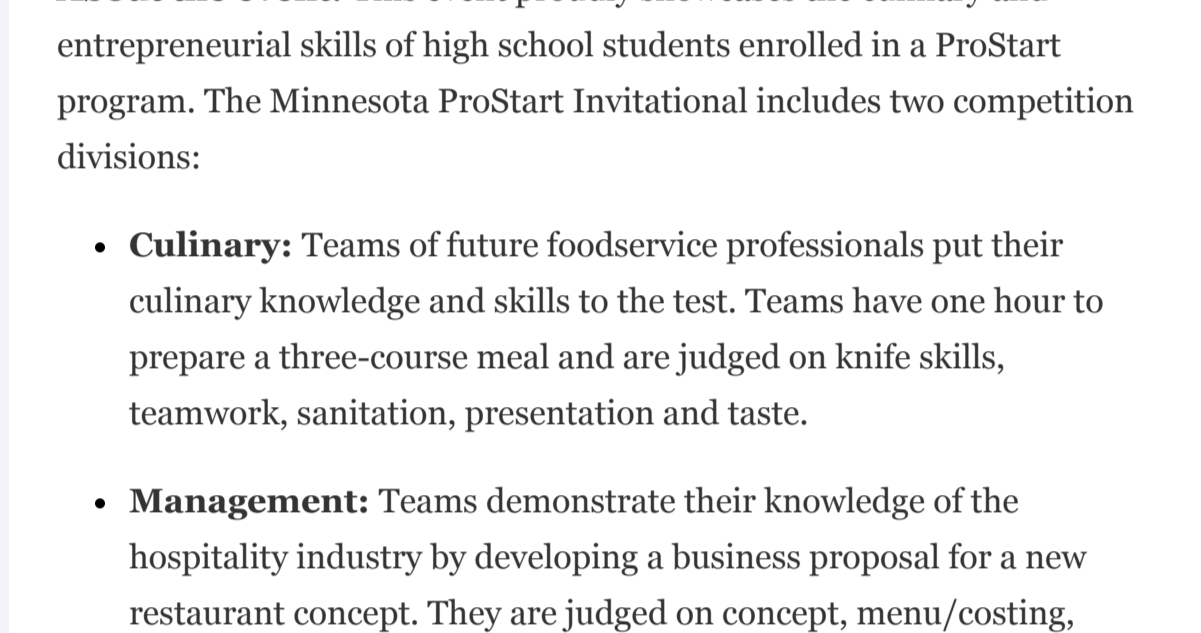
"Our students are excited to participate in Stars of the Future because it's a chance to showcase their skills, learn from industry professionals, and connect with others who share their passion for hospitality," says Levinski. "This event inspires them to dream big, work hard, and see themselves as the future leaders of this dynamic industry."

Why it matters: This fundraiser promises to be an unforgettable evening of culinary delights, inspiring connections, and the chance to directly support the future of Minnesota's hospitality industry. Secure your spot now— [get your tickets today!](#)

- **Go deeper:** Learn more about the workforce development fundraisers like Stars of the Future makes possible [here](#).

[Get Your Tickets!](#)

Judges Needed: Share Your Industry Expertise at the 2025 Minnesota ProStart Invitational



Calling all hospitality professionals: The 2025 Minnesota ProStart Invitational will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at the St. Paul RiverCentre.

About the event: This event proudly showcases the culinary and entrepreneurial skills of high school students enrolled in a ProStart program. The Minnesota ProStart Invitational includes two competition divisions:

- **Culinary:** Teams of future foodservice professionals put their culinary knowledge and skills to the test. Teams have one hour to prepare a three-course meal and are judged on knife skills, teamwork, sanitation, presentation and taste.
- **Management:** Teams demonstrate their knowledge of the hospitality industry by developing a business proposal for a new restaurant concept. They are judged on concept, menu/costing, operations, marketing and critical thinking.

What's at stake for the teams: The winners of each division will represent Minnesota at the National ProStart Invitational in Baltimore, MD, on May 1-4, 2025.

How you can help: We would love to have you share your food service experience and expertise at this event by being a judge this year.

- **What to expect:** The time commitment is from about 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on March 13, depending on your role.
- **All hospitality professionals welcome!** We are looking for a wide variety of skill sets to fill culinary chef judges, management judges and timing positions. Please let [Victoria](#) know if you are interested and available to participate!

Cyndi Keese, HMEF's ProStart & HTMP Program Manager, Announces Retirement



Please join us in congratulating Cyndi Keese on her recent retirement.

Cyndi's impact: Cyndi joined Hospitality Minnesota as HMEF Administrative Coordinator/ProStart & HTMP Program Manager in 2018 after a 30-year career at Sysco, where she was instrumental in the growth of the ProStart & HTMP Programs.

- Growing both ProStart and HTMP programs with Hospitality Minnesota, she continued to develop and promote the hospitality industry to students as a rewarding career opportunity. Her complete dedication to the students, teachers and programs was inspiring. We congratulate her in a well-deserved retirement!

Wish her the best: We are conveying good wishes to Cyndi for her retirement. We invite you to add your [message to Cyndi here](#).

Apprenticeship Funding Available from MN Department of Labor and Industry



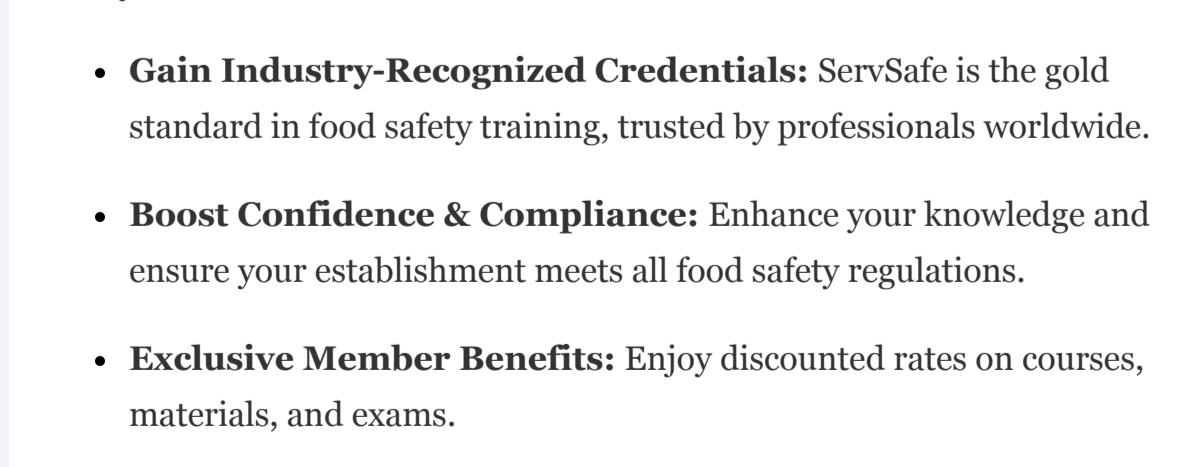
New grant funding is now available from the MN Department of Labor & Industry to help you create an apprenticeship program at your business!

- **What to expect:** This incentive grant funding will assist businesses with the costs of starting or expanding a registered apprenticeship program and may be used to cover the costs of employer staff time to operationalize program logistics, develop and instruct related instruction or recruit apprentices.

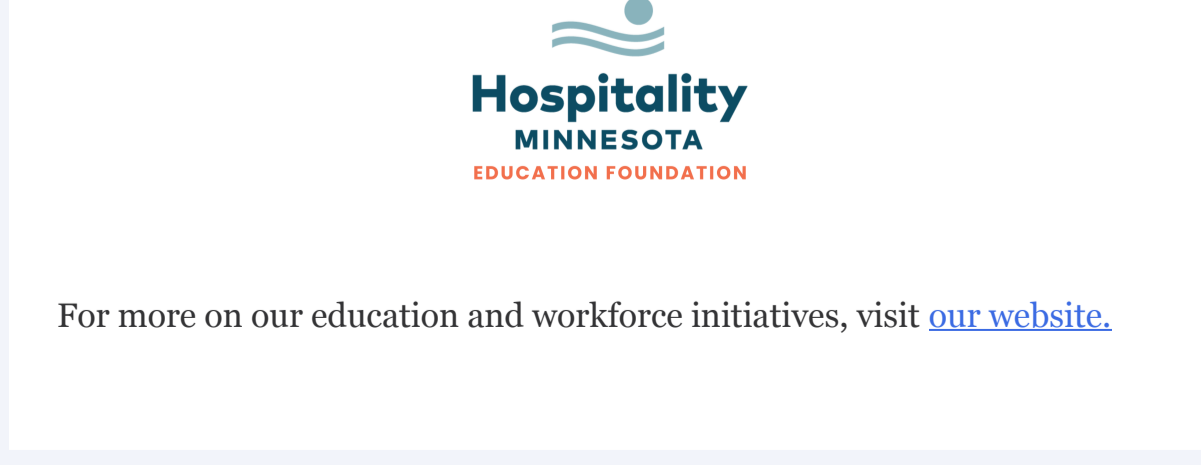
Why it matters: In addition to helping start or expand a registered apprenticeship program, these grant funds may also be used to purchase tools and supplies or pay for related technical instruction if not covered by the NRAEF or AHLA. Priority will be given to a few industries including hospitality.

- **Don't wait:** Now is the perfect time to start an apprenticeship in your business! Applications are being accepted now on a rolling basis and will continue until all funds have been awarded. For more information, [contact Victoria](#).

[Learn More](#)



Behind the Scenes: Media Outlets Get the ProStart Culinary Treatment



Students from Shakopee and Elk River High Schools welcome WCCO and Twin Cities Live into their ProStart kitchens for sneak peeks into the dishes they are preparing for this month's Stars of the Future event.

What's cooking? This week, the talented culinary teams from Shakopee and Elk River High Schools welcomed the Twin Cities Live and WCCO teams, giving both news crews the special ProStart culinary treatment in the lead up to the [Stars of the Future](#) fundraiser later this month at the [Four Seasons!](#)

What happened:

- **In Shakopee,** the Twin Cities Live news crew filmed a segment showcasing Shakopee's skills and passion for food, and you won't want to miss their segment on Twin Cities Live next Friday, January 17.
- **At Elk River,** the WCCO news crew filmed their own segment for a broadcast later this week. Tune in to WCCO's 4:00 PM program tomorrow or Friday to watch the Elk River students in action!

What's next: Want to have the ProStart Experience yourself? Get your tickets now to see these future culinary leaders in action at [Stars of the Future](#) on January 22!

[Get Your Tickets!](#)

Get ServSafe Certified This Month with Food Safety Guy

Hospitality Minnesota has partnered with FoodSafetyGuy to bring you exclusive discounts on ServSafe Food Protection Manager certification courses, materials, exams, and recertification.

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