

Free Online Learning Portal Available to Somerset And Hunterdon County Residents

Resource Offers Career-Related Classes To Improve Job-Readiness and Management Skills

SkillUp Greater Raritan, a free online learning portal for residents of Hunterdon and Somerset counties, is now offering two new exclusive Badge-credentialing programs that can be used by job seekers and employers in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, Hunterdon County Board of Commissioners Deputy Director Zachary T. Rich announced at the March 1st Board of Commissioners meeting.

Deputy Director Rich, the Board's liaison to the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board, said, "The benefits of this resource for county residents, which boosts their skills and increases their ability to be employed, encourages growth and increases a person's ability to find and keep a job. As the community recovers from the pandemic, job stability is an important factor.

This new initiative motivates participants to complete the programs by earning badges through a series of games and online courses. I appreciate the Workforce Board's efforts to make unique and fun training opportunities and applaud their continued commitment to both employee and employers in Hunterdon County."

Free 15- to 20-hour, self-paced classes utilize a combination of career-related gaming classes and SkillUp's existing online classes to provide focused training in two areas: Job Readiness and New Manager skills. The two Badge pathways allow participants to master the skills needed to have competency when they are starting or returning to work or when they are in new management roles. Residents and job seekers in both counties can sign up directly for either program. Employers can enroll individual workers or a group of employees for the programs.

The Badge programs represent a program expansion of SkillUp Greater Raritan, which was introduced in February 2020. The 6,000-plus SkillUp training opportunities are designed to help program participants who are working or looking for employment have the opportunity to sharpen their skills and improve their career pathways. The free courses can be accessed from a laptop or mobile device during a 180-day, 24/7 license period.

Over the past two years, more than 2,000 residents and workers in Hunterdon and Somerset counties have signed up for SkillUp Greater Raritan; the participants have spent nearly 7,000 hours in course work and completed more than 3,500 courses.

“We know employers are looking for workers and more people are starting to return to work,” said Joanne Hala, board chair of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board. “From our ongoing surveys, we also know that our businesses are looking for assistance with current employees promoted into management roles. We believe these new Badge-credentialing programs will assist our job seekers and employers and help people get and stay in good-paying jobs in our two counties.”

Job Readiness Badge topics include teamwork, communication, workplace skills, administrative support, listening, telephone skills, emotional intelligence and basic budgeting. New Manager skills include time management, communication, being a first-time manager, leadership, delegation, diplomacy and tact, running meetings, and emotional intelligence. The content was developed by Metrix Learning®, the provider of the Skillup Greater Raritan platform. The Job Readiness pathway has been used by workforce providers in other states; the New Manager pathway was developed exclusively for Greater Raritan.

Residents and job seekers who sign up for the Job Readiness or New Manager Badge will have 60 days to complete the program. Workers who have signed up for the New Manager Badge pathway by their employer will have 30 days to complete the program.

Upon program completion, participants receive a digital Badge to share with employers and post on their LinkedIn profiles and in resumes. Signing up for either program is easy. Residents and employers can just click on the appropriate links found at <https://bit.ly/3Jvyc0x>. All registrants will get follow-up emails with their account information and a notice about an introductory webinar. The programs will be available after March 1.

A webinar introducing new users to SkillUp is conducted at 3 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month. The next one is scheduled for March 2. Go [here](#) or to the calendar of www.thegrwdb.org for details. More information on SkillUp is also available on the [Resources tab](#) of the website.

The Greater Raritan workforce system connects job seekers and employers in Hunterdon and Somerset counties to programs, grant opportunities and other services designed to create and sustain career pathways and robust economic opportunities.

Additional information on in-person and virtual career-development programs and services offered by the Greater Workforce Development Board (GRWDB) and its partners can be found on www.thegrwdb.org. For more information on SkillUp Badges or other career services, email info@thegrwdb.org or call 908-541-5790. In addition, weekly text alerts provide updates about career and job opportunities in the two counties; text “onestop” to 565-12 to sign up.