Building Careers, Creating Opportunity: KRA and Hospitality Training Academy Strengthen Workforce Connections

The hospitality industry plays a vital role in our economy, supporting millions of jobs and providing career opportunities for people from all walks of life. According to the National Restaurant Association, the restaurant and food service industry is projected to generate $1.55 trillion in sales and employ approximately 15.8 million people nationwide in 2026.

Behind these numbers are businesses that depend on skilled workers and individuals looking for opportunities to build meaningful careers. As the industry continues to evolve, the need for quality training and stronger connections between employers and workforce development organizations remains essential.

That connection was the focus of a recent visit to the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA) in Los Angeles, where KRA Corporation joined community leaders, elected officials, and workforce development partners to learn more about HTA's work and meet individuals preparing for careers in hospitality.



Nicole Ganier, KRA's Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, represented KRA at the event, joining California State Assembly Member Mike Gipson; Caleb Rabinowitz, Chief of Staff to California State Assembly Member Isaac Bryan; Isidro Villanueva of the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity; and representatives from HTA.

One of the highlights of the visit was the opportunity to meet participants enrolled in HTA's training programs. Seeing their commitment to learning new skills brought the importance of this work into focus. For many participants, these programs represent an opportunity to enter a new career, provide for their families, and build a more stable future.

Chef Frieder also spoke about HTA's commitment to serving individuals who have faced significant barriers to employment, including foster youth, justice-involved individuals, and those experiencing homelessness or generational poverty.



The results are encouraging. According to Chef Frieder, 100% of HTA graduates receive job offers, and approximately 97% secure employment. These outcomes reflect the value of training that is intricately connected to employer needs and supported by organizations committed to helping participants succeed.

KRA's partnership with HTA is supported through its Rancho Dominguez American Job Center of California (AJCC). Through participant referrals, career counseling, and assistance addressing barriers to employment, the Rancho Dominguez AJCC helps individuals access HTA's training programs and take important steps toward entering the hospitality workforce.

As Chef Mitchell emphasized during the podcast, partnerships make this work possible. Training providers, workforce organizations, employers, and community leaders each have a role in helping individuals take the next step in their careers.

The recent visit and podcast conversation were reminders of why these relationships matter. When organizations work together and keep the needs of both job seekers and employers in focus, they can make a meaningful difference.