Letter from the Executive Director.

In 2006, BEST opened its doors to offer one ESL class, a citizenship prep class, and a banquet server class to Local 26 members with education benefits. Ten years later, in 2016, there were 491 class enrollments, of both incumbent hotel workers and job seekers. Our courses now include six levels of English, computers, culinary skills and industry-specific certifications and trainings like food safety and ergonomics. We’ve leveraged the funding for our incumbent workers to raise funds for job seeker training. Our annual budget has grown from $250,000 in 2007 to over $1.3 million in FY 2016. This biennial report will tell you what we achieved over the last two fiscal years.

Our partners include over 40 hospitality employers and UNITE HERE local 26; city, state, federal, and private funders; our growing staff and engaged volunteers. Our students provide the engine, steam, and inspiration for what we do.

Today, BEST is a national model of what a successful labor-management partnership can achieve when we find common ground: workers who are well paid and receive comprehensive benefits want to excel in and retain their jobs. A well-trained workforce reduces the costs of turnover and accidents. Happy workers bring more business. Communities and neighborhoods benefit as well. Good jobs lead to better lives.

The mission of BEST Hospitality Training is to provide individuals with the education, skills and training to excel in the hospitality industry and in their personal lives.
2015-2016 HIGHLIGHTS

• Launched Mel King Empowerment Program
• Launched first brand-specific training for two new hotels (CV Properties/Starwood)
• Became Department of Labor registered Housekeeping Pre-Apprenticeship Program
• Opened job seeker training space in Dudley Square

RECOGNITIONS

• White House UpSkill Summit
• First prize in Harvard KSG Philanthropy Class Competition
• Won second prize in National Wish Upon a Star competition

“BEST has a really great host of folks that give you their all.” – Doe Togbah, computer student

“I love BEST because it helps me with my confidence in speaking English.” – Maya Chuke, EFH student

“Students are incredibly hard-working...It has been very rewarding to see students improve not just their math skills, but their self-confidence. It has been a privilege to help BEST Hospitality Training pursue its mission.” – Jim Wiess, BEST volunteer
FY15–FY16 ENROLLMENTS BY COURSE CATEGORY

- English for Hospitality: 617
- Certifications: 541
- Technology Workshops: 229
- Citizenship Class: 166
- Job Seeker Class: 161
- Others: 149

FY15–FY16 ENROLLMENTS BY STUDENTS

- Total: 1693

FY15–FY16 PRIMARY LANGUAGES TOP 6 OUT OF 36

- English: 29%
- Spanish: 29%
- Cantonese: 17%
- Chinese: 11%
- Haitian Creole: 8%
- Arabic: 6%
**FY15–FY16 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

Top 6 out of 69:
- China: 35%
- United States: 28%
- Haiti: 15%
- Colombia: 8%
- El Salvador: 8%
- Dominican Republic: 6%

**FY15–FY16 ETHNICITY**

- Black or African American (not Hispanic): 29%
- Asian: 9%
- Hispanic or Latino: 23%
- White (not Hispanic): 20%
- Other: 4%

**FY15–FY16 BEST JOB SEEKER PLACEMENTS BY EMPLOYER**

Top 6:
- The Boston Park Plaza Hotel: 20
- Aloft Hotel: 16
- The Westin Boston Waterfront: 13
- Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel: 12
- Sheraton Boston Hotel and Towers: 12
- The Westin Copley Place Boston: 9
**Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incumbent Worker Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(funded by employers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six levels of English for Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Citizenship Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Culinary Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Food Server</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Certifications: CPR/AED, Food Safety, and TiPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(safe serving of alcohol)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Seeker Offerings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(funded by city, state, and private foundations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Attendant/Housekeeping Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Labor Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Housekeeping Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Hospitality Program / Mel King Empowerment Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vision for 2017-2018**

- Move from Chinatown to Medford
- Fully staff Dudley training site
- Expand apprenticeship program
- Prepare for casino hiring
- Partner more closely with Bunker Hill Community College

“We were thrilled to be able to direct our jobs linkage funds to a fantastic organization like BEST Hospitality Training. They will provide great training and preparation for the workers who will serve our guests at the new Aloft and Element hotels on D Street.”

- Dick Galvin
  President & Founder
  CV Properties, LLC
Saudatou Diallo came to the U.S. from Guinea in 2011 with her three children. She came to the United States because she wanted to change her life. “Here, you work and earn money. In Africa, you work and don’t earn money.” When she came to the U.S. she first worked in a hair-braiding salon, and after six months, she started taking classes at ABCD. Then, she applied for a retail job. Over the three years she worked in retail, she moved up from cleaner to cashier as her English improved. At Target, she worked as much as 36 hours a week when it was busy, and other times as little as 11 hours/week. She started at $8.75 and eventually her hourly wage came up to $10.33. She never received benefits because she was not full time. It would take her 1.5 hours to get to work, from Dorchester to Watertown.

A friend told her about BEST’s training and she was admitted to the Room Attendant Training Program. She was hired as a housekeeper at the Omni Parker House in May 2015. Now, work is only half an hour away. She makes over $20/hour and, as a member of UNITE HERE Local 26, she receives comprehensive employer sponsored benefits. As part of the benefit plan, she took BEST’s English classes and a CPR class and got CPR certified. She also took BEST’s US citizenship prep class and, in May 2016, she became a US citizen.

“My dream is for my kids is to go to college and have a better job and better life. I think their lives will change because I have a new job. Before I was too stressed and I couldn’t pay my bills. Now I have money to pay my bills and my stress is low.” We’ve just received word that in September 2017, Saudatou’s daughter will enroll as a freshman at Bridgewater State College.
Katrina Hines graduated from the second 2015 MKEP class on August 7, 2015. The following Monday, August 10, she met Lisa Brandi, Starwood Regional Talent Acquisition Manager at our Job Fair. On August 18, she was asked to apply for a housekeeping position at the Sheraton. She started working there in September, and now earns $20.43/hour.

For Katrina, moving from unemployed to employed changed her outlook on life: "As a young African American woman growing up with different jobs like working at Save-a-Lot and other retail stores, I developed a frustrated and negative outlook. I used to be a negative thinker, full of self-doubt.

Now I have the confidence and tools to do what I need." Katrina says her job has impacted her daughter: "We’re doing a lot more things now and situations that used to stress me out don’t anymore. I can tell she notices. And she’s reaping the benefits."

Her outlook on life and plans for the future are bright: "I feel as if I have so much more to prove. I’ve gotten this job. It’s just the beginning. And my mind is made up. There’s no going back. I’m only going forward and I want this for others who think they’re at the end of the road in dead-end jobs. Strive for more. Keep working hard."
CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Moving people into quality jobs

Since BEST’s inception in 2004, BEST has advocated for policies that help move low-wage workers into jobs that pay a living wage. BEST has led the charge on “quality training for quality jobs”. BEST Social Return on Investment and reputation for quality training leading to quality jobs has been recognized as a model program.

“I have this profound love and appreciation for people who do the kind of work that’s going on in service, in hotels, hospitals... and we’re just beginning to get to see that they get the remuneration that they deserve and that their work is as valuable to any kind of work that anybody does.” – Mel King

“The city of Boston’s relationship with Local 26 and the BEST Corp falls right in line with some of our top priorities. We’re working to help women and people of color overcome obstacles and secure good jobs and good employment. We’re working to ensure safety and health and good working conditions. And we’re boosting our local economy up by supporting working families. So this is a win-win-win all the way around.” – Mayor Walsh
Highlighting the labor-management relationship:

UNITE HERE Local 26 President Brian Lang is making waves in Boston. Positive waves. Brian refers to the Greater Boston Hospitality (GBHE) Local 26 hotels as, "Boston's best hospitality employers". And they are. GBHE signatory employers in the Taft Hartley labor management partnership provide quality jobs, including good wages and comprehensive benefits.

BEST’s programming ensures that these hotels have the skilled talent they need to compete in a competitive and growing industry. Brian refers to this labor-management partnership as an “anti-poverty tool”, moving thousands of low-wage hospitality workers from working poor into the middle class.
BEST STAFF

Marie F. Downey, Executive Director
Joan Abbot, Assistant Director
Mary Cronin, Director of Operations and Skills Training
Christy Betit, Assistant Director of Skills Training
Nelly Chan, Career Coach
Huiling Chen, Education Program Manager
Joe Coughlin, Financial Controller
Edwin Gonzalez, Intake Coordinator
Shery B. Murphy, Director of Employment Services
Aisha Necoechea, Workforce Development Strategist
Mei Ngo, Tech and English Instructor
Lori Sylvia, Apprenticeship Program Director
Brenda Richardson, Front Office Assistant
Jerry Wheelock, Database Lead
Patrick Yu, Evening Office Assistant
BEST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Abrigal Forrester
Board President

Suzanne Lee
Director

Anthony L. Gilardi
Director

Aparna Ramesh
Director

Sr. Louise Kearns, SND
Treasurer and Clerk
SUPPORTERS

Greater Boston Hospitality Employers Local 26 Benefits Administration, LLC
Boston’s Local 26 UNITE HERE
Boston Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development
Commonwealth Corporation
Department of Industrial Accidents
Eastern Bank
SkillWorks
The Boston Foundation
The Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation
The United States Department of Labor
United Way