

New year brings new training opportunities – for employers and job seekers

- By Heather Boulger



Melissa O'Brien, a human resources officer for Interprint, chats with Andrew Kingafter during an advanced manufacturing job fair at MassHire Berkshire Career Center in June 2019. MassHire and its collaborative partners are currently recruiting for occupational training opportunities, which are grant-funded and tuition-free.
BEN GARVER — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

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Whether you're looking for a new job in 2024, making a career change, or planning to grow in your current job, all professionals should make a plan for upskilling/reskilling.

Here are some reasons why now is a great time to train, take a new class or enroll in a degree program. Certificates make you more employable and help you retain your job. Keeping your skills sharp can help you stand out from your peers. You may have more down time to focus on skill development. You may increase your income. Finally, certifications nearly always provide a measurable career boost.

You may be wondering how to start a more secure career or what is the best way to train for a new career. Even though it may be a little overwhelming to take the next step in your career journey, doing so now

can get you ahead and help you reach your career goals faster. The MassHire Berkshire Career Center can help you identify your strengths and opportunities for improvement, formulate a career plan, and outline a variety of education and training programs to help get you started!

BUILDING SKILLS FOR A STRONG ECONOMY

If you are unemployed or looking for a career change or working someplace where your skills feel underutilized, there are several free training programs to help you upskill and enter some pretty amazing companies in the Berkshires. There are thousands of job opportunities in the region.

MassHire and our many collaborative partners are currently recruiting for occupational training which are grant-funded and tuition-free:

- Health care
- Certified and modified nursing assistant programs
- Licensed practical nursing
- Medical assistants
- Phlebotomy technicians
- Emergency medical technicians (EMT)
- Registered behavior technician (RBT)
- Career and technical programs (new)
- Advanced manufacturing technology
- Automotive technician
- Metal fabrication/welding
- Technical skills accelerator training

Many of these trainings start in January or February 2025 and will fill up quickly, so please register today!

There are also business accelerator and pitch contests offered by EforAll for business training, mentorship and access to an extended professional network for people wanting to explore starting their own company.

COMPANY TRAINING

Most companies provide training for practical reasons – to keep up with industry standards and to onboard new hires which are critical. However, many businesses are not aware of the real importance of training employees and the measurable impact it has. It has always been important to upskill, but the continued economic instability has further hammered that point home.

At MassHire, we've seen firsthand what training employees can do for businesses, and we've helped hundreds of companies set up training strategies and access resources to help businesses thrive.

Training and development help companies gain and retain top talent, increases job satisfaction and morale, improves productivity, addresses internal weaknesses and leads to better processes and business growth. Additionally, businesses that have actively interested and dedicated employees see 41 percent lower absenteeism rates and 17 percent higher productivity.

The Berkshire Workforce Board can help your company access:

- Workforce Training Fund resources (up to \$250K) help upgrade your current workforce & Express to streamline and simplify access to course training.
- Safety grants to reduce the risk of injury and illness to workers and promote safe and healthy conditions in the workplace.
- WCTF demand-driven programs by industry sector partnerships that train and place unemployed and underemployed workers.

- Career Technical Initiative to address the persistent need for skilled labor in construction, trades and manufacturing.
- Behavioral health to establish a recruitment pipeline and to promote career advancement in this healthcare sector.

MassHire Career Center is also hosting Recover Ready Workplace Workshop to help create a company culture that supports addiction recovery on Feb. 10 at 9 a.m. or Feb. 11 at noon.

Upskilling employees is more than a strategic decision in order to maintain your staff's competitive edge. It's a way to offer them a sense of certainty and security, during these highly uncertain times.

If you are currently employed, it's equally as important to continuously upgrade your own skills. Of the employees who remained in their roles in 2023, about 40 percent can expect that the core skills for that position will change and 50 percent of employees will need upskilling. Many Berkshire employers are aware of the value of investing in their employees and that on average employers expect to offer upskilling and reskilling to just over 70 percent of employees by 2026.

At MassHire, we develop a pipeline of workers by connecting un/under employed residents and career changers to training to help fill critical vacancies for Berkshire businesses. We help train and upskill current workers for career advancement which helps to build skills and contribute to business competitiveness. Let us help connect you to your next training opportunity!

Additional information:

- [Berkshire Community College](#) and its [ESOL program](#)
- [Berkshire Workforce Board](#)
- [EforAll Berkshire](#)
- [MassHire Berkshire Career Center](#)

- [McCann Tech](#)
- [Northern Berkshire Adult Basic Education program](#)
- [Pittsfield Adult Learning Center](#)
- [Pittsfield Public Schools](#)

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