

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI CELL Partners With Diageo USVI to Provide Free Hospitality Training

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UVI CELL in partnership with Diageo USVI and supported by Bellows International and the Virgin Islands Department of Labor, announced Wednesday that registration is currently ongoing for the 2020 Learning Skills for Life program on St. Croix and St. Thomas. Learning Skills for Life is part of a larger global training program introduced by Diageo to help individuals develop valuable life skills and expand career possibilities.

Launched in the USVI in 2010, the program provides unemployed and underemployed individuals with free basic employability skills, specialist training, and work experience within the hospitality industry. Participants receive classroom-based technical instruction in bartending and general life skills, followed by an internship in the hospitality industry

where available, UVI CELL said.

“Our partnerships with the private sector are extremely valuable as they allow the University to expand our educational offerings in the service industry,” said Dr. Suzanne Darrow-Magras, director of UVI-CELL. “Our territorial economy is primarily service-based so our goal is to help the industry to meet the demand for skilled workers while empowering the individuals in our community with the tools and skills needed to go out and secure those jobs.”

According to the release, during the free, five-week program, participants – who are all of the legal drinking age - will receive intensive, hands-on training in bartending and hospitality to include business etiquette, customer service, and responsible drinking. Students will also gain valuable life skills such as basics in managing personal finances, working in a team environment, resume creation, and interviewing techniques.

“We know how important it is to the territory’s economy to have a skilled workforce in the Virgin Islands, especially in industries that support tourism,” said Erica J. Johnson, director of community relations for Diageo USVI. “We are eager to welcome another class of future hospitality professionals into our training program, and we look forward to how they will create new opportunities for themselves in an industry that is full of possibilities.”

To participate, individuals should be between the ages of 18-35, be a resident of the USVI, not currently working as a professional bartender, and must have a serious interest in furthering their skills in the bartending and hospitality industry, according to the release.

Classes will be held from 9 am to 1 pm from Sept. 21 to Oct. 23, 2020, on both St. Croix and St. Thomas. Classes will be conducted in person and will adhere to strict COVID-19 social distancing standards and precautionary safety measures.

While free to participants, the program is being underwritten by Diageo USVI and administered by UVI CELL, with support from Bellows International and the Virgin Islands Department of Labor, the release stated.

UVICELL applications must be submitted by Aug. 31 and can be obtained [here](#). Applications can also be picked up in person from Bellows International, The Chill Station on St. Thomas, and Diageo USVI on St. Croix.