



Work Experience Program

Propel Kitchens is a Black and Brown led social-enterprise 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to create and support opportunity, equity, and justice for individuals through innovations in community food systems and nutrition interventions. Propel Kitchens will create systemic change that will favorably influence health outcomes for those who live in and around underserved communities. Its programs will address employment deficiencies and stimulate job opportunities to disrupt cyclical economic barriers in the St. Louis Promise Zone. Further, Propel Kitchens will play a key role in addressing food insecurity and community-wide food-related economic development.

Propel Kitchens endeavors to create systemic change that will favorably influence health outcomes for those who live in and around underserved communities. Propel Kitchens will achieve these objectives by integrating existing local organizations and institutions into a coordinated food education and nutrition system built upon knowledge of community needs and best practices from community kitchen models across the country.

The Propel Kitchens Work Experience Program will provide an opportunity for participants to train in a state-of-the-art commercial teaching kitchen. This training will involve an introduction to high-volume batched cooking. This level of production kitchen training and experience is unique in the region and provides a value-added opportunity for those interested in institutional food service production. The demand for students from our targeted demographic requires that they earn wages while in training. Propel Kitchens is leading the community kitchens movement in the Saint Louis region with an earn and learn approach to training.

All participants of the Propel Kitchens Work Experience Program will receive high quality training from industry professionals. They can expect to be trained on the proper sanitization requirements of a commercial kitchen and will be provided with the opportunity to learn basic cooking roles, which include culinary math. The skills achieved through this program are transferable and will provide value-added opportunities for whatever culinary role our participants will explore. All participants will receive the industry acknowledged credentials as a ServSafe Food Handler.

This program is designed for those who have an interest or who may have previous work experience in the culinary field at any level. The program also serves to elevate the knowledge of those with previous experience, while also catering to the novice who has little to no previous experience. Our target audience is those living within the Saint Louis Promise Zone ages 16+. Propel Kitchens aims to change the lives of those who come through our kitchen utilizing food and food production to provide training and expertise in the commercial food industry providing an opportunity to earn a living wage and family sustainability.

The training will consist of the following:

Kitchen Safety

- Adherence of ServSafe certification guidelines
- Proper use of ovens, range, grills, kettles, fryers, robot coupe, blast chiller, etc.
- Proper use of first aid kit
- Proper lifting techniques
- Proper handwashing techniques
- Understanding use of fire extinguisher and safety procedures to exit building in case of fire

Food Handling

- Understanding of commercial batch cooking/production
- Maintaining stock, organization, and rotation of food items within the pantry, cooler and freezer
- Proper storage and labeling of product for retail sale
- Understanding of recipes and execution
- Proficient mathematical conversions of recipes and culinary math
- Understanding of technical kitchen terminology
- Proper time and temperature control
- Proper cleaning of kitchen surfaces and equipment
- Understanding and documentation of cooler and freezer temperatures
- Recognizing weight and volume terminology (gallon, cup, lbs., tablespoon, teaspoon, etc.)
- Proper knife skills and usage
- Expansive culinary and bakery knowledge
- Use of technical equipment (volumetric pump, food sealer, etc.)
- Cross training in all kitchen positions and stations

Sanitization/Chemical Use

- Understanding and usage of pH strips for 3 compartment sink and vegetable prep sink along with proper water temperature for each chemical
- Proper use of kitchen chemicals to include identification of chemicals required for specific needs and proper storage
- Identifying proper color of cleaning buckets for kitchen use
- Proper assembly and disassembly of kitchen equipment for cleaning and sanitation

Kitchen Workplace Etiquette

- Receiving of orders from vendors
- Troubleshooting minor kitchen problems
- Maintaining kempt uniform and personal hygiene
- Self-Motivation/Self-Management
- Trust and respect of fellow kitchen staff and management

Industry Credentials

- ServSafe Food Handler

Time Frame of Training Program

The Regular Work Experience Program will consist of an 8–10-week training program with a coupled mix of classroom training and hands-on training in the kitchen. The timeframe for the training is based on a 300-hour training model.

Proposed Wages

The proposed hourly wage rate for participants in the program is \$16/hour.

Transitioning to Permanent Employment

The process for transitioning employees to a permanent position after the completed work experience program will be a warm handoff to established business owners and managers that are seeking experienced culinarians. This includes those in the commercial food industry, such as Bon Appetit Management Company, industry partners with the Missouri Restaurant Association, and those in the hospitality industry. These partners have agreed to hire directly from our pool of trainees.

Possible Certifications Available

Additional certifications that may be available to our trained culinarians include the American Culinary Federation (ACF) – Certified Fundamental Cook (CFC).

Program Supervision

The program will be supervised by the current leadership of Propel Kitchens who are all trained culinarians with a wealth of combined expertise. This includes Chef Martin Lopez, Chef Slayder Betts and Chef Anthony Haywood.

Cohort

The initial cohort of participants will consist of up to 10 individuals. No previous experience is required.