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Brooklyn Communities Collaborative Launches Community Health Worker Training Program for Formerly Incarcerated Brooklynites

The program provides certification and a stipend to individuals with a history in the criminal legal system, offering them employment opportunities in the midst of historic healthcare worker shortage

Brooklyn, NY – Today Brooklyn Communities Collaborative (BCC), a non-profit focused on strengthening health and wealth in Brooklyn, held the first training session for its inaugural Community Health Worker (CHW) training program for formerly incarcerated individuals in Brooklyn. The cohort of 20 trainees will complete a full certification program in addition to receiving skills training, mentorship, and job placement opportunities. The program was made possible by a grant from the Affinity Legacy Community Grant Program.

Trained community health workers go on to roles as peers, care navigators, and case managers, and are a key member of many care teams. By bridging the gap between providers and patients and working directly in their communities, CHWs build trust, provide mentorship and care coordination, and help to reduce poor health outcomes. These roles are particularly impactful in historically underserved communities, where trust in the healthcare system is often lower and barriers to accessing care are higher.

"Community health workers are trusted advocates for health and wellbeing in their own communities," said **Shari Suchoff, BCC Executive Director**. "We've found that community health workers often go on to other critical health care positions, building upon their experiences and skills acquired in the field. By providing the training, skills, and certification needed to take on community health positions, we are empowering these individuals to improve health outcomes for years to come."

BCC has partnered with Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, an organization committed to racial equity and closing the Black wealth gap in Central Brooklyn, to conduct recruitment and placement support, and with Kingsborough Community College, an organization with a proven track record in healthcare workforce development, to provide training. In addition to the cost of certification, each participant receives a MetroCard and \$1,000 stipend to support cost of living needs during the program. Those who complete the training will also receive placement opportunities, support services, and resume assistance.

"A training program for formerly incarcerated individuals in Brooklyn serves not only the individuals but also provides a pathway to positive reintegration, reducing the chances of re-offense," said **Blondel A. Pinnock, President and CEO, Bed-Stuy Restoration Corporation**. "By giving individuals the skills and tools they need to secure gainful employment, they can foster a sense of responsibility, decision-making skills, and a commitment to a more positive future. As a result, a more inclusive and productive community."



Topics covered in the program include: essential skills training, introduction to care management, practical counseling skills, art of person-centered documentation, non-coercive approaches to conflict management, foundations of motivational interviewing, understanding special needs, and reducing job related stress.

“Kingsborough Community College is proud to partner with Brooklyn Communities Collaborative to create jobs and fill much needed health care roles,” said Dr. Simone Rodriguez, Vice President, Workforce Development, Continuing Education and Strategic Partnerships. “We are excited to be a part of training and fostering dedicated health care professionals who are from the community, know the community, and will be working in the community right here in Brooklyn.”

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About Brooklyn Communities Collaborative

Brooklyn Communities Collaborative (BCC) is a not-for-profit based in New York that works with local institutions and stakeholders to address longstanding health inequities in the borough. BCC was founded in 2019 with the goal of leveraging the financial power of anchor institutions and community resources to address the economic factors that improve the social determinants of health – whether it's supporting housing stability, advancing economic empowerment, expanding care management services, or strengthening CBOs in the area. BCC builds upon years of collaborative efforts with anchor institutions and community partners in Brooklyn. Visit [www. https://brooklyncommunities.org/](https://brooklyncommunities.org/) for more information.

About Kingsborough Community College

Founded in 1963, Kingsborough Community College is Brooklyn's only community college and is part of the City University of New York (CUNY). Located on a 70-acre campus in Manhattan Beach, Kingsborough remains firmly committed to its mission of providing both liberal arts and career education, promoting student learning and development, as well as strengthening and serving its diverse community. Kingsborough provides a high-quality education through associate degree programs that prepare students for transfer to senior colleges or entry into the workforce. Serving approximately 10,000 full- and part-time students annually and an additional 20,000 students in its expanding continuing education program, Kingsborough has earned recognition as a Leader College of Distinction for excellence in student success by Achieving the Dream, and has been identified as a Top 10 Community College in the nation by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

About Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation is the nation's first community development corporation. created in 1967 by Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob Javits and community leaders. Restoration is committed to racial equity and closing the Black wealth gap in Central Brooklyn. Restoration offers a suite of economic mobility programs in workforce development, business acceleration, financial inclusion, affordable housing, weatherization and arts and culture to 60,000 clients annually.