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**STATE OF OHIO AWARDS WEST SIDE CATHOLIC CENTER WORKFORCE PROGRAM  
PRE-APPRENTICE CERTIFICATION**

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The West Side Catholic Center (WSSC) Culinary Academy was approved as a Registered Pre-Apprenticeship program by ApprenticeOhio, a division of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Registered Pre-Apprenticeship programs provide career pathways and opportunities for people with employment barriers to earn a nationally recognized credential and a full-time job as a Registered Apprentice.

WSSC Culinary Academy was able to secure its certification with the support of the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), which provided technical assistance to support the academy's Pre-Apprenticeship registration with the state. In August 2022, GCP was awarded a \$5.8 million Apprenticeship Building America grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to establish an Equitable Registered Apprenticeship Hub. As the organization overseeing this Hub, GCP is working with partners to build Greater Cleveland's capacity to champion and grow Registered Pre-Apprenticeships in nontraditional industries like hospitality, healthcare, IT, banking, insurance, and real estate over the next four years.

"We are thrilled to celebrate West Side Catholic Center's approval by ApprenticeOhio as a Registered Pre-Apprenticeship program. This marks a significant milestone in aligning our workforce systems with the gold standard of Registered Apprenticeships. This approval is not just a win for WSSC; it's a win for our entire community, setting a precedent for excellence and inclusivity in workforce development," said Mike Glavin, GCP's vice president, talent solutions.

The WSSC Culinary Academy was created in 2021 as an entry-level training program focusing on practical kitchen skills and culinary knowledge. WSSC clients who have graduated from the Workforce Development Program can enroll in the Culinary Academy to extend their training in the service industry. In addition to classroom training, the academy offers hands-on experience through WSSC's two commercial kitchens and the Ohio City Pizzeria, a WSSC social enterprise, which provides valuable real-world exposure to the fast-paced food service environment.

"As an agency that began with food and community as our foundation, it has been a natural evolution to provide our program participants with the education to develop the skills to feed others. The Cleveland area is ripe with opportunity for our culinarians, and this certification furthers our ability to serve those on their path to self-sufficiency," said Michael Bernot, WSSC Executive Director.

A goal of a Registered Pre-Apprenticeship program is to have participation from underrepresented groups. The WSSC Workforce Development Program serves clients facing multiple barriers to employment, including low levels of education, housing insecurity, criminal records, a lack of employment history, and a lack of transportation or childcare.

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**West Side Catholic Center** was established in 1977 to assist all who come in need of food, clothing, shelter, advocacy, and a path to self-sufficiency. Through the coordination of care, our programs respond to the needs of men, women, and children. With the support of donors and volunteers, we provide these services free of charge regardless of religious affiliation.

**Greater Cleveland Partnership** is the region's leading economic development organization and, with over 12,000 members, the largest metropolitan chamber of commerce in the nation. Guided by a board of corporate and entrepreneurial CEOs, the organization focuses on strategic initiatives, business services, and advocacy to build a vibrant business environment and region for small businesses, middle-market companies, and global corporations. It includes the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE) and Cleveland Development Advisors, a real estate development affiliate. GCP is committed to working with private, civic, and public partners to accelerate growth and prosperity to propel Greater Cleveland towards being one of the Great Regions in the Great Lakes.