

# Food safety quality assurer boost for Gauteng tourism sector

The Department of Tourism's one-year Food Safety Quality Assurers training programme has welcomed a new cohort of 108 graduates to populate the talent pool of skill in the tourism value chain. Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela welcomed the graduates, saying: "As government, our approach to the skills revolution is to assist the youth to upskill and future-proof themselves in the light of the fast-changing work environment. Through our training programmes, we are able to contribute to mitigating the impact of the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality."



Source: Supplied

The programme entails 30% theory and 70% workplace experiential training. Graduates receive a National Certificate in Food Safety Quality Assurers, NQF level 4 (116 credits) accredited by FoodBev Seta and CATHSSETA, helping to kick-start their careers in the sector.

Graduates were excited to share their experiences about the Food Safety Training Programme. Simphiwe Mankayi (42) from Bonnane in Vanderbijlpark participated in the programme to develop his skills further after he had been retrenched from the hospitality industry during the pandemic. "It is not only about the certificate that will open doors for me, but also the experience and knowledge I acquired.

"The programme helped me to develop my skills further, and now I know better when it comes to the food services and the hospitality industry as a whole. It was not easy at first but through the support from the Department of Tourism staff members and program implementer KTMS, I managed to complete the programme," says Mankayi.

In terms of skills development and the certificate, 33-year-old Nelisiwe Tshabangu from Sunnyside in Tshwane says: "There are lots of hospitality opportunities in the country and I know with this certificate, I will be able to be employed."

34-year-old Nompumelelo Mahlangu from Kiblerpark in Johannesburg states: "I have been in the hospitality industry for fifteen years without the relevant qualification. This programme has helped me, because I will now have a certificate to compete in the job market."

## **Providing training, development programmes**

The Food Safety Assurer's graduation took place ahead of this week's State of the Nation Address (Sona) that is poised to encourage an inclusive and proactive integration of all in growing the country's economy under the theme – 'Leave no one behind.'

"According to the UNICEF report, governments and businesses are being urged to address global skills gap and decrease youth unemployment. I, therefore, call upon our youth to seriously take up all available opportunities being provided by government as quick fixes and shortcuts to economic empowerment," concludes Mahlalela.

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