

Shannon Keith
Senior Manager, Consulting
FareStart
700 Virginia St
Seattle, WA 98101
Shannon.keith@farestart.org

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Dear Members of the Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

As Senior Manager of Consulting with FareStart, I am writing to express my strong support for the Culinary Workforce Development Bill (S.F. 5181), which seeks crucial funding for the Healthy Roots Institute (HRI). This initiative is pivotal for the continuation and expansion of HRI's impactful work in our community, including the esteemed VoCul program.

The significance of this initiative cannot be overstated. It promises not only to enrich individuals with vital skills for the culinary industry but also to sow seeds of economic resilience and social cohesion within our community.

- For over 20 years, FareStart has helped more than 300 organizations in 47 states across the country increase economic mobility for individuals furthest from opportunity through culinary and employment skills training programs.
- Culinary workforce development programs like VoCul are a proven model for increasing participants confidence and ability to access employment pathways, while supporting them with wrap-around support.

I strongly urge your support for this initiative, confident in its capacity to make a lasting, positive impact on the lives of many and the culinary landscape of our state.

Thank you for considering this support. Together, we can contribute to a vibrant future for our community, marked by prosperity, inclusivity, and culinary excellence.

Sincerely,

Shannon Keith