

# CAYMANIANS PLAN TO TRAIN MORE TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS



The Cayman Islands are made up by islands of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman. The tourism industry is vital for this British overseas territory. The fact is that the tourism industry accounts for some 70-75% of the annual GDP of the Cayman Islands.

As it is located in the western Caribbean Sea it can offer plenty attractions to tourists. The islands are said to be among the best scuba diving destinations in the world. Seven Mile Beach is world wide known because there is a number of the island's hotels and resorts. There are also other interesting attractions for tourists; nevertheless the tourism industry has some troubles. Local hospitality businesses lack qualified people. Ritz-Carlton resort manager Chris Sariego said that The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman had a continuous need for skilled people to service its clientele. "We are forced to recruit outside of the country for many positions in housekeeping and food and beverage, because there are no local applicants," Chris Sariego said.

Local administrative decided to change this situation. The government launched Tourism Apprenticeship Training Programme. "The programme is designed to create a cadre of Caymanian hospitality professionals in occupations traditionally under-represented by Caymanians but with respectable compensation levels and career potential," said Tourism Minister Charles Clifford. "Apprentices should walk away at the end of the year with the technical skills and work experience necessary to succeed in today's fast-paced tourism industry." The programme should give the students combination of academic knowledge and practical abilities. Students will undergo on-the-job training in a variety of service industry roles such as front office, housekeeping, food and beverage operations and food preparation. The problem is that modest entry level wages as well as working weekends, holidays and evenings make work in this sector somehow unwanted. But anyway the officials believe that this job could be interesting for some people. Students will be given a scholarship package \$8,000 to \$10,000 and they will be paid \$5 an hour during the on-the-job training.

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