

# Holyoke Community College to host cannabis education center

Holyoke Community College and the Cannabis Community Care and Research Network last week announced the creation of the Cannabis Education Center to provide education and training opportunities and other business resources to individuals in the region who want to work in the state's newly legalized cannabis industry.

"The emerging cannabis industry in Western Massachusetts will spur investment, economic growth and job creation in the Pioneer Valley," said Jeff Hayden, HCC's vice president of business and community services. "The purpose of the Cannabis Education Center is to create an innovative learning space for those interested in joining the cannabis workforce as an employee or entrepreneur."

The announcement was made during a panel discussion on the cannabis industry, moderated by C3RN, on Oct. 21 on the HCC campus. HCC and C3RN are designated training partners

through the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission's Social Equity Vendor Training program. The program was designed to provide priority access, training, and technical assistance to those negatively impacted by the War on Drugs.

The Cannabis Education Center will be managed by HCC's Kittredge Center and provide the following resources:

- Academic advising and workforce training
- Public education events that highlight workforce development and entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship events for those interested in joining the cannabis industry as a startup company
- Social equity training for applicants qualified through the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission's Social Equity Training program.

More information about these pro-

grams will be posted soon at [cannabiseducationcenter.org](http://cannabiseducationcenter.org)

The Cannabis Education Center will also run four previously announced certificate programs for specific jobs in the cannabis industry: cannabis culinary assistant, cannabis retail/patient advocate, cannabis cultivation assistant, and cannabis extraction technician assistant. Each certificate program will consist of 96 hours of instruction, half of which will be held on the HCC campus with the other half conducted through C3RN's internship program with participating dispensaries, cultivators, manufacturers and ancillary businesses.

Registration and scholarship information will be released on the Cannabis Education Center website on Friday.

"The Cannabis Education Center is the first of its kind in Massachusetts," said Marion McNabb, C3RN's chief executive officer. "Our programs are

designed to provide high-quality, skill-based, and innovative training that not only give students knowledge of the industry, but also practical experience through on-site internship programs with local cannabis partners. Working with local industry, educators, students, and policy makers, we aim to create a learning and collaborative environment that utilizes innovative educational technologies and covers the latest trends, best practices, including B2B and B2C resources."

C3RN and HCC will also run five courses for the entrepreneurship track in the Social Equity Program starting Nov. 23 at HCC's Picknelly Adult and Family Education Center, 206 Maple St., Holyoke. The first two-session class, Nov. 23-24, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., will focus on business plan creation and development.

Information about scholarships will be posted soon on the Cannabis Education Center website.