

# Scholarships given for cannabis class

The Cannabis Education Center, a collaboration between Holyoke Community College and the Cannabis Community Care & Research Network (C3RN), awarded scholarships to six students enrolled in its entry-level cannabis culinary assistant training program, which began Jan. 25.

These initial scholarships were provided by cannabis businesses Curaleaf, Good Chemistry, Mill Town Agriculture, and Cultivate and awarded to students who either live in the Holyoke area, are unemployed or underemployed, or were disproportionately impacted by drug enforcement laws before the legalization of marijuana in Massachusetts, among other criteria.

"The goal of the scholarship program is to provide high-quality cannabis training to those who might otherwise not have the financial opportunity," said Marion McNabb, chief executive officer of C3RN and the 501c3 nonprofit that manages the scholarship program for the Cannabis Education Center. "The initial scholarships provided by leading local cannabis businesses demonstrate their commitment to furthering opportunities that advance social justice via education locally in Massachusetts and in Holyoke."

The cannabis culinary assistant program started Jan. 25 at the HCC MGM

Culinary Arts Institute and runs for six Saturdays, through Feb. 29. Cannabis culinary assistants are responsible for preparing cannabis or cannabidiol-infused products using a variety of cooking, baking, and infusion techniques. Students are also learning about manufacturing operations and security, health, and safety policies and regulations. Course instructors and guest lecturers include representatives from C3RN, HCC, INSA, Cloud Creamery, Ardent, Willie's Reserve, MCR Labs, and Bay Grown Farms.

Hemp products are being used in place of cannabis on the HCC campus. Students will follow up their classroom sessions with internships at cannabis businesses, including INSA in Easthampton and AmeriCann and BASK in Fairhaven, Mass., and additional internship partnerships will soon be announced.

The scholarships cover the full cost of the training program, including the internship, \$3,000.

"Curaleaf Massachusetts is proud to partner with C3RN and Holyoke Community College by sponsoring scholarships at the Cannabis Education Center," said Patrik Jonsson, president of Curaleaf Massachusetts. "We greatly value the opportunity to provide support for individuals from areas of disproport-

ionate impact, and we are looking forward to getting involved in the onsite occupational training aspect as well."

Additional scholarships are envisioned for future cannabis training programs. The Cannabis Education Center will begin a program to train workers for jobs as patient advocates and budtenders March 2 at HCC's Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development.

"We're looking forward to offering these training programs to as many people as possible," said HCC President Christina Royal. "Thanks to these scholarships, one more barrier to education and training is lessened for those with significant financial need."

The Cannabis Education Center is based at HCC's Kittredge Center.

"This is a landmark opportunity to provide education for incoming labor in this emerging market," said Kate Phillips, director of education of C3RN and one of the culinary assistant program instructors. "With the cannabis industry being one of the fastest growing sectors, it is imperative that programs like the Cannabis Education Center provide quality education while establishing industry standards."

For more information or to apply for a scholarship, visit [cannabiseducationcenter.org](http://cannabiseducationcenter.org) and click on a program of interest.