

Holyoke Sun

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IN THE CLASSROOM

State awards HCC \$229,500 for Culinary Arts Institute

HOLYOKE — The HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute got a big boost yesterday from the governor's office with the awarding of a \$229,500 grant for the purchase of computer and kitchen equipment for the new downtown training facility, which is expected to open next month.

During an appearance at Nashoba Valley Technical High School in Westford, Gov. Charlie Baker announced a total of \$9.5 million in Workforce Skills Capital Grants to 32 community colleges, high schools and educational institutions to enhance and expand career training programs like the ones Holyoke Community College will be operating at the Cubit Building on the corner of Race and Appleton streets in the city's Innovation District.

"These Skills Capital Grants will help boost our economy and equip students with new skills, knowledge and experience with state-of-the-art equipment across the Commonwealth," Baker said. "We look forward to continuing our work with these 32 institutions and previous awardees to enhance their programs and develop a skilled workforce ready to meet the needs of the Commonwealth."

The HCC grant will be used to buy 32 computer workstations, networking infrastructure, and software programs unique to hospitality and culinary industry workplaces, as well as kitchen equipment such as refrigerators, grill and fry tables, ice machines, skillets, griddles, steamers, and dishwashers.

"All the items purchased with the grant will directly support workforce training for occupations within the growing hospitality and culinary arts industry of western Massachusetts, including preparing workers for



When it opens later next month the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute will occupy nearly 20,000 square feet on the first and second floors of the Cubit Building on the corner of Race and Appleton streets in downtown Holyoke.

MGM Springfield, one of our major employer partners," said Amy Dopp, interim vice president of Institutional Advancement.

Dopp said the new equipment will allow the college to increase the number of seats available in its credit and non-credit programs and be able to customize instruction to meet the needs of local employers.

Construction of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, which will occupy nearly 20,000 square feet on the first and second floors of the Cubit Building, is expected to be completed in late November with non-credit workforce training programs beginning in December. HCC's credit programs in Hospitality and Culinary Arts will relocate from the main campus to the new facility for the beginning of the Spring 2018 semester.



An architect's rendering of the student lounge on the second floor of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

The competitive grants are awarded to educational institutions that demonstrate partnerships with industry, as well as align curriculum and credentials with businesses' demand, in order to maximize hiring opportunities in each region of the state. Economic Development legislation proposed by the Baker-Polito Administration and passed by the state legislature last year authorizes \$45 million in program funding over the next three years.

"While Massachusetts has the most highly educated workforce of any state in the nation - with 50 percent of our workforce holding a bachelor's degree or higher - there is a skills shortage that needs to be addressed to support future business growth and economic success," said Education secretary James Peyser. "With these Skills Capital Grants, we are ensuring our education and workforce investments meet current and future industry growth in the Commonwealth by requiring schools that receive grants partner with local businesses."