

## House earmarks \$50K for new manufacturing program at HCC

HOLYOKE – Rep. Patricia Duffy (D – Holyoke) is pleased to announce that \$50,000 has been earmarked in the House Fiscal Year 2022 budget to seed the development and implementation of a new Manufacturing Training Program at Holyoke Community College.



Patricia Duffy

“Holyoke employers need a trained workforce and Holyoke constituents need career-track jobs,” said Duffy. “I’m thrilled to see these local assets of our population and our historical manufacturing base come together and build on each other.”

According to labor and workforce data, 9.7% of jobs in Holyoke are in manufacturing compared to 6.7% statewide. Meanwhile, at 9.9 percent, the unemployment rate in Holyoke is the second highest in western Massachusetts after Springfield at 11.2 percent, compared to a statewide rate of 6.6 percent for March 2021.

The Manufacturing Training Program will join the robust stable of workforce development programs at HCC, Duffy said.

“We’re grateful to Rep. Duffy for advocating for this funding on behalf of the college,” said President Christina Royal. “Manufacturing is an important employment sector in Holyoke and one with deep historical roots. Despite the city’s high unemployment rate, a significant number of manufacturing jobs in Holyoke remain vacant. The purpose of this new program is to increase the num-

ber of Holyoke residents working in manufacturing, especially those impacted by poverty, unemployment, and limited educational opportunities.”

The program will serve up to 45 individuals in three cohorts by providing approximately 150 hours of remote and in-person, hands-on training combined with workplace experiential learning.

The three-phase program includes: skills assessments, and pre-training focused on workplace readiness in English and basic math, followed by core training in entry-level manufacturing.

The manufacturing component will include modules in communication, teamwork, customer service, digital literacy, general manufacturing processes and principles; blueprints, dimensions, tolerances, instrumentation and measuring; manufacturing workplace math; lean manufacturing, problem-solving, quality control; and workplace safety.

Regional employers will be invited to participate in curriculum design and delivery, as guest speakers, as well as in hosting tours of their facilities when possible. Participants will be connected to area employers and receive job placement assistance through HCC and MassHire Holyoke.

“We believe the program will benefit jobseekers, incumbent workers, and businesses of Holyoke and the region alike,” Royal said. “Ultimately, the goal is to help lift individuals out of poverty and meet the needs of the business community.”