
Job readiness focus of Holyoke Community College-led grant project

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College has been awarded a \$247,000 grant to help unemployed and underemployed individuals acquire the job-readiness skills they need to secure and retain stable employment.

Through this grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Training Resources and Internship Networks initiative (TRAIN), HCC will work with a long list of regional partners to develop a three-stage program that includes pre-training in job readiness, industry-specific training in culinary arts or manufacturing, followed by some kind of work experience with a local employer.

Up to 120 individuals from Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin coun-

ties are expected to participate in some way through June 2019.

"We hear from employers all the time, and we hear it from every sector, that many applicants lack basic job readiness skills – things like customer service, communication, conflict resolution, time management," said Kermit Dunkelberg, HCC assistant vice president of Adult Basic Education and Workforce Development. "They say, we can train them to do the work, but we need them to have these basic things. What we're trying to do here is develop a regional model."

HCC's partners in the TRAIN Pioneer Valley Consortium project include the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board,

the MassHire career centers in Holyoke, Springfield, and Franklin and Hampshire counties, Springfield Technical Community College, and Greenfield Community College.

In addition, the University of Massachusetts Auxiliary Dining Services in Amherst, the Log Cabin Group in Holyoke, MGM Resorts in Springfield, Peerless Precision Inc. in Springfield and Bete Fog Nozzle Inc. in Greenfield have agreed to provide internship, apprenticeship, or job shadowing opportunities to program participants.

HCC is working with the regional career centers to develop a three-week, 60-hour "essential skills/job-readiness" pre-training course that will be offered at least four times at locations in the three

Pioneer Valley counties.

The pre-training segment will also include career exploration.

In the past, job readiness training has been incorporated into other workforce training programs HCC has offered and that will continue.

After the pre-training, participants will have the opportunity to continue into one of the industry-specific training segments: a four-week, 120-hour program in culinary arts and hospitality at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute; or a 44-hour manufacturing training program at STCC.

Also, participants might instead choose to enter another industry-specific training program offered by one of the community colleges.
