

Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$2.6 Million in Workforce Skills Capital Grants

Enables educational institutions to expand skill-building programs

BOSTON, MA, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016 – The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded \$2.6 million in Workforce Skills Capital Grants to seven high schools, community colleges, and an educational collaborative, in order to expand skills training programs and address capital and expansion needs at educational institutions that help Massachusetts residents develop skills for careers in growing industries.

“Providing skill-training opportunities across the Commonwealth is a priority for our administration,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “These important grants to vocational high schools, community colleges and other educational institutions will aid their development of programs best suited to train workers for a growing Massachusetts economy and evolving workforce.”

In February, Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito, along with members of the Governor’s Cabinet, awarded more than \$9.3 million in Workforce Skills Capital Grants to 35 high schools, community colleges, and training providers to purchase technical equipment and expand the capacity of training programs. In June, Madison Park Vocational Technical High School in Boston received a \$451,000 award. With the \$2.6 million awarded today, the Workforce Skills Capital Grants exceed \$12 million.

“The goal of these grants is to expand the capacity of programs that build skills for Massachusetts residents,” Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said. “We already see the impact these grants are having at educational programs around the state, and we know these investments will strengthen the state’s economy for all residents.”

The Workforce Skills Capital Grant Program was a new initiative of the Governor’s Workforce Skills Cabinet, which seeks to align education, workforce and economic development strategies across the state. Early in the administration, Governor Baker tapped Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald Walker II, Education Secretary James Peyser, and Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash to work together to develop policies to improve economic and job training opportunities for residents of the Commonwealth.

“We are pleased to award an additional \$2.6 million in skills capital grants to these high schools, community colleges, and educational partners for needed capital projects and expansions,” said Education Secretary Jim Peyser. “We have already seen the difference that this grant program has made for the first grantees announced earlier this year, and we look forward to seeing the impact that this money will have on the schools, the workforce, and their communities.”

“Across the three secretariats, we work to align programs so that workforce development is always front-and-center in policy making,” Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald L. Walker, II said. “These Workforce Skills Capital Grants will make a difference in residents’ ability to access skill-building and training programs, which in turn, will help businesses continue to grow in the Commonwealth if they are able to find capable and talented workers.”

“All of these schools crafted quality training programs that are tied directly to regional employment needs and have strong employer partnerships, which is in direct alignment with the goals of the Workforce Skills Cabinet,” said Assistant Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development Juan R. Vega. “Since all of today’s awardees initially applied in the inaugural round in February, we are particularly pleased to move forward on these grants today, ensuring excellent programs are given the necessary resources to succeed.”

To create the Workforce Skills Capital Grants, the Baker-Polito Administration consolidated two separate capital grant

programs – the former Manufacturing Training Equipment grants (administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development) and the former Vocational Opportunity Challenge grants (administered by the Executive Office for Administration and Finance) – into one unified workforce development capital grant program.

Grant Awardees:

Roxbury Community College: \$499,966: The Roxbury Community College Simulation Center bridges the gap between theory and clinical experience for registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nursing assistant students. Simulation is a vital aspect of nursing students practice and a critical component of nursing education. The grant will help RCC purchase equipment to create a realistic patient care environment for students to accurately practice diagnostic problems.

Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership Inc: \$135,915: MassMEP will develop a “Basic Mechanical Skills” pathway, focused on providing unemployed and under-employed individuals with skills needed to work in automated plants, including mechanical ability, pneumatics and hydraulics, mechanical prints and troubleshooting methodologies.

Quinsigamond Community College: \$488,735 : QCC will expand laboratory capacity in the CIT lab at its Southbridge location, and introduce integrated basic education and technical skills training. In addition, the funding will support training for unemployed and under-employed individuals located with the Southbridge office of the Workforce Central Career Center.

Massasoit Community College: \$442,517: Massasoit will outfit a new veterinary technician laboratory to offer a new associate degree program in Veterinary Technology, targeting the rapidly growing animal health care industry. A need for veterinary technicians also exists in the life sciences and public health sectors. This associate program will target high school graduates with an interest in STEM or animal science, including students enrolled at Norfolk County Agricultural High School, with which the program has a dual enrollment/early college partnership.

Holyoke Community College: \$121,741: Holyoke CC plans to meet the growing regional need for certified EMTs by purchasing equipment for the Center for Health Education. The EMT Training Program provides certification and continuing education to individuals entering into firefighting or health care professions. HCC, along with Springfield Technical Community College and Training Workforce Options (TWO) will work with local employers to provide customized workforce training in the region.

Cambridge Public Schools – Rindge School of Technical Arts: \$463,472: Hands-on learning, with new equipment purchased for the engineering lab at the Rindge School of Technical Arts, will broaden students’ understanding of the skills needed for STEM careers in the region. The new equipment will also prepare students for employment or post-secondary opportunities in the manufacturing and robotics fields.

Westfield Public Schools - Westfield Technical Academy: \$500,000: The grant will support the Aviation Maintenance and Manufacturing Technology programs for high school students, as well as an adult education program in manufacturing offered at the school through the Hampden County Regional Employment Board. New equipment in the aviation program will provide hands-on experiences to meet FAA requirements to qualify to take a test for the Airframe and Power Plant Certification. The funding will also train students for careers in manufacturing and precision machining that are in high demand in western Massachusetts.

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