

# Partnership between MGM Springfield and Holyoke Community College paves way for free tuition for 50 Holyoke residents



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HOLYOKE – Fifty Holyoke residents will be admitted at no charge to a new culinary program Holyoke Community College is establishing at the Cubit Building in a three-way agreement among the city, the college and MGM Springfield.

Holyoke is getting \$500,000 upfront from the \$1.28 million in neighboring community impact payments Mayor Alex Morse negotiated to receive from MGM over the course of 15 years. Rory Casey, Morse's chief of staff, said Wednesday that the city has an agreement to turn over the \$500,000 to HCC to help fund the culinary arts program so long as 50 Holyoke students get to go for free.

The MGM money will be paid to Holyoke Community College in stages as the students are trained.

Holyoke was the only community in the state to negotiate casino impact payments without sharing a border with a casino host community.

The program addresses MGM's needs for workers and Holyoke's need to train people for careers. HCC will also create a pathway programs students at William J. Dean Technical High School can easily matriculate into programs at the Cubit and then transition to bachelor's degree programs at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Casey said.

"We're really excited," Casey said.

**MGM Springfield**, which needs 750 to 900 trained hospitality service staff for its \$950 million casino resort scheduled to open in Springfield's South End in 2018, is looking to Holyoke Community College's new [Culinary Arts Center in the Cubit building](#) as a source of future employees.



**Holyoke to get \$50,000, plus \$1.28 million over 15 years and jobs from proposed MGM Springfield casino**

MGM Springfield and Holyoke Community College officials next week will announce a partnership where MGM will have its name attached to the kitchen and classroom facility Holyoke Community College hopes to open in the Cubit Building at 164 Race St.

The media announcement, set for 10 a.m. Monday, will feature cooking demonstrations by James Coughlin, assistant executive chef at MGM's Mirage Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, and HCC Culinary Arts Professors and Chefs Warren Leigh and Mark Antsel, along with HCC Culinary Arts students.

Holyoke Community College had already announced that it's been awarded a \$1.55 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development and \$1.75 million from the state government for its project at the Cubit building.



## Holyoke Community College receives \$1.55M grant to renovate The Cubit for culinary center

The center will house HCC's associate degree and certificate programs in hospitality management and culinary arts, as well as expanded non-credit workforce training programs in hospitality and culinary arts and specialized courses in those areas administered by Training and Workforce Options, or TWO, a joint program between HCC and Springfield Technical Community College, Holyoke Community College wrote Wednesday in a news release.

In 2015, TWO used a \$75,000 state grant to train 228 culinary students at HCC's existing facility on its main campus. That group included 85 new job seekers and 143 students who were already working in food service but who wanted to upgrade their skills.

TWO is taking the lead in training Pioneer Valley hopefuls for new casino jobs even looking to Atlantic Cape Community College in New Jersey for expertise in training dealers for table games, [something Atlantic Cape specializes in](#).

New owners Denis and Marco Luzuriaga are converting the former [Cubit Wire & Cable Co. Inc.](#) building at Appleton and Race streets into commercial spaces and residential lofts. The building fronts Holyoke's famous canals.

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