

HCC receives \$240K for vet techs

Holyoke Community College has received a \$240,743 state grant to expand and improve the outdoor instructional kennel used for its veterinary technician program.

The allocation was part of the Skills Capital Grants awarded last month by Gov. Charlie Baker's Workforce Skills Cabinet. The competitive grants are awarded to educational institutions that demonstrate partnerships with local businesses, as well as align curriculum and credentials with industry demand to maximize hiring opportunities in each region of the state.

"Skills Capital Grants help preserve the commonwealth's talent pipeline by funding expanded enrollment and equipment upgrades at educational institutions to provide more students with in-demand skills sought by employers," Baker said in announcing the awards.

HCC plans to use the money to increase the size of its kennel to better facilitate instruction and add modern updates, including a new security system, more lighting, and an overhang to protect the dogs housed there.

The college will also be adding a one-year veterinary assistant certificate program for the fall 2020 semester. It already offers a two-year associate degree vet tech program, the only one in Western Massachusetts accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet which was created in 2015 to bring together the secretariats of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development to align the state's education, economic development and workforce policies.



Vet tech instructor Jennifer York examines Bandit during a wellness check with help from Holyoke Community College student Briana Diaz of Westfield.

Submitted photo