

# Massachusetts Gov. Baker awards \$712,000 in grants to New Bedford schools

“Latest round of grants totals nearly \$51 million and includes funding to expand buildings.

The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded nearly \$51 million in Skills Capital Grants to high schools, colleges, and educational institutions, which marks a milestone of awarding more than \$200 million total over the past eight years to upgrade technology and lab spaces for students, expand career programs for young people and adults, and increase capacity in workforce training programs across the Commonwealth. Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Education Secretary James Peyser, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, and Labor Secretary Rosalin Acosta visited Essex North Shore Technical High School today to announce the awards and tour the school’s new Agricultural Museum, which is being built by students.

The awards announced today include two separate rounds of grants. Approximately \$39 million was awarded to nine organizations to undertake major building construction projects, funded through An Act Relative to Immediate Covid-19 Recovery Needs, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, which included \$100 million in state resources to provide capital improvement grants to vocational high schools and public schools operating career and technical education programs. The second round of grants totals \$11.7 million to 38 organizations for technology equipment upgrades, and is funded through the 2018 Economic Development Bill, which established \$75 million in Skills Capital Grant funding over five years.

“We created the Skills Capital Grants to ensure young people and adults in every region of the Commonwealth could learn and gain skills on the most up-to-date technologies and equipment so they would be well-prepared for in-demand careers,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “We are proud of these investments in vocational technical education and their long-term impacts that will positively affect thousands of Massachusetts residents for decades.”

“Our goal with the Skills Capital Grants was to align valuable state resources, build better educational opportunities, and increase access to workforce development training, and we have successfully accomplished those goals,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “Since taking office, we expanded access to career training for both high school students and adults, launched the Career Technical Initiative – turning vocational schools into three shifts-a-day training facilities – and expanded STEM education opportunities for young people.”

Since 2015, 538 grants totaling \$204 million have been awarded through the Skills Capital Grant program.

The Skills Capital Grants are awarded by Governor Baker’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 education, economic development, and workforce policies in order to strategize around how to meet employers’ demand for skilled workers in every region of the Commonwealth. 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.

“These grants are all about expanding access for more students,” said Education Secretary James Peyser. “The funding awarded today for major expansion projects will have a significant impact on the spaces that are available to teach

and train people and will enable new programs to open in communities and regions that currently do not have a program, giving more students opportunities that didn't exist before."

The Skills Capital Grant program has evolved into a crucial component of local workforce training efforts by expanding the number of young people and adults trained and experienced with the newest technologies used by local employers. Approximately 80,000 students across the Commonwealth will directly benefit from all the grants awarded over the past eight years. Investments made through the Skills Capital Grant program helped establish the Career Technical Initiative at 25 vocational-technical schools, as well as early career Innovation Pathways at 60 high schools.

"This continued investment in our vocational-technical schools and colleges has a direct impact on young learners and adults, opening up more opportunity for equitable access to the best equipment possible for training in high-demand industries," said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Rosalin Acosta. "Together, Skills Capital Grants and the Career Technical Initiative are creating more workforce training pathways for constituents across the Commonwealth, while helping employers address staffing shortages."

"Employer demand for skilled workers is high, and the \$51 million in Skills Capital Grants we're announcing today will help us support the space and equipment needed to expand training opportunities for young people and adults across Massachusetts," said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. "The Baker-Polito Administration's Workforce Skills Cabinet has provided an avenue to align policies and investments, like this one, to develop the skilled workforce needed to drive our economy forward."

About two-thirds of the investments made with the grants are directly aligned to reduce skills gaps in high priority industry sectors, including health care, manufacturing, IT,

and skilled trades. A percentage of the funding, about 5 percent, has been invested in multi-year strategic projects in manufacturing, healthcare and energy training programs which are projected to have significant regional impact.

**The following 38 organizations received a total of \$11.7 million for capital equipment technology upgrades:**

*Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, New Bedford – \$212,333, Medical Assisting – Funding will provide diagnostic, treatment, and technology/training equipment to support Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School to update the Medical Assisting vocational program.*

*New Bedford High School, New Bedford – \$500,000, Healthcare – Funding will provide the high school equipment and technology to develop a simulated health sciences laboratory to support current healthcare CVTE program and the development of Health Assisting vocational program.*