For Immediate Release Media Contact:

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**The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Awards Grants to Advance**

**Workforce and Economic Development within the Gaming Industry**

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) is pleased to announce the award of $75,000 in grants to six recipients statewide as part of an effort to aid the advancement of economic development***.*** MGC’s Workforce, Supplier and Diversity Development Office developed this grant program to maximize equity and inclusion within the emerging gaming industry. This grant program was created to support initiatives that will ensure an adequate pool of available, qualified, diverse and prepared applicants for the state’s gaming and hospitality jobs.

MGC Director of Workforce, Supplier and Diversity Development Jill Griffin said, “The Commission works collaboratively with multiple stakeholders to ensure the gaming industry in Massachusetts is inclusive and provides opportunities that reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth.” Griffin added, “MGC will continue to enthusiastically support initiatives that will maximize economic benefits of expanded gaming for all Massachusetts residents.”

MGC requested grant applications to inspire collaborative coalitions, partnerships, grassroots organizations and non-profits to aide in providing programs, outreach, and resources to achieve the following goals:

1. Promote awareness of job opportunities and assist with interview/skill preparation for potential job candidates within the Host and Surrounding Communities of one of the casino properties.
2. Remove road blocks for the unemployed, underemployed and/or candidates with employment challenges.
3. Increase net job gain via initiatives benefiting minorities, women and veterans.
4. Strategies for maximizing contracting opportunities for vendors/suppliers with the licensee

MGC identified six recipients through a competitive process. The grants must beused or designated this fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 with the potential of refunding next fiscal year based on budget availability and performance.

**Here is a list of the approved grant recipients listed by region of focus:**

**Western MA**

* **Hampden County Sheriff Department** received a grant of $12, 715.99. The Sheriff’s Department received funding to train current custodial inmates and recently released population for certification in the Customer Service Gold program from the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute. ESOL and adult education will be offered for students in the program, as well. Additionally, education will be provided on MGM’s SkillSmart software, and the available opportunities with the casino. Students will receive instruction on how to seal their criminal record to increase eligibility for employment.
* **Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation** received a grant of $7,722.00. The QVCDC grant will support both business vendor opportunities, as well as workforce development efforts. Through direct network outreach, advertising (such as on the Quaboag Connector vehicles) and their connections within the local community, they will promote awareness of opportunities for potential vendors and job seekers. Additionally, they will offer courses in ServSafe and Job Readiness Skills for under and unemployed job seekers aspiring to work with MGM Springfield. To remove road blocks for those interested in the courses and opportunities at MGM, QVCDC will purchase travel vouchers for the Quaboag Connector to ensure dependable transportation.

**Eastern MA**

* **Asian American Civic Association** received a grant of $15,000. The AACA will offer program enhancements that increase minority access to the casino industry, working with members of the Asian American, immigrant and economically disadvantaged populations in Greater Boston to raise awareness of job opportunities, and increased placement success. The organization will do this through the direct preparation of interested candidates via pre-screening resumes and qualifications and offering mock interviews; as well as referrals to English language courses and social service and benefits programs (such as housing assistance and child care services.)
* **BEST Hospitality Training** received a grant of $15, 000.With the grant funds provided, BEST will create a hospitality training pipeline focused on casino careers. BEST will accomplish its goals by meeting with industry stakeholders in the Boston area to develop a marketing strategy, holding informational sessions for diverse candidates looking to enter the hospitality industry, determining a qualified community organization to offer BEST’s English for Hospitality curriculum and identifying a local partner to host the Wynn Model Hotel Guest Room in the Everett area for training purposes.
* **Chelsea Collaborative and La Comunidad** received a grant of $12,260. The Chelsea Collaborative and La Comunidad will collaborate to support a workforce pipeline initiative to bridge the unemployment and income gap for Chelsea and Everett-area residents. Their grant-funded work will consist of expansion of adult education (ESL and computer proficiency courses,) individualized career development case management (including industry “fit” assessment and application completion,) and creation of a data-tracking pipeline for continued follow-up with interested residents.

**Statewide**

* **Hispanic American Institute** received a grant from $12,000. The funding provided to the HAI will support the development of local resource partners for the casinos, awareness of vendor opportunities and technical assistance for minority-owned businesses. These goals will be obtained via workshops, networking events and educational forums including three breakfast forums in collaboration with Chelsea Chamber of Commerce, North Shore Latino Business Association and La Comunidad, Inc., and the ongoing Quarterly Small Business Breakfast at Wynn Boston Harbor. The grant also allows for marketing and social media promotion, as well as planning for events and expanding partnerships in Western MA.

**About MassGaming**

The mission of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission is to create a fair, transparent, and participatory process for implementing the expanded gaming law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in November 2011. In creating that process, the Commission will strive to ensure that its decision-making and regulatory systems engender the confidence of the public and participants, and that they provide the greatest possible economic development benefits and revenues to the people of the Commonwealth, reduce to the maximum extent possible the potentially negative or unintended consequences of the new legislation, and allow an appropriate return on investment for gaming providers that assures the operation of casino-resorts of the highest quality. For more information on MGC, please visit [MassGaming.com](http://www.mass.gov/gaming) or connect and share on Twitter ([@MassGamingComm](http://www.twitter.com/massgamingcomm)) or Facebook [www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm](http://www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm).