

MCC's jobs tank

Targeted training can help fill local employment void

Rare was the state or federal lawmaker who didn't discuss job training during campaign-season meetings with the Editorial Board this fall. It's a surprising fact, given stubbornly high unemployment rates, but thousands of jobs sit unfilled for extended periods in New York because many applicants lack the appropriate skills.

One of the initiatives in the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council's bid for state funding could make a dent in those unfilled positions. It deserves full state support.

Multiple Pathways to Middle Skills Jobs, led by Monroe Community College, aims to prepare workers to fill that troublesome employment niche between unskilled and highly skilled labor. The project — a partnership among local colleges, school districts, trade associations, workforce investment boards and employers — will

establish career programs that tie high school and secondary education to jobs in fields like health care, advanced manufacturing and skilled trades.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo and state officials visited Rochester last week to review the regional council's bid, which included a request for \$600,000 for the Multiple Pathways project. The state will soon divvy up more than \$700 million in economic development funds throughout New York.

State aid is vital, but a secondary benefit of the regional economic development model is prompting area leaders to think creatively about their needs and priorities. The result is bids that include not only big projects, like Rochester's repurposing of the Eastman Business Park, but big ideas, like the Multiple Paths plan. In fact, SUNY is looking at the program as a statewide model.

Workforce development doesn't just mean creating shovel-ready projects, it means creating career-ready employees.