KDRV Channel 12
Sept. 9, 2026

RCC awarded $150K for faster pathways into various careers

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- Sep 9, 2026 Updated Sep 9, 2026



JACKSON AND JOSEPHINE COUNTIES, Ore. - Rogue Community College was awarded $150,000 from two separate grants, which will be used for accelerated work credentials and programs for healthcare, transportation, and clean energy.

One grant will redesign dental assisting, emergency medical services and medical assisting programs. Programs that now take two to three terms will be condensed into 11-week credentials.

"This investment will expand access to accelerated, high-quality healthcare training that prepares students for in-demand careers while helping meet the urgent workforce needs of our region," said Rusty Riis, dean of healthcare and education. "By strengthening pathways in dental

assisting, emergency medical services and medical assisting, we are creating more opportunities for students to earn valuable credentials and move quickly into family-wage employment."

The grant will help RCC buy equipment and cover staffing costs. Regional healthcare providers will help shape the programs to match industry needs.

Students can build on these credentials and pursue careers in dental hygiene, nursing and paramedicine. The shorter timeline means students can start working sooner.

The second grant will support a new electric vehicle safety credential. The program will stack into RCC's quick lube training and Transportation Technology pathways.

Graduates will be ready for jobs in quick lube, express maintenance, dealership service and fleet support. The program responds to projected demand for automotive service technicians, which is expected to grow by more than 12% in Jackson and Josephine counties between 2025 and 2035.

"High-voltage diagnostic tools, specialized safety gear and modern training equipment represent a substantial investment for any technical education program," said Stephen Phelps, dean of instruction and student engagement. "We are deeply grateful to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for this grant opportunity, which helps bridge that cost barrier."

RCC will develop the credential with regional workforce partners. Partners will advise on curriculum, validate entry-level skills and help guide implementation.

Both programs will teach employability skills identified by regional employers as essential to workplace success. These include adaptability, communication, collaboration, digital literacy and safety-focused problem-solving.

Development activities will be completed by June 30, 2027. The first students are expected to begin the new programs in fall 2027.