

High School Apprenticeship Challenge



“The High School Apprenticeship Challenge made it possible for us to place 18 students at high-quality, paid STEM internships at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Without MLSC, this simply would not have happened. MLSC made the partnership between my organization, UMass, and the students possible. With MLSC support, UMass increased their number of places over 500% in a year. This kind of support is what will move the needle on STEM education and preparation for high-quality STEM careers in the Commonwealth.”

Matt Rigney

Alternative Youth Programs Director
Collaborative for Educational Services
Northampton, Massachusetts

Program Overview

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) High School Apprenticeship Challenge facilitates and funds internship opportunities for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged high school students throughout Massachusetts. The program connects employers with students through an online platform and provides funding to enable research institutions and small companies to hire paid interns. For select school districts, the program also offers a pre-internship laboratory training program providing rigorous biotechnology/biomedical and professional skills development.

How the Program Works

The program creates new internship opportunities by subsidizing intern wages for small life sciences companies and academic researchers, enabling them to hire paid interns.

Students submit an online application, which includes their resume and cover letter, through the MLSC’s online platform. There is no application deadline since placements are rolling throughout the year.

Host institutions register online through the MLSC’s website, and once approved, are given access to a secure database to review applications, reach out directly to candidates, and select interns with the qualifications that are most suited to their needs. Interns are hired and paid by the employer. Companies can hire up to two interns per year and research institutions can hire no more than 30 interns per year.

The MLSC reimburses eligible host organizations for intern wages of \$15 per hour, for a total reimbursement of up to \$3,600 per intern (based on six weeks of full-time work).

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Lab Training Program

Since 2016, the MLSC has offered an intensive lab training program for underserved students that provides a direct pathway to internships with partner research institutions. The program has been offered in Brockton, New Bedford, Worcester, and Cambridge (serving Boston, Cambridge, and Everett students) and takes place after-school or during the summer.



“The Apprenticeship Challenge is an amazing opportunity given to kids to help them further their knowledge in biotechnology. In this program, I believe I was given the most memorable experiences Brockton High has to offer to kids interested in going into the field of biotechnology. With the help of this program, I was given the opportunity to put one foot forward in achieving my goals for the future.”

Angela Thevenin
Brockton High School Student

Eligibility Requirements

Students must be at least 16 years old and enrolled in or have recently graduated from a school that meets at least one of the following descriptions:

- Vocational technical high school
- Public high school located in a Gateway City
- Public high school with a student population of at least 25% classified as “economically disadvantaged” by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Recent graduates (not enrolled in college) that received their high school diploma within the past two calendar years are also eligible.

Host institutions must be life sciences companies, incubators, or research institutions located in Massachusetts. Companies must have 100 or fewer employees in Massachusetts (up to 250 worldwide) to be eligible for the internship subsidy. Larger companies are encouraged to participate, but cannot be reimbursed for intern stipends. Host institutions are expected to provide a hands-on learning experience and at least one mentor that directly oversees the internship.

Impact

Since the program first launched in 2016, the MLSC has supported more than 400 internships at more than 100 organizations. Interns have represented 138 Massachusetts high schools and 325 students have participated in MLSC-sponsored lab training programs designed to better prepare them for internship opportunities.