

# Internship Challenge

## Program Overview

The Internship Challenge funds hundreds of internships each year for college students interested in pursuing careers in the life sciences. The program connects employers with students through an online platform and provides funding to enable eligible organizations to hire paid interns. Offered year-round, this workforce development program seeks to enhance and build a robust talent pipeline for Massachusetts life science companies, research institutions, incubators, and trade associations.

## Program Objectives

- Creating paid internship opportunities by enabling small companies and research institutions to host interns.
- Providing students with hands-on, real-world experience through direct exposure to the Massachusetts life sciences ecosystem.
- Helping students build a professional network in the life sciences industry and gain relevant work experience.
- Connecting companies with diverse talent and enabling them to hire underrepresented/underserved students.
- Supporting the growth of smaller life sciences companies by providing and subsidizing a talented workforce.
- Promoting careers in life sciences and working to retain talent in Massachusetts.

## Impact on the Ecosystem

As the MLSC's longest-running program, the Internship Challenge has become the largest state-sponsored internship program in the U.S. and serves as a model for similar programs across the country. Since the program's inception in 2009, more than 7,700 internships and over 1,190 companies have supported students representing 295 different academic institutions.

## Case Study

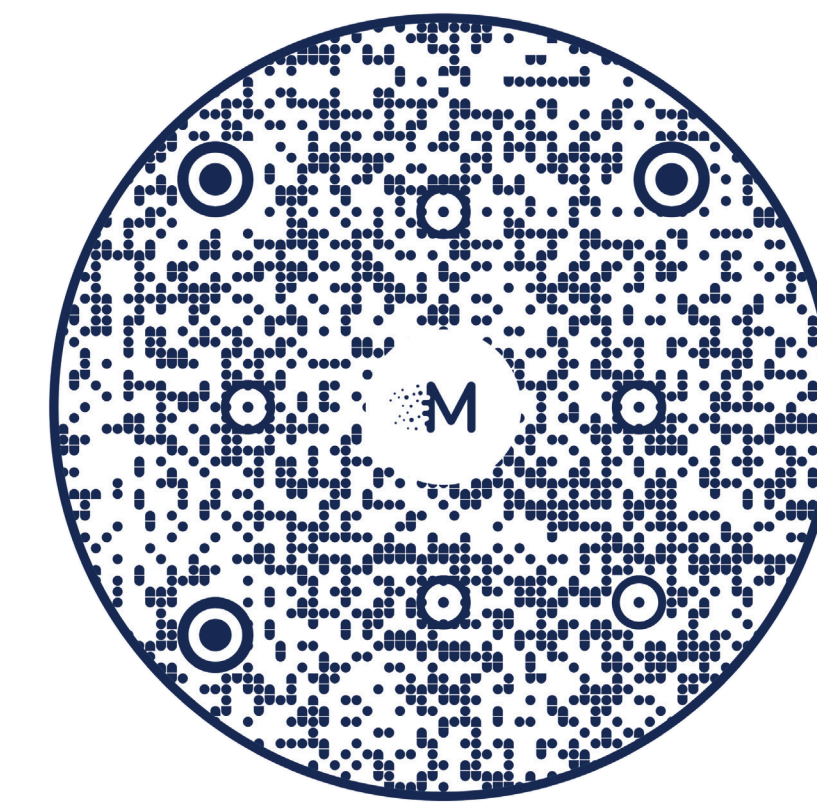
Olaris, Inc. aims to revolutionize how we diagnose and treat patients with life threatening diseases. Its growing team includes Chen Dong, who after interning with Olaris through the MLSC Internship Challenge and receiving his master's degree in bioinformatics, joined the company full-time as a Data Scientist. It all clicked for Chen when he realized that his contribution to the science made a practical impact and drove the company's growth.

"I think internships are valuable because they provide an exploring and learning opportunity to see how the company operates and how different teams collaborate."

Chen Dong  
Data Scientist III (former intern)  
Olaris, Inc.







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## How the Program Works

- Internships can be part- or full-time and can take place any time during the program year, from May 1 through April 30.
- Students submit an online application, which includes their resume and cover letter. The application period opens in January. There is no application deadline.
- Organizations interested in hosting interns register online, review applications, and hire candidates with the qualifications that match their needs.
- MLSC reimburses eligible companies for intern wages of up to \$20 per hour, for a total reimbursement of up to \$9,600 per intern (based on 12 weeks of full-time work). Interns must be paid at least \$18 per hour.

## Eligibility Requirements

**Interns** must be Massachusetts residents and/or enrolled at a Massachusetts institution or enrolled in a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, anywhere in the country. Four-year college/university

students must be completing at least their freshman year prior to the start of the internship. All two-year/ community college/certificate students, Master's degree students, and recent graduates who completed their degree/certificate within the past year are eligible.

**Host organizations** must be located in Massachusetts and engaged in life sciences. Companies must have 100 or fewer FTE employees in MA (up to 250 worldwide). Larger companies are also encouraged to participate but cannot be reimbursed for intern wages. Incubators and trade associations are also eligible for internship funding.

**Research Institutions** of any size are eligible to host up a total of six interns, provided that only two interns are hired per lab/department, and that at least one intern within each lab/department is a student or recent graduate from two- year/community colleges, certificate program, or MSI. Organizations are expected to provide hands-on learning experience and at least one mentor that directly oversees the intern.



The hope for any company taking those first few steps was to get more hands and more brains in the lab and have access to a talent pool, which is made possible by the MLSC. You not only have the ability to get positions funded in a very well structured program, but as a company, we are provided access to a database of students who are willing, able, and eager to take part in internships. This is a powerful resource to tap into."

*Rachit Ohri PhD  
Founder and CEO  
Enable Life Sciences*

