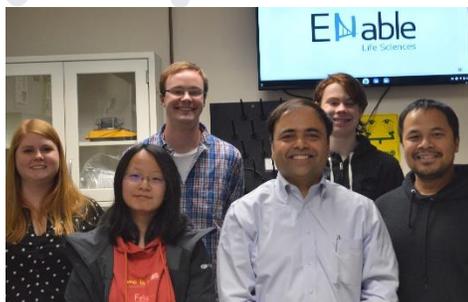


# Internship Challenge



*“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 Ph.D.  
Founder and CEO  
Enable Life Sciences



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## Program Overview

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) Internship Challenge creates hundreds of new internship opportunities each year for college students interested in pursuing careers in the life sciences industry. The program connects employers with students through an online platform and provides funding to enable small companies to hire paid interns. Offered year-round, this workforce development program seeks to enhance and build a robust talent pipeline for Massachusetts companies engaged in life sciences.

## Program Objectives

- Creating paid internship opportunities by enabling small companies to host interns.
- Providing students with hands-on real-world experience and 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 incentivizing them to hire underrepresented/underserved students.
- Supporting the growth of smaller life sciences companies by providing/subsidizing human capital.
- Encouraging careers in life sciences and help retain talent in Massachusetts.

## 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 for each new program year opens in Jan. There is no application deadline.
- Companies interested in hosting interns register online, review applications and hire candidates with the qualifications that are most suited to their needs.
- MLSC reimburses eligible companies for intern wages of up to \$17 per hour, for a total reimbursement of up to \$8,160 per intern (based on 12 weeks of full-time work). Interns must be paid no less than \$15 per hour.

## 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.

## Eligibility Requirements

**Interns** must be Massachusetts residents and/or students or enrolled in an HBCU. 4-year college/university students must be completing at least their freshman year prior to the start of the internship. All 2-year/community college/certificate students, Master's degree students, and recent graduates that completed their degree/certificate within the past year are eligible.

**Host companies** must be located in Massachusetts and engaged in life sciences. Companies must have 100 or fewer employees in MA (up to 250 worldwide) to be eligible for the subsidy. Larger companies are also encouraged to participate, but cannot be reimbursed for intern wages. Companies are expected to provide a hands-on learning experience and at least one mentor that directly oversees the internship. As of 2022, research institutions are eligible to host interns that are students or recent graduates from 2-year/community college or certificate programs.

## 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 served as a model for similar programs across the country. Since the program's inception in 2009, more than 5,000 internships with over 920 companies were supported for students representing 250 different academic institutions.