

On-Site and Virtual Internships Through SENEDIA'S Real Jobs Rhode Island Internship Program

The Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA) is the lead for the Real Jobs Rhode Island Defense Industry Partnership grant to implement workforce development opportunities to support the needs of the Defense industry. The grant provides funding to support a robust internship program for IT/Cybersecurity, Engineering, Supply Chain/Business Management, and Military Veterans. SENEDIA, through our Real Jobs RI grant, matches interns with companies. Interns are provided a stipend and afforded the opportunity to take associated online certification training. SENEDIA can facilitate immediate job placement for candidates with sufficient experience. U.S. citizenship is required to work in the Defense industry. **To date, SENEDIA has placed 149 interns in member companies/partner organizations and facilitated 193 job placements.**

As a result of the pandemic, SENEDIA is placing interns both on-site and virtually, to match the shift of companies transitioning to a partial remote working environment. Companies have had to pivot to transition their staff and remain connected.

Richard Astle, CEO of NeQter Labs, a SENEDIA member company who has successfully used our internship program, observed, "This meant that we had to figure out how to support our ongoing operations including our employees and interns, service our existing customers, and continue the development of our products." **SENEDIA intern Michelle, a student at the Community College of Rhode Island, was caught in the middle of this transition. Michelle, who is a software development intern, has been able to continue her internship remotely by accessing the NeQter network to continue her project. "Working remotely, Michelle has been creating new features for our cybersecurity product by collecting and examining event logs.** Constant communication with the team regarding progress and next steps has been key," said NeQter's Director of Product, Shawn Houston. When asked about the pros and cons of her virtual internship, Michelle replied, "I am learning a lot and it has been interesting. I found that scheduling has certainly been key, and another lesson I learned was that you must set yourself up in a remote work-like setting to be productive."

Jeffry, a student at the Community College of Rhode Island completing his A.S. in Cybersecurity, successfully completed a virtual internship with KMS Solutions, another SENEDIA member company. Jeffry expressed, "with the internship I learned a lot about the cybersecurity field. I had the opportunity to apply real-life situations to what I learned in the classroom, and I also developed new skills that will help me to have a successful cybersecurity career. I am very lucky to have supportive people, who assisted me to have a successful and valuable experience." When asked about the challenges and/or surprises on completing an internship during a pandemic, Jeffry answered, "When I was looking for an internship, I relied on my college career office, but there were not many requests for interns during the early months of the pandemic. Then SENEDIA reached out to me with an internship offer. During the pandemic, adapting to safety protocols for the workplace required working from home; therefore, my entire internship was distance learning." **Jeffry is now preparing for his Security+ certification through online training resources provided by the RJRI grant. He has been offered a job with KMS Solutions after he graduates.** Michael J. Martino, KMS Solutions Senior Vice President added, "The SENEDIA Intern Program has a two-fold benefit. It provides participating SENEDIA member companies valuable technical resources immediately and at low cost. This Program also provides permanent employment and growth potential for the interns. KMS hopes to continue using this great program as frequently as possible."

Travis, a rising senior majoring in computer engineering at the University of Rhode Island, was placed in an on-site internship at Response Technologies, another SENEDIA member company, at their Coventry facility to learn about and work on installing a robotic spray system and mask-making automation. When asked about working on-site during the pandemic, Travis replied, "everyone is safe with COVID precautions," and "this internship has contributed so much to the start of my career." **When Travis finished the 80-hour internship, Response Technologies offered him a position for the summer.**

Jacklyn was placed through SENEDIA's Supply Chain / Business internship program. As a 2020 graduate with a B.S. in Applied Mathematics and Statistics, Jacklyn's opportunity at MIKEL allowed her to apply everything she learned throughout her four years at Bryant University to real world situations. Jacklyn expressed, "I am extremely grateful to have had an internship opportunity at MIKEL through SENEDIA, during such unprecedented times. Throughout the summer, I have been working to analyze data using SAS, which is a statistical analysis program I specialized in at Bryant University. Not only have I been analyzing this data, but I have also been creating a scientific document that will be used to teach my coworkers at MIKEL, the features of SAS. I've thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity working alongside my coworkers at MIKEL, learning more about the company and assisting them in expanding their knowledge of statistical programming."

Jim, an intern currently placed at Innovate Newport, was brought on through SENEDIA's Supply Chain / Business internship program. Jim is completing his B.S. in Marketing from Salve Regina University. When asked about his internship opportunity through SENEDIA at Innovate Newport, Jim replied, "I greatly appreciate the opportunity to complete my internship due to SENEDIA's generosity and support of Innovation. I am able to apply the knowledge I gained through my four years at Salve Regina, however, you can only learn so much in the classroom. There is no substitute for hands on experience and connecting with people who become valuable mentors. Todd LaChance, Community Manager at Innovate Newport, has been unbelievably helpful, teaching me every aspect of running the business, beyond what my marketing degree prepared me for. The growing diversity in my skill set will be beneficial to any future company I am employed with. **The current pandemic has created a lack of open positions. I consider myself lucky to have received the assistance and guidance from SENEDIA in securing this internship opportunity.**"

Chris, another intern at NeQter Labs, was recently hired full time as a result of his internship; and was brought on through SENEDIA'S IT/Cybersecurity Internship Program. Chris completed his A.S. Degree in Cybersecurity from Community College of Rhode Island. When asked what an internship means to him in obtaining future employment, Chris replied, "The internship gave me a great opportunity to gain experience in my field, as well as allowed me to get my foot in the door. The skills I've learned from the internship will benefit me greatly since it provided me the practical experience needed to help me succeed in the future. One of the challenges in obtaining an internship during the pandemic Chris commented on, "by the time the State of RI began to close down, I was close to obtaining all the hours needed to complete my internship, although the challenge was trying to communicate with others in the company; but like everyone else, we adapted to the situation." When asked what skills or experiences he is looking forward to obtaining, Chris expressed, "I am learning a lot about how to become better at Customer Support and NIST SP 800-171, which is becoming a big deal for smaller government contractors to be compliant with."

If interested in an internship or if your company would like to host an on-site or virtual intern, please contact internships@senedia.org. SENEDIA has talented intern candidates with cyber/IT, engineering, business and military backgrounds.