



The Alliance for Defense Tech, Talent, and Innovation

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SENEDIA Expanding Defense Talent Pipeline with Real Jobs Rhode Island
Defense Industry Partnership Offers Career Exploration, Job Placement

MIDDLETOWN, RI – SENEDIA, the alliance for Defense tech, talent, and innovation, is expanding the Defense industry workforce through a grant with Real Jobs Rhode Island.

RI Department of Labor and Training, through their Real Jobs RI program, awarded another year of effort under a five-year grant, awarded in 2020, to support SENEDIA's Defense Industry Partnership. Since the inauguration of the Real Jobs RI program in 2016, SENEDIA has been awarded 8 contracts to support this important mission. In 2024, SENEDIA will continue to build upon its previous efforts to grow the defense industry workforce. SENEDIA's program supports the workforce development of Defense industry companies and partners by connecting prospective employees—veterans and students with internship or direct hire career opportunities.

"In 2023, SENEDIA connected with and screened nearly 300 candidates, providing resume help, conducting mock interviews, and exposing them to the possibility of a high-wage, high-tech, high-growth career in defense," said **Molly Donohue Magee**, SENEDIA's chief executive officer. "Defense has a \$7.6 billion annual economic impact in Rhode Island. To meet the demand and maintain our state's role as an essential player in our national security infrastructure, we must continue to attract, train, and retain top talent, which is exactly what this initiative sets out to do. The careers in the Rhode Island defense cluster generates \$3.0 billion in income for households, supporting 8.9% of the total income generated in the state."

In addition to screening and engaging candidates, SENEDIA places interns and helps candidates secure long-term job placements. There are other opportunities to help job seekers obtain cyber security industry certifications.

"Through our partnership with SENEDIA, our Real Jobs RI Defense initiative exemplifies the power of strategic investments in workforce development to not only enhance career opportunities for individuals but also to fortify the foundation of our local defense industry. Together, we are cultivating a skilled workforce that not only meets the demands of the defense sector but also contributes significantly to our state's economic strength and national security," said **Matt Weldon**, Director, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. "More than 34,000 Rhode Islanders are employed in good-paying jobs in Defense, and that number promises to increase as the RI Defense cluster continues to grow to meet the expanding

national security demands, both here in the US and across the globe. Defense careers are a rewarding and family-sustaining career pathway worth exploring—both for young people just starting out and for veterans and transitioning workers looking for a new challenge.”

The Defense Industry Partnership supports SENEDIA’s paid internship and direct hire job placement programs for veterans, transitioning professionals, and college students—undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate—in the fields of IT/cybersecurity, engineering, supply chain management, technology, and business support.

“This program is incredibly valuable for a Defense company like mine. Candidates are pre-vetted through a rigorous screening process, and we can see if a prospective hire has the skills they need and is the right fit for our organization,” said **Kelly Mendell** of MIKEL, a SENEDIA member and participating employer who hired through the Defense Industry Partnership Program. “Small businesses have many competing priorities, yet this opportunity allows us to access top new talent so we can continue to thrive, grow, and serve the needs of our national defense.”

“SENEDIA’s program helped prepare me for an internship in the defense industry, providing me with networking and information to land a great opportunity” said **Patrick Colantonio** of NeQter Labs. “My internship grew into a career, taking me from a Cyber Security Analyst to a Vice President of the company. This program not only helped me, but helped NeQter Labs, as many of the interns placed with us have converted to full-time, long-term employees.”

If you are ready to take the first step into your career, or if you are a transitioning servicemember looking to continue your service to the country, join SENEDIA’s Defense Industry Partnership Program as a candidate by visiting www.SENEDIA.org/Internships/. To learn more about how this program can help your company grow, visit www.SENEDIA.org/Internships/ to watch the latest webinar covering the program. Interested candidates and companies can reach out directly to Internships@SENEDIA.org.

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SENEDIA, the alliance for Defense tech, talent, and innovation, is a catalyst for thought leadership, technical innovation, and workforce development. SENEDIA connects, convenes, and partners across the industry to support talent, innovation, and growth. For more information on SENEDIA, please visit www.SENEDIA.org.