

SENEDIA Continues to Strengthen Defense Workforce

Real Jobs RI Grant Supports Rhode Island's \$7.6 Billion Defense Industry

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MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – SENEDIA, the alliance for defense tech, talent, and innovation, announced today a \$200,000 grant to continue their highly-successful Defense Partnership Program. The program, administered through Real Jobs RI, connects job seekers with direct hire, internship, and training opportunities in the defense sector, which represents more than 34,000 jobs and \$7.6 billion in economic output in Rhode Island.

“Real Jobs is critical to our efforts to fortify national security and grow the defense industry, an essential part of the economy in Rhode Island and across the region,” said Molly Donohue Magee, chief executive officer of SENEDIA. “The meaningful skill-building, on-the-job experience, and job search support we foster through this program ensures a strong defense workforce for today and tomorrow.”

Real Jobs RI has supported the Defense Partnership Program since 2016, enabling training and job placements in high-wage, high-growth, high-demand careers in defense, including IT and cybersecurity, engineering/science, supply chain management, technology, and business support. In 2024, the program placed more than 60 applicants into good-paying jobs and facilitated employment support for more than 100 candidates, including resume and interview prep, direct outreach to employers, internship opportunities, and technical certifications.

“Defense is a key part of the Rhode Island economy, and its impact reverberates across many other industries,” said

Matthew Weldon, director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training that oversees the Real Jobs RI program. “Connecting Rhode Island companies with talented and skilled workers – from recent high school graduates pursuing rewarding careers to mid-career professionals looking to leverage new skills – is a win for the employer, for the candidate, and for our state.”

The Defense Partnership Program builds on SENEDIA’s broader portfolio of workforce development and industry advocacy. Through the Department of Defense sponsored New England Submarine Shipbuilding Partnership, SENEDIA has facilitated the training of more than 5,100 people for employment opportunities in Rhode Island and has strengthened the talent pipeline across the K-12, higher education, and advanced training levels.

Building a strong workforce pipeline is essential to sustaining and growing the industry. According to [SENEDIA’s 2023 Economic Impact Report of the Defense Cluster in New England](#), defense represents more than 10 percent of the state’s economy and generates \$3 billion in labor income for Rhode Island workers. Across the region, the sector accounts for \$119.1 billion in economic output, more than 407,000 jobs, and more than \$40 billion in income.

To learn more about hosting an intern or pursuing an internship through SENEDIA, visit www.SENEDIA.org/internships. Candidates interested in direct hire opportunities can visit www.SENEDIA.org/defense-careers, or view defense-related job openings from SENEDIA member companies at members.SENEDIA.org/jobs.