

Work-Based Learning Alliance

School Guide



Internships and Project Experiences

2024-2025



Work-Based Learning Alliance

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About WBLA

Student Opportunities

100 Hour Internships

Our 100% virtual internships provide opportunities for students to work in teams with a real industry mentor, solving a real problem in their organization. Spread over 4, 6, or 8 weeks, these 100 hour internships give students the chance to flex their employability skills while also gaining valuable insight into their mentor's organization and industry.

Industry-Focused Project Experiences

Our 3 week industry-focused project experiences challenge students to solve a real-world problem within a team while being coached by an industry expert. These projects are focused on specific industries and skill sets, such as cybersecurity in collaboration with IBM SkillsBuild and CAD in collaboration with Dassault Systèmes.

All WBLA Programs



Virtual

100% virtual experiences drive equitable access by removing hurdles such as geography and transportation



Industry Aligned

Projects are designed using proven work-based learning templates that align to real world industry roles and skills



Structured

Structured industry feedback creates greater value for students and builds social capital



Quality Assured

Data and reporting on learning, skill development, participation levels, engagement & performance at work

Given the high demand for our programs across the state, each internship cohort is capped at 100 students, and each project cohort is capped at 50 students. Students are offered places in order of registration. Students must complete all onboarding activities by the deadlines detailed on the 2024-2025 schedules. After each deadline, WBLA will begin reallocating places to waitlisted students.

How to Spot a Great Candidate

WBLA programs provide students with real-world opportunities to explore industry, practice their employability skills, and build their social capital. Due to the virtual and flexible nature of our programs, it is important that students have a certain level of maturity and motivation to get the most out of our programs. The following qualities are typically indicators of future success in a WBLA program:

- Able to work, learn, and think independently
- Self-disciplined, organized, and reliable
- Flexible and willing to adjust and adapt
- Open to feedback
- Eager to learn
- Connects well with peers and adults
- Driven to succeed
- Technologically savvy and able to navigate digital learning tools
- Able to commit the required weekly hours to the experience
- Eligible to work in Massachusetts, preferably at least 16 years old

Communicating Opportunities

For many students participating in a program with WBLA is their first real-world industry experience, and we make every effort through onboarding, orientation and WBLA Advisor support services to ensure every student is set up for success. It's important, however, that schools are transparent with students regarding the nature and expectations of our programs when discussing opportunities with them.

We have provided some key talking points below, as well as details of student expectations on the following pages. We have also included a sample email you can distribute to students and their families. We hope that this information supports your discussions and allows students to feel confident in their decision to participate in our programs.

Internship Placements

WBLA internships are team-based career exploration opportunities. While WBLA takes student industry interests into account when placing students with industry mentors, we do not guarantee matching with certain industries, organizations, or job roles.

Time Commitment

Students must be able to commit the required weekly hours to their WBLA experience. For projects this means 6-7 hours each week, while internships require 12-25 hours per week depending on the length of the internship. Students must attend industry and team meetings throughout the week.

Ability to Work Independently

The virtual, flexible nature of WBLA's programs also means that students spend a large amount of time working independently. Students should be able to navigate digital tools, plan their time, and work on their own to meet team goals. While WBLA offers structured guidance and support, students need to be able to take that guidance and apply it to their own work.

Sample Email

Announcement

Dear Students and Families-

I am sharing an opportunity that has recently become available to our students through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education and Work-Based Learning Alliance (WBLA). WBLA is a non-profit organization that provides virtual work-based learning opportunities to high school students. I have attached some additional information about the opportunity and outlined some of the details below:

- WBLA offers two types of paid experiences: virtual internships and virtual industry-focused projects. Internships are available across various industries while industry-focused projects are available for cybersecurity, CAD, and clean energy.
- WBLA's programming is 100% virtual, so there is no need to travel to a work site to participate. Students will need to participate in multiple Zoom meetings each week, and will need to use a laptop, Chromebook or tablet with a working camera as well as reliable internet connectivity.
- Students should be ready to work collaboratively within a team and also work independently to complete their own work in these programs. These experiences reflect how remote work happens in the workplace, so students will need to be self-disciplined and personally driven to successfully participate.
- WBLA internships are 100 hours in length, meaning that a significant time commitment is required each week to complete the internship. Students will need to dedicate 12-16 hours per week during a school year internship, and 25 hours per week during the summer.
- WBLA industry-focused projects are available for students to explore careers utilizing cybersecurity, CAD, and clean energy skills and concepts. These are shorter, 3 week projects that require students to commit to 7 hours of work per week.

We are excited to offer these opportunities to our students. Please reach out to me if you have questions, or begin the registration process by completing the [WBLA Student Registration Form](#).

Sincerely,

Attachments:

Family Information Letter

2024 WBLA Internship Flyer

2024 WBLA Industry Project Experiences Flyer

Choosing an Experience

Internships vs. Industry Projects

	Internships	Industry Projects
Overall Commitment	100 hours over 4, 6, or 8 weeks	20 hours over 3 weeks
Weekly Commitment	12-16 hours during the school year 25 hours during the summer	7 hours
Synchronous Meetings	Two per week, plus ad hoc team meetings	One per week plus ad hoc team meetings
Industry	Range of industry projects available	Focused on the skills associated with one particular industry. During 2024-2025 school year the industries will include Cybersecurity, CAD and Clean Energy.
Mentors	Work within a specific organization; project is scoped for their organization	Work within the project's industry; project is relevant the industry, not the mentor organization

Student Expectations

Attendance

Students must attend all scheduled meetings in their internship or project experience. Our programs are largely asynchronous and built to be flexible, so it is critical that students attend all meetings including mentor, industry expert, and WBLA advisor meetings.

Deliverables

Our experience platform gives students a place to learn more about their program deliverables, and submit items for feedback from their peers, advisor, industry expert, or mentor. Students must complete all program deliverables to successfully complete their experience.

Virtual Showcase

The final deliverable for all programs is a virtual showcase. This gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their hard work throughout their experience, present their solution to their mentor and school, and practice their employability skills by communicating and presenting to an audience. All students must attend and actively participate in the virtual showcase.

Stipend funding for Massachusetts WBLA programs is provided by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education. As such, it is the responsibility of WBLA to ensure that students are fulfilling their commitments to the programs. While WBLA makes every effort to support student success, students who do not meet the listed expectations may be removed from the program and become ineligible for stipend payments.

Please note that only students with a Social Security Number are able to be paid a stipend. Any student without a Social Security Number is able to participate in an unpaid capacity.

How WBLA Programs Work

1 Registration

- Schools complete the [School Registration Form](#), letting WBLA know how many students the school anticipates will register for each experience.
- Schools share the [Student Registration Form](#), Family Information Letter, and program information sheets with students and families. The Student Registration Form should be completed by the student with family guidance and support.

2 Onboarding & Orientation

- Once registered, students are added to a virtual community space (Slack) and begin receiving information from their WBLA advisor about onboarding tasks that must be completed ahead of program launch. For some programs, students must complete pre-work in order to participate in the experience. All students under 18 will need a valid [work permit](#) from the school.
- Onboarding and Orientation sessions will be scheduled at least 2 weeks before the program start date. Schools will be included on weekly emails to students and invitations to Onboarding and Orientation sessions. Students will meet their teammates at Orientation, so it is critical that they attend.

3 Program Experience

- During internships, students will meet with both their mentor and WBLA advisor weekly. For project experiences, students will meet with an industry expert weekly. These meetings are required for successful completion of the experience.
- WBLA will share weekly reports with schools and invite school staff to the virtual showcase at the end of the program experience.

2024-2025 Schedule: Internships

Format	Student Registration Deadline	Student Onboarding Deadline	Program Preparation Dates	Program Dates
6 Week Internship	September 13	October 4	Onboarding - 9/19 Orientation - 10/3 Kickoff - 10/10	October 15 - November 22
8 Week Internship (No meetings during February vacation)	December 6	December 20	Onboarding - 12/12 Orientation - 1/9 Kickoff - 1/16	January 21 - March 21
6 Week Internship	January 31	February 14	Onboarding - 2/6 Orientation - 2/13 Kickoff - 2/27	March 3 - April 11
4 Week Internship	May 16	June 18	Onboarding - 5/29 Orientation - 6/17 Kickoff - 6/26	June 30 - July 25
4 Week Internship	May 16	July 18	Onboarding - 5/29 Orientation - 7/17 Kickoff - 7/22	July 28 - August 22

Quick Links

- [School Registration Form](#)
- [Student Registration Form](#)
- [WBLA Signed Work Permit Application/Promise of Employment](#)

2024-2025 Schedule: Project Experiences

Format	Student Registration Deadline	Student Onboarding Deadline	Program Preparation Dates	Program Dates
Cybersecurity Project Experience	September 13	October 11	Onboarding - 9/19 Orientation - 10/8	October 21 - November 8
CAD Project Experience	September 13	November 22	Onboarding - 9/19 Orientation - 11/19	December 2 - December 20
Cybersecurity Project Experience	January 31	February 14	Onboarding - 2/6 Orientation - 2/25	March 10 - March 28
CAD Project Experience	January 31	April 17	Onboarding - 4/3 Orientation - 4/15	May 5 - May 23
Clean Energy Project Experience	January 31	April 17	Onboarding - 4/3 Orientation - 4/17	May 5 - May 23
CAD Project Experience	May 16	June 18	Onboarding - 5/29 Orientation - 6/24	July 7 - July 25
Cybersecurity Project Experience	May 16	July 18	Onboarding - 5/29 Orientation - 7/22	August 4 - August 22

Quick Links

- [School Registration Form](#)
- [Student Registration Form](#)
- [WBLA Signed Work Permit Application/Promise of Employment](#)

About WBLA

The Work-Based Learning Alliance (WBLA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose mission is to provide all high school students across the United States with access to quality assured, career connected learning experiences that allow them to discover their passions, develop their skills, and better understand the career pathways available to them.



We are focused on addressing the needs of historically marginalized, underrepresented and geographically remote student populations by delivering mobile-first virtual experiences that meet students where they are, eliminating barriers to access.

The opportunities we give students today will shape the workforce of tomorrow, and we are committed to providing accessible, equitable and sustainable opportunities for all.

Contact Us

We're here when you need us! Please reach out via email or schedule some time to connect in real time via Calendly.

Email



support@wblalliance.org

Website



www.wblalliance.org

Schedule a Meeting



[Calendly](#)

- [School Registration Form](#)
- [Student Registration Form](#)
- [WBLA Signed Work Permit Application/Promise of Employment](#)