

BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Inc.



BTI opens doors for participants like Kim Jones, shown here in the hematology lab at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

The BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Inc. (BTI) provides free training to qualified adult high school graduates who are unemployed or underemployed to become entry-level biotechnicians and creates a workforce of skilled and motivated lab technicians for the Baltimore region's vibrant and growing biotechnology industry.

Building Careers and Futures

Though Kim Jones, 27, had a high school diploma, she was not finding jobs that would make a career. When she saw a small BTI ad in the *Baltimore Sun*, she was “looking for a better opportunity, a better job. I needed training for a career.”

The BTI program was just what she needed—seven years later, Kim has built a career in biotechnology and is currently a laboratory technician in the pediatric hematology lab at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She is also working toward her BS in biology and exploring becoming a medical lab technologist.

Though Kim was interested in science in school, she says, “I didn’t know what was out there. I didn’t know how to translate that to a profession.” Kim’s BTI training opened doors for her. “It showed me what I could do in the biosciences. Without the training, it wouldn’t matter whether I was interested. I wouldn’t be able to get the job.”

A History Of Success

BTI was founded in 1998 when Dr. Margaret B. Penno, Director of the Cell Culture Laboratory at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, was asked by a non-degreed employee about becoming a lab worker. At the time, Dr. Penno was struggling with retaining skilled laboratory assistants who tended to be college graduates on their way to higher education or other pursuits. This sparked an idea—training high school graduates to be lab technicians would help unemployed or underemployed workers learn valuable skills to build careers while creating a skilled workforce.

BTI develops their curriculum based on the needs of business partners. The bioscience industry is integral to completing the BTI program; participants must complete 100 hours of an internship to graduate. For many BTI students, these internships become full-time jobs.

To identify candidates, BTI partners with public and private social service agencies, workforce training providers and schools. After testing and a screening similar to a hiring process, successful candidates begin the BioSTART program. Initiated in 2006, BioSTART is a 12-week pre-training bridge program that helps students build on math and reading skills while learning the professional communication and job skills needed to succeed in the biosciences. Once participants successfully complete pre-training in BioSTART, they are admitted into the intensive nine-week, hands-on Laboratory Associates Program.

The bioscience industry relies on continuous professional development and many BTI graduates seek higher education, encouraged and supported by their employers. At graduation, BTI students get six free credits toward an associate’s degree in biotechnology at Baltimore City Community College.

BTI is supported by the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative. The Collaborative brings together funders from the private and public sectors to increase the earnings and assets of low-income Baltimore City residents while meeting the workforce needs of employers.

The Collaborative provides support to workforce partnerships that deliver training and job placement services in several growing employment sectors: biotechnology, healthcare, construction, food service and green jobs.

The Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative
Partnering to Build a Stronger Workforce

BTI is a valuable resource for local employers because they supply candidates with the basic skills needed to be ready for work. They are pro-active, they're problem solvers and they're willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

- Robert Eberwein, vice president of GMP operations, Paragon Bioservices, Inc.

Funding Support

BTI's largest source of revenue is foundation grants but BTI also benefits from its own social venture, BioSci Concepts, which provides fee-based professional bioscience training to the industry. Workshops range from basic lab skills to customized curricula designed to meet specific training needs.

Key Funders:

The Abell Foundation
 Associated Black Charities/ EBMC
 Atapco
 Baltimore Women's Giving Circle
 Bank of America
 BD Diagnostics
 Bio-Rad
 Bio Research Supplies, Inc.
 City of Baltimore
 Charles T. Bauer Foundation
 The Annie E. Casey Foundation
 Corporation for National and
 Community Service/ Social
 Innovation Fund Award
 The Drescher Foundation, Inc.
 The Goldseker Foundation
 Chester Higgins, Sr. Memorial
 Fund

Johns Hopkins University
 Life Technologies
 Mayor's Office of Employment
 Development
 National Fund for Workforce
 Solutions
 Open Society Institute-Baltimore
 PNC
 State of Maryland
 Aaron Straus and Lillie Straus
 Foundation
 The Alvin and Fanny B.
 Thalheimer Foundation, Inc.
 Wells Fargo
 University of Maryland, Baltimore
 Harry and Jeanette Weinberg
 Foundation

To date, BTI has achieved the following results:

- 311 workers have completed the program since 1998
- 75 percent of lab associate students complete the program
- 76 percent of graduates are placed in jobs within three months of program completion
- 90 percent of placements are full-time and with benefits
- Graduates earned significant wage gains in the first year after completing training
- Average post-training hourly starting wage is \$12.50



BTI provides hands on learning experiences for participants.

Key Partners

Employers of BTI Graduates

More than 40 total, including A & G Pharmaceuticals, AlPharma, American Red Cross, American Yeast, Baxter BioScience, BD Diagnostics, BioReliance, BRT Laboratories, Cangene bioPharma, Celsis In Vitro, CVS Pharmacy, Flavor Fragrance Specialties, Grace Davison, Human Genome Sciences, Inc., Institute of Human Virology, Intralytix, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins University, Lonza, McCormick & Company, Microbac Laboratories, Novascreen, Osiris Therapeutics, Paragon BioServices, Pathsensors, Quest International, Shire Laboratories, St. Agnes Hospital, Stellar Bio Systems, TrimGen, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Government Agencies

Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, BioMaryland Center, Governor's Workforce Investment Board, Maryland Department of Human Resources

Educational Institutions, Other Nonprofits, Private Sector

University of Maryland Baltimore, Baltimore City Community College, East Baltimore Development Inc., Associated Black Charities, Catholic Charities, Goodwill Industries, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Life Technologies, Inc., BioMarker Strategies, Innovative Biosensors, Inc., Astrachan Gunst Thomas, Community College of Baltimore County, Pathsensors, SB & Company

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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