



What is Summer Search?

We are a dynamic, national non-profit program that develops character, builds leadership, and promotes long-term change in low-income, high-potential young people. Summer Search started in San Francisco in 1990 with 14 students and has since grown to serve over 700 students annually in San Francisco, Boston, New York, Seattle, Silicon Valley, Philadelphia and Napa-Sonoma, with 300 of those participants coming from Boston.

Why are we needed?

We look for resilient and altruistic students who want to succeed and help others who have been faced with tremendous hardship and adult responsibilities at an early age. These students dream of interrupting the cycle of negativity in their lives, but they lack the tools, opportunities, and confidence to change their futures. Without help, many of these students will, in fact, manage to graduate from high school and even attend college, but then, sadly, drop out. Over 80% of Boston Public High School students who go on to college never finish. This loss not only affects them as individuals, but is a significant loss to the greater community as it creates a sense that only a miraculous few can fulfill their dreams.

How does Summer Search work?

We challenge students to develop insight into repeating self-defeating behaviors and to take responsibility for changing this behavior. Our comprehensive method includes a life-changing combination of full scholarships to summer programs, intensive, year-round mentoring throughout high school, college access services, and ongoing relationships with alumni. This support helps students find their voices, conquer their fears and, eventually, give back to their communities.

What is our impact?

Outcomes vary with each participant, but results overwhelmingly indicate that students become more resilient in response to adversity and develop an increased sense of their potential in life, as well as their capacity to help others.

Summer Program Completion Rate:	97%
High School Graduation:	100%
College Matriculation:	97%
College Retention:	89%

Students participate in Summer Search throughout high school.

They stay connected through college and beyond.



Summer Search Boston Employer's Guide



Taking on a Summer Search intern is a rewarding and positive experience. Our alumni are hungry for the opportunity to prove themselves and to learn and develop the critical skills necessary for working in the professional world.

For the past six years, over 100 of our college-age alumni in Boston have had summer internships at companies around the city. Each company felt they were an asset because of their skills and willingness to work hard as well as their resiliency. Boston alumni have worked at organizations such as:

Alta Communications	Jack Morton Worldwide
Boston Lawyers Group	King Fish Media
Citizens Schools	Loomis, Sayles & Co.
Corby Capital Markets	Mass General Hospital
First Marblehead	Mt. Holyoke Summer Math
Grand Circle	New England Baptist Hospital
Harvard Business School	Northfield Mount Hermon
Summer Bridge	Shawmut Design and Construction

Our college students tend to fall behind their wealthier counterparts during the summers because they lack the network and information to obtain paid internships and professional experiences. These summer internships can lead to or provide access to a network of support and a greater range of opportunities upon college completion.

For one student, her experience working in a team environment at Shawmut Design and Construction opened her eyes to the many skills she was lacking and forced her to face her shortcomings. When she returned to Bowdoin College, she brought her grades up from a C/D average freshman year to a B average sophomore year. She graduated from Bowdoin College in 2005 and went on to share her experience and expertise as a full-time ACCESS College Counselor, serving high school seniors across Boston Public Schools with college and financial aid counseling.



SUGGESTIONS FOR THE HIRING PROCESS

Taking on a Summer Search intern can be rewarding and a tremendously helpful experience. Potential employers have many questions about what this type of commitment would mean. Over the past six years, Dana Emery at Dodge & Cox in San Francisco has worked with fifteen Summer Search San Francisco interns. In Boston, Michelle La Fleur at Shawmut Design and Construction has overseen seven Summer Search interns over the past four summers. These two long term internship employers thought it would be helpful to share the following suggestions about their experience.

Initial concerns about hiring a Summer Search intern include:

- Concerns about confidentiality—of our clients and of the firm’s products and strategies
- Concerns about making the work meaningful
- Concerns about the supervisory time it could take

Confidentiality

It is important that people responsible for hiring interns are familiar with Summer Search. Attending the Summer Search Spring Event is helpful and we encourage members of your organization to attend. Once there is an understanding of the Summer Search model of ongoing mentorship and student accountability, the concern about client confidentiality usually dissolves. This is an issue to address directly with every intern as you lay the ground rules of their summer experience.

Meaningful Work

Before taking on an intern, it is important to brainstorm with staff about possible projects/tasks that the intern can do relatively independently. Depending on the student’s specific interests and capabilities, tasks can range from general administrative work (filing, organizing, entering and downloading data, etc.) to creating organizational systems, interviewing, research, follow-up work with staff members and article writing. Don’t over-think the “meaningful work” aspect of the internship. Remember for these students, just working in a professional organization is meaningful in and of itself.

Extra Time for Supervision

We have found that it does not take an inordinate amount of supervisory time to work with students. Our experiences have generally been so positive and rewarding that the concern about extra time involvement dissipates. However, two key individuals need to take ownership if the internship is going to be an asset to the firm and to the student: a supervisor and a mentor.



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ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNSHIP

Supervisor –The Supervisor is responsible for assigning tasks and carefully reviewing the work. Supervision is needed no matter how simple you believe the task to be. For many of the students, this is their first work experience in a professional environment. It is important to lay out the ground rules and work expectations early, including dress code standards. The nature of this relationship is more formal.

Mentor - It is also helpful to have a mentor for the student, someone other than the supervisor that can answer questions and guide them on “how things are done” at the organization. The nature of this relationship is more informal and confidential.

Common Issues

We have found that many students are not prepared for the degree of accuracy that is needed in a professional environment. They need mentoring in this aspect of their work. Reminding them to check and double-check and to focus on accuracy rather than speed has been important. In our experience the most common challenge our employers have faced is ensuring that there is enough work for their intern. Holding students to the same standards that you would for any employee is doing them a favor in the long run, as uncomfortable as it might be short term. When supervisors hesitate to address concerns, the question of “is this more trouble than it’s worth” arises. We’ve found, though, by addressing issues as they arise this feeling dissipates and the company and alumni see the program for its many benefits.

Rewards and Benefits

Because most students have not been in a professional environment before, working with them gives you an opportunity to see your systems, work, and organization with fresh eyes. This can help better plan for new hires and especially recent graduates. Students later take business classes and enter the working world. They remain in contact for class projects and the real world examples you can provide. They take that knowledge to their future employers, helping the quality of the potential work force. Knowing you’ve made a difference in someone’s life is highly satisfying. The inspiration and excitement these students bring is contagious.

If you have any specific questions about the Summer Search Alumni Internship program, please contact Alumni Coordinator, **Ines Ariceta** at **(617) 524-9911** or **iariceta@summersearch.org**



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