

JUST A START CELEBRATES FIRST GRADUATES OF BIOTECHNOLOGY CAREER ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

Cambridge, MA — September 9, 2025 — Just A Start’s Adult Career Training Program celebrated the graduation of its inaugural **Biotechnology Career Accelerator Program (BCAP)** on Tuesday, August 26, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Twenty trainees successfully completed the intensive nine-week pilot, gaining the foundational knowledge and technical skills needed to pursue careers in the growing biotechnology sector.

Funded through a **\$480,000 Pathmaker Grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC)**, the BCAP offers hands-on training, real-world applications, and a supportive learning environment designed to prepare participants for sustainable careers in laboratory support and biomanufacturing.

“The nine-week accelerator was designed to meet the needs of individuals who wanted a fast track into biotech without sacrificing depth of learning,” said **Korynn Stoyanoff, Director of Adult Career Training**. “This first cohort proved that an accelerated program can deliver the same transformation as our longer nine-month course. We are grateful to Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for investing in expanded access to biotech career pathways.”

Vidhartha Deonarain, Director of Economic Development & Partnerships at the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, who also spoke at the graduation ceremony, added, “The Biotechnology Career Accelerator Program reflects the innovation and collaboration that make Massachusetts a leader in the life sciences. By supporting accelerated training opportunities, we are opening doors for more individuals to access rewarding careers in biotech while helping the industry build the workforce it needs to thrive.”

The BCAP curriculum emphasized:

- Developing critical thinking skills through hypothesis generation, experimental design, and data analysis.
- Understanding how biological interactions between DNA, RNA, and proteins influence medicine, drug development, and the environment.
- Communicating scientific findings effectively in written, oral, and visual formats.
- Safely and confidently using biotechnology laboratory equipment.

“As a recent high school graduate, preparing to enter the workforce became an incredibly daunting task,” said **BCAP graduate Inez S. Bendavid-Val**. “I wanted to improve my work ethic in the professional field I most aspired towards, which Just A Start’s BCAP program provided; not only through lab and career training, but also by working alongside other adults with various backgrounds. The experience has greatly contributed to my confidence and comfortability with pursuing work in bigger industries as someone previously young and inexperienced.”

Following completion of the program, graduates will continue to have access to alumni support services, including job search assistance, training opportunities, and guidance for further education.

The next cohort of the Biotechnology Career Accelerator Program will begin in the summer of 2026.



Biotechnology Career Accelerator Program Graduates photographed by Santosh Rimal

###

About Just A Start:

Just A Start believes that access to stable housing and sustainable careers are the essential building blocks of equitable communities. For more than 50 years, we have focused on meeting the fundamental needs of individuals and families who have been systematically denied opportunities to realize their full potential. Our programs include affordable housing, education and job training, and comprehensive support services, spanning Cambridge and beyond. We have developed and currently maintain 600 affordable apartments. To keep community members housed, we also offer financial and technical assistance to prevent evictions, and support low- and moderate-income homeowners. Finally, we prepare individuals of all ages and circumstances with the skills and knowledge they need to secure fulfilling careers, leveraging their talents to achieve economic mobility and strengthen the region's workforce.

About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center:

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is an economic development investment agency dedicated to supporting the growth and development of the life sciences in Massachusetts, home to the most verdant and productive life sciences ecosystem in the world. Through public-private funding initiatives, the MLSC supports innovation, research and development, commercialization, and manufacturing activities in the fields of biopharma, medical device, diagnostics and digital health. Since its creation in 2007, the MLSC has strategically deployed more than \$1 billion in Massachusetts, through a combination of grants, loans, capital infrastructure investments, tax incentives and workforce programs. These investments have created thousands of jobs and propelled the development of new therapies, devices and scientific advancements that are improving patient health and well-being in Massachusetts and beyond.