

## MCRP's diverse workforce expands across the country

By Tamesha Monk, Minority College Relations Intern for the Joint Munitions Command August 15, 2023



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The Minority College Relations Program started yet another year of summer interns.

MCRP recruited students from various institutions to work for 10 weeks within the Army Contracting Command, First Army, Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center, and Joint Munitions Command.

The mission of the program is to identify and develop collaborative programs within participating organizations that allow minority institutions to participate in federal programs.

The program provides opportunities to minority students from Historically Black Colleges, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges. In 2022, there were 17 MCRP interns, and the figure grew to 36 this year.

MCRP works to maintain diversity not only within the work environment, but also within their interests. MCRP is organized by a group of volunteers that work within ACC, JMC, JMTC, and First Army. Each year

the volunteers assist the interns as they gain knowledge, understanding, and interpersonal skills while working within the different departments of the Army.

Ellen Neubauer, a financial management analyst at JMC and a volunteer for MCRP, is aware that the program helps interns acquire valuable skills that will benefit their future careers.

“I believe that interns can learn a wide variety of skills that they can apply within their college career and after college as well. I hope the interns will have a better understanding of the impact of the Army, how it operates, and what we do to help our country,” Neubauer said. “Hopefully in the future years, we’ll have more interns joining us.”

Shawn Banks, a former two-year intern at MCRP who currently serves as a logistics management specialist at JMC, highlights the significance of the intern learning experience in preparing for full-time employment.

“What I learned throughout my time as an intern and being a full-time employee is to be confident in yourself. When you’re speaking, briefing, and presenting work, just know what you’re doing, how you’re doing it, and how they want it presented,” Banks said. “Even if you have hiccups with speaking, your confidence will show them that you know what you’re doing.”

MCRP wants the very best for its interns. Volunteers of the program know how challenging the first couple of weeks can be, so the program assigns mentors to each intern to help assist with any stumbling blocks along the way. Banks, who is also a volunteer mentor for MCRP interns, understands the first few weeks as an intern can be hectic.

“Stay true to yourself, be you,” Banks said. “Everyone here understands that the interns are new and may not know what goes on here, but just keep learning.”

With strong and helpful mentors and volunteers the program leads trailblazing interns with new strategies, and a different story to share.

Michael Johnson, an MCRP intern for First Army, also serves in the National Guard as a military police officer in Mississippi, shared his reasons for choosing to sign-up for MCRP.

“I’m graduating soon, and I knew I needed an internship on my resume in order to get a job in my field,” he said. “MCRP appealed to me because it was targeted toward helping minority students, and that’s what made it stand out from other internships.”

From Johnson’s military experience he expresses how he’s able to see things on a larger scale while working for First Army.

“Because I’m working with so many high-ranking officers, contract government workers, and Civilian workers, it makes me think on the grand scheme of things,” Johnson said. “They have done a great job putting pieces together and putting people in positions to ensure success.”

Aimee Bland, the Government-Owned, Government-Operated division chief in the Organic Industrial Base Support Directorate for JMC and the team lead for MCRP this year, expressed her anticipation for the program's future and her aspirations for enhancements, advancements, and expansion.

“We’re really excited about expanding the program with other participating organizations,” Bland said. “First Army participated for the first-time last year and has doubled their numbers this year. They also hope to expand it to their partnering organizations. We also have some JMC installations that are participating for the first time as well such as Iowa Army Ammunition Plant and Lake City Army Ammunition Plant.”

As the MCRP volunteers and mentors work hard to amplify the program, they also hope this year’s interns continue learning, overcoming challenges, and exploring their career possibilities.

“Our main focus is to expose interns to work that they can identify on their resumes to be competitive in the future for federal positions in the government, ideally with us,” Bland said.

Through MCRP, JMC, JMTC, ACC, and First Army are committed to fostering the growth, development, and diversity of their workforce by incorporating experienced interns. These departments are dedicated to ensuring the success of their interns on an annual basis.