

# Career Bridge Modernization

**PRESENTER NAME:** Marina Parr

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** 7/16/21

**DISCUSSION TIME ALLOTTED:** 15 mins

<p><b>ISSUE/SITUATION:</b> Be concise - 1 or 2 sentences that get to the heart of the situation, problem or opportunity being addressed.</p>	<p><b>THE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY IS:</b></p> <p>One proposal for the 2022 legislative session are resources to upgrade the Workforce Board's website Career Bridge. Career Bridge is a vital connection for the public to the workforce system, and this proposal will strengthen this connection.</p>
<p><b>TAP STRATEGIC PRIORITY:</b> Which TAP strategic priority or priorities does this recommendation support? Can you tie to specific goals and objectives in TAP? Briefly describe these connections. If the connection is unclear, describe why this is of consequence to the Workforce Board and/or workforce system.</p>	<p><b>THIS IS IMPORTANT TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM BECAUSE:</b></p> <p>Career Bridge is mentioned by name in the TAP plan as both a method of consumer engagement and disseminating program performance information. This upgrade proposal is aimed at improving system accessibility and equity for jobseekers and students by improving functionality and adding key features. Resources for ongoing updates are also included in the proposal.</p>
<p><b>BACKGROUND:</b> Short history of how this recommendation came to be. What has been tried, to what result? What evidence exists to support this recommendation?</p>	<p>The Workforce Board has developed a set of possible items for the legislative advocacy agenda over the last several months. Career Bridge modernization has been discussed as one possible item, and was developed into this proposal for further discussion.</p> <p>The proposal is for a one-time project to modernize Career Bridge for approximately one million dollars and two full time employees going forward to support Career Bridge and related systems. This will accomplish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing mobile device accessibility. This is critical for equitable access to career and education information due to increasing dependence on mobile devices by low income households.</li> <li>• Adding a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) tool. Many schools use the free career and training exploration tools currently on Career Bridge, but career planning requirements have expanded to include a HSBP. Adding a HSBP component will provide school districts with another option to meet this requirement, possibly in place of expensive commercial tools.</li> <li>• Including a digital portfolio for students and job seekers to organize career planning resources such as resumes, cover letters, saved career and school searches, and career quiz results.</li> <li>• Additional Career Bridge enhancements including enhanced search technology.</li> <li>• Switching Career Bridge to a continuous improvement model. Improving Career Bridge in an ongoing incremental way will improve user experiences and avoid future major modernization projects.</li> <li>• Organizing the system behind Career Bridge. In addition to being a career and labor market exploration tool, Career Bridge is the public-facing side of the underlying Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) regulatory system. The ETPL allows Career Bridge to display outcome measures, which are compiled from student data collected directly by the Workforce Board through the Student Data Portal. Adding a</li> </ul>

	<p>management position will allow the Workforce Board to coordinate these systems more effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide ongoing technical support for the HSBP and digital portfolio tools.</li></ul>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:</b> What specific result do you want from the Board? Is this recommendation for discussion or action? If for discussion, will action be required at a later date? What next steps are expected after this discussion?</p>	<p><b>THE RECOMMENDATION AND/OR REQUESTED ACTION IS:</b></p> <p>It's hoped that the Board will consider taking this up as a 2022 legislative agenda request. Staff will present the proposal and be available for questions.</p>



## Career Bridge Modernization

Ensuring all Washingtonians equitable access to career and exploration tools is important for economic recovery. The Workforce Board administers a popular (and free) career and education exploration component on its Career Bridge website. This piece could be enhanced with a modernization effort that increases functionality, integrates with student High School and Beyond Plans, and provides dedicated staff to help ensure up-to-date, accurate information, along with an expanded program directory, and needed technical support.

As lower-income households increasingly rely on mobile devices, it's critical that Career Bridge incorporates a modern, mobile-friendly design to provide equitable access. Plans to launch a new digital portfolio on Career Bridge also promises to boost access to career and education planning. By integrating this new portfolio feature with the state's required High School and Beyond Plan, school districts from all parts of Washington can use this free tool rather than spending tens of thousands of dollars per year on private, for-profit career and education platforms.

### *School district costs for privately offered career planning tools:*

- *Small district: \$6,800 per year*
- *Mid-size district: \$30,000 per year*
- *Large district: \$105,000+ per year*

### Career Bridge background

The Workforce Board launched Career Bridge.wa.gov just over 10 years ago. The site records over six-million-page views per year and features over 6,500 postsecondary education programs, along with state labor market information on projected occupation growth and wages, employment and earnings performance data for thousands of WA education programs, a career quiz to assess talents and interests, and a living wage calculator to help ensure career and education goals align with the cost of living. Career Bridge is recognized nationally for providing performance results (employment, earnings) for recent graduates of thousands of postsecondary programs, including registered apprenticeships.

### **Equity Issue: All WA students deserve access to an online career and education planning tool**

Right now, WA school districts—that can afford it—are paying significant dollars to provide their students with for-profit tools that support career exploration and planning. Career Bridge could address that gap for smaller or under-resourced schools by meeting the need for an online portfolio for High School and Beyond Plans with a relatively modest investment for site upgrades and modernization. Career Bridge is free and can be distributed widely, and already partially fills this role. Updating the architecture of Career Bridge, making it mobile friendly, and embedding a digital portfolio feature, will provide a solid career exploration and planning tool to *all* Washington students.

### Need for site updates

As the scope and complexity of Career Bridge has grown, the Workforce Board hasn't been able to provide resources for needed updates. Nor do current resources allow for dedicated staff support for ongoing site maintenance. While efforts at functional upgrades have been made when discretionary resources were available, the backbone architecture has not been upgraded in over a decade. The fact that the site remains popular despite lacking a mobile-friendly design shows the value of this resource.

### Shifting to a continuous improvement model

Continuous improvement is a standard industry practice to keep websites updated and engaging through small changes and direct measurement of user engagement. After an initial architectural upgrade, Workforce Board staff will use this maintenance model. However, to keep Career Bridge fresh and relevant, additional staff are required. Proposed site changes call for more direct and ongoing interactions with school districts and will boost staff workloads. The current workload is only possible by dividing duties and tight collaboration among a handful of dedicated staff. New positions will be required to meet the needs of an expanding, modernized site, including overall site management and IT.

### Career Bridge: Home of the state's Eligible Training Provider List

Career Bridge is not only used by thousands of WA middle and high school students, it also is the “go-to website” for jobseekers and those interested in training for new careers, as it is the home of the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Updating the site will benefit thousands of Washington residents who rely on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding, as well as those participating in other workforce programs, including the state's Training Benefits program. Federal and state policies allow financial assistance for eligible students enrolled in training programs that meet specific outcome measures. Workforce Board staff collect data and evaluate program outcomes each year through wage-record matches to determine whether programs meet employment, earnings, and completion requirements to be on the state's ETPL. These results are pushed out to the public via Career Bridge.

### Needed positions and descriptions

**Career Bridge Manager:** This position will lead the operations surrounding Career Bridge and the related Student Data Portal and Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) functions. Responsibilities include coordinating data portal and ETPL functions, second-level contact with training providers, along with related policy decision-making. This position will also lead stakeholder outreach and marketing for these systems, and will vastly improve staff efficiency and oversight. Currently, agency staff from several departments are providing piecemeal support of this growing, increasingly technical website.

**Career Bridge IT Manager:** This will be a technical lead for the Career Bridge and Student Data Portal websites, including coordinating the Career Bridge modernization project and ongoing continuous improvements. This position will also provide technical support to both internal and external customers.

### New Investments to Career Bridge: What lies ahead?

- All school districts in the state will be able to provide comprehensive, online career and education planning that aligns with required High School and Beyond Plans for students.
- Parents and guardians, educators, school counselors, and other support staff will be provided easy (appropriate) access to student plans to support academic and career goals.
- Students can use a digital portfolio to upload career planning resources such as resumes, cover letters, saved career and education searches, and career quiz results. This feature has long been requested by K-12 teachers/counselors.
- Students can create, personalize, and revise their required High School and Beyond plans.
- Up-to-date architecture will allow more interactive use. Mobile friendly for phones/tablets.

### Estimated costs to modernize Career Bridge

- Modernize architecture --\$800K (1X, over 2 years).
  - Internal site search optimization
  - Mobile friendly for phones, tablets
  - Dynamic user-friendly experience
- Digital portfolio/High School and Beyond Plan feature--\$250K (1X over 2 years).
- Career Bridge Manager-- \$150K per year ongoing, including salary, benefits, and overhead.
- Career Bridge IT Manager-- \$150K per year ongoing, including salary, benefits, and overhead.

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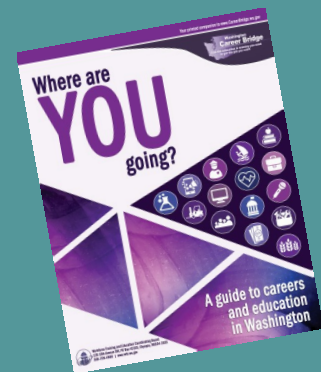
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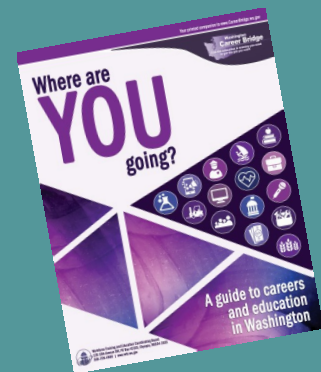
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## Windsor High School

Search for a participant to view career quiz results, portfolio documents, and more.



### My Groups

**First period—counseling**

**Second period—English**

**Third period—counseling**

**Fifth period—English**

**Sixth period—English**



**Marina Parr**

**Career Quiz:**

Complete—View results

**Documents:**

Resume.docx

Cover letter.docx

High School and Beyond.pdf

**Saved Careers:**

2

**Saved Programs:**

3

**Saved Schools:**

4



**Lindsay Elwanger**

**Career Quiz:**

Incomplete

**Documents:**

Cover letter.pdf

**Saved Careers:**

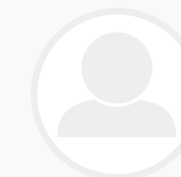
0

**Saved Programs:**

0

**Saved Schools:**

4



**Randy Smith**

**Career Quiz:**

Complete—View results

**Documents:**

Resume.docx

High School and Beyond.pdf

**Saved Careers:**

6

**Saved Programs:**

5

**Saved Schools:**

4





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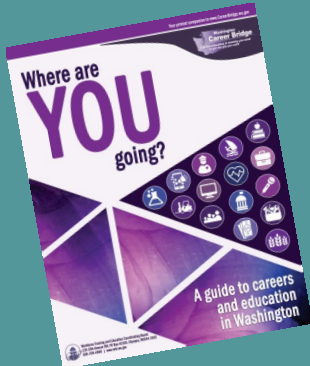
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**Marina Parr**


My Career Quiz








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My Saved Programs

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Upload Documents

**Career Quiz:** Complete 

	Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications	Score:	18
	Education and Training	Score:	14
	Human Services	Score:	13
	Government and Public Administration	Score:	10
	Hospitality and Tourism	Score:	10
	Marketing, Sales and Service	Score:	9
	Business, Management and Administration	Score:	8

### My Groups

**Windsor High School—ALL**

Class of 2019

Class of 2020

Class of 2021

Class of 2022



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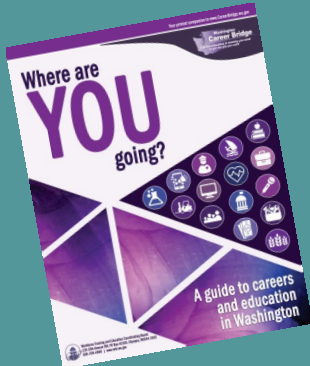
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- Upload Documents

### My Saved Careers



Graphic Designers



Technical Writers



Career/Technical Education Teachers, Middle School



Certified Nursing Assistants



Court, Municipal, and License Clerks

### My Groups

**Windsor High School—ALL**

Class of 2019

Class of 2020

Class of 2021

Class of 2022

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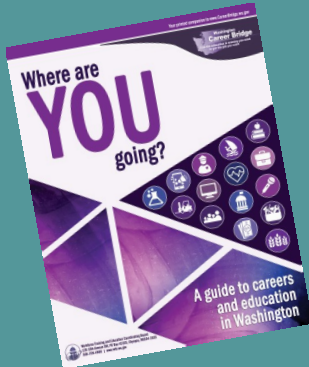
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### My Saved Programs



#### Graphic Design

AAS-T  
Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane



#### Technical Communication

BA  
Eastern Washington University, Cheney



#### Career and Technical Education Teacher Certification

Certificate  
Olympic College, Bremerton



#### Nursing Assistant

Certificate  
Nursing Assistant Training School, Tukwila



#### Accounting Clerk

Certificate  
Shoreline Community College, Shoreline

### My Groups

#### Windsor High School—ALL

Class of 2019  
Class of 2020  
Class of 2021  
Class of 2022

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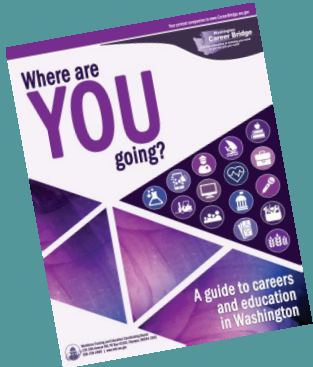
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### My Saved Schools



**Spokane Falls Community College**  
Spokane



**Eastern Washington University**  
Cheney



**Olympic College**  
Bremerton



**Nursing Assistant Training School**  
Tukwila



**Shoreline Community College**  
Shoreline

### My Groups

**Windsor High School—ALL**

Class of 2019

Class of 2020

Class of 2021

Class of 2022

EXPLORE CAREERS

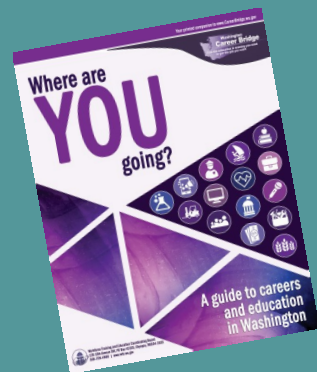
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Upload Documents

### Upload Documents

Upload documents like your resume, cover letter, or High School and Beyond Plan in the boxes below.

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Upload Cover Letter

Upload Document

Upload Document

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