



Workforce Training and  
Education Coordinating Board

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## **WASHINGTON 'CONSUMER REPORTS' WEBSITE WINS INNOVATION AWARD**

*Council of State Governments votes Career Bridge website one of eight national winners*

Washington's Career Bridge web site has won a 2010 Innovation Award from the Council of State Governments for providing the state's first ever "consumer reports" on education and training programs to help residents make wise financial decisions before they head to school.

The site is one of just eight projects from across the nation to receive this distinction.

Launched in 2009, Career Bridge ([www.CareerBridge.wa.gov](http://www.CareerBridge.wa.gov)) connects Washington residents to over 5,000 education and training programs and provides performance results for many programs, giving citizens a "consumer report" on how many people graduated from a particular program, what they earned afterward, and whether they landed a job, so citizens can make a wise decision before they invest their time and money.

Right now, Career Bridge is helping Washington residents retool for careers that are in-demand and result in living-wage jobs. The web site is used daily at WorkSource career centers across the state, where record numbers of unemployed and recently laid off job seekers are using it to chart their next educational step.

"This online database makes it easier to find the training that will make you competitive for the job you seek" said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the website's sponsoring agency, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. "The consumer report side of Career Bridge means you can find the training that best suits your needs and budget."

Career Bridge is also being introduced to high schools and middle schools as a career planning tool. It features links to online surveys, where users can assess their talents and interests and see how they match up with a career, and also provides a region-by-region look at which jobs are in demand, and which are not, so potential students can make an informed decision on what to study.

Ultimately, Career Bridge enables potential students to sort through dozens, if not hundreds of training programs, and enroll in one that matches their interests and is likely to lead to a living-wage job.

The website also connects to employment data from the state's Employment Security Department so users can learn whether an occupation is in demand, what it pays on average and its projected growth rate.

Winning an Innovation Award from the Council of State Governments promises to bring more attention to Career Bridge. The web site has already attracted the attention of California, where state officials are studying how to create a similar site.

Quote from Council of State Governments goes here??

The council is a region-based forum that helps state officials shape public policy. The council established the Innovations Awards Program in 1986 to bring greater visibility to exemplary state programs and practices, and to facilitate the transfer of those successful experiences to other states. The program is the only comprehensive national awards program that focuses exclusively on state programs and policies.

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High school students involved in career planning are also using Career Bridge to chart their next educational step. The site includes an Explore Careers area that allows students to view their interests and abilities and how they align with a potential career. The site also shows students ways to pay for their education through federal and state grants, scholarships, tax credits and work study.

Combined with the award-winning Self-Sufficiency Calculator, Washington residents now have well-designed tools that provide specific information about what it costs to live anywhere in Washington, what job it will take to support them and the education and training necessary to get the job.

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*The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of labor, business and government, dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.*