



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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STUDENTS USE CAREER BRIDGE TO SEE HOW EDUCATION PROGRAMS PERFORM

State website provides "consumer reports" on thousands of Washington education programs

OLYMPIA--Students uncertain about where to go to school, or what to study after high school, now have a powerful tool to help them decide.

With Washington Career Bridge, it's possible to see whether thousands of certificates, associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees are worth a student's time and money. Career Bridge's "Performance Results" shows how many people completed a program, if they got a job, what they earned and the field they went to work in.

This program-by-program "consumer reports" is a key feature of www.Careerbridge.wa.gov, a free, state website that has information on over 5,000 Washington education programs in one place. Note: Not *all* programs on Career Bridge include performance results--but nearly 40 percent do. New programs and those with smaller student counts are not included in the results. But Career Bridge provides other details, including tuition, duration, location and whether a program is available online.

The site, which won a National Innovation Award from the Council of State Governments, is managed by the state's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

This summer, Career Bridge received a significant upgrade. The site now includes a personal dashboard where students can save their career and education searches. It also provides easier access to state labor market data on how much jobs pay and whether they're growing.

Visitor counts are up significantly since the start of the school year, with website traffic rising by more than 14 percent since mid-August, when compared to the same period in 2011. The site receives around 15,000 visits each month from students throughout the state as well as from workers looking to retrain. The site's popularity comes at a time when more young people recognize the importance of career planning as they face a tight job market. At the same time, the cost of education, and student debt, continues to rise. Career Bridge is designed to help Washington consumers make wise education and career choices.

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