

Reimagining Washington Career Bridge

Synthesis Report from WTB-RIPL Hybrid Design Thinking Workshop

September 2022



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Executive Summary

As a part of RIPL's ongoing partnership with the State of Washington, RIPL's policy and product innovation leadership facilitated a workshop of Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB) stakeholders and collaborators to support WTB's efforts to modernize Washington Career Bridge. The workshop, held in September 2022, utilized a hybrid and on-site format to gather a diverse group of state and regional government stakeholders to identify critical opportunities for Washington's digital workforce ecosystem with a focus on improving outcomes for Washingtonians.

This workshop revealed the following themes during a collaborative design thinking activity for WTB to take into consideration for a Career Bridge modernization:

1. For each visit, users have a discrete task in mind and want to complete that task quickly.
2. Users need confidence that the data they are referencing is current and accurate.
3. Users are unlikely to explore new functionalities or content of their own volition.
4. Meet users where they are: consider context, access points, and potential barriers to reach a wide range of users.
5. Consider user journeys and engagement across a continuum.

Workshop Purpose and Approach

The purpose of the session was to bring together Washington's Workforce Training and Education Board (WTB) stakeholders to inspire a refined vision for the future of Career Bridge that delivers the most value for Washingtonians. The workshop approach drew from a method called [Design Thinking](#), an iterative approach for defining new concepts that centers the needs of target users.

Design Thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation, concept development, and solution definition. The method allows teams to uncover insights and opportunities by closely examining a target user's needs and intentions. It is an intentionally iterative process meant to enable continuous learning and ongoing testing to clarify key problems to be solved and to ensure solutions are solving the "right" problems. Design Thinking focuses teams on identifying the intersection of three key factors:

1. **Desirability:** the needs of people as well as the preferences, conditions, or context that influence user demand for a solution.
2. **Feasibility:** the ability of the solution to exist (be designed and built).
3. **Viability:** the possibilities of the solution and its ability to work and remain useful/desirable over time.

RIPL and WTB organizers developed four fictional Career Bridge personas for the session participants to reference, expand upon, and consider as a first step toward generating new ideas

and goals for the next iteration of Career Bridge. The session and associated activities had two core objectives:

1. Cultivate stakeholder engagement across WTB’s diverse stakeholders to advocate for the needs of Washingtonians across counties, industries, and demographics.
2. Define critical goals and needs for the next iteration of Career Bridge as driven by WTB’s diverse perspectives.

Career Bridge Personas

During the session, attendees were split into four groups and assigned a “Career Bridge Persona”. The personas were developed by RIPL and WTB organizers and represent a **fictional character** as a current or potential user of Career Bridge. Each group was tasked with moving through a series of activities together aimed at defining the following as a group:

- **Constructing a persona “empathy map.”** Participants discussed and documented perceived user tasks, thoughts, feelings, pain points, and goals. This exercise asked each group to explicitly name the actions and associated context each persona brings when seeking to leverage Career Bridge to meet their objectives or needs.
- **Highlighting inspiration and clarifying access points.** Participants indicated the ecosystem of tools their user may be accessing to achieve their goals and also specified how that persona is most likely to access Career Bridge and other tools.
- **Expressing “look” and “feel”, user experience goals, and mandatories.** Participants explored analogous or similar tools which they feel Career Bridge might draw inspiration from and/or outlined descriptive adjectives or characteristics for how a user may experience a new Career Bridge. Participants also outlined gaps to be filled, key goals they felt were most important as WTB stakeholders, and indicated any “must-haves” they recommend future Career Bridge iterations incorporate.

User Persona 1

Name: Mary

Profession: Retail Worker

Racial Identity: Black

Gender Identity: Female

Age: 31

Education: High School Graduate

Location: Renton, WA

Mary is 31 years old and currently works in an entry-level retail position at a downtown Renton, WA clothing store. She is a single parent of two kids in elementary school and she’s looking to move into higher-paying work to better provide for her family. She would like to feel more secure in her ability to financially support herself and her family.

Mary is struggling as she finds her high school education limits her career opportunities and she isn't sure what to do next. Mary is connected to a local non-profit that is supporting her with housing assistance. The non-profit refers her to Career Bridge as a tool that could help her find new career opportunities, but she doesn't know much more than that.

User Persona 2

Name: John
Profession: High School Guidance Counselor
Racial Identity: White
Gender Identity: Male
Age: 38
Education: College Graduate
Location: Spokane, WA

John is a busy public high school guidance counselor with a caseload of 250 students in Spokane, WA. WA students are required to complete High School and Beyond Plans as a graduation requirement but it's tough to find time to help every individual students do real career and education planning due to the volume of students John supports and student lack of interest in completing the task.

John heard about Career Bridge at an education workshop but hasn't used the tool and isn't sure it's useful. He doesn't have a lot of time to play with a new tool. John is aware of the Bureau of Labor Statistics tool and plans to refer students there.

John tends to rely on paper/printed assets with students as he feels it facilitates a richer conversation than staring at a screen together.

User Persona 3

Name: Olivia
Profession: Full-time parent
Ethnic Identity: Latinx
Gender Identity: Female
Age: 49
Education: Some college
Location: Wenatchee, WA

Olivia is a middle-aged parent of three kids. Her oldest son is entering his senior year of high school in Wenatchee, WA and he's not sure what he wants to do after high school.

Olivia didn't finish college but she wants her son to go to a four-year college because she feels it's the one true path to the middle class.

Olivia and her son don't know where to start to compare colleges, education programs, or where to get the financial resources to pay for college. Her son mentions the Career Bridge website he heard about and the two sit down to review it together.

Olivia and her son are overwhelmed by the number of promising education programs in WA – including beyond just four-year institutions. They know this will be a multi-step process and wish they could save their work to better pick up where they left off.

User Persona 4

Name: Mark

Profession: WorkSource counselor

Racial Identity: Asian

Gender Identity: Male

Age: 58

Education: College graduate

Location: Vancouver, WA

Mark is a WorkSource counselor in Vancouver, WA with an active caseload of unemployed and under-employed workers. Bob has worked at WorkSource for five years and was onboarded to Career Bridge when he started but it has been a while. He knows that Career Bridge is home to the state's Eligible Training Provider List and uses the site to ensure the programs he suggests to his clients qualify for federal and/or state training dollars.

Mark is passionate about helping his caseload find reskilling programs. He would like to be able to refer folks to apprenticeship opportunities but doesn't know where to find a list of them in WA.

Mark sometimes wonders about the value of the programs he is referring people to but doesn't have the time to be as thorough as he'd like. He's not that comfortable with tech and relies on the few aspects of Career Bridge he knows well.

Workshop Insights for Future Career Bridge Scoping

1. For each visit, users have discrete tasks in mind and want to complete tasks quickly.

Career Bridge has a wide range of user archetypes or "personas" – these users range from program administrators, career counselors, high school and education counselors, jobseekers, career changers, re-skillers and up-skills, students, parents of students, and beyond. Ultimately, users will be driven to Career Bridge with a clear goal or task in mind that they will want to handle as quickly as they can.

Although Career Bridge users are diverse, many of them share common time constraints. They are seeking to make progress toward their goals and need to do so quickly. They have limited ability and patience to spend time learning, exploring, and parsing troves of information even if it may be useful to them. They are looking for value and they expect it quickly. As one participant summed up, *“Everyone goes to a website for a reason. If they can’t find what they are looking for they leave.”*

When reflecting on the goals, thoughts, pain points, and feelings of their assigned persona, participants outlined the following.

Users come to Career Bridge because they want to...

- Route themselves or their clients to the best resource or service in a short amount of time
- Help students explore their career interests, often for the first time, and help them satisfy their High School and Beyond Plan requirements.
- Explore new in-demand career options
- Identify opportunities that will enable great financial security for their family or children
- Identify/recommend quality training programs
- Verify or understand which training programs qualify for funding or are low-cost
- Look for jobs
- Find achievable/practical education goals

As users seek to make progress toward that task in Career Bridge they are thinking...

- "I need to get this done quickly so I can move on to the next task/client"
- "There is a lot of information here... where do I start?"
- "How can I quickly find the information I need (and skip the other steps)?"
- "What job is best for me? Will it help me support my family better?"
- "What is required of me to transition into this new field of work?"

Users are often feeling...

- Overwhelmed
- Time-crunched

2. Users need confidence the data they are referencing is current and accurate.

Career Bridge is only as good as the information it provides. All participant groups raised information quality and data timeliness as critical to their assigned persona’s needs and critical to unlocking ongoing usage and adoption at scale. There was a common set of questions about what data sources Career Bridge used and how to strengthen data feeds.

The Career Bridge team should consider strategies to better inform stakeholders on data sources, collection methods, and data refresh cadences to give stakeholders and users alike a baseline understanding of where information within Career Bridge is coming from. There is an appetite to focus on more automatic data collection methods as a part of future improvements to Career

Bridge. One participant remarked, “*Career Bridge is a node in a system.*” There is an opportunity for Career Bridge to be more integrated within that system and thereby benefit from the wider system’s data. Ensuring data on occupational and industry opportunities is “demand-driven” was another frequently mentioned idea. The group also agreed it is important to ensure trajectories highlighted in Career Bridge are grounded in Washington employer needs and are regionally appropriate.

When reflecting on the goals, thoughts, pain points, and feelings of their assigned persona, participants outlined the following.

Users come to Career Bridge because they want to...

- Work toward their own career goals or support others’ career goals in a data-driven and evidence-based way.
- Gather more information about opportunities beyond what they personally know or what their network may know.

As users seek to make progress toward that task in Career Bridge they are thinking...

- “How often is this data updated? Can I trust it?”
- “If I don’t have confidence in the tool’s data, why would I use point people toward it or revisit it often? The strength of the data is a key incentive for my regular use.”
- “I don’t trust that data is timely and therefore I am worried that this performance data is off.”

Users are often feeling...

- Hesitant.
- Unsure.
- Not confident in the quality of data and therefore anxious about recommendations given or using data to give recommendations to others.

3. Users are unlikely to explore new functionalities or content of their own volition.

Career Bridge has a wide breadth of content, functionalities, and potential tasks it can support its users with but the onus is on the user to identify and/or find those elements. Participants reflected on the unlikelihood of their busy, goal-focused, time-constrained personas to pour a lot of time into learning Career Bridge’s fullest potential or explore and self-teach new functionalities that they are not already aware of. It was recommended that Career Bridge explore smart ways to surface or proactively remind users of elements that would be useful for their unique situation. For example, the use of a profile or a user account may enable curation of the product *for* each user persona while also allowing the user to save or bookmark items to return to more quickly the next visit.

When reflecting on the goals, thoughts, pain points, and feelings of their assigned persona, participants outlined the following.

Users may come to Career Bridge because they want to...

- Achieve that singular or small set of tasks they are comfortable and familiar with.

As Users seek to make progress toward that task in Career Bridge they are thinking...

- “I don’t know what I don’t know”
- Unsure how to explore functionality beyond what they are familiar with
- They are not familiar with Career Bridge and why it is useful to [insert task or persona-type]
- “I can’t remember how to do/find that thing...”
- “I need a map; where do I go for help?”
- Resources are opaque.
- There is no FAQ.
- There are so many systems, which do I use when?

Users are feeling...

- Unsure about what else can be done
- Uncomfortable with technology
- I don’t have time to teach myself how to use a new thing
- Concerned if the community organization or partner recommends Career Bridge but can’t meaningfully support the use of it

4. Meet users where they are. Consider context, access points, and potential barriers to reach a wide range of users.

Career Bridge is currently providing a one-size fits all experience to a diverse set of users. To remain competitive, Career Bridge must not only explore methods to provide a more personalized or curated experience for user personas with distinct use-cases but also ensure those use-cases can be seamlessly accessed based on each user’s workflow, access points, language, and/or ability needs. While offering supports and training are important services and resources to bridge gaps, Career Bridge must be designed to smooth friction points and it should be expected that most users can self-serve.

When reflecting on the goals, thoughts, pain points, and feelings of their assigned persona, participants outlined the following.

Users may come to Career Bridge because they want to...

- Quickly complete a task or find what they are looking for without having to be trained on Career Bridge.
- Look for hard copy resources that are easier to work on in collaboration with a student/jobseeker/counselor.

As Users seek to make progress toward that task in Career Bridge they are thinking...

- “This isn’t in my language.”
- “What is this tool for? Is it for me?”
- “I’m not able to save my work.”

- “This is hard to use from my phone.”
- “I can’t read this without my glasses.”
- “I can’t use this on the go.”
- “I can’t find that thing on here.”

Users are feeling...

- “This tool is not for me.”

Mandatories

- **Design for ease of use.** As one participant said, “It just has to be intuitive.”

RIPL Recommendation: There is no silver bullet here. A seamless, user-friendly experience is best achieved through multiple iteration cycles and regular user interviews and testing. Product owners must understand the core friction points of their users and continually meet with them and observe usage data to see if usability gains have been made.

- **Design for [mobile-first](#).**

RIPL Recommendation: It is essential to prioritize the experience of the smallest screens and consider ease of use on devices people most commonly use to access the internet.

- **Design for accessibility and inclusion.**

RIPL Recommendation: The common standard used by web tools today is [WCAG 2.0 AA](#) compliance. This includes requirements for color contrast, alternative text to convey imagery, consistent navigation elements, accurate labeling, functions with screen readers, and logical ordering of headers.

- **Design for the most commonly spoken languages in Washington.**

RIPL recommendation: Web tools for the public are most inclusive when they accommodate content in languages beyond English. A best practice is to provide a “toggle” that allows the user to view the same experience in an alternate language. While it is ideal to have content and copy by a native speaker familiar with the system the tool is operating within, it can be challenging and costly to manage content changes across languages. Product owners will often focus human translation on the most critical or important content such as legal information, terms and conditions, or privacy policies, and leverage AI-powered translators elsewhere. AI-translated content should be reviewed by a native speaker. Finally, most governments offer over-the-phone interpretation and translation services to residents at different points of service delivery. Referring users to these resources can be a helpful support in addition to product localization or in lieu of where localization may not be feasible.

5. Consider user journeys and engagement across a continuum

Participants reflected on how Career Bridge usage and ongoing use are varied. While users are coming to each session of Career Bridge with a task in mind, that task may be different in the next session. Participants shared the desire to use Career Bridge to help them plan not just for the next credential or job but for the longer-term career path. Career Bridge *can bridge* use-cases across stages in a user's career journey but participants felt it is unlikely it is being used this way and that users are returning at different points in their lives to complete a step relevant to that stage of life.

Participants drew parallels with analog services and processes as a point of inspiration, "Counseling is not a one-stop task; what does the journey look like and where does Career Bridge fit in? How can we make this tool ongoing? How can we use this tool to show credential pathways that can link towards higher-level credentials or better careers" Career Bridge may also be best leveraged across a continuum moving from independent usage and self-served research or exploration to a tool to collaborate on a career journey with others to a tool that individual users can feel confident referring others to use on their own.

Independent User > Collaborative Team > Referrer and Evangelist

Users may come to Career Bridge because they want to...

- Collaborate with a counselor/jobseeker/student in a digital format
- Review work a collaborator has started and move forward on the next step together
- Learn what credential pathways can lead to more momentum towards a longer-term career path

As Users seek to make progress toward that task in Career Bridge they are thinking...

- "How can I use this tool in a more personal way with my students/clients?"
- "How does mentorship fit into Career Bridge goals?"
- "How does the stackability of credentials get me to where I need to be in my career?"

Customers are feeling...

- Unsure how to transition a student/client toward self-service of Career Bridge.

Attendee Goals and Visions

As a final step in the session, participants were asked to comment on their own goals, visions, and "must-haves" for a future Career Bridge modernization. The following represents a compiled list.

Bolded items surfaced multiple times.

User Experience Goals

Gaps to Fill

- A clear purpose statement on the main landing page. Answer quickly for the user "what is this for?" or "can I achieve my goal?"

- Profile-based navigation. Allow users to save their work, return to previous tasks, or smartly recommended new functionalities to consider based on their user type.

Look, Feel, and Tone

- **Simple**
- Clean
- **Credible**
- **Personalized** – “for me”
- **Trustworthy**

Characteristics

- **Intuitive;** does not require training
- **Easy-to-use**
- Quick-to-use; respects user time
- Builds confidence of the user
- Clear

Functional Suggestions

- **Clear purpose articulated**
- **Easy to move between all devices** (mobile, tablet, desktop)
- **Interoperability:** seamless transitions to other tools the user may be accessing
- **Data is timely and accurate**
 - Real-time data projections: what does it pay now and what will it pay?
 - Dashboard of SOC supply/demand
 - Automated timely reports to remind/educate the userbase on the latest data points
 - Leverages incoming occupation data from employers
 - A hub for real-time info at a local and regional level
 - # of jobs last month opened
 - # enrollment in training programs/CTC
 - # capacity in training programs/CTC
- **Has mechanism to record goals and next steps;** ability to build a portfolio plan
- Provides “warm hand-offs” to other services, human support mechanisms, and/or other digital services
- **LERs**
- Portability

Anti-Goals

- Shouldn’t feel like homework or a test
- “More links don’t help, they need the right links”
- Complicated or jumbled

Workshop Attendees

The hybrid session convened 26 stakeholders across the Washington workforce and education ecosystem.

Name	Title	Organization	In-Person / Remote
Laura Anderson	Trade Adjustment Assistance Program Support Specialist	Employment Security Department (ESD)	Remote
Jade Borgeson	Director of Policy & Partnerships	Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL)	Remote
Elizabeth Court	WIOA Policy Manager	Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB)	In-Person
Will Durden	SBCTC Director of Basic Education for Adults	Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)	Remote
Louisa Erickson	Executive Manager for Strategy, Risk and Government Relations	Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Economic Services Administration	Remote
Megan Fiess	Vice President of Workforce and Strategic Initiatives	Thurston County Chamber of Commerce	In-Person
Nova Gattman	Deputy Executive Director	WTB	Remote
Micah Gordon	Product Manager	RIPL	In-Person [Facilitator]
Scott Jensen	CEO	RIPL	In-Person [Facilitator]
Jim Kenney	Employment Pipeline State Coordinator	DSHS, Economic Services Administration	In-Person
Ami Magisos	Assistant Director of Policy and Planning	Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)	Remote
Cassie Martin	Executive Director of Special Education	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)	In-Person
Mark Mattke	CEO	Spokane Workforce Council	In-Person
Christine McMullen	Policy Associate, Student Services	SBCTC	In-Person
Ellen Nagourney	Vocational Services Specialist, Region 6	Washington State Department of Labor and Industries	In-Person
Inez Olive	Associate Director of Adult Postsecondary Pathways	WSAC	Remote
Shelly O'Neill	CTE/Career Connected Learning Coordinator	ESD, Education Service District	In-Person

Name	Title	Organization	In-Person / Remote
Eleni Papadakis	Executive Director	WTB	In-Person
Marina Parr	Director of Workforce System Advancement	WTB	In-Person [Facilitator]
Kim Reykdal	Director of Graduation and Pathway Preparation	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)	Remote
Mitesh Shah	Career Bridge Modernization Project Manager	WTB	In-Person
Randy Smith	IT and Research Specialist	WTB	In-Person
Kaitlin Sweetin	Deputy Policy Director	RIPL	Remote
Sarah White	Director of Product Innovation	RIPL	Remote [Facilitator]
Joe Wilcox	Career Pathways Manager	WTB	Remote
Eric Wollen	Executive Assistant and Board Secretary	WTB	In-Person

RIPL Recommendations

Conduct Ongoing User Research and Testing

While the session was an invaluable first step, it is important that the Career Bridge modernization team make sure they are regularly and often validating the understanding of their needs, preferences, and ideas of Career Bridge users by connecting with users themselves. An exploratory user research round would be an important first step in ensuring the personas and associated needs discussed during the session best reflect the needs of the wide range of user personas Career Bridge is intending to serve. It is also recommended to Career Bridge seek to narrow its target user to one or two priority archetypes. This will help the modernization team prioritize needs and associated feature sets or functionality improvements for the user group most important to Career Bridge’s success. User research will also be key in understanding effective outreach strategies and demand-driven approaches for expanding Career Bridge adoption. It is important to not leave an adoption strategy to the end of the modernization effort.

Finally, once driving user needs are set, it is recommended that the Career Bridge team develop two or more low-fidelity prototypes aimed at testing new functionalities or new features of Career Bridge rapidly and iteratively before narrowing on a finalized scope or roadmap for the modernization. As the build process begins, it is recommended that the team approach the modernization in an agile and iterative approach to more easily adapt and shift course, as new learnings emerge.

Collaborate with the Wider Workforce System

Career Bridge is one tool in a wide and diverse group of workforce and education organizations and associated tools. In pursuing ongoing user research and narrowing toward priority target users, it is important that Career Bridge can clearly articulate two things to effectively collaborate across the ecosystem:

- 1. A unique value proposition:** What it uniquely offers a discrete user base that is distinct from other organizations or tools.
- 2. How it complements and intersects with other organizations or tools:** How Career Bridge connects with the wider ecosystem and allows for timely referrals to other sources, organizations, or opportunities that may help meet an individual user’s goals.

Ecosystem of WA Workforce and Training Tools

Below is a non-exhaustive list of online or digital tools that participants referenced as also likely to be used by personas discussed during the session. It is recommended that the Career Bridge team refine this list and explore how discrete tools may (or may not) tie into the Career Bridge user experience.

	Job Boards and Job-seeking	Labor Market Information	Career Planning & Exploration	Education, Training, and Re-Skilling
Burning Glass		X		
PLC				X
“School Tools”				X
College Websites: UW, WSU, SBCTC				X
WSAC			X	X
Education Office				X
College and Career Compass			X	X
FAFSA				X
WAFSA				X
Career Cruising			X	X
Bureau of Labor Statistics		X		
Xellos				X
Yes Vets				
O*Net			X	X
Worksource WA	X		X	X
Unite Us	X	X	X	X
CBO Websites		X	X	X

Design for Interoperability and Seamless User Transitions

Interoperability with key tools that enable a seamless user experience with Washington’s workforce and education digital ecosystem can not only reduce barriers to accessing services it may also accelerate the pace at which Washingtonians can achieve their individual career goals. The session called out a number of “smart” integration ideas aimed at reducing silos and creating more intentional connections across systems to support Career Bridge users and user-cases.

A few specific suggestions include:

- **Single Sign On (SSO) and a common workforce/education “profile.”** This unlocks the ability for a personalized and curated experience for discrete archetypes and allows users to seamlessly move between “sibling” systems they may be accessing within Washington (e.g. Unemployment Insurance, Worksource WA).
 - o Profiles would also allow users to “save” their past searches and/or regularly used tools.
 - o Gives the ability to “recommend” unused functionalities to users when leveraging product analytics/account data.
 - o Enables curated step-by-step journeys to be designed within the tool.
 - o Allow users to access via federation accounts they already use for career exploration (e.g. LinkedIn, Google)
- **Centralize Career Bridge data on the cloud** where it can be combined and linked to other agency data or leverage more timely data points. Career Bridge’s data relies on accurate and timely reporting; if hosted in the cloud it could be readily connected with other useful data sources owned by ESD or SBE. Consider linkages or integration with:
 - o Employer-reported wage, occupation, or LMI data
 - o Education data (student records/ resumes)
- **Instrument Career Bridge and monitor product analytics** to learn what content, functionalities, and/or data is most commonly used (or not) within Career Bridge. With a profile, usage data can also help WTB understand who their users are across the state and inform where to focus refinement for different audience groups.

About RIPL

Research Improving People’s Lives (RIPL) is a nonprofit tech-for-social-impact organization that works with governments to help them use data, science, and technology to improve policy and lives. Our scientists and policy experts partner with government leaders to frame their challenges, and develop and deliver the best scientific approach to solve them. Our technologists design databases, applications, and user experiences that make policy delivery effective and engaging. We partner with policymakers so that they can use data, science, and technology to positively impact lives, solve pressing social challenges, and build their own capacity to innovate and measure success going forward.

For more information about RIPL, please visit our website at <https://www.ripl.org/>

APPENDIX A: Workshop Deck



Workforce
Training & Education Coordinating
Board

WASHINGTON

WTB Hybrid Event
September 13, 2022



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Reimagining Washington Career Bridge

*Applying design thinking to identify key needs in
Washington*



Marina Parr, Director of Workforce System Advancement

Purpose of Today's Event

How today accelerates a new beginning for Career Bridge Washington.

The purpose of this morning's event is to **refine a vision of what works well on Career Bridge, what needs to be fixed, and what big goals to undertake to make the site user-friendly, dynamic, and accessible to all WA residents.**

In today's workshop we will:

- Review the current status of Career Bridge and highlight WTB's hopes for the future modernization.
- Introduce RIPL's role in supporting progress toward that vision.
- Break-out into working groups to brainstorm the primary needs, motives and perspectives of individuals likely to use Career Bridge.
- Begin capturing explicit strategies, ideas, and approaches that can address those needs and improve outcomes.

After today's event, RIPL will deliver **a synthesized report with recommendations and actionable items based on what we discuss today to inform Career Bridge modernization** scoping, planning, and next steps.

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

Created by Washington Legislature in 1991:

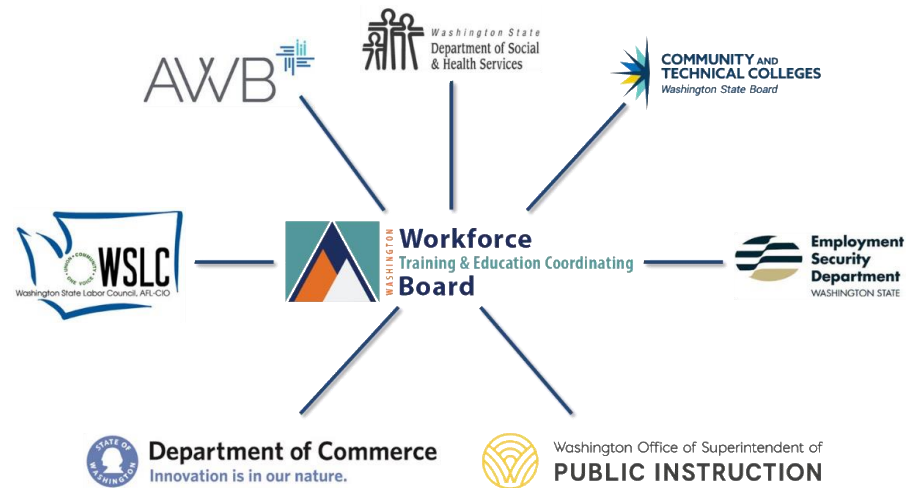
- Performance accountability agent for public investments in workforce development
- Planning and advocacy
- **Both an educational and workforce agency**

Tri-Partite and Consumer-led:

- Dual-customer focus: Business-Worker/Jobseeker
- 2/3 held by Business and Labor
- **Balance** held by major service providers (OSPI, SBCTC, ESD)
- Advisory members from targeted populations, chief local elected officials, DSHS, Commerce

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The Board's Role

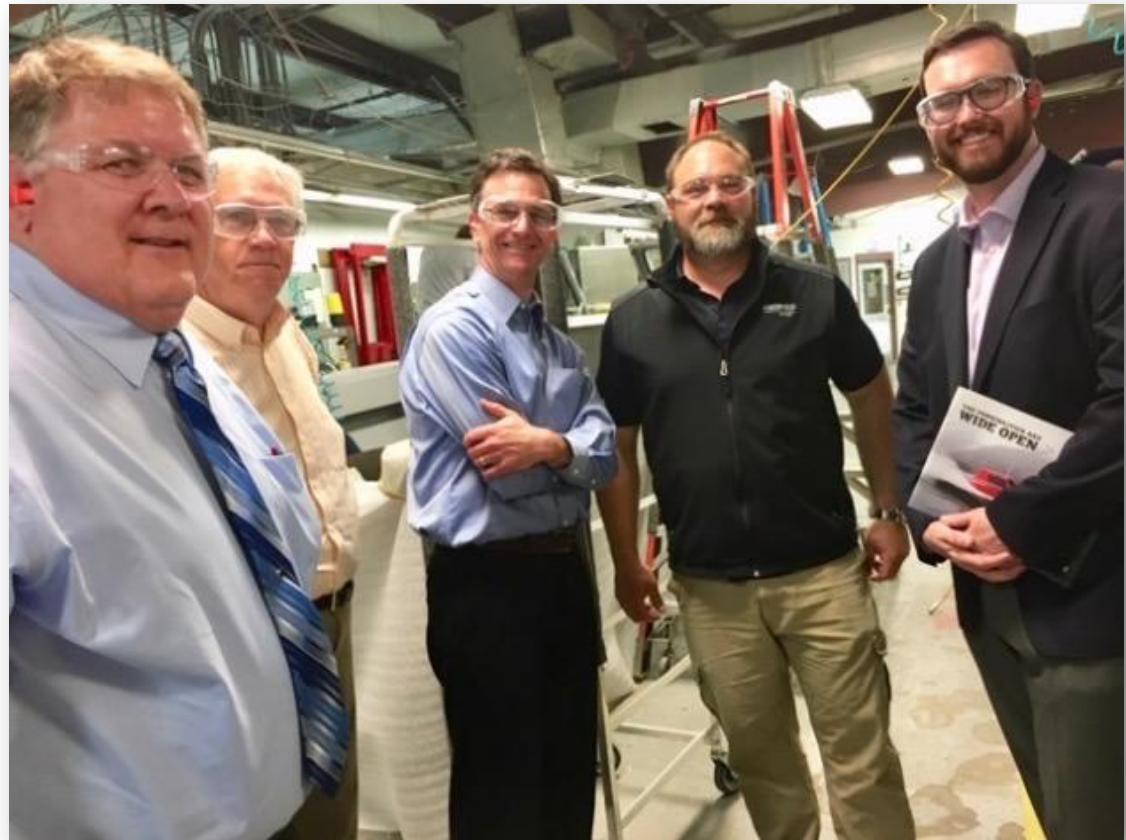
Across 15 state and federal fund streams, 7 operating agencies:

- Planning & Coordination
- Performance Accountability & Evaluation
- Research and Development
- Policy Analysis
- Advice to Governor and Legislature
- Consumer Information and Protection

Stakeholder and Industry Engagement

- The way we work to keep our services relevant to the times and looking into the future.
- Industry & business at the table.
- Workers at the table.

We conduct focus groups, bring together community members and seek regular feedback through surveys.



Regional Workforce Councils



<https://washingtonworkforce.org/>

Outcome Measures

- Did participants of workforce programs get the skills they needed (to get the job they wanted)?
- After leaving the program, were participants employed?
- How much did they earn?
- Were program participants and employers satisfied?
- Did the participant and public get a good return on investment?

Career Bridge: careerbridge.wa.gov

- Public facing site used by middle/high school students planning career and education steps.
- Also used by unemployed and underemployed workers seeking training.
- Site includes “full education spectrum” including licensed private career schools.

The screenshot shows the Washington Career Bridge website. At the top, it says "Washington Career Bridge" and "Find the education & training you need to get the job you want." There is a "SIGN IN / REGISTER" link in the top right. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with the following options: "EXPLORE CAREERS", "VIEW JOB TRENDS", "FIND EDUCATION", and "PAY FOR SCHOOL". Below this menu is a graphic for a guide titled "Where Are YOU Going?" with the subtitle "A guide to education and careers in Washington" and a button that says "Printed guide available". The main content area is titled "Find education and plan your career in Washington" and features three columns of interactive cards:

- Explore Careers:** "Which careers fit your interests?" with a "TAKE A QUIZ" button.
- View Job Trends:** "Which jobs are in demand?" with a "FIND OUT MORE" button.
- Find Education:** "How do programs perform?" with a "START YOUR SEARCH" button.

Below these cards is a video player titled "Career Bridge Career Bridge How-To Video" which shows a preview of the website's navigation options. At the bottom of the screenshot, it says "See what Career Bridge can do for you!"



Scott Jensen, CEO Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL)



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Agenda

9:30 Intro to RIPL and Workshop Approach
Scott Jensen, RIPL CEO

9:40 Design Thinking for Career Bridge User Personas (10m)
Scott Jensen & Micah Gordon, RIPL Product Manager

9:50 Career Bridge Needs Definition (40m)
Breakout groups

10:30 Share out (20m)
Breakouts to present

10:50 Next Steps and Closing (10m)
Scott Jensen & Marina Parr

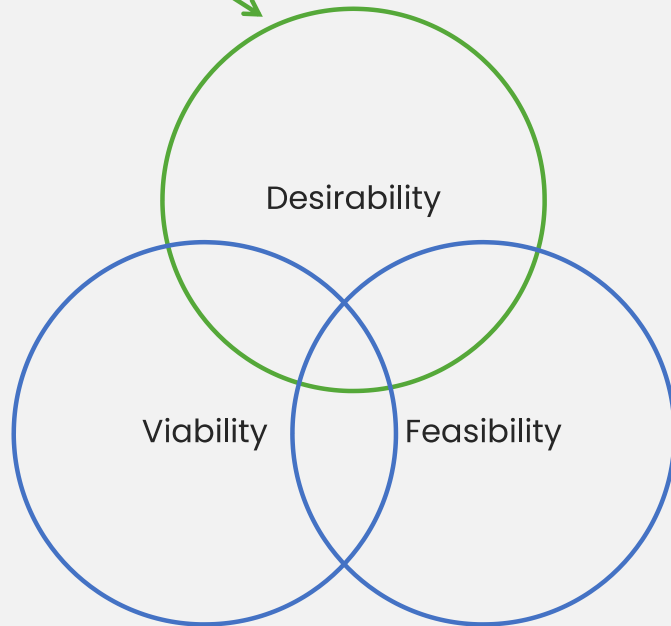
RIPL is a tech for social impact non- profit

RIPL combines three key areas of expertise to develop science and technology that improves people's lives:

- Our **policy and product experts:**
 - Conduct user research with jobseekers and employers to design solutions that meet needs.
 - Collaborate with government partners to iterate and improve customer-facing experience.
- Our **engineering experts:**
 - Work alongside government partners to integrate services and systems for easy customer use.
 - Build all deployments and updates as part of a scalable and sustainable technology stack.
- Our **scientific experts:**
 - Peer review models and use the best causal scientific methods.
 - Guide methodological approach for impact measurement.

What is Design Thinking?

Start here



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Design Thinking is an iterative approach for defining new concepts that are grounded in the needs of target customers.

Today's activities are designed to allow us to answer a series of questions that specify critical customer problems to solve and grounding those needs in new ideas.

Key Questions we will cover:

- Who is the customer?
- What is the customer experience, pain point, need, and opportunity?
- What is the most important customer benefit we can deliver?
- What does the customer experience look/feel like?

Enablers to Design Thinking

Anything the group would like to add?

Ground rules help us maximize our time and impact with a goal of maximizing creativity and creating the conditions to push past obvious solutions to get to breakthrough ideas:

- **Be present**, and please keep your camera on.
- **Be open-minded** and quiet your inner No. For the purpose of this workshop, we will largely be in a *generation mode* rather than evaluation mode.
- **Encourage wild ideas.** Push yourselves to think outside the box; often the best solutions can be drawn from ideas the stretch beyond pragmatism.
- **There are No Bad Ideas.** Don't adjudicate your own ideas; just share them.
- **Build on the Ideas of Others.** "Yes, and" over "But..."

Today's Exercise

In a moment, we'll break out into groups

- There will be 3 in-person groups
- There will be 1 remote group

Each group has been assigned "a persona".

A persona is a fictional character that represents a potential user of Career Bridge.

- We have three "design thinking" steps for your group to move through to discuss your persona's needs and what would improve their overall experience using Career Bridge.
- You will have around 40 minutes to complete this exercise and we'll share out with wider group at the end.

Breakout!

For attendees that are attending in-person:

- Please gather with those at your table.
- There are materials on your table.
- *Scott, Micah, Marina will facilitate each group.*

For attendees joining us online:

- You will be split off into a "Zoom Breakout room" in a moment.
- Materials will be displayed to you using screen sharing.
- *Sarah will facilitate the remote group.*

Breakout Group Instructions

Before diving into the questions. Make sure you do the following:

- **Briefly introduce yourselves.**
- **Read your assigned persona together.**
- **Assign a scribe.** This person is responsible for capturing notes using the post-its provided.
 - If in-person you have post-its provided. Make sure you capture one idea per post-it.
- **Assign a presenter.** This person is responsible for briefly sharing out what the group discusses.

Breakout Sessions 9:50–10:30 AM



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Breakout Sharing

5 minutes per group

5 minutes per group:

- Tell us a bit about your persona, their needs, and what they are looking for from Career Bridge. What are their pain points with the status quo?
- What else is your persona relying on to achieve their goal and what do they expect Career Bridge to do (or do better) to get them where they'd like to be? Describe the experience they need.
- What objectives or requirements did you as WA/WTB stakeholders propose for the future of Career Bridge? Why?

Last steps for today

1. Please take a moment to add any final thoughts to your posters or remote worksheets.
2. If in-person, please make sure your post-its are all legible to allow for your inputs to be photographed and compiled.

Next Steps:

1. RIPL will compile all of the great discussion today to develop a detailed synthesized report that WTB may use as it makes progress toward Career Bridge modernization.
1. The synthesized report will be shared with the full group within the next month.

Thank you!



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