A New Kind of Report Card

Tracking Private Career School Performance in Washington

Marina Parr, Communications Director
Randy Smith, IT and Research Specialist

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
Over 7 million page views in the last year alone. The site is growing. Serves adults in Washington state looking to retrain for new careers. Also serves middle and high school students searching for education opportunities in Washington state—from three-day training courses to one-year certificates to two-year associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees and beyond. Career Bridge also features apprenticeships.

Washington CareerBridge.wa.gov is a free state website that connects to over 6,500 Washington education programs in one place.
Watch the video! It’s on the home page of Career Bridge.
Click the Find Education square and filter your search for education programs in Washington by location, associated jobs, education type, and more.
Enter a keyword and generate search results. Notice that it provides a program name, school name, location, length and whether it’s on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETP). Got a green checkmark? It’s on the ETP list and the program potentially qualifies for federal training dollars through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
This page tells you more about the program, including the program contact, program description, cost of the program, length of training, and more.
School details gives potential students valuable contact information for the school they are considering, including admissions, financial aid, worker retraining, veteran services, and more.
When Performance Results are available, they are posted to Career Bridge. In this case, the private career school Divers Institute of Technology, wanted their program evaluated for inclusion on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List. Workforce Board research staff use student-level records submitted through the Student Data Portal and match them to wage records. Staff then crunch the data to show the completion rate for students, their employment rate, how much they earned four quarters after exit, (both hourly and annually), and the industries where they went to work. We call this a “consumer report card.” It’s one reason other states have reached out to us to create their own Career Bridge, helping their consumers make educated decisions on which education to invest time and money in.
The Student Characteristics page shows who enrolled in an education program, including gender, race, age, and prior education level.
You can sign into Career Bridge to save your search results. But it’s not required. Some site visitors use this feature, others don’t.
Career Bridge is home to over 6,500 Washington education programs. It’s ALSO the home of Washington’s Eligible Training Provider List. The federal government requires each state to maintain a list of qualifying programs. In Washington, the Workforce Board sets the performance thresholds that programs must meet to be on the list. Many of the programs on Career Bridge are on the ETP list. Others are not. For programs on the list, we show performance results on Career Bridge. About one third of the programs on Career Bridge show performance results.
A closer look at these ETP performance thresholds. Remember, these are minimum standards. And it’s not the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. But by setting and enforcing standards, poor performers are kept off Washington’s ETP list.

Current thresholds set by the Workforce Board are: Completion rate—20 percent. Employment rate—50 percent. Earnings--$3,943 in a calendar quarter (three months) or $10.64 per hour.
Career Bridge offers a career quiz in the Explore Careers section of the site. Click the blue button to find out what you like to do and how it connects to a career.
Check the box on your strengths and interests.
After you take the quiz, it generates a list of your top rated career clusters. Each cluster contains multiple occupations with links to state labor market information on average pay, projected growth, and where to get education and training related to the career.
On this page the career cluster featured on Business, Management and Administration is featured. It also shows the many occupations included in this cluster. These occupations tend to require similar skills/share similar features. Each occupation on Career Bridge has a link that leads to a statewide labor market snapshot provided by Washington state’s Employment Security Department on wages, growth, and more.
The Job Details page shows that Accountants and Auditors are considered “In Demand” occupations in Washington (see the green InDemand logo). Also site visitors can see the projected growth for the occupation, average openings per year, hourly and average annual wages, statewide. This page also provides links to “Education Available in Washington.” Users can click these education links to get the education and training they need, to get the job they want. This page also shows related occupations. Users can click these links to explore other occupations they might also be interested in.
Once users find an education program they’re interested in, they can click the Performance Results tab. (This tab and others showing Program Details, School Details and Student Characteristics, was mentioned earlier in the presentation.) Remember, these results are tied to a specific program, not the occupation in general. So potential students can see the completion rate, earnings, employment rate and other details that are outcomes for this specific education program at this particular institution.
This feisty crew comes from different sections of our state agency during the busy student data reporting season. It’s an “all hands on deck” approach to help ensure that schools are able to get their data reported accurately and efficiently each fall.

More details on the student data reporting process are in our webinar series for schools: https://youtu.be/4nkEaeTNg4k
Schools submit their data through the Workforce Board’s secure, encrypted Student Data Portal. The portal is open each fall for a limited time. Schools are provided a step by step guide, along with webinars to help them successfully submit their data.
Schools are provided the following steps at the start of the data reporting process.
This page shows schools their complete list of programs for which they must provide data.
This Excel template is supplied by the Workforce Board for schools to report student data each fall. Note the variety of categories including name, address, SSN, demographic data, etc.
Smaller schools sometimes choose to submit data directly through the portal, rather than on a spreadsheet.
Student level records provided by schools include a variety of demographic details, including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and veteran status. But the key identifier is the Social Security Number (SSN). SSNs are matched against both Washington and national wage records. Workforce Board research staff then arrive at “performance results” for education programs, showing the completion rate, employment rate, earnings, and industries where graduates went to work.
Through this evaluation process, education programs are evaluated for inclusion on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List, as required by the U.S. Department of Labor. The information is pushed out to the public via the Career Bridge website. The Workforce Board is an independent, third-party evaluator of workforce and education programs. Schools do NOT self-report their results. Our staff uses objective data to arrive at accurate evaluations that help students make informed choices about their education and training plans.
Of course, not all private career school education programs are on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List. Even so, the Workforce Board requires ALL schools the agency licenses and regulates to submit student records each year. All of those education programs are rolled up to evaluate the entire private career school sector each year. These results are posted and published as part of the Workforce Board’s annual Workforce Training Results, as shown here.
A look at the administrative code surrounding the Workforce Board’s regulatory authority over private career schools in Washington offering programs below the degree level. The Washington Student Achievement Council regulates private schools offering degrees.
Questions?

Contact Marina Parr at marina.parr@wtb.wa.gov