



City of Seattle

Date: July 1, 2013

To: Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations Committee  
Councilmember Sally Clark, Chair  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, Co-Chair  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Jean Godden

From: Steve Johnson, Director, OED  
Catherine Lester, Interim Director, HSD  
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Subject: SLI 120-1-A-1 Request for Additional Information on the Career Bridge Program

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In Green Sheet 120-1-A-1, the Council requested the Office of Economic Development (OED) and the Human Services Department (HSD) to submit to Council two reports containing additional information about the Career Bridge Program. The February 1, 2013 response provided a description of the Career Bridge program design, its data framework and expected timelines for selecting the contracted implementation partners for 2014. This report serves as the second response to Council's request and contains clarification on the following:

- **Annual Reporting Plan.** Identifying expected specific, measurable program outcomes, including enrollment targets, jobs outcomes, and how they compare, if applicable, to the outcomes achieved by similar programs.
- **Preliminary Program Outcomes.** Summarizing preliminary outcomes from the initial cohorts of program participants.
- **Estimated Career Bridge Costs.** Estimating Career Bridge's fixed and scalable costs and how changes to the City's annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations could impact the program's scope and capacity.

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Attachments: Career Bridge Outcome Map  
Career Bridge Mid-Year Evaluation Report  
Career Bridge SLI Response, Part 1, February 1, 2013

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Career Bridge is a new collaborative effort between the Human Services Department (HSD), the Office of Economic Development (OED), and the local community to create a more aligned strategy between workforce training investments, social service supports and community networks for low-income individuals seeking economic independence. By intentionally connecting these resources and education/training to individuals, Career Bridge is designed to provide a more coherent and comprehensive approach to facilitate an individual's journey to self-sufficiency.

### **a. Program Development**

As described in the February 1, 2013 SLI Response, Career Bridge began with HSD and OED assessing how best to meet the needs of men of color who face multiple barriers to employment and/or education. Following initial and ongoing community conversations, it also became evident that there is a critical need to address the myriad of institutional, service delivery and personal barriers faced by men of color, particularly African-American men with criminal histories. Community members spoke to the importance of designing the program based on community experiences and knowledge, as well as ongoing community ownership of the program. Consequently, Career Bridge enhances a traditional employment and training model with a focus on connecting participants to wrap-around services (e.g., housing, transportation, childcare resources) and stable community/family networks.

With five new cohorts being launched since October 2012, much of our attention has focused on how to embed the essential elements of meeting the increased challenges faced by individuals with multiple barriers by:

- Integrating access and increasing availability of wrap-around services to participants. Housing, transportation, financial debt and legal obligations are the major barriers faced by the Career Bridge participants and remain significant impediments for entry into employment and training. A Career Investment Fund has been established, with fiscal sponsorship from the White Center Community Development Association, to help individuals with unmet needs, including rental assistance, car repairs and work supplies, at an average of \$250 per participant.
- Solidifying the role of community sponsor and building community capacity to provide a network of support to individuals who are working to stabilize their lives, complete training and secure a job.
- Planning for the upcoming selection of a Community Based Development Organization (CBDO) that integrates Career Bridge's program design with organizational/community accountability structures and systems.

The departments continue to meet twice weekly with community members, current and potential participants to launch new cohorts, discuss the status and needs of current participants, and discuss process improvements for ongoing implementation.

**b. Career Bridge External Evaluation Process**

Concurrently, an external evaluator, MEF & Associates, has been hired by the Office of the City Auditor to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the Career Bridge program by July 1, 2014. The first phase of the evaluator’s work is to complete a work plan proposal that describes the methodology for evaluating Career Bridge outcomes in relation to similar programs. OED and HSD staff are currently working with MEF to provide program data and connect them with participants, community sponsors and other stakeholders to inform the evaluator’s initial report. It is our understanding that the evaluator will complete this initial phase by July 31, 2013.

**c. Expansion of Career Bridge for Immigrant & Refugee Populations with Limited English**

From its inception, Career Bridge is intended to serve immigrant/refugee individuals who have limited opportunities for employment and/or educational attainment due to low levels of English language competency, low basic skills and limited work experience. Similar to the strategy to serve men of color, the complexity of barriers for immigrants and refugees require a comprehensive range of services and supports to help bridge an individual’s transition into a job and/or training program. In addition to English-language instruction, there may be similar needs for housing, transportation, and childcare. OED and HSD are currently evaluating best practices for connecting individuals with low levels of English to employment and skill attainment for a convening of community stakeholders this summer.

**II. ANNUAL REPORTING PLAN**

**a. Theory of Change**

The primary purpose of the evaluation framework for Career Bridge is to answer the initial question of how to build an effective program and strategy in three main areas:

- **Changes in Individuals** – toward increased readiness, with a corresponding decrease in barriers, for skill attainment and advancement into family supporting jobs and career pathways.
- **Changes in Communities** – toward improved capacity and integration of community support network.
- **Changes in Systems** – toward improved coordination in the multiple systems in which these individuals interact.

The ultimate goal is to achieve lasting change for individuals facing multiple barriers to self-sufficiency, through an aligned strategy between workforce training, social service, and community that improves outcomes for these individuals. An underlying assumption is that by building better alignment and linkages across systems, including HSD, OED, non-profit organizations, community groups and training providers, Career Bridge will create a more coherent and effective approach to supporting individuals to self-sufficiency.

**b. Outcomes Map**

OED and HSD have prepared the attached Outcome Map that depicts the relationship between the Career Bridge initiative, its strategies and its intended outcomes and goals. The theoretical assumptions underlying the Outcome Map were discussed in the February 1, 2013 SLI response (attached), which are illustrated in a logic model of how Career Bridge resources, strategies and activities are intended to lead to specific outcomes. The Outcome Map also suggests the monitoring and performance measures to assess strategies and is an important part of continuous learning and improvement.

**c. Implications for Evaluation and Annual Reporting Plan**

As Career Bridge is currently in the midst of making operational and organizational decisions (e.g., selection of CBDO), the evaluation framework is structured towards continuous learning and improvement that will help answer key questions around program design, scalability and program sustainability. Similarly, measuring incremental community, system and individual change will be important in assessing progress within the context of a complex, long-term effort; and inform strategic decisions on the City's strategies and investments. The evaluation framework therefore recognizes and documents the achievement of certain milestones along the way. For an individual, this might mean tracking placement in a transitional job or entry into a training/education program until they reach self-sufficiency. Assessing progress on systems, both internal and external to the City, key measurements could include alignment around policies and practices, changes in investments, and greater effectiveness in meeting client needs.

The evaluation approach will help us understand why the expected individual and community changes did or did not occur, the merit and worth of a particular strategy or approach and what will be required to expand, replicate or refine certain strategies.

The following outcomes have been identified by HSD, OED and community partners as a high priority for evaluation and measurement under an annual reporting plan. All are part of an internal evaluation framework and are illustrated in the Outcome Map (attached).

<b>PRIORITY INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>MEASURES</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
Increased readiness for employment and/or training and education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/proportion placed in jobs, training, or educational programs</li> <li>• Job Retention/Duration</li> <li>• Average Wage</li> <li>• Number/proportion who complete programs that result in readiness (i.e. competency levels) to attend postsecondary education and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant data in JobStat or similar client tracking system</li> <li>• Participant pre and post surveys</li> </ul>
Increased connection to supportive communities, including families/ children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/proportion who remain engaged in the Career Bridge program</li> <li>• Proportion reporting improved connection to community networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews and focus groups with participants</li> <li>• Community sponsor reports</li> </ul>
Increased advancement into career and/or training pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/proportion in jobs with family supporting wages</li> <li>• Number/proportion enrolled in and complete postsecondary education and training programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant data in JobStat or similar client tracking system</li> </ul>
Increased access to support services and a decrease in barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/proportion of participants who access Career Investment Fund</li> <li>• Number/proportion of participants who report a reduction in barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant data in JobStat or similar client tracking system</li> <li>• Career Investment Fund records</li> </ul>
Improved confidence and readiness to balance life responsibilities and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/proportion of participants who report an improved readiness</li> <li>• Rate of Recidivism for participants who have a prior criminal history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview and focus groups with participants.</li> <li>• Participant tracking system</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY COMMUNITY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>MEASURES</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
Improved community infrastructure to partner across systems to implement Career Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community sponsors who provide effective guidance, mentorship and leadership.</li> <li>• Improved sense of community support from participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City data (contracting)</li> <li>• Interviews and focus groups with participants and community sponsors reports</li> </ul>
Increased implementation (scale) and improved delivery of community sponsorship model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in number and diversity of participants served by Career Bridge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant data in JobStat or similar client tracking system</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY SYSTEMS OUTCOMES</b>	<b>MEASURES</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
Improved availability and access to support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in support services that better accommodates needs of individuals with significant barriers to employment &amp; training</li> <li>• Perceptions of participants of how well Career Bridge met their support service needs and/or reduced barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City data</li> <li>• Interviews and focus groups with participants</li> </ul>
Improved organizational infrastructure and coordination within and across systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in service delivery practice that support progress along a skills continuum</li> <li>• Perceptions of participants of how well Career Bridge met their needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City data</li> <li>• Interviews and focus groups with participants</li> </ul>
Comprehensive and cohesive education and training system that address the needs of diverse populations at varying levels of the skills continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of individuals served by Career Bridge</li> <li>• Amount of aligned public investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Bridge documentation</li> </ul>

OED and HSD recommend that these measures of individual, community and systems change be key components of an annual reporting plan that will be collected by the City and the CBDO selected to implement Career Bridge in 2014.

**c. Assessing Individual Level Outcomes Versus Other Programs**

The formative focus of this evaluation approach does not specifically measure Career Bridge outcomes against other programs. As noted in the February SLI response, our initial research did not reveal a comparable program. However, many of the best practices described in the research (e.g. cohort model, network of support, wrap around services) are key aspects of Career Bridge’s design and theoretical underpinnings.

An evaluation of Career Bridge’s performance relative to other programs is the stated purpose of the evaluation funded by Green Sheet 120-2-A-1, which is to include a comparison of outcomes with a similar population not involved in the program and in comparison with SJI’s employment and training services. The workplan and methodology for such an evaluation is scheduled to be provided to the Council by July 31, 2013 and will be cross referenced with the departments’ annual reporting and data collection plans. In the interim, OED and HSD staff have been participating with MEF & Associates in their document collection and stakeholder interviews.

**d. Data Collection**

Data collection has been implemented using a mixed methods approach which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative measures to obtain rich information regarding what is working well and what can be improved. Analysis of data collected from participants, community sponsors, community supporters, and the implementation partners is providing a mechanism for identifying key facilitators of success, and informing any necessary modifications to the Career Bridge design. Data collection has been an ongoing process between participant cohorts for continuous quality improvement as issues are identified and lessons learned. The Career Bridge strategies will be refined as needed, according to what the data suggests.

Quantitative data is being collected via SJI using the standard enrollment form used for all SJI clients and is maintained in SJI’s JOBSTAT MIS system. To date, JOBSTAT has housed the demographic, training, placement and retention information for all Career Bridge Participants. Following CBDO selection, we will assess their data capacities and whether we can continue to utilize JOBSTAT to provide a centralized source of data. Career Bridge participants, community sponsors, community supporters, and the Oversight Committee have collectively identified measures, in addition to the standard SJI enrollment form, that are now also collected to ensure participants' success upon intake and completion of Career Bridge. SJI also implements a written pre- and post-survey to collect quantitative data from participants at the beginning and end of the five-day job readiness training.

Qualitative data is also being collected to capture information that cannot be reflected through counts or statistics, and instead highlights vignettes from participants, community sponsors, community supporters, and the Oversight Committee. This qualitative data has been collected via focus groups conducted at both the conclusion of the five-day job readiness training (beginning with Cohort 2) and the Community Partners’ Meetings. The stories shared via qualitative inquiries are critical to highlighting the importance of the relational model of the Career Bridge initiative and the culturally relevant components which may not be identified otherwise via quantitative measures.

The Career Bridge design and evaluation strategy allow all involved parties to collaborate in development of the data collection and evaluation processes. The emphasis on input from all stakeholders ensures cultural relevance beyond what exists from evidence-based models, which often do not account for the specific needs of diverse communities often underrepresented in research. This approach is critical for community capacity building, which has been clearly identified as a key goal for Career Bridge among all stakeholders. Many elements of the Career Bridge design and evaluation have been tailored to be more comprehensive and culturally relevant than models which exist in the literature on best practices for similar efforts.

### III. PRELIMINARY PROGRAM OUTCOMES

#### a. Participant Outcomes

The City Council's SLI requested preliminary program outcomes from the first three cohorts of Career Bridge. A Career Bridge Mid-year Evaluation Report, completed in May, 2013, is attached and details the key findings from the first three cohorts. Highlights from these cohorts are provided here:

- **Total Enrolled in First Three Career Bridge Cohorts:** 32
  - Cohort 1 – October, 2012
  - Cohort 2 – February, 2013
  - Cohort 3 – March, 2013
  
- **Training & Job Placements:** 68% have been placed in jobs, training, or educational programs
  - 17 are working (10 full-time, 7 part-time)
  - 3 are in training
  - 2 are in community college
  
- **Average Wage for all Placements:** \$15.12/hr.
  
- **Increased Readiness for Employment and/or Training:**
  - 96% of men surveyed report they are prepared to take the next step after Career Bridge workshop
  - 71% of men surveyed report they learned new skills for balancing work, school, training and family responsibilities following Career Bridge workshop
  
- **Connection with the Program and Community Sponsors**
  - The vast majority of participants remain connected to the program and community sponsors, even those who have taken a pause on their job search and/or training due to illness or other life circumstances.
  - Participants are the leading referral source for future cohort participants.

Two additional cohorts, the Cohort 4 beginning at the end of May and Cohort 5 beginning at the end of June, have enrolled 16 new participants.

## **b. Program Development and Continuous Improvement**

Biweekly meetings with participants, community sponsors, and staff have provided an ongoing opportunity to evaluate the Career Bridge activities and implement process improvements. Since the initial cohort in October, 2012, we see further process improvement and program development in a number of areas:

- Increased Clarification of Community Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities. A drawback has been a reduction in the number of community sponsors who are actively engaged. However, we continue to see new interest across many new individuals and organizations who have expressed interest in taking on a community sponsor role.
- Completion of policies and procedures for access to Career Investment Fund in April, 2013. The Career Investment Fund provides a small source of funds to support individuals address barriers to employment. A fiscal sponsor was secured to manage and expedite support provided through this fund. To date, \$4,361 has been accessed from this fund.
- Continued challenges in accessing supports services once barriers are identified. Many of participants experience housing insecurity, transportation challenges, and outstanding legal financial obligations which remain ongoing challenges to securing employment or entering a training program. In response, community sponsors and staff have improved follow-up with participants and formed a Success Team to identify and address ongoing barriers and needs. We have found that housing resources are particularly difficult to access, especially for individuals with a history of former incarceration.

## **IV. ESTIMATED CAREER BRIDGE COSTS**

### **a. Background**

City Council's approved budget provided \$210,000 for Career Bridge in 2013 and \$800,000 in 2014. In 2013, the budget includes \$150,000 in General Funds from OED's contract with the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) and \$60,000 in new HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to HSD. In 2014, \$800,000 in CDBG funding is proposed which will all be allocated to HSD.

As CDBG funds become the primary fund source in 2014, an eligible Community Based Development Organization (CBDO) will assume the job training, placement and other employment services. These are expressly permitted activities under CDBG regulations as long as they are provided by a CBDO. While we have not selected a CBDO to date, the organization is required to have a primary purpose to serve low-income individuals in a focused low-income neighborhood. We will also require the organization to have strong linkages to communities of color and immigrant/refugee communities. We are currently in the process of developing the proposed scope of work and Request for Proposals to select a CBDO later this summer, subject to funding availability, so that Career Bridge can begin to be transitioned for full implementation by a CBDO in 2014.

In the interim, Seattle Jobs Initiative has been a start-up partner in the initial design and development of Career Bridge. It has provided staffing for the Career Bridge training and job development services, as well as tracking client data in its JobStat system (a proprietary software program for client tracking). In addition, HSD and OED staff are also filling other functions during this start-up phase, including community sponsor coordination, case management and community outreach. Beginning later this fall and following its selection through an RFP process, a CBDO will manage and implement the Career Bridge program, including

the employment and training services, case management, and outreach and coordination of community sponsors.

In 2014, Career Bridge will also expand its services beyond the participants currently served; men of color who face multiple barriers, including a history of former incarceration, limited work history and low levels of education to immigrant/refugee and/or limited English speakers who also have low basic skills and limited work history. The inclusion of a new population focus also has budget implications because of the complexity of barriers, both similar and dissimilar, and the total increase in the number of individuals served. Since the education and training component, as well as the community sponsor network, is likely to be different for these two target populations, we anticipate that there will be separate program providers under a single umbrella CBDO or potentially two separate CBDOS.

**b. Cost Assumptions & Estimates**

As Career Bridge is transitioned to the community and with the addition of a second population of individuals who also have significant barriers to employment and training, there are core functions which will need to be filled to ensure the effective transition and implementation of Career Bridge. The cost assumptions are built around these set of functions which we believe will be critical to Career Bridge’s successful implementation and transition in 2014.

In 2013, total funding allocated to Career Bridge is \$210,000, of which \$150,000 was directed from OED’s existing workforce funding with SJI. However, SJI’s actual costs during 2013 will be twice this amount and are projected below. Since OED contracts with SJI on a base pay/milestone method, the 2013 budget is a combination of direct expense and an allocation of staffing costs. These costs are provided to give Council a sense of what Career Bridge is likely to cost given the experience of SJI to fill key functions necessary for program start-up and implementation. However, it does not include the “value” of functions filled by OED, HSD and Community Sponsors, which will transition to a CBDO in 2014. The expenses also do not include the many volunteer hours that were spent on Tuesday evening and Saturday morning meetings by City and SJI staff, and Community Sponsors.

In 2014, the projected budget is built on the experience in 2013 to fill program functions and assumes that these activities will be filled almost entirely by a CBDO. The 2014 budget also contemplates an expansion of Career Bridge to the limited-English population, which would essentially double the number of clients anticipated to be served from 100 individuals in 2013 to 200-240 in 2014, requiring a comparable increase in staffing capacity.

2013 PROJECTED EXPENSE		2014 PROJECTED BUDGET		NOTES
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & STARTUP COSTS				
Description	Cost	Description	Cost	
Development & Planning Costs		Development & Planning Costs		In 2013, based on SJI staff time and does not include the value of City staff or Community Sponsor services estimated to be well in excess of \$200,000. In 2014, this includes CBDO program staff, SJI staff to support transition, as well as consulting services to integrate Career Bridge’s model into a CBDO structure.
- Research & development		- CBDO Development		
- Program design		- Program Transition		
- Partner outreach		- Budget Development		
- Policies & procedures development	\$79,000	- Program Integration	\$70,000	

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION COSTS					
Description	Cost		Description	Cost	
Program Management, Oversight and Partner Coordination	\$34,000		Program Management, Oversight and Partner Coordination	\$130,000	In 2013, based on SJI staff time and does not include value of City staff or Community Sponsor services. HSD has requested position authority to hire a Career Bridge Program manager in 2014. The cost is based on the salary, benefits and shared cost for a Strategic Advisor position. Position could also be filled by a CBDO Program Manager.
Program Trainer Costs (2 Trainers for 6 cohorts)	\$31,000		Program Trainers (2 Trainers for 12 cohorts)	\$62,000	Budget is based on an hourly cost for two trainers, at an average rate of \$50/hr, that includes the actual time in training and preparatory time.
Orientation & Training Costs (room rental, refreshments, supplies, etc)	\$19,000		Orientation & Training Costs (room rental, refreshments, supplies, etc)	\$38,000	Assumes six cohorts in 2013 and 12 cohorts in 2014 (averaging about \$3,100 per cohort)
Community Sponsor Contracts - Community Outreach - Training facilitation - Participant Referral - Mentoring & Support	\$0		Community Sponsor Contracts Community Outreach - Training facilitation - Participant Referral - Mentoring & Support	\$50,000	In 2013, Community Sponsors have volunteered their time and services. In 2014, we propose small service contracts of between \$5-\$10,000 per community sponsor.
Job Developer (1 FTE)	\$70,000		Job Developer (2 FTE)	\$140,000	In 2013, a Job Developer has been contracted with to provide employment connections services to participants. This amount includes salary and benefits. In 2014, we anticipate that 2 FTE will be dedicated to this function through the CBDO.
Case Mgmt & Navigation	\$0		Case Mgmt & Navigation	\$140,000	In 2013, this function has been filled by a combination of HSD & SJI staff. In 2014, we anticipate that 2 FTE will be dedicated to this function. The salary is commensurate with the job development function.
Career Investment Fund	\$25,000		Career Investment Fund	\$60,000	Average of \$250.00 per participant (@ 100 participants in 2013 and 240 participants in 2014)

ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT & EVALUATION COSTS					
Description	Cost		Description	Cost	
Data Collection & Reporting	\$20,000		Data Collection & Reporting	\$20,000	<p>This amount may increase in 2014 due to the increase in participants and the possible need for technology enhancements if JOBSTAT is not utilized.</p> <p>In 2013, this includes occupancy, insurance equipment and proportion of administrative costs. Rate is unknown in 2014; however, it is assumed in CBDO Admin costs below.</p> <p>15% of program costs, and includes a proportion of shared costs and administrative overhead.</p>
Shared Costs & Administrative Overhead	\$85,000		Shared Costs & Administrative Overhead		
CBDO Administration	\$0		CBDO Administration	\$90,000	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$363,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>		

The experience in 2013 in implementing the Career Bridge program affirms a program cost of approximately \$400,000 to serve a single population group. Although some of the 2013 cost was start-up costs by SJI and others, additional administrative costs provided in-kind by HSD, OED and Community Sponsors are not included. As Career Bridge is scaled in 2014 to address the needs of low-income individuals with low-basic skills and limited-English, the community-based model would require additional staffing and tailoring of services to meet differing needs and is estimated to be about \$800,000. As noted above, the 2014 budget contemplates CDBG funding for the Career Bridge program after the program is transitioned to a CBDO.

The funds for the Career Bridge program come from CDBG program. In 2014, CDBG is anticipated to have a slight decrease in funding. Current CDBG allocations will be evaluated during the 2014 budget process, but reductions are not expected in the commitment to Career Bridge.