Rhode Island to Launch Virtual Career Center Powered by Google Cloud as Part of 'Back to Work RI' Initiative

Rhode Island's Virtual Career Center will connect thousands of residents with jobs to match their skills, and return to work after being displaced by COVID-19

Providence, R.I., and Mountain View, Calif., October 21, 2020 – The State of Rhode Island and Google Cloud today announced they are working together on an initiative that will dramatically expand access to key career resources across the state. The initiative was developed as part of Governor Gina M. Raimondo's "Back to Work RI" initiative. The Virtual Career Center will connect Rhode Islanders to career services on an innovative, data-driven, and easy to navigate online platform developed on Google Cloud and in partnership with the tech-for-social-impact nonprofit Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL).

This agreement brings together Rhode Island government, technology leaders, and top research scientists to launch Rhode Island's economic recovery, and harness the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to connect the state's workforce with pathways to new careers. Rhode Island will become the first state in the country to innovate with AI / ML and cloud technology to help Rhode Islanders get back to work.

"We're incredibly grateful for Google Cloud's investment in Rhode Island. Our Virtual Career Center is only possible thanks to their technology and resources," said Governor Raimondo. "Through this public-private partnership with Google Cloud and RIPL, Rhode Island is leading the way in using technology to connect our workforce with pathways to great jobs. We won't rest until all Rhode Islanders are back on their feet."

Since March, hundreds of thousands of Rhode Islanders have filed for unemployment. Many of those impacted were already some of the state's most vulnerable workers and families. Now, more than ever, Rhode Island needs to rapidly and successfully connect workers with new jobs and offer effective training programs that help both workers and employees succeed.

The Virtual Career Center will give Rhode Islanders remote access to an array of resources to support their job searches. As part of the Virtual Career Center, RIPL and Rhode Island are developing a first-of-its-kind Career Matching Bot, which will innovatively use data to connect Rhode Island workers with new and successful career paths and proven, effective reskilling opportunities.

Multi-Sector Relationship

Governor Raimondo, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), Google Cloud, and RIPL have formed a unique multi-sector coalition to rapidly support workers in crisis and virtually connect them with new skills training and in-demand careers.

"We want to congratulate Rhode Island on being the first state in the U.S. to use AI and ML to deploy a job search platform on this level," said Thomas Kurian, CEO of Google Cloud. "The state is truly innovative and forward-looking in its approach to citizen services, and we are honored to help provide technology that powers such a tremendous effort."

Rhode Island's Virtual Career Center will be powered by a range of Google Cloud technologies--such as BigQuery, Cloud SQL, Cloud Storage, Cloud Talent API, and Vision API-- in partnership with MavenWave, who built the application interface. Google Workspace, including Google Meet, will allow job seekers to schedule video meetings with career coaches, job recruiters and potential employers. Additionally, the Google Job Search API is an AI-powered job discovery tool, powered by Google Cloud, that will allow jobseekers to explore career opportunities best suited to their skills and interests.

In collaboration with Rhode Island, RIPL scientists are developing a Career Matching ML algorithm, delivered through an AI-powered Chatbot, a first-of-its-kind tool which will set Rhode Islanders quickly on the path to successful and rewarding new jobs and careers. The program will use data from Rhode Island's Research Data Lake to identify which careers and job openings each person will likely find rewarding, and deliver personalized recommendations directly to jobseekers and to employers. It will make finding great-match careers easier for workers and employers, and kickstart lasting economic growth in Rhode Island. The research and development for the Career Matching Bot is funded in part by the National Science Foundation.

Starting today, Rhode Islanders can access a Back to Work landing page and a preliminary chatbot named Skipper, to get answers to questions, navigate career resources and access job openings, training opportunities and additional support services. The Virtual Career Center and Career Matching Bot will launch in late November, with additional services available over the coming months.

About Back to Work RI

Back to Work RI is a public-private partnership designed to train, support, and hire thousands of Rhode Islanders who have been displaced by COVID-19. Launched by Governor Raimondo in July 2020, this is the first and most innovative workforce development program of its kind in the country. Back to Work RI partners directly with employers to ensure Rhode Islanders get the skills they need to secure well-paying jobs in growing industries. While using proven best practices, Rhode Island is also making serious innovations, like deploying Artificial Intelligence to connect Rhode Island jobseekers with pathways to careers.

About Google Cloud

Google Cloud provides organizations with leading infrastructure, platform capabilities, and industry solutions. We deliver enterprise-grade cloud solutions that leverage Google's cutting-edge technology to help companies operate more efficiently and adapt to changing needs, giving customers a foundation for the future. Customers in more than 150 countries turn to Google Cloud as their trusted partner to solve their most critical business problems.

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. We work with faculty research affiliates from top research universities across the country to provide powerful, scientific-grade insights at the speed of policy directly to policymakers so that they can positively impact lives, solve pressing social challenges, and build their own capacity to innovate and measure success going forward.

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