

State of Rhode Island Partners with Google Cloud to Reimagine the Future of Workforce Development

New Virtual Career Center offers an easy-to-use, cloud-based platform to help Rhode Islanders match their skills with new career opportunities

Solution assists the state of Rhode Island with economic recovery

Providence, R.I., and Sunnyvale, Calif., March 1 — Back to Work Rhode Island, a state-led workforce development initiative, and Google Cloud unveiled today an easy-to-use career platform that provides Rhode Islanders with the ability to find employment and get matched with meaningful career opportunities. To facilitate the virtual job hunt process, the new Virtual Career Center (VCC) will offer virtual meetings with career coaches, the ability to schedule meetings with prospective employers, and help on building effective resumes. Beginning today, Rhode Islanders can access the Virtual Career Center at backtoworkri.com.

Last fall, Rhode Island announced a landmark initiative with Google Cloud and Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL) to build the VCC, which is part of the state's Back to Work RI workforce initiative. Today, the VCC is available for all state residents, helping COVID-displaced workers with career development and job placement.

"COVID-19 has left thousands of Rhode Islanders unemployed and searching for new, sustainable careers," said Sarah Blusiewicz, assistant director of workforce development for Rhode Island's Department of Labor and Training (DLT). "Our collaboration with Google Cloud has married accessible technology with government innovation to train and connect workers with the resources they need to access in-demand jobs."

The VCC harnesses the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to connect the state's workforce with new career opportunities while using familiar productivity tools within Google Workspace.

Key VCC features include:

- Career coaches set their availability on the platform, allowing job seekers to schedule time to meet at their convenience. Google Calendar integration enables the job seeker and career coaches to schedule and cancel meetings directly from the dashboard. It also includes the ability for coaches to set availability parameters in their schedules. The VCC also integrates video calling via Google Meet, collaboration through Google Docs, and screen sharing for the job seekers and career coaches.
- Coaches and job seekers are paired based on the coach's areas of expertise and language fluency.
- Finally, the platform provides the flexibility for the Rhode Island DLT to host virtual job fairs with local employers.
- The AI-powered CareerCompass RI bot, named "Skipper," innovatively uses data and ML to connect Rhode Islanders with potential new career paths and proven reskilling opportunities.

"It is so rewarding to see the Virtual Career Center assist with economic recovery, as Rhode Islanders get back on their feet," said Mike Daniels, vice president, Global Public Sector, Google Cloud. "Rhode Island is the first state in the country to use AI/ML and Google Workspace to deploy a job search platform at this scale. We hope that the integrated experience provided by our technology will help job seekers hit the ground running."

The VCC is powered by several Google Cloud technologies, including BigQuery, Cloud SQL, Cloud Storage, Cloud Talent API, Vision API and Google Workspace. The VCC was created in partnership with MavenWave, who built the application interface.

Unlike other workforce development programs, Back to Work RI has designed its program to work backwards: it identifies sectors in need of talent, forms flexible partnerships within these industries and training-related programs, secures funding to cover a participants' transportation, childcare, and education costs as needed, and matches workers with the careers they want.

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 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 accelerates organizations' ability to digitally transform their business with the best infrastructure, platform, industry solutions and expertise. 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 200 countries and territories turn to Google Cloud as their trusted partner to solve their most critical business problems.

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