

# Introducing...



The *CIS-Connection* is a web-based tool that connects schools to businesses and businesses to schools. It links business information and employment opportunities to students and job seekers using the *CIS for Internet* website. It also provides a database for volunteers from your local businesses who are interested in supporting educational activities and career-related learning.

## **How was *CIS-Connection* developed?**

The *CIS-Connection* product was developed by Wisconsin Careers, located at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is licensed to Oregon CIS for use by Oregon communities. Two goals drove Wisconsin Careers' development and our acquisition of the product for Oregon:

### **1. To link business information and employment opportunities to students and adults**

*CIS for Internet* describes occupations and industries for the purpose of career planning. These descriptions include information about work activities, skills, preparation, licensing, wages, and employment outlook. *CIS-Connection* expands on this by providing detailed information about local employers. It provides students and adults with a real life perspective on the workplace, one they can relate to because they are familiar with the businesses and organizations where they live.

### **2. To link business people willing to volunteer to educators needing volunteers**

*CIS-Connection* also provides an easy mechanism to link business people who are interested in volunteering with teachers and other school personnel who are seeking volunteers. The Volunteer Exchange portion of *CIS-Connection* helps organize and track all school-based and work-based activities in a local region.

## **What are the benefits of *CIS-Connection*?**

- Educates students and job seekers about the scope of jobs available.
- Generates interest in local industries.
- Provides the appropriate links to businesses and their websites while one engages in career planning.
- Assists students and job seekers in the development of career plans within the context of actual employer expectations.
- Provides an easy mechanism to link business people that are willing to volunteer with teachers/school personnel that are seeking volunteers.
- Helps organize and track all business-related, school-to-career activities in a local area.

## What information is provided by participating businesses?

There are two types of information that each business or organization enters - general information and volunteer information. The general information helps users of *CIS for Internet* understand the business or organization. It includes a description, a list of occupations it employs, special skills and qualities it wants employees to possess (soft skills), and links to the company websites. It takes about 30 minutes to enter the requested information through an online data entry form.

The volunteer information includes information about individuals from the business or organization who would like to volunteer in some capacity at local schools or with students in work-based learning activities. It describes the specific services or activities in which employees in the business or organization are willing to participate. Volunteer activities are categorized into the following areas:

school-based activities	work-based learning activities	services for educators & schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest Speakers</li> <li>• Career Days/Fairs/Expos</li> <li>• Readers</li> <li>• Tutors</li> <li>• School Volunteers</li> <li>• Mentors</li> <li>• Senior Project Advisors</li> <li>• Field-based Investigation Advisors</li> <li>• School-based Enterprise Advisors</li> <li>• Business Site/Industry Tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Shadows</li> <li>• Informational Interviews</li> <li>• Mock Interviews</li> <li>• Internships – Paid and Unpaid</li> <li>• Service Learning/Volunteer Opportunities</li> <li>• Cooperative Education Worksites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Shadows for Teachers</li> <li>• Educator Externships</li> <li>• Advisory Committee Members</li> <li>• Donations of Equipment</li> <li>• Staff Development Training</li> </ul>

## How does my site get involved?

*CIS-Connection* is implemented by a region – a city, county, or group of counties. In determining the composition of a region, it is important that the businesses included in a region can reasonably provide career-related learning opportunities to schools and students in that region. An organization that takes on the responsibility to coordinate business recruitment and support licenses the product from CIS. This organization is called the Cooperating Organization. In Wisconsin, Cooperating Organizations were initially chambers of commerce, but quickly other entities became involved.

As of April 2009, there are three regions in Oregon implementing *CIS-Connection*:

- Lane ESD, with the Lane Workforce Partnership, as a state-funded pilot for Oregon programming, materials, methods, and strategies.
- BizConnect, a regional pilot effort through Worksystems, Inc., that includes Washington, Multnomah, Columbia, and Yamhill counties.
- Corvallis School District.

Regardless of who takes on the role of Cooperating Organization, *CIS-Connection* is a community-based effort that requires teamwork between school staff, employers, and workforce entities. If your region is interested, contact Oregon CIS at 346.3872 or 800.495.1266.