



## **Digital Promise Takes an Inclusive Approach to Encourage the Design of Learning and Employment Records**

*The organization will co-design two LER Certifications creating equitable pathways for BIPOC learners and workers*

**APRIL 11, 2022 | Washington, D.C.** – National education nonprofit [Digital Promise](#) will develop two [Product Certifications](#) for Learning and Employment Records (LERs). Product Certifications are rigorous, reliable signals education providers and communities can use to identify tech that is designed to intentionally meet the varied needs of all learners.

LERs are digital records of an individual’s skills, credentials, diplomas, and employment history that have the potential to strengthen or reinvent resumes by including verifiable information about achievements in real time.

Since 2019, Digital Promise has engaged in [multiple research efforts](#) with workers, adult learners, education providers, and employers to learn about necessary strategies to build meaningful career pathways.

“LERs have the potential to mitigate biases related to individual’s race and ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and primary language to create equitable pathways for meaningful careers,” said Sierra Noakes, marketplace project director at Digital Promise. “Ensuring the realization of this vision requires LER developers to understand and design for the needs of individuals with diverse lived experiences. Through a co-design process with workers and learners from multiple backgrounds, we will build certifications with clear criteria based on the needs, interests, and aspirations of those who will be using the technology. These certifications will hold the field accountable to solving for real challenges people face in education and employment opportunities today.”

To build Inclusive Design Principles and User Profiles, Digital Promise led co-design sessions with frontline workers, prioritizing Black and Latina women who are overrepresented in low-wage jobs. The goal was to raise awareness of and establish a commitment to greater equity in LER design among developers and other key stakeholders (forthcoming, April 2022). Digital Promise plans to adopt the Inclusive LER Design

Principles as criteria for certifying both equitable design and usability for learners and workers, as well as for the education and training providers who serve them. Awarded LERs will signal to learners and workers that the tool has been certified to help to mitigate biases and promote inclusion for minoritized workers.

“LERs have the potential to connect learners and workers to better education and employment opportunities by improving how skills, and experiences may be made visible, verified and shared,” said Kelly Page, director of learning and employment innovations at Digital Promise. “This would especially be of value to people with diverse needs, following diverse pathways, or who have experienced systemic inequities in learning and employment practices. Yet, this value will only be realized if we design LERs with Inclusive LER Design Principles embedded deeply in the LER development process.”

To stay up-to-date on this work, including opportunities to participate in this summer’s co-design sessions for adult learners or LER Pilots interested in testing the certification applications, follow the [Adult Learning Spotlight](#) for updates and reach out to [productcertifications@digitalpromise.org](mailto:productcertifications@digitalpromise.org) to get involved.

This work is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Press Contact:**

Crystal Williams

Digital Promise

[cwilliams@digitalpromise.org](mailto:cwilliams@digitalpromise.org)

240-494-6382

###

**About Digital Promise**

Digital Promise is a nonprofit organization that builds powerful networks and takes on grand challenges by working at the intersection of researchers, entrepreneurs, and educators. Our vision is that all people, at every stage of their lives, have access to learning experiences that help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive and continuously learn in an ever-changing world. For more information, visit the [Digital Promise website](#) and follow [@digitalpromise](#) for updates.

