

New Skills for Youth Phase One Snapshot: Indiana

The Indiana New Skills for Youth (NSFY) Phase One team's vision for career readiness was grounded in and built upon the work of the Indiana Career Council and the state's 11 Regional Works Councils. During Phase One, the project team developed a plan to continue cross-agency collaboration through a state-level consortium and a shared communications plan, created dual credit crosswalks to link secondary and postsecondary career pathways, and laid the groundwork to strengthen the web-based Career Explorer planning tool with demand-driven labor market data.

Foundations for the Work

The [Indiana Career Council](#) was authorized by the state Legislature in 2013 to study Indiana's workforce needs and determine strategic priorities for education and training within the state. The Council, composed of governor-appointed representatives from the state Legislature, workforce development, K-12, higher education, labor and the business community, released a [strategic plan](#) in 2014 including a goal of equipping 60 percent of Indiana's workforce with postsecondary knowledge, skills and credentials by 2025.

While the Council dissolved shortly after releasing the strategic plan, members of the Indiana Workforce Innovation Council, which serves as the state's designated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) board, have retained some elements of the plan, ensuring that career readiness remains a top strategic priority in the state. Additionally,

Indiana is home to a network of 11 regional advisory boards known as the [Indiana Regional Works Councils](#). Each Regional Council evaluates the availability of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, provides input into the design and curriculum of those programs, and informs graduation requirements within its region. The Regional Councils also have worked to implement elements of the state's strategic plan.

Indiana is also notable for its efforts to align career pathways with labor market demand through a tiered funding system that prioritizes high-wage, high-demand career pathways. Proposals for new career pathways must demonstrate alignment to local labor market need before they are approved for state and federal funds. Additionally, schools are eligible to receive \$900 in incentive funding for each student graduating with an Indiana Technical Honors Diploma, which is awarded to students who complete a state-

Phase One of JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s New Skills for Youth grant extended from May to October 2016. With bold visions for improving career readiness in K-12 education, each Phase One state spent the grant period performing a diagnostic assessment of its career preparation system and preparing for implementation of a new action plan. This snapshot describes Indiana's experience and progress in Phase One, including promising practices and innovations.

approved career pathway, earn college credits or an industry credential and demonstrate additional academic proficiencies.

Also noteworthy is the state's use of data to support career readiness. Through a cross-agency collaboration between the Governor's Office, the Department of Education, the Commission for Higher Education, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and the Family and Social Services administration, Indiana developed the [Indiana Network of Knowledge](#) longitudinal data system. The system links education and workforce data to enable policymakers to monitor students' progress and success throughout their career pathways.

The state's accountability system also values college and career readiness at the high school level. Thirty percent of the weight for high school accountability scores is determined by the number of students obtaining an industry-recognized credential, earning postsecondary credits, or achieving a passing score on an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate examination.

Work During Phase One

Indiana's theory of change is oriented around four key elements: coordinating state leadership, shifting perceptions, breaking down silos by adopting common definitions and terminology, and leveraging accountability systems to identify and address gaps. The theory is that these elements will catalyze systems transformation and lead the state to achieve its vision: *equipping citizens with the information, education and skills required for career success so that Indiana*

businesses will have access to an educated and skilled workforce.

Coordinating State Leadership

To address the first key element in its theory of change — coordinating state leadership — the Indiana state project team created a framework called the Consortium for Workforce Talent Pipeline Development to regularly convene and engage state leaders around the implementation of the state's strategic plan. As designed, the Consortium would be led by three chairs: the superintendent of public instruction, the commissioner for workforce development and the commissioner for higher education. A third party would coordinate and facilitate meetings. Despite early efforts to design and implement the cross-agency Consortium, recent leadership transitions at the state level make ascertaining the future longevity of the proposal difficult.

The Indiana NSFY team also used Phase One grant funds to develop a shared communication and marketing campaign called My Path. My Choice. The campaign is designed to increase awareness about the state's strategic plan and change perceptions about career readiness opportunities. The campaign is similarly on hold pending approval from the new administration.

Dual Credit Crosswalks and Career Advising

Indiana made efforts to break down silos between secondary and postsecondary education by developing [Priority Dual Credit crosswalks](#) for CTE technical and liberal arts coursework. The crosswalks were the result of close collaboration between the Department



Figure 1: The logo for Indiana's My Path. My Choice. campaign

of Education, the commissioner for higher education, and the state's public colleges and universities. Launched in fall 2016, the crosswalks provide information to help guide students along a seamless pathway from secondary to postsecondary. Additionally, Indiana aims to continue work on bridging secondary and postsecondary career pathways by crosswalking students' graduation plans with postsecondary guided pathways and integrating career planning strategies into educator preparation programs.

Another priority for Indiana during Phase One was developing and disseminating workforce-relevant career advisement tools. The project team worked closely with the DWD to better integrate labor market information into [Indiana Career Explorer](#), the state's web-based career planning system. The team initiated a

redesign of the website that would draw on data from the DWD's Demand-Driven Workforce Development System — a database that provides real-time workforce data — to integrate labor market information and encourage data-informed decision-making among users. In addition to launching the updated website, Indiana next plans to deploy a new Indiana Career Explorer mobile application, make career awareness tools available to students at the elementary level, and leverage funds from the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to incentivize and increase completion of online graduation plans.

Looking Ahead

Indiana, like many other states, held a statewide election in November 2016 that resulted in a transition in the governor's and superintendent's offices. While leadership changes put implementation of the action plan temporarily on hold, state leaders are confident that career readiness will continue to be a priority in Indiana moving forward. Many of the core elements of the Indiana Career Council's strategic plan have been preserved by the Workforce Innovation Council and the 11 Regional Works Councils. Additionally, the DWD has made progress on efforts to integrate labor market data and career planning, a key component of the state's action plan.

Indiana's Vision: Every Indiana citizen will have access to the information, education and skills required for career success, and every Indiana business will find the educated and skilled workforce necessary to compete successfully in the global economy.