

New Skills for Youth Phase One Snapshot: Nevada

Nevada began the New Skills for Youth (NSFY) work during a time of economic transition toward a “New Nevada” focused on economic diversification and closing skills gaps. During Phase One, the NSFY state team created a strategic plan for its career readiness reforms and focused on restructuring state-level organizations to accomplish this work, as well as formalizing processes for employer engagement. The state not only focused on structure and capacity, but it also began work on changing policies, including around graduation requirements.

Foundations for the Work

To progress beyond the “Old Nevada” economy focused primarily on gaming, tourism, mining and agriculture, the state spent the last several years diversifying its economy and strengthening its workforce development and Career Technical Education (CTE) systems to ensure more economic opportunity.

In 2013, Nevada established the Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED), which now leads the state’s economic development efforts. However, gaps remained with the state’s ability to convene the disparate parts of the workforce development delivery system as economic development progressed. Therefore, in March 2016, the governor issued an executive order establishing the Office of Workforce Innovation (OWINN) with the mission of creating a skilled, diverse and aligned workforce. OWINN, an

independent office within the state governance structure, works with GOED and the state’s Industry Sector Councils to bolster workforce development efforts and, more specifically, to develop a career pathways strategy for the state focused on the governor’s priority sectors of technology, advanced manufacturing, education and health care.

The state has mechanisms in place to support statewide K-12 career readiness reform, including a statewide longitudinal data system to analyze student progression through secondary and postsecondary education and through career. Nevada also provides some access to high-quality career pathways through its Career Technical Academies and community college high schools, and it plans to expand the CTE offerings at comprehensive high schools.

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 Nevada’s experience and progress in Phase One, including promising practices and innovations.

Work During Phase One

The state began Phase One of the NSFY grant by focusing on the current data collection and capacity of GOED. GOED's responsibilities currently include stimulating business expansion and retention, as well as facilitating employer community development. GOED, in partnership with the state Industry Sector Councils, analyzes labor market data to issue recommendations based upon short- and long-term employment and occupational forecasts, and it identifies the skills needed for the workforce to be adequately prepared to meet each sector's staffing demands.

However, Nevada recognized that GOED's capacity was limited and that the state lacked a formalized statewide process for convening stakeholders and scaling career pathways. To address this, OWINN was tasked with leading a cross-sector team to develop a strategic plan to strengthen coordination and collaboration across agencies and with employers. Specifically, OWINN was charged with:

- Identifying and developing quality career pathways for students in high-demand sectors;
- Improving the seamless integration of the workforce development delivery system by supporting the Governor's Workforce Development Board and Industry Sector Councils and collaborating with other stakeholders focused on workforce development; and
- Ensuring that stakeholders are regularly and systematically using labor market and outcomes-based data to improve accountability and increase strategic investments in high-quality career pathways.

The plan includes strategies for implementing a formal employer engagement framework to implement new career pathways and for improving career guidance and awareness across the state. The state also plans to increase the number of career readiness indicators in its accountability system. Through these strategies, Nevada plans to increase the percentage of students enrolled in high-quality CTE pathways from 40 percent to 55 percent by the 2018-19 school year.



OWINN also led a process with the Governor's Office, local workforce boards, the Department of Education (NDE), the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and business representatives to develop and adopt a statewide definition of "career pathway."

Formalizing Employer Engagement

A key piece of the NSFY effort involved leveraging the restructured state Industry Sector Councils. The Councils now predominantly consist of employers as well as an education and labor representative. OWINN, in partnership with the Governor's Office;

GOED; and the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), led the process to restructure and reorganize the Councils. Industry Sector Councils now provide recommendations on the high-demand jobs, skills, education requirements and other elements needed to assist in meeting the state's economic goals and workforce needs based on its expertise and labor market information. The team released guidelines for the newly organized Councils, articulating their updated responsibilities, expected outcomes and organizational policies.

After the restructuring, all eight of the Councils held their first meetings in August and September 2016. OWINN led discussions about the Councils' duties and responsibilities, and GOED and DETR led discussions on labor market data analysis and research. These Council meetings provided an opportunity for private-sector employers and education and labor representatives to discuss workforce-related challenges and learn about education and training programs developed to address those challenges. A comprehensive report on the top occupations and skills based on labor market data and industry insight from these meetings will be released in early 2017.

The NSFY team also developed a formalized annual process for engaging employers in the development of career pathway frameworks, based on the process used by GOED in the creation of the Learn and Earn Advance Manufacturing Career Pathway framework. The process will begin with the creation of a steering committee composed of postsecondary institutions, school districts and relevant state agencies to develop a draft framework based on an inventory of current courses and GOED's labor market analysis.

Once the draft framework has been developed, a task force composed of industry representatives and secondary and postsecondary institutions will review it and provide feedback to the steering committee. Once those revisions have been accepted, OWINN will host a series of sessions for employers to review and endorse the framework. The employers in the OWINN-led sessions will also review and provide feedback on the standards, certifications, credentials and required skillsets of each framework. From there, the career pathways can be implemented. This process will be used next for the education, health care and technology career pathways, and eventually it will be used for any future career pathways.

Improving Graduation Requirements

Prior to the start of the NSFY grant period, the State Board of Education convened a High School Graduation Committee, which received input from GOED, NSHE, NDE and employer partners. During the grant period, the committee made recommendations to NDE for improved graduation requirements. The recommendations focus on shifting from credit accrual to college and career readiness as a basis for graduation. Based on those recommendations, NDE submitted a bill draft request to the state Legislature in June 2016 and worked throughout Phase One on iterations of the bill draft.

NDE developed and recommended to the Interim Legislative Committee on Education multiple diploma options aligned with certain paths for students. The committee later recommended that all options be achievable by demonstrating proficiency through work

experience, community service, credentials and dual credit, among other things.

Looking Ahead

The codification of OWINN into state law is the number one priority for the state team as it moves into the next legislative session because this entity is critical to ensuring the sustainability of Nevada's cross-sector efforts. Capacity within OWINN and GOED remains a challenge, so the NSFY cross-sector team will

focus on building state capacity to accomplish this work on a wider scale. By December 2017, the state team plans to have its employer engagement framework in place for all priority sectors. The team will focus first on using it to create more CTE programs in high-priority sectors and then on phasing out programs in lower-priority sectors. The state team will also use the employer engagement processes to increase high-quality work-based learning opportunities.

