






Denver, Colorado

Denver, Colorado, is one of the six sites selected to participate in the *New Skills ready network*. This five-year initiative, launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in 2020, aims to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways.

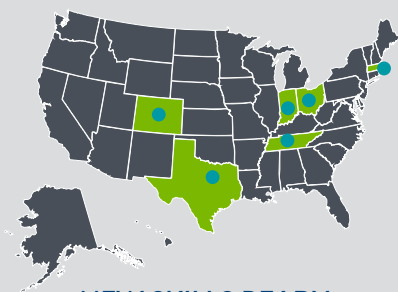
In the first year of this initiative, the Denver, Colorado, team — working under the name *New Skills Ready Initiative (NSRI)* — prioritized building a shared data framework to better measure the impact of career pathways and began mapping career pathways with built-in accelerators. The Denver, Colorado, team established the foundation for sharing data across secondary and postsecondary institutions and documented their career pathways strategy to integrate dual/concurrent enrollment, Career Technical Education (CTE), work-based learning, industry certifications and aligned advising.

At the close of year one of the initiative, the Denver, Colorado, *NSRI* partners reviewed their action planning to clarify priorities and strategies for the second year of the initiative, building on the strong connections developed between secondary and postsecondary partners in year one.

In 2021-22, the Denver, Colorado, *NSRI* team focused on:

-  Aligning work-based learning within career pathways;
-  Expanding a data framework with protocols for data collection, sharing and analysis; and
-  Launching an Individual and Career Academic Plan (ICAP) pilot with secondary and postsecondary partners.

THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK



NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Columbus, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Indianapolis, Indiana
- Nashville, Tennessee

New Skills ready network, launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their new \$30 billion commitment to advance racial equity. Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group are working with sites to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways in six US communities.

The six *New Skills ready network* sites are: Boston, Massachusetts; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Nashville, Tennessee. These sites are formulating new partnerships between local school systems, higher education, employers, and government entities to develop pathways and policy recommendations that give underserved students

access to higher education and real-world work experiences that lead to high-wage, in-demand jobs.

These snapshots provide an overview of sites' accomplishments in the second year of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, including the development of priority objectives and action steps toward those objectives. Through the *New Skills ready network* initiative JPMorgan Chase is looking to advance the following priority areas to prepare students for good careers and economic mobility:

- Strengthening the alignment and rigor of career pathways;
- Designing, implementing and scaling real-world work experiences;
- Building seamless transitions to support postsecondary success; and
- Closing equity gaps.

Partners engaged on the leadership team

- The Attainment Network (site lead) (formerly DEAN)
- Colorado Community College System
- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Colorado Workforce Development Council
- Community College of Denver
- Denver Public Schools
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- University of Colorado Denver

VISION FOR SUCCESS

Denver, Colorado

The Denver, Colorado, NSRI team established a vision to guide the team's work over the five-year initiative.

The Denver, Colorado, New Skills Ready Initiative team aims to dramatically increase the number and diversity of students who complete selected high-quality career pathways that start in high school, continue into and through higher education, and lead to good jobs in Denver's labor market. This partnership will also deliver a national model for closing equity gaps and increasing postsecondary attainment resulting in family-living wage employment.

PRIORITY 1

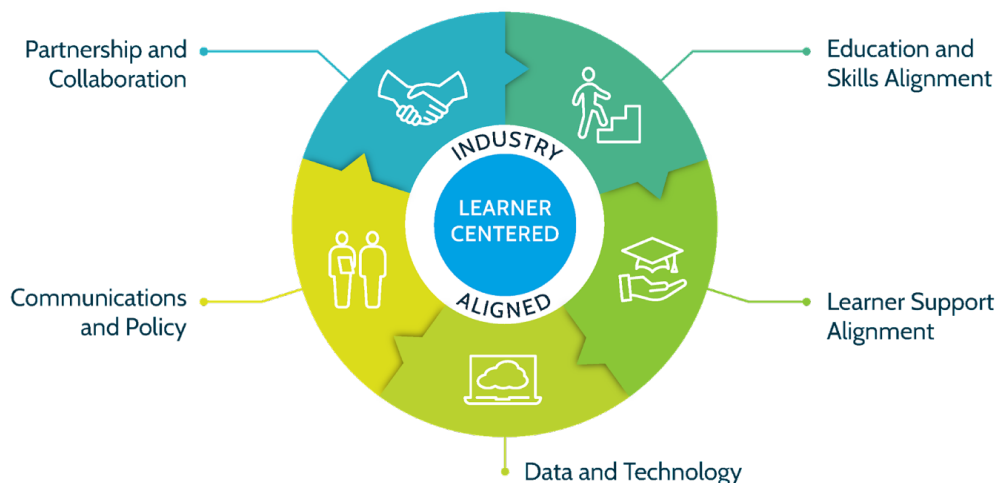


Aligning work-based learning within career pathways

In year one, the Denver, Colorado, team brought together partners, including the Colorado Workforce Development Council, to design work-based learning and began the process of creating, mapping and documenting a career pathways development strategy.

In year two of the initiative, the team focused on engaging employers to better understand experience, skills and education requirements and how those requirements align with work-based learning strategies. This work with employers directly affects the site's year five outcome goal that career pathways include a variety of accelerators along the work-based learning continuum, including industry certifications and stackable credentials.

The Denver, Colorado, team prioritized the alignment of work-based learning opportunities, with a focus on industry certifications. The team uses Colorado's Work-based Learning Continuum as a common framework for partner institutions, providing structure for the alignment of work-based learning to industry certification and stackable credentials while standardizing practices across partners. Aligned to the *New Skills ready network* priority of designing, implementing and scaling real-world work experiences, the team in Denver, Colorado, is aligning their secondary, postsecondary and industry partners to increase access to work-based learning that is applied to a program of study.



Using shared mapping processes and templates, the team realized there is no standardized process across institutions for awarding credit to learners for prior learning and work-based learning experiences. The lack of alignment creates significant barriers for learners. Throughout year two of the initiative, secondary and postsecondary partners in Denver met to strategically discuss and map the ways in which learners are awarded credit for work-based learning. The team's postsecondary partners are evaluating their policies surrounding credit for prior learning assessment and identifying opportunities to improve the process for awarding credit for work-based learning. Through this cross-systems work, the team was instrumental in providing content and context for the state House Bill 20-1002 College Credit for Work Experience plan, including a standardized prior learning assessment process.

The strategic focus on the work-based learning continuum in year two led secondary and postsecondary partners to create visual maps to demonstrate career pathway on- and off-ramp offerings, including opportunities for work-based learning, to guide learners currently in high school all the way through master's degree completion using stackable credentials. The Denver, Colorado, team expects to finalize the maps in year three of the initiative. This practice will guide learners, as well as secondary and postsecondary partners, in the alignment of and messaging for current and future career-connected pathways.

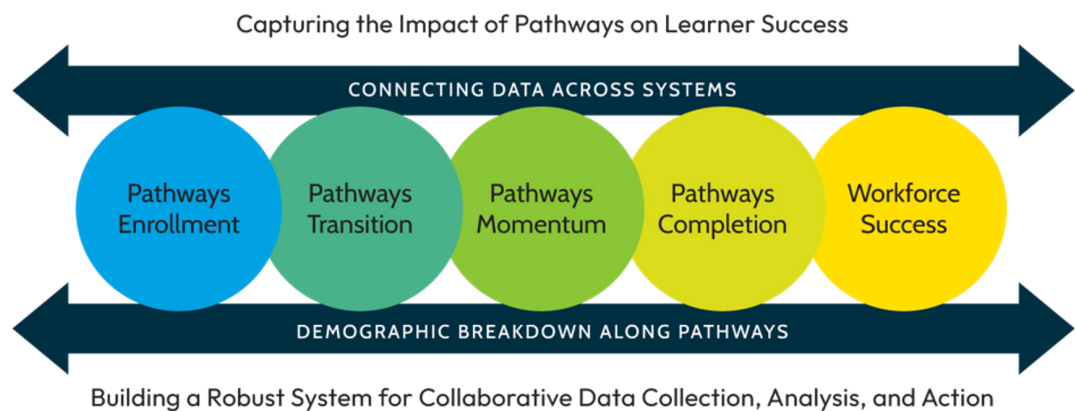
PRIORITY 2



Expanding a data framework with protocols for data collection, sharing and analysis

In year one of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, the Denver, Colorado, team prioritized developing a shared framework for defining, collecting and analyzing data to help the team measure the success of the career pathways strategy. The team identified the best way to measure the implementation and impact of career pathways and agreed on data terminology, metrics and data sources. The established baseline helped the Denver, Colorado, team set goals for the second year of the initiative.

In year two of the initiative, the team prioritized building out a cohesive data framework and agreed-upon data collection protocols across partners. The data framework addresses gaps in learner access, participation and outcomes for career pathways disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender and other demographic characteristics. The Denver, Colorado, team expanded on the data framework with protocols for data collection to systematize and codify robust data collection, alignment, use and accountability to inform and drive career pathways practices across partners.



The Denver, Colorado, team built on the foundation from year one by implementing agreements between Denver Public Schools (DPS) and the postsecondary institutions to begin sharing data according to newly established protocols. Additionally, the Denver, Colorado, team increased collaboration between DPS and postsecondary institutions to think more critically about how learners navigate to and through different career pathways, and the team defined career pathways using actionable data. In the first and second years, the Denver, Colorado, team prioritized equity by using disaggregated data to focus on closing equity gaps along career pathways.

The trust built through the first year of collaboration laid the foundation for the development of mutually beneficial data sharing agreements and a process for the ongoing use of shared data to inform career pathways decisions. The first data exchanges have guided goal-setting and strategy discussions around retention and completion of career pathways.

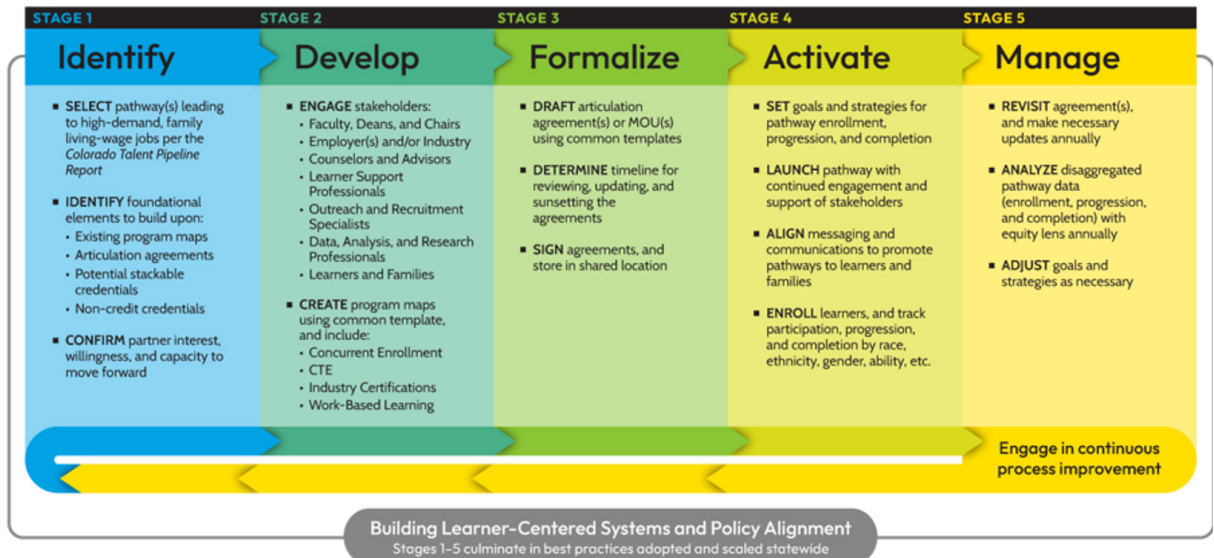
The secondary and postsecondary partners now have access to enriched data sets that speak to the nuance of learners navigating career pathways, including high school career pathways indicators, postsecondary matriculation along career pathways and the demographic data of learners who are choosing career pathways and programs. Denver, Colorado, secondary and postsecondary partners are now evaluating these data sets together to guide their efforts to better meet the needs of learners navigating career pathways and to strengthen program offerings. Over the coming year, the team will seek to identify the best way to connect wage and employment data within the data framework.

PRIORITY 3



Launching an ICAP pilot with secondary and postsecondary partners

DPS requires all learners to have an ICAP to support their path to career and college, including setting and marking progress toward goals, exploring career and college options, planning for high school graduation and learning about financial literacy and financial aid opportunities. The ICAP creates a personalized process that supports learners in exploring possibilities and achieving milestones toward their career and college aspirations.



In the second year of the initiative, DPS worked closely with postsecondary partners to extend the application and usefulness of ICAP and related data to support learners as they transition into postsecondary institutions. Learners and advisers agreed that the ICAP pilot added value to advising conversations as learners matriculated. Moving forward, the team will focus on addressing implementation challenges related to the timing of data sharing, processes for data sharing and capacity.

As the ICAP pilot (newly named the Learner Transitions Pilot) is scaled to become a standard practice among partners in the NSRI, the Denver, Colorado, team is working across partners to better understand the support learners need for a successful transition from secondary to postsecondary institutions. The team plans to provide professional development for postsecondary advisers on the use of ICAP and related data to inform learner supports and services. With the inclusion of the data sharing agreements, postsecondary institutions will now be able to leverage data, along with ICAPs, to tailor their services to meet the needs of learners. The Denver, Colorado, team aims to fully connect ICAP as a streamlined process for learners that bridges secondary and postsecondary experiences so that learners can more easily navigate career pathways with their career goals and interests at the forefront.

Looking Ahead

In year three of the NSRI, the Denver, Colorado, team is committed to the execution of the data framework with a shift to reviewing and connecting the data to make programmatic and operational decisions based on what the data is revealing. The team is also committed to continued career pathways development, adding new career pathways in behavioral health and cybersecurity, and strengthening learner-centered communications strategies to promote career pathways. The Denver, Colorado, team will continue to focus on work-based learning and integrating high-value industry certifications for credit along career pathways. The NSRI in Denver, Colorado, has become a statewide model for collaboration and career-connected pathways development. Based on the success of the NSRI work in Denver, Colorado, similar projects have recently been launched in Aurora and the San Luis Valley.