



# Indianapolis, Indiana

Indianapolis, Indiana, 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 Indianapolis, Indiana, *New Skills ready network* team developed an internal project management infrastructure that supports strong cross-sector partnerships. The team also selected five career pathways to focus on, which are aligned with the state's Next Level Programs of Study (NLPS), and conducted a meta-analysis of labor market indicators.

In 2021-22, the Indianapolis, Indiana, *New Skills ready network* team was able to build upon the success of year one and drive progress in a variety of areas, including career pathways mapping, career advising efforts and continuing to incorporate equity initiatives across workstreams. Despite considerable staff turnover at each of the partners, including at the state level, the team leveraged

relationships built in year one to recruit administrative and content professionals to different working groups to provide expert knowledge and support in each area. Each partner continued to align work with existing and ongoing initiatives, including Talent Bound, the Modern Apprenticeship Program and a community of practice around student success in Marion County. Finally, the project team continued ongoing conversations surrounding data sharing among institutional partners. Throughout this considerable progress, the Indianapolis, Indiana, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:



Piloting the inclusion of Indiana's equity labs in the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) process;

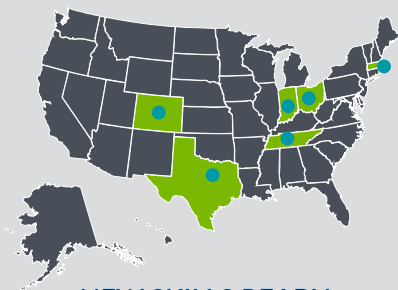


Completing career pathways sequencing and alignment; and



Aligning career advising opportunities.

## 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

- EmployIndy (site lead)
- Ascend Indiana
- Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Indiana Department of Education
- Indiana Governor's Workforce Cabinet, Office of Career and Technical Education
- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
- Indianapolis Public Schools
- Ivy Tech Community College

## VISION FOR SUCCESS

### Indianapolis, Indiana

Much of the vision of the Indianapolis, Indiana, team derives from growth in Indiana's economy and workforce. While the coronavirus pandemic has changed this outlook to a certain degree, the need for postsecondary credentials, especially in the areas of high demand, remains an important touchstone. As such, the Indianapolis, Indiana, *New Skills ready network* team endeavors to provide Indianapolis youth and young adults equitable access to career pathways leading to economic mobility and future prosperity through an aligned system. This system will connect partners so learners can transition seamlessly through their academic and professional careers. To better align partners within the system, the team seeks to build data capacity, align local and state programs of study to Indiana's labor market demands and improve the quality of career pathways implementation at all learner levels.

## PRIORITY 1



### Piloting the inclusion of Indiana's equity labs in the CLNA process

In year one, the Indianapolis, Indiana, project team thought critically about how to incorporate equity across each aspect of the project. As they reviewed priorities, they realized that equity components need to be embedded within each priority area, rather than as a stand-alone component. In year two, in part building upon connections made between the Indianapolis, Indiana, and Columbus, Ohio, teams, the state decided to incorporate equity labs into its [CLNA](#) process. The CLNA is a requirement under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) and is designed to enable Perkins-eligible recipients to better direct resources toward Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways that lead to high-skill, high-wage and in-demand occupations and activities that address equity and opportunity gaps.

Modeled after a similar process used by Ohio since 2019, the equity labs help local administrators identify the largest or most pressing equity gaps and perform a root cause analysis. The purpose of these labs is to support districts and colleges in ensuring that students have meaningful access to, are engaged in and are completing high-quality CTE programs using data-driven analysis and in articulating a commitment to advancing equity. Because of its participation in the *New Skills ready network*, Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) piloted the equity labs, taking on a comprehensive equity evaluation process, which was then incorporated into the work the district is doing more holistically. Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) were also involved in these discussions as stakeholders invested in the success of IPS learners.

This pilot demonstrated a need for a more direct connection between the state's NLPS and local implementation to reduce equity gaps. The state also better understood how to leverage heatmaps and other data visualizations as a result of the conversations in the equity lab. In addition, the pilot revealed gaps between state and local data, which were beneficial to understand before a statewide roll-out. Many other CTE districts and colleges throughout the state participated in an equity lab before the end of 2021, building upon these lessons learned from IPS as a pilot, with the remainder of Perkins V funding recipients participating in early 2022. The partners in the Indianapolis, Indiana, project team will take their learnings back to their institutions with the goal of pursuing strategies to make their programs and practices more equitable and accessible in year three.



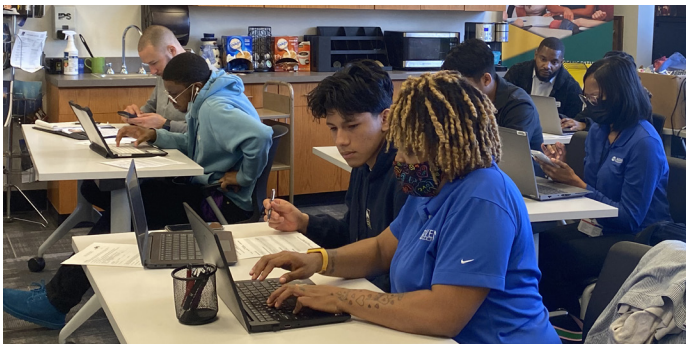


## Completing career pathways sequencing and alignment

In year one, the Indianapolis, Indiana, team mapped five different career pathways of focus (Business Administration, Construction Trades, Digital Manufacturing, Engineering, and IT Tech Support & Services) across the various institutions, including course sequencing and credential attainment. This process served as a pilot to help the team implement lessons learned in year two. The IPS team, in particular, has completed mapping for the remainder of their career pathways using this process. IPS has consolidated or sunset some career pathways, reducing the number of offered career pathways from 42 to 33. The remaining career pathways include 25 CTE pathways, and all 33 are aligned with the state's NLPS.

Through discussions with secondary, two-year and four-year partners, the team has uncovered many challenges to creating an ideal K-16 career pathway sequence. Though career pathways are aligned with the NLPS, mapping across institutions can be messy, as there often is not a one-to-one match between programs. Despite this challenge, institutions were able to build more interconnected systems. Changes were made to dual enrollment opportunities, for example, to allow for more integrated dual credits aligned to postsecondary credential attainment at both Ivy Tech and IUPUI, rather than dual enrollment that was created ad hoc or misaligned to program needs at the postsecondary level.

In year three, the project team, particularly the educational partners, will be working collectively to identify solutions to some additional challenges revealed by this mapping process. For example, the team will be defining *alignment*, *connectivity* and *stackability* to create a common language when discussing career pathways across K-16. Additionally, the continued implementation of the NLPS will allow for those career pathways to have set employability skills and certifications that students earn upon completion of a career pathway.







## Aligning career advising opportunities

In year one, the Indianapolis, Indiana, team identified a lack of awareness around potential opportunities as a barrier to recruitment in particular career pathways. As a result, the team identified career advising as a key priority for year two, working to align career advising opportunities and further enable seamless transitions for postsecondary success. During the past year, team members participated in multiple in-depth discussions about the barriers to an ideal advising experience and how partners can begin to overcome those barriers. As part of this process, the team has identified key staff at each of the institutions who are the “right people” to make decisions about advising. These experts make up a working group that advises on implementation steps for the Indianapolis, Indiana, project team.

As a result, multiple changes have already occurred surrounding career advising. Ivy Tech and IPS partnered to embed Ivy Tech career and postsecondary advisers in IPS buildings, supporting learners in their postsecondary transitions. This initiative is aligned with the goals of the *New Skills ready network*, and lessons gleaned from the implementation of these embedded advisers can be applied to future work of the initiative. IUPUI also implemented changes as a result of the ongoing student advising conversations, creating a data filter to better advise Ivy Tech students who transfer to IUPUI. The university also explored the development needed on a tracking and advising tool for 2+2 programs, which guarantee transfer to complete two years of study at IUPUI upon successful completion of two years of study at Ivy Tech.

As part of the conversations around student advising, barriers arose that have been identified as key priorities for year three. Some barriers identified include capacity challenges for advisers at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, a lack of knowledge about available career pathway opportunities for learners and limited wraparound supports. The team will work to build messaging to increase learner knowledge of career pathways. They will also be developing an aligned advising framework across middle school, high school and college and will expand professional development for advisers, administrators and faculty around this framework to send consistent messages and increase capacity at each level.

### Looking Ahead

The plan of action for the Indianapolis, Indiana, team in year three builds upon the progress made in year two and foundational steps laid in year one. Many of the top priorities for the next year stem directly from this year’s work. First, the project team will work to finalize and implement changes to career pathways across institutions, building on the career pathways evaluation work that was undertaken largely in year two, with the goal of expanding the number of career pathways qualifying as high quality. Additionally, EmployIndy and IPS will be leading the collaborative in executing a communications plan to inform students, families and advisers about IPS, Ivy Tech and IUPUI high-quality career pathways. Finally, the project team will focus on expanding work-based learning and modern youth apprenticeship opportunities across partner institutions, building upon lessons learned from the statewide community of practice and Ascend Indiana’s Modern Apprenticeship Program.