






Nashville, Tennessee

Nashville, Tennessee, 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.

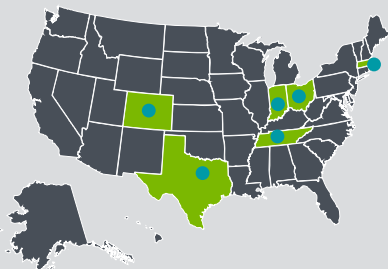
In the first year of this initiative, the Nashville, Tennessee, *New Skills ready network* team laid a critical foundation by focusing on establishing a shared understanding around systemic barriers to racial equity and beginning the process of developing a data sharing agreement between secondary and postsecondary institutions for seamless transitions. During the second year, the Nashville, Tennessee, team has built upon that work by investing in training to create opportunities for level setting to guide implementation across all partner organizations. This strategic process aided the creation of a robust draft of a career pathways college and career advising system, anchored in the

College Career Coach framework. The team also worked strategically to increase work-based learning opportunities to connect learners to high-wage careers. The focus on aligning workforce needs with career pathways has set the trajectory for success for learners in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 2021-22, the Nashville, Tennessee, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:

-  Establishing a shared understanding of key strategies to address systemic barriers to equity;
-  Developing a career pathways college and career advising system with a College Career Coach framework; and
-  Increasing work-based learning opportunities for learners in career pathways.

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

- Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (site lead)
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Nashville State Community College
- Scarlett Family Foundation
- Tennessee Board of Regents
- Tennessee College Access and Success Network
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology – Nashville
- Tennessee Department of Education
- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission

VISION FOR SUCCESS

Nashville, Tennessee

The Nashville, Tennessee, *New Skills ready network* team established a vision statement to guide the team's work over the five-year initiative and their efforts to develop and expand access to high-quality career pathways for all learners:

With cross-sector stakeholder leadership, the New Skills ready network Nashville team will build high-quality career pathways with a focus on learners who are under-served and under-resourced. Learners will be supported to and through postsecondary education and into high-growth, high-wage careers in the local economy. Systemic inequities and barriers to postsecondary access, persistence and success will be addressed.

PRIORITY 1



Establishing a shared understanding of key strategies to address systemic barriers to equity

During year one, the Nashville, Tennessee, team focused on tackling the challenge of closing equity gaps within career pathways by coming to a shared agreement around key terms and definitions. The team also had a strong focus on dismantling racial barriers preventing learner access to high-quality career pathways by offering a series of trainings to leaders across the site partners. The evolution of this work deepened across the site's ecosystem to close equity gaps through verified approaches of changing systemic issues.

In year two, the Nashville, Tennessee, *New Skills ready network* team also invested in systemness training led by a local consulting agency. All partners participated in the training, which was based on the [Civic Lab's Stakeholder Engagement Process](#). This process, as defined by the Community Education Coalition, is "a relationship-based, systems-building approach. It is rooted in the idea that when it comes to addressing a social problem, it's a systems thing, not a single thing. And the 'system' is the way we have chosen to work together."

The systemness training allowed the team to take a closer look at their approaches to developing and implementing high-quality career pathways with a specific focus on impact and learner outcomes. The training supports the site's five-year goals because it has fostered brave spaces and opportunities for cross-site partner collaboration to drive the mission of the initiative.

The implementation of systemness training encouraged partners to have internal approaches to systems change while building capacity within their teams to bring more value to the work of the whole initiative. As a result, partners are motivated to define larger components within their internal organizations that should be addressed to effectively implement systems change. Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) is launching equity training for all certified staff with additional training for school leadership teams. Nashville State Community College has hired an expert to develop an internal



equity training for all employees. The goal is to push forward the college's equity work through the *New Skills ready network*, with employees participating in six facilitated discussions throughout the duration of the training. Additionally, Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is creating internal working groups to develop common goals and opportunities to connect the initiative widely across its campus.

Another key component of the Nashville, Tennessee, team's equity work was the decision to use the Momentum Metrics framework created by Education Strategy Group to establish equity-centered goals. These goals will help the Nashville, Tennessee, team prioritize assisting more learners, particularly learners of color in low-income communities, to successfully move to and through postsecondary education and training.

PRIORITY 2



Developing a career pathways college and career advising system with a College Career Coach framework

Another primary strategy for the team has been the continued development of aligned and equitable pipelines between secondary and postsecondary partners, with stronger advising central to that strategy. The Nashville, Tennessee, team developed milestone objectives centered around advising beginning in middle school through the postsecondary levels, with the overall objective of increasing learner access to postsecondary opportunities through individualized advising approaches based on a college and career advising framework started in year one.

At the outset of the *New Skills ready network* initiative, the Nashville, Tennessee, team identified four pilot schools that would be involved through the entire effort. The pilot schools were selected based on school demographics; the increased need for learner access to in-demand, high-wage career pathways; and learner population from under-represented families in sustaining-wage jobs within the economy. The pilot schools are each staffed with one college and career readiness (CCR) coach. The coaches collaborate with the school administrators and counselors to identify and implement effective practices and solutions that help learners access and be successful in high-quality career pathways through high school and beyond.

Aligning with the priority of building seamless transitions to postsecondary success, the Nashville, Tennessee, team is focused on starting while learners are in middle school to help them plan their educational trajectory through any postsecondary experience. The middle school advising component will focus on a process of supporting the framework while scaffolding college and career advising experiences for learners during their middle school years through the use of an innovative career discovery program.

The CCR coaches have added critical capacity in a time when the teacher shortage is having a profound impact. While this shortage has limited the CCR coaches' ability to provide one-to-one advising for learners in grades 9-11, most seniors are receiving personalized advising to help them prepare for post-high school transitions. To bolster college and career advising experiences for learners in earlier grades, the CCR coaches plan to develop whole-group college and career advising experiences through career fairs, college visits and virtual orientations.

By 2025, the goal is to have at least one CCR coach in each school within MNPS. This effort will also increase support for school counselors in the day-to-day work of advising learners.

At the same time, the Nashville, Tennessee, team has continued to strengthen its advising framework through input and iteration. In addition to the cross-sector working group, work-based learning students were hired to provide feedback and input into what makes an effective framework from their perspective.



Increasing work-based learning opportunities for learners in career pathways

The Nashville, Tennessee, team has been working to infuse work-based learning into high-quality career pathways by securing work-based learning placements for learners, with a strong focus on ensuring equitable access to meaningful work-based learning across the region.

The team invested time and committed to bringing partners together to strategize about learner access to work-based learning placements, and partners are stepping up in critical ways. Nashville State Community College hired a work-based learning coordinator to continue building talent pipelines as learners transition into their postsecondary education. The work-based learning coordinator is working with MNPS to create consistency with employers that are currently engaging learners through high school work-based learning experiences with the intention to connect the pipeline through future internships as learners enroll in Nashville State. As the four-year postsecondary partner in this initiative, MTSU has committed to establishing a focus of work-based learning on its campus. Although MTSU's on-campus internship program has been successful in hiring students for academic credit, since its involvement in the *New Skills ready network*, the university has been examining its process for allowing learners to earn credit for prior learning through work-based experiences.

In addition, a growing number of learners are participating in paid work-based learning experiences in the fields of information technology, health care and marketing, earning \$14-\$15 an hour and academic credit. MNPS has launched an information technology youth apprenticeship program, currently serving more than 30 learners. Furthermore, MNPS is serving as the employer for nearly 20 information technology youth apprentices in the district office. These numbers are expected to increase as more students engage in work-based learning opportunities throughout the summer and beyond. As these numbers increase, more efforts will be drivers of the team's talent supply chain support using the six strategies Nashville Chamber of Commerce's implemented in its facilitation of the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management \(TPM\)](#) initiatives.

Work-based learning expansion has been a key component of the team's strategic goals for the initiative. The initial focus during year two was to have at least 15 learners accessing high-quality, work-based learning opportunities. Currently, 75 learners are participating in work-based learning with a goal to double that number in year three. To support continued learner interest in work-based learning, MNPS' superintendent, Dr. Battle, has committed to investing a quarter million dollars in the district's yearly budget to pay wages for at least 35 learners per year, starting in year three. This commitment significantly increases learner access to work-based learning, which especially removes more barriers for learners in marginalized communities.





Looking Ahead

The Nashville, Tennessee, team is working on developing more opportunities for the school-based partners and coaches to move further in the implementation phase and is continuously increasing and scaling work-based learning opportunities for learners, while fully being grounded in the work of creating systems for all learners to thrive. The team is focused on the data sharing process to help track and record progression data on learners who enter career pathways to monitor their full growth into high-wage careers. In year three, many learners will have access to a wide array of work-based learning opportunities, and the impact of CCR coaches will be assessed to continue honing the development of robust career pathways.

