

Oklahoma is one of the 10 states selected to participate in New Skills for Youth (NSFY), an initiative enhancing state efforts to increase the number of kids across the country who are prepared for success in both college and career. NSFY is a \$75 million, five-year initiative developed by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group.

In Phase One of the initiative, the Oklahoma NSFY team built upon the governor's Oklahoma Works campaign to identify regional labor market priorities and develop a plan to align program offerings across the state.¹ Through NSFY, Oklahoma aims to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to successfully secure a postsecondary degree and/or industry certification that reflects their individual passions and skills.

Phase Two of the NSFY initiative began in January 2017. This snapshot profiles Oklahoma's progress in the first year of Phase Two, including:

- **Aligning career pathways with high-demand industries in each region:** Using regional labor market data, the Oklahoma NSFY team assessed existing career pathways in the state to ensure that they are aligned with regional workforce needs as well as meet local community demands.
- **Implementing Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP):** The state is moving toward a holistic, student-centered approach to career development and postsecondary goal-setting after the Oklahoma Legislature passed ICAP into law.
- **Expanding teacher externships:** Oklahoma is working to develop its teaching workforce by expanding externship offerings and giving teachers the opportunity to work on site with experts in their field of instruction.
- **Enhancing the state accountability system:** Oklahoma revised its state accountability system and adopted a postsecondary opportunities measure that values students who participate in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and dual credit coursework and pursue work-based learning and industry-recognized credentials.

Foundations for Career Pathways in Oklahoma

With more than 55 percent of Oklahoma's labor market driven by middle-skill jobs — those that require postsecondary education and training but less than a four-year degree — Career Technical Education (CTE) plays an integral role in the state's economy.² Oklahoma residents have access to CTE through a network of 29 technology center districts with 58 campuses that serve secondary, postsecondary and adult learners in 72 of the 77 counties throughout the state. In addition to

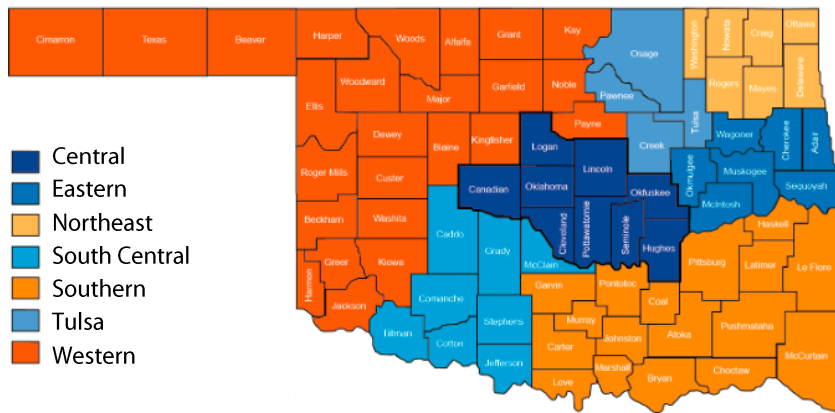


Figure 1: Oklahoma Key Economic Network regions

Oklahoma’s technology centers, CTE is also delivered through the state’s comprehensive high schools and 12 community colleges.³

However, Oklahoma faces a substantial skills gap in its workforce, with only 47 percent of workers qualified to fill these middle-skill positions.⁴ To address this gap, Oklahoma launched a widespread

workforce development initiative in 2014 as part of Governor Mary Fallin’s Oklahoma Works initiative. Oklahoma Works is designed to help all Oklahomans obtain meaningful employment by equipping them with the skills they need for the state’s changing workforce.

Implementation of the Oklahoma Works initiative is powered by the state’s Key Economic Networks (KENs) — seven regional networks aligned with the state’s workforce development area boundaries that connect employers in high-demand industries with education, workforce development and community organizations to help close regional skills gaps.⁵ Each KEN is led by a governor-appointed business leader called a KEN champion, who partners with the NSFY career pathway strategy lead, workforce development boards, K-12 educators, business and industry, career technology centers and higher education institutions to ensure that career pathways are informed by labor market needs. The KEN system localizes the governor’s workforce development goals and strategies, with each KEN region having individual targets for the attainment of CTE credentials, associate degrees and bachelor’s degrees that roll into the statewide target of 70 percent postsecondary credential attainment by 2025.⁶

Aligning Career Pathways with High-Demand Industries

In Phase Two, the Oklahoma NSFY team began assessing existing career pathways to ensure their alignment with regional workforce needs. While Oklahoma does have a shared definition of a high-quality career pathway, which is based on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) definition, the state does not have a formalized process to review the quality of career pathways, making fully applying the state criteria challenging.⁷ Furthermore, Oklahoma does not currently have the means to measure student enrollment in career pathways, though the state NSFY team hopes to improve its data collection abilities soon.

Nonetheless, the state team did make progress toward identifying high-wage, high-demand industries and mapping career pathways opportunities. This work was informed by regional economic briefings developed for Oklahoma Works by the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) to identify workforce development priorities for each KEN region. Economic briefings were updated in 2017 using public and proprietary data from OOWD.⁸ They report on — among other things — population data, top employment sectors, and the priority occupations that drive workforce development in each KEN region. The briefings allowed leaders in each KEN to identify specific

regional workforce development needs, inventory education and training delivery services, and advocate for underserved populations.

The state team plans to use economic briefing data along with the WIOA career pathways criteria to review the quality of the career pathways offered in each region. By the end of 2018, Oklahoma aims to have 45 percent of school districts working collaboratively with KENs to develop high-quality career pathways aligned to these criteria. In the meantime, the Southern Regional Education Board, in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Career Technology Education (ODCTE), OOWD and the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), has begun facilitating Career Cluster® alignment workshops in the Western and Central KEN regions to develop quality career pathways in high-demand industries.

ICAP Implementation

With the passage of House Bill 2155 in May 2017, Oklahoma began implementing ICAP — a statewide system of career and academic planning for grades six through 12 that will be integrated into statewide graduation requirements beginning with the graduating class of 2023.⁹ ICAP is Oklahoma’s first statewide career and academic planning program and is designed to empower students to make informed career decisions by exploring the education and career opportunities that best align with their interests and strengths.

ICAP is intended to take a holistic, student-centered approach that involves collaboration at many levels — including with parents, school counselors and local employers — to help guide students to postsecondary success. According to standards laid out by OSDE, the ICAP process should include:¹⁰

- Career and college interest surveys;
- Individualized postsecondary and workforce goals and mechanisms to track progress toward those goals;
- Scores on required state and federal assessments and a college and career readiness assessment;
- Experiences in service learning and/or work environments, including apprenticeships, internships, mentorships and job shadowing;

Four-Year Plan (Traditional)	ICAP (The Vision)
Product based	Process based
Some or select students (CTE, special education)	All students
Acts as a four-year plan of courses	Acts as a navigational tool for students in grades 6-12 and beyond
Career application in elective CTE classes	Career application in all classes
Career development in elective courses or not at all	Career development infused throughout all courses
Student “on own” for his/her development	Student driven with collaboration (advisor, mentor, parents)
High school graduation = end point	High school graduation = checkpoint
Career development is only the school counselor’s job	Career development is systematic, whole-school responsibility

Adapted from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Academic and Career Planning resource
<https://dpi.wi.gov/acp>

- An intentional sequence of courses that reflects progress toward postsecondary goals; and
- Records of academic progress.

As required by statute, OSDE began piloting the ICAP system in 60 schools across 28 districts during the 2017-18 school year.¹¹ After another year of piloting in the 2018-19 school year, the program will be scaled statewide. OSDE developed a suite of resources and tools to support implementation in each of the pilot sites. With support from the state, each site designated an ICAP core team, assigning roles and responsibilities to students, educators, parents and community members to support career and academic planning. Additionally, the state is delivering counselor training, providing career guidance curriculum, and convening school-based leaders through an online learning platform. Using the pilot sites as a case study, a cross-sector ICAP Advisory Group will develop implementation processes and requirements for scaling ICAP across the state in the coming years.

Expanding Teacher Externships

As part of its efforts to scale high-quality CTE pathways and implement the new ICAP system, OSDE has recognized the need for the state's teachers to be more familiar with the career pathways and postsecondary options they are being asked to promote. On the recommendation of the 2015 Teacher Shortage Task Force — which was formed to study and make recommendations to address the state's severe teacher shortage — Oklahoma established a summer science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field externship program for teachers.¹²

In 2017, for example, five teachers completed externships with environmental consulting firm Terracon, during which they shadowed Terracon employees and conducted their own soil sampling.¹³ Externships are paid and provide worksite placements for teachers that allow them to gain hands-on experiences — and later impart the knowledge gained to their students. OSDE developed an externship toolkit to further promote the program. The toolkit contains sample applications, materials and implementation protocols to help businesses create externship opportunities in the years to come.¹⁴ The state plans to expand externship opportunities to five of the seven KEN regions by the end of 2019.

In partnership with ODCTE and technology centers within the state's KEN regions, school districts also work with community organizations and industries to secure externship opportunities for teachers each summer. The Oklahoma Education and Industry Partnership externship program has given teachers an inside look at a wide range of local jobs in high-demand, high-skilled areas at major companies such as Dell, the Oklahoma Blood Institute and Boeing.

Enhancing the State Accountability System

Oklahoma updated its state accountability system in 2017 to value career readiness achievements in school and district report cards. Under the previous accountability system, the state had awarded bonus points to schools for AP, IB, dual enrollment, or American Institute for Creative Education and CTE courses.

Under the new system, the state has adopted a postsecondary opportunities indicator. This indicator also awards points based on student completion of AP, IB or dual enrollment courses and has been expanded to include work-based learning and other programs leading to industry certification.¹⁵ Over the next three years, the state plans to emphasize course outcomes rather than participation in

courses only. The postsecondary opportunities indicator was introduced in the 2017-18 school year and accounts for 11 percent of the total high school accountability score.

Looking Ahead

Oklahoma has identified public outreach as a priority for the advancement of its career development and career pathways work under NSFY. The state is currently engaging students and parents to share their experiences with career development initiatives through testimonials and videos. Oklahoma is also developing fact sheets and tools with detailed information on internships, externships, work-based learning and classroom programs across the state.

This information is currently being shared on OSDE's website, but Oklahoma is working to transfer these tools and resources to a new one-stop website called Oklahoma EDGE.¹⁶ Oklahoma EDGE will serve as a comprehensive tool with resources for students, teachers, employers and other key stakeholders to explore career opportunities across the state. In 2018, Oklahoma selected a vendor to build out the website, which is scheduled to be launched in fall 2018. This tool will be integrated with the other major career and education tools supported with state and federal dollars, including OkCareerGuide.org, OKCollegeStart.org, OklahomaWorks.gov and OKJobMatch.com, to ensure that the end user has access to all resources needed to prepare, enter and succeed in Oklahoma careers. Each of these tools provides a critical component that may affect the success of an Oklahoman: awareness, exploration, access, education, training and resources.

With Governor Fallin leaving office at the end of the year, the Oklahoma NSFY team is working to institutionalize career readiness initiatives to ensure that Oklahoma Works and related career pathways programs can be transitioned easily to a new state leadership team. Leveraging long-term state institutions like the KENs, the state Every Student Succeeds Act plan and the WIOA plan will be crucial for sustaining momentum through the administration change.

Continued Phase Two work will include leveraging the KEN economic briefings to communicate existing career pathways in the region and the workforce needs. As the ICAP program enters its second pilot year, an NSFY evaluation in partnership with the University of Oklahoma will help to highlight ICAP successes and challenges to be addressed. The state is also working to improve data collection capacity to better measure student performance and report on participation in — and outcomes of — high-quality career pathways.

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- ¹ https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/Oklahoma_Phase_One_Snapshot_2017.pdf
 - ² https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/Oklahoma_CTE_Factsheet_2017.pdf
 - ³ *ibid*
 - ⁴ <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/states>
 - ⁵ <https://oklahomaworks.gov/kens/>
 - ⁶ <https://oklahomaworks.gov/ken-regional-attainment-goals/>
 - ⁷ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Oklahoma%20Career%20Pathways%20Definition%20-%20WIOA.pdf>
 - ⁸ <https://oklahomaworks.gov/ken-regional-data/>
 - ⁹ http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2017-18%20ENR/hB/HB2155%20ENR.PDF
 - ¹⁰ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/ICAP%20Overview.pdf>
 - ¹¹ http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/8-30-17%20ICAP%20Kick_off%20meeting.pdf
 - ¹² <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Teacher%20Shortage%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report%20%2012-12-16.pdf>
 - ¹³ <https://tinyurl.com/y8sx6orq>
 - ¹⁴ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/ExternshipToolkit.pdf>
 - ¹⁵ <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/okconsolidatedstateplan.pdf>
 - ¹⁶ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/icap>