

**NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH**

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

# EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS AND INNOVATIONS FROM PHASE ONE OF THE NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH INITIATIVE



# Early Achievements and Innovations From Phase One of the New Skills for Youth Initiative

Across the nation, state and national policymakers have begun to recognize the need for learners to engage in career pathways that lead to meaningful credentials and fulfilling, family-sustaining careers. In addition to expanding Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, which provide students with the necessary academic, professional and technical skills to excel in their future careers, many states have been exploring ways to transform their education systems more broadly to equip all students with the experiences and skills they need for lifelong success.

To support and accelerate such efforts, JPMorgan Chase & Co. partnered with the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group to launch the New Skills for Youth initiative in 2016. The initiative, part of JPMorgan Chase's \$250 million global New Skills at Work program, aims to catalyze and accelerate transformational work already happening in states around career readiness.

*This report provides an overview of a number of the accomplishments and challenges of the New Skills for Youth Phase One states. To learn more, individual state snapshots are available for 24 of the Phase One states. Each snapshot draws upon artifacts from the Phase One grant period, including the needs assessment, data analysis and action plan, to provide a summary overview of the state's approach to the work and future plans to strengthen its career readiness systems. The index on pages 9 and 10 indicates specific strengths and focus areas of each state's work. While all states explored strategies connected to the six New Skills for Youth objectives (see page 3), the index highlights key focus areas for each state to draw out notable lessons and best practices.*

## Getting Started

Forty-four states applied for the first round of grants to fund a comprehensive needs assessment, develop a three-year action plan and begin early implementation. Twenty-four states plus the District of Columbia received Phase One New Skills for Youth grants in spring 2016. The 24 states included California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New

Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

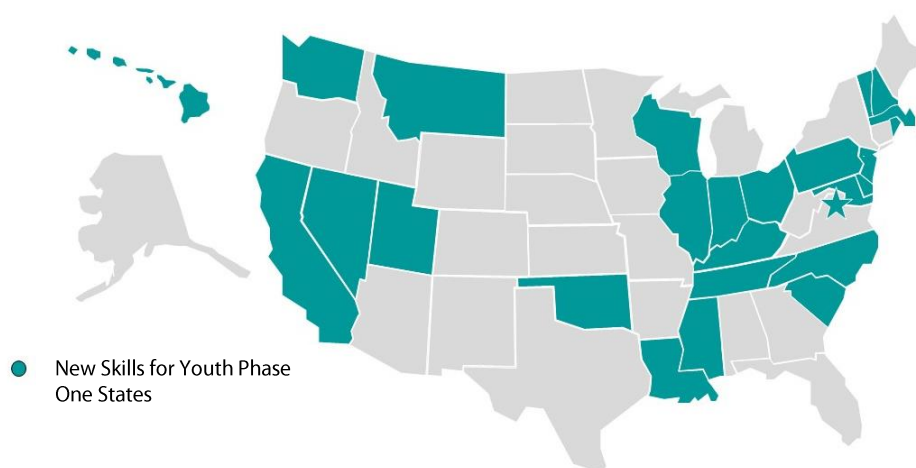
To begin the Phase One work, states were required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment based on six key objectives (see page 3). The needs assessment served as a diagnostic exercise to help identify focus areas and prioritize different strategies moving

forward. In addition to the needs assessment, states were required to collect and analyze data on key indicators, including access to and completion of high-quality career pathways, dual credit attainment, industry-recognized credential attainment and postsecondary outcomes.

States drew upon findings in their needs assessments and data analyses to strategize different approaches to more meaningfully engage with employer communities, increase the rigor of career pathways, align accountability systems with career readiness goals, and expand access to career pathways. This effort led to innovative approaches not only in the assessment and design stage of the New Skills for Youth work but also in the early execution of action plans. After the conclusion of Phase One, 10 states were selected to continue the work over the next three years with additional funding from JPMorgan Chase. While only a small cohort of states was eligible to receive the second round of New Skills for Youth funds, every state made progress in Phase One, and many are continuing the work even without additional funding, laying the groundwork for future systems transformation.

### ***Different Starting Points***

While all states had CTE and career readiness programs in place prior to Phase One, each state entered the initial grant period at a different starting point. Some states had made



considerable progress in recent years to transform their career readiness systems, passing policies or making significant investments related to the six New Skills for Youth objectives. These states were challenged to identify gaps and build strategic plans to accelerate the work already under way. Other states were newer to the work but no less committed to achieving systems transformation. These states used the opportunity to establish benchmarks and lay the groundwork for implementing their strategic action plans.

## **Common Approaches From Phase One States**

Despite the unique political and geographic contexts of the Phase One cohort, many states experienced similar challenges within their education and career readiness systems — as well as early successes in their approaches to reform. As a result, several common themes and approaches emerged during the New Skills for Youth Phase One grant period.

*New Skills for Youth states were required to focus their efforts in Phase One around six key objectives:*

**Key Objective 1: Demand Driven and Employer Led Processes**

*Establish employer-driven processes informed by real-time and other labor market data to determine high-skill, high demand industry sectors with which career pathways and programs of study will be aligned.*

**Key Objective 2: Rigor and Quality in Career Pathways for ALL**

*Use policy and funding levers to improve the quality and rigor of career pathways - including scaling down or phasing out those that don't lead to credentials with labor market value - and make those pathways widely available to and accessed by all students in all secondary settings, especially in underserved populations.*

**Key Objective 3: Career-Focused Accountability Systems**

*Incorporate robust career-focused indicators in state accountability systems that measure and value successful completion of meaningful pathways, work-based learning, enrollment in postsecondary education or apprenticeships, and credentials of value.*

**Key Objective 4: Scaled Pathways that Culminate in Credentials**

*Working with local districts, scale career pathways that span secondary and postsecondary systems, offer focused career guidance and advisement, blend rigorous core academic and career technical instruction, include high-quality work-based learning experiences, and culminate in postsecondary or industry credentials of value.*

**Key Objective 5: Align State and Federal Funding Streams**

*Reorganize and intentionally align state and federal funding streams from education, workforce development, and economic development sources to effectively deliver career-focused programs to all students.*

**Key Objective 6: Ensure Cross-Institutional Alignment**

*Foster greater collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary institutions to adopt policies and processes in schools, technology centers, academies, and institutions of higher education to ensure cross-institutional alignment of programs and pathways that smooth transitions for students and minimize institutional barriers.*

## ***States Took Advantage of the Opportunity to Build Cross-Sector Ownership***

To prepare all students for college and career effectively, state agencies must break down silos and work collaboratively across agencies and sectors. Developing strong partnerships can strengthen work within state governments by identifying opportunities to braid funding, leverage data to support continuous improvement and measurable outcomes, and build shared commitment for the work. Further, partnering with private-sector leaders can bring new insights to the table and ensure that career pathways are relevant and aligned with the needs of the labor market.

During Phase One, states took the opportunity to strengthen existing collaborative relationships and build new ones. For example, [Rhode Island](#) made an intentional effort to gather input from a variety of stakeholders, including representatives from business, secondary and postsecondary education, the Department of Commerce and the Governor's Office. This input ensured that all parties understood their role in developing and implementing

the action plan and enabled Rhode Island to assign specific tasks to individual staff members in each agency. The state also developed a Career Readiness Working Group of 75 cross-sector stakeholders that met bi-weekly throughout Phase One to inform the work.

In [Nevada](#), the state made an effort to build the ownership and involvement of the business community by restructuring the state's Industry Sector Councils. The Councils, made up of representatives from business, labor and education, now provide recommendations on the high-demand jobs, skills, education requirements and other elements necessary to meet [Nevada's](#) economic goals that will serve as the anchor for the state-approved career pathways.

[Mississippi](#), in an effort to strengthen the quality and value of career pathways in the state, made an early effort during Phase One to engage industry leaders. As a result of this effort, [Mississippi](#) updated its career pathways for automotive technology, construction trades, welding and manufacturing programs to include industry certification requirements. Meanwhile, [California](#) recognized that, given its size and regional disparity, state agencies had developed similar but isolated efforts to educate and train individuals for the workforce. As a result, the state developed strategies to leverage what it referred to as "glue funding" to reinforce and integrate statewide systems. One such strategy was to bring together representatives from the community college system, the Department of Education and the Workforce Development Board to develop crosswalks of program requirements and resources, thus enabling state actors to identify areas of overlap and

opportunities to streamline program implementation.

## ***Equity Was a Key Driver in Both Early Implementation and Strategic Planning***

Many states in Phase One recognized the role that career readiness plays in reducing income and achievement gaps. As such, they approached their New Skills for Youth work as part of their overall equity strategy, leveraging the findings from the needs assessment and data analysis to develop equity-focused action plans that would target specific under-served and non-traditional student populations. Some states even redirected Phase One funds to respond to early findings and begin executing strategies to reduce gaps in access to high-quality career pathways.

For example, [Louisiana's](#) Phase One needs assessment revealed that Jump Start, a statewide career readiness initiative launched in 2014, was not being implemented fully in the high-poverty Delta Region. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Louisiana diverted resources from the Phase One grant to develop a pilot program to provide professional development for teachers in the region to understand their role in the initiative.

In [Massachusetts](#), the work was focused on reaching the 80 percent of students in the state who are not currently concentrating in a high-quality career pathway. To expand access and encourage wider participation from students across the state, Massachusetts identified strategies such as a governor-led marketing campaign to encourage more internships in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.



Additionally, [Oklahoma](#) directed efforts during Phase One to reach rural populations and members of the state's 39 local Native American tribes. To ensure that students in rural areas could access career planning tools, the state built upon an existing initiative to expand broadband internet access to rural communities. Also, [Oklahoma](#) encouraged participation from rural and Native American communities in the development of the state's action plan and engaged them through a statewide Call-to-Action Summit to discuss strategies for reaching under-served and under-represented students.

## ***Many States Chose to Work Regionally to Develop and Execute Action Plans***

Several states recognized the value of a career readiness system that is informed by and responsive to economic priorities and took a regional approach to developing and implementing their strategic plans. Specifically, states — especially those with more decentralized or local control education systems — made intentional efforts to engage local stakeholders and leverage existing regional infrastructure to advance the work.

[Kentucky](#) took a regional approach to developing its career readiness action plan. During the planning stage, the state engaged regional Workforce Innovation Boards to examine labor market data and identify regional economic priorities. This approach enabled the creation of a heat map of career pathways in high-demand sectors within each region. Additionally, meetings with K-12 district superintendents were held to examine labor market data and strategize approaches

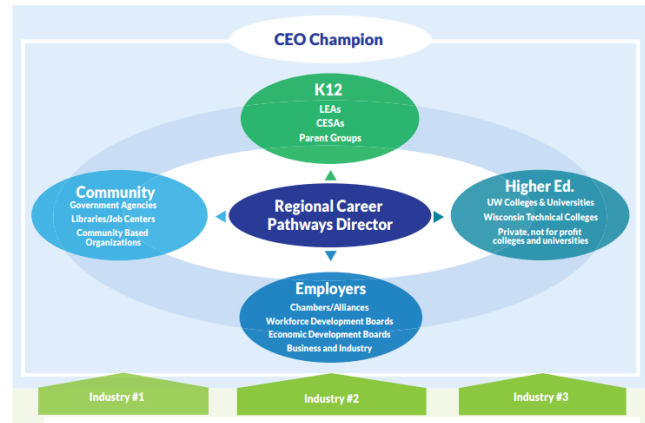


Figure 1: Wisconsin's Regional Career Pathways Project framework

to developing local career pathways. Moving forward, Kentucky plans to encourage regional ownership of the work by providing statewide frameworks and guidance for implementing career pathways and career academies while simultaneously enabling local actors to tailor strategies to meet the needs of their communities.

In [New Hampshire](#), local flexibility in setting and implementing education policy — critical to the success of the state's competency-based education system — has resulted in pockets of excellence but no cohesive statewide career pathways system. To address this challenge, New Hampshire developed plans to pilot new statewide competency-based assessments for CTE programs, beginning with automotive technology and health science, through collaboration with local teachers charged with developing the assessments.

Meanwhile, [Wisconsin](#) and [Tennessee](#) both chose to leverage existing regional networks to implement their strategic plans. Wisconsin designed a framework called the Regional Career Pathways Project that aims to build upon the state technical college infrastructure to catalyze local partnerships in each of the 16 technical college regions. Under the

framework, each region would be coordinated by a director and led by a CEO champion, who would work collaboratively with other stakeholders to set and drive a locally tailored education and training agenda. Likewise, Tennessee's plan makes use of each of the state's nine Pathways TN regions as vehicles for delivering high-quality and locally responsive career pathways. This network will be used to promote the use of labor market data and build relationships with local employers to expand work-based learning opportunities.

### ***States Laid the Groundwork for Linking Data and Building Career-Focused Accountability Systems***

Now more than ever, states are recognizing the need for robust data systems to monitor and hold schools accountable for student performance, tailor efforts to local economic needs, and continuously improve career readiness systems. During Phase One, states worked to identify gaps in statewide data collection systems and develop or implement strategies to strengthen data linkages. As the Phase One grant period overlapped with states' planning efforts under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) — the 2015 reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act — states made intentional efforts to streamline and integrate their accountability strategies for both New Skills for Youth and ESSA planning.

Specifically, [Ohio](#) made accountability one of its priority focus areas for the Phase One period, aiming to build upon the state's CTE-focused school report card to ensure that all schools are held accountable for the career

readiness of their students. An update to the CTE report card was proposed to factor industry credential attainment into the school's overall score. Ohio, along with Kentucky and Tennessee, participated in a national work group through the New Skills for Youth initiative that aimed to study and make recommendations on how states can improve their accountability systems to encourage career readiness. The Career Readiness Expert Workgroup offered four recommended categories of measuring career readiness, including progress toward a post-high school credential, co-curricular learning and leadership experiences, assessment of readiness and transitions beyond high school. Many Phase One states are turning to this framework to inform their accountability systems under the new federal law.

Meanwhile, several states worked to link data across sectors to streamline career pathways from secondary to postsecondary education. In [Delaware](#), the Department of Education partnered with the state Technical Community College to develop a template for sharing labor market information, which the state aims to draw on to develop a future online dashboard. Meanwhile, the [Tennessee](#) Department of Education, the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology worked collaboratively to streamline secondary-to-postsecondary career pathways by agreeing to counts credits for industry certifications earned in high school toward a postsecondary degree.

And in [Washington, DC](#), a committee was established to review and align data systems. The committee, which included representatives from secondary education, postsecondary education, business and

workforce development, set priorities for data collection and agreed to a common set of tools and definitions. This effort enabled DC to analyze data using shared cross-sector definitions and leverage this analysis to inform strategic planning.

## ***Phase One States Worked to Enhance Career Guidance Strategies***

A core element of many states' strategies was a focus on strengthening career advisement systems, often with a focus on getting the right information to students and parents about critical career opportunities.

Some states, including [Ohio](#), [Oklahoma](#) and [Indiana](#), designed promotional campaigns through which guidance counselors and local administrators could raise awareness about tools and opportunities available to students. During Phase One, Ohio developed a brand and logo for the state's SuccessBound campaign. Likewise, Oklahoma created a brand and made preparations in Phase One to launch a career guidance website that would provide students, parents, teachers and employers tools and information related to available career preparation opportunities. Indiana developed a cross-agency communications and marketing strategy called My Path. My



*Figure 2: The SuccessBound Brand in Ohio Was Developed During Phase One*

Choice. The campaign is designed to raise awareness about opportunities afforded to students in the state.

In addition, some states worked to strengthen existing career guidance strategies. [Vermont](#), for example, built upon its existing Flexible Pathways Initiative, through which students develop individualized plans that include alternative learning pathways, to strengthen the quality of work-based learning. Likewise, [Washington](#) identified that teachers and local administrators were not implementing the state-mandated High School and Beyond Plan consistently, meaning that some students were missing out on the opportunity to receive relevant career guidance. To address the issue, Washington is planning to provide technical assistance and guidance on how to implement the Plan and expand the web-based Career Bridge platform, which connects students, parents and educators with labor market trends and job information.



## Early Lessons From Phase One

Looking holistically across the planning and early implementation work during Phase One, a few strategies emerged that are conducive to effective career readiness systems transformation. Drawing upon these lessons, states should consider the following strategies:

### *Secure Commitment From the Highest Levels of Leadership*

Implementing an effective career readiness system requires deep collaboration and shared ownership among the highest levels of leadership. States were most successful when the Phase One work was owned and driven by committed leaders in business and industry as well as state agencies. The involvement of industry leaders was integral to the success of the work, providing critical insights and expertise on labor market needs and helping to secure commitments from the employer community to provide work-based learning opportunities and strategic guidance. Additionally, states in which the governor or chief state school officer was deeply engaged in the planning and early implementation efforts were able to prioritize the work and lay the foundation for future sustainability.

### *Identify Key Roles and Funding Mechanisms to Ensure Sustainability*

Another strategy to ensure sustainability is identifying key roles and funds for specific activities. The states that were successful in Phase One were those that assigned ownership to individual agencies — or in some cases, individual staff members — for implementing activities in the strategic plan. Role clarity contributes to effective implementation by ensuring that each stakeholder understands the role he or she plays in moving the work forward. Additionally, some states began the process of combining disparate programs and braiding funding streams to consolidate and streamline similar state-funded and federally funded activities.

### *Prioritize Strategies That Are Connected and Build Upon One Another*

Transforming education, training and workforce development systems can expand opportunity for students and strengthen the economy. But systems transformation requires a cohesive, statewide strategy. One-off activities such as pilot programs, minor updates to state policies and data-sharing agreements may lead to incremental change, but without a shared vision and strategy, these efforts will have limited impact. States that were successful in Phase One identified a north star vision and used that as the focal point to drive and prioritize the work. For some states, the north star was to increase equity outcomes for various student groups. Others chose to focus on credential attainment or industry engagement. Either way, setting a clear and articulate vision helped to better coordinate across activities and ensure the work was connected.

## ***Be Bold and Ambitious Throughout the Planning Process***

Finally, the states that made the most progress during Phase One approached the work with the fearlessness and dedication required to effect lasting systems change. Leaders in these states were willing to think outside of the traditional bounds of their offices to make bold and ambitious commitments to transformative work. These states took risks by making public statements in support of career readiness, engaging key influencers in all relevant sectors, and signaling that education would be a key driver of the state's economic and workforce development strategy rather than a bystander. Such a bold approach to career readiness indicates a willingness to throw away the old playbook and innovate new strategies for preparing students for high-wage, high-demand career opportunities.

# New Skills for Youth Phase One State Snapshot Index

All states involved in the New Skills for Youth Phase One initiative made considerable progress toward transforming career readiness through strategies that were aligned with the six key objectives. The index below indicates the states that made notable progress or devised innovative strategies to address a particular focus area that may prove instructional to other states. Individual state snapshots are available in the Learning that Works Resource Center at <https://careertech.org/resource-type/snapshots>.

Focus area	Covered in state snapshot	
Access and Equity	<a href="#">Louisiana</a> <a href="#">Massachusetts</a> <a href="#">Montana</a> <a href="#">Ohio</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a> <a href="#">Rhode Island</a> <a href="#">Wisconsin</a>
Articulation and Transfer (including dual and concurrent enrollment)	<a href="#">Indiana</a> <a href="#">Montana</a> <a href="#">Rhode Island</a> <a href="#">South Carolina</a>	
Career Advisement	<a href="#">Hawaii</a> <a href="#">Indiana</a> <a href="#">Louisiana</a> <a href="#">New Hampshire</a> <a href="#">North Carolina</a>	<a href="#">Ohio</a> <a href="#">Oklahoma</a> <a href="#">Washington</a> <a href="#">Wisconsin</a>
Credentials and Assessments	<a href="#">Mississippi</a> <a href="#">New Jersey</a> <a href="#">Ohio</a>	<a href="#">South Carolina</a> <a href="#">Tennessee</a>
Data and Accountability	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a> <a href="#">New Jersey</a> <a href="#">Ohio</a> <a href="#">South Carolina</a>	<a href="#">Tennessee</a> <a href="#">Washington</a> <a href="#">Wisconsin</a>
Employer Engagement	<a href="#">Hawaii</a> <a href="#">Illinois</a> <a href="#">Kentucky</a> <a href="#">Louisiana</a> <a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina</a> <a href="#">Pennsylvania</a> <a href="#">Vermont</a> <a href="#">Washington</a>

Graduation Requirements	<a href="#">Hawaii</a> <a href="#">Illinois</a> <a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">Ohio</a> <a href="#">Vermont</a>
Instructor and Leader Quality	<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	
Program Quality	<a href="#">California</a> <a href="#">Delaware</a> <a href="#">Louisiana</a> <a href="#">Massachusetts</a> <a href="#">Mississippi</a>	<a href="#">Montana</a> <a href="#">New Hampshire</a> <a href="#">Tennessee</a> <a href="#">Vermont</a>
Systems Alignment	<a href="#">California</a> <a href="#">Delaware</a> <a href="#">District of Columbia</a> <a href="#">Indiana</a> <a href="#">Kentucky</a> <a href="#">Mississippi</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a> <a href="#">Rhode Island</a> <a href="#">South Carolina</a> <a href="#">Tennessee</a> <a href="#">Washington</a> <a href="#">Wisconsin</a>
Work-Based Learning	<a href="#">Mississippi</a> <a href="#">North Carolina</a> <a href="#">Vermont</a>	

## Acknowledgements

Advance CTE would like to extend gratitude to Brenda Dann-Messier, Terry Holliday, Todd Levinson, Rick Melmer, Kathy Oliver, Alissa Peltzman and Ryan Reyna for their coaching support to Phase One states and their input into the state snapshots.

This document and the accompanying 24 state snapshots were developed through the New Skills for Youth initiative, a partnership of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group, generously funded by JPMorgan Chase & Co.