

Nashville, Tennessee

2022-23 SNAPSHOT

THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK

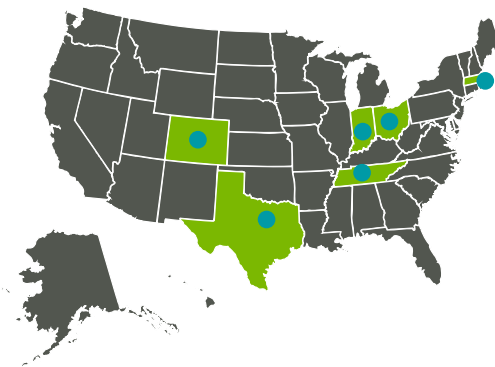
New Skills ready network, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their \$30 billion commitment to advance racial 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 third 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.

Nashville, Tennessee, is one of the six sites participating in the *New Skills ready network*. This five-year initiative, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, aims to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways.



NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

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

In the first two years of this initiative, the Nashville, Tennessee, *New Skills ready network* team aimed to dismantle through systemic change the barriers to success affecting learners from under-represented populations. During the second year, the Nashville, Tennessee, team made significant investments in building a foundation for future implementation across partner organizations. In the third year, the Nashville, Tennessee, team focused their efforts on implementation through pilot projects to maximize the potential of the learner experience in work-based learning (WBL) and postsecondary persistence. The work of the college and career readiness (CCR) coaches became invaluable to supporting college and career planning in Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) and to strengthening the partnership with the Tennessee College of Applied Technology – Nashville (TCAT-Nashville), Nashville State Community College (NSCC) and Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU).

In 2022-23, the Nashville, Tennessee, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:

- 1 Ensuring that learners have transparent secondary and postsecondary career pathways that align to one another and to in-demand, high-wage careers that meet labor market needs;
- 2 Enhancing experiential learning by defining and implementing best practice WBL models and learner-centric secondary and postsecondary experiences; and
- 3 Increasing the enrollment and postsecondary persistence of historically under-represented learners in postsecondary education.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



LEADERSHIP TEAM PARTNERS

- 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

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

Ensuring that learners have transparent secondary and postsecondary career pathways that align to one another and to in-demand, high-wage careers that meet labor market needs

Career pathway alignment remains a priority for the Nashville, Tennessee, team. The team applied a strategic approach to leveraging the resources of the initiative and developed eight pilot projects, distributing \$10,000 to innovative projects that engaged MNPS, TCAT-Nashville, NSCC, MTSU and industry and community partners. The collaborative approach to the pilot project process garnered implementation support from the CCR coaches within MNPS, who connect existing career advising and transition supports to learners. Although the pilot projects were different in scope, two of them focused on expanded access to career pathways.

Healthcare Futures and Information Technology (IT) Apprenticeships were designed to connect learner classroom experiences with employer partnerships to help learners develop durable skills. Healthcare Futures created an opportunity for Vanderbilt University Medical Center nurses, human resources professionals and other health care professionals from diverse backgrounds to collaborate with MNPS to mentor 19 high school learners interested in becoming medical assistants or care partners with a future goal of becoming registered nurses. Likewise, IT Apprenticeships has helped identify a Computer Information Technology (CIT) course through the two-year postsecondary partner, NSCC, that aligns with employer-identified skills, making learners competitive applicants for employer IT apprenticeship programs. High school learners participating in IT pre-apprenticeships at John Overton High School, a *New Skills ready network* priority school, are enrolled in this course as dual enrollment students, which is the first time a CIT course has been offered as such for MNPS learners.

The pilot projects fostered opportunities for focusing on career pathways leading to postsecondary opportunities through dual enrollment coursework and authentic WBL experiences. This unique approach to leveraging resources from the initiative provided the Nashville, Tennessee, team perspective on where to drive their career pathway efforts toward scalability and sustainability by continuing support for the successful pilot projects.

PRIORITY 2

Enhancing experiential learning by defining and implementing best practice WBL models and learner-centric secondary and postsecondary experiences

The critical work of year two enabled the Nashville, Tennessee, team to increase employer connections and begin piloting WBL experiences. The annually released [Education Report](#) from the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce highlighted the WBL pilot to drive community awareness and support for scaling and improving the experiences for learners. This effort also helped lay a foundation for allowing learners to thrive outside of the classroom with more employer-supported experiences during year three.

Operationalizing WBL continues to increase on-the-job experiences for learners across all MNPS schools. Hiring a full-time WBL coordinator at MNPS has helped employer partners and the local school district effectively communicate about the needs of learners while aiding in their placements in worksites connected to career pathways. Employer partners such as HCA Healthcare and Ascension Saint Thomas have been onboarded to provide experiential learning for learners in MNPS who are pursuing health care careers.

During year three, the partnership with Ascension Saint Thomas yielded WBL options for 20 high school seniors, some of whom attend a *New Skills ready network* Nashville priority school. Learners participating in this year-long inaugural program have been able to perform high-level tasks associated with the health care field as well as shadow other departments of interest and receive career coaching from their employer mentors. This WBL program has also afforded the opportunity for learners to earn an income and academic credit.

As WBL is scaled across MNPS, the Nashville, Tennessee, team has recognized that transportation is a barrier to learners' participation in these opportunities. For that reason, the team has earmarked financial resources in year four for a transportation study to investigate opportunities for increased learner access in such experiences beyond their community.

HIGH-PRIORITY INDUSTRY SECTORS



Advanced Manufacturing



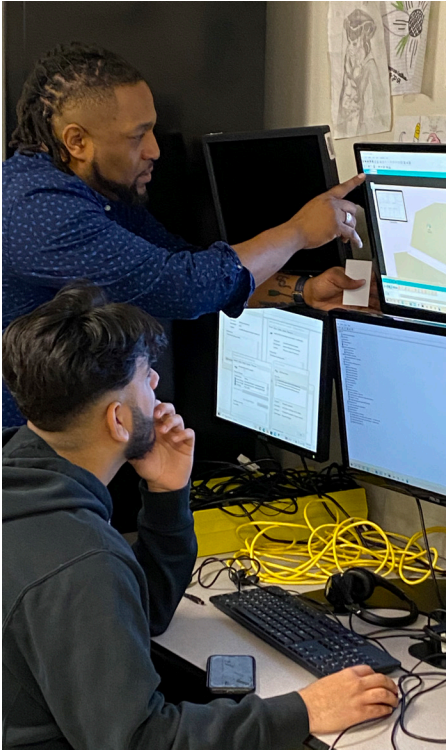
Health Care



Information Technology

PRIORITY 3

Increasing the enrollment and postsecondary persistence of historically under-represented learners in postsecondary education



Over the course of year three, the Nashville, Tennessee, team increased access for learners to participate in dual enrollment coursework throughout MNPS — and specifically in the *New Skills ready network* priority schools. Through the financial support of the initiative, NSCC increased its capacity to build relationships with learners and acclimate them to collegiate-level coursework to earn academic credit. The team leveraged initiative resources to hire a high school initiatives liaison to engage and support learners in their dual enrollment experience. More than 150 learners currently participate in dual enrollment coursework for health care and IT career pathways through NSCC.

Additionally, the re-engagement of a two-year postsecondary partner, TCAT-Nashville, has provided further access for learners, which is vital to meeting the Nashville, Tennessee, team's goal of increasing learner persistence in postsecondary opportunities. The institution's eagerness to begin better serving learners in the district led to all MNPS Career Technical Education practitioners visiting the campus in conjunction with the district-required in-service training to better understand the offerings at TCAT-Nashville. This partnered approach has increased learner participation and interest in dual enrollment opportunities for career pathways in HVAC and IT, which had been absent from TCAT-Nashville's campus previously. The increase in the number of learners, with more than 300 participating, led to the hiring of a dual enrollment coordinator within the TCAT-Nashville campus through support of the initiative. The presence of the dual enrollment coordinator is essential to learner success in their matriculation as both a high school and a collegiate learner.

Authentic practitioner connections have been foundational to achieving the Nashville, Tennessee, team's goal of increasing learner access to dual enrollment. This success has led to the team's year four plan to accelerate family engagement for first-generation college learners in this area, catalyzing a process for meeting needs of additional under-represented learners.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Nashville, Tennessee, team is looking forward to scaling and sustaining in an inclusive way that will seamlessly integrate work all the way from the state agency level down to the learner level through consistent collaboration. The team is also inviting conversations about opportunities for assisting learners with avoiding the summer “melt” by connecting summer youth employment to career pathways through WBL and postsecondary transitions.

The mini-grant pilot process guided an intentional process for testing many ideas for scaling high-quality career pathways. The team has discovered areas for refinement through success criteria connected to the pilot projects and is prepared to use this information to guide primary goals going into year four.