

Columbus

OHIO

THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK

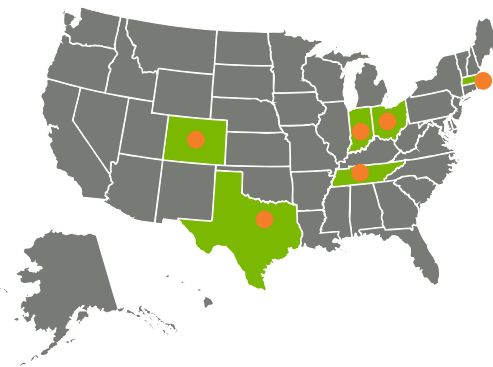
New Skills ready network, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their \$30 billion commitment to advance racial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

Columbus, Ohio, 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 learner completion of high-quality career pathways.



NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

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

Starting in late 2020, the Columbus, Ohio, project team focused heavily on relationship and capacity building across partners to ensure that significant progress could be made in future years. The team also identified multiple sectors as key focus areas, finalizing evaluations of career pathways across institutions and creating a communications and marketing plan informed by learners and families for information technology (IT) and health care.

The initiative was also vital to expanding access to career pathways at the secondary level through a transition to an open lottery system, laying the foundation for increased access to all Career Technical Education (CTE) programs citywide. The team further began to look at misaligned IT career pathways and identify potential solutions. In addition, the project team focused heavily on employer engagement as a core component of work-based learning efforts, adding new project team capacity and driving conversations with new and existing employer partners. This process also affirmed the strength of the existing health care career pathways.

Because of the relationship building and alignment work in the early grant years, the project team was able to expand on these initiatives in year four by quickly developing new career pathways and programs aligned to new labor market needs. The project team also began engaging employers more comprehensively than ever before to help provide and align new work-based learning opportunities for Columbus, Ohio, learners.

COLUMBUS OHIO



LEADERSHIP TEAM PARTNERS

- Ohio Excels (*site lead*)
- Columbus City Schools
- Columbus Partnership and One Columbus
- Columbus State Community College
- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio Department of Higher Education
- The Ohio State University



VISION FOR SUCCESS

Columbus' goal throughout this project is the following:

All students in Columbus City Schools, Columbus State Community College, and The Ohio State University have the academic, technical, and professional skills they need to succeed, and that Columbus businesses have the workforce they need to prosper. Columbus students across the K12 and postsecondary spectrum are engaged in high-quality career pathways that fuel their aspirations, prepare them for success, and are supported through their transitions into high-wage, high-skill, in-demand careers in the Columbus region.

This goal will be met by developing a central Ohio career pathways system with cohesive partnerships that can strategically utilize resources and data to provide opportunities for learners at all levels, particularly learners who are under-represented in higher education and the workforce.

To be successful in this goal, all partners strive to align high-quality career pathways across the network to support learners through transitions in their academic and career journeys. The project team plans to align the strategic goals of partner institutions and create processes that allow for regular tracking and analysis of updated information.

In 2023-24, the Columbus, Ohio, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:

- 1 Designing new career pathways aligned to local labor market needs;
- 2 Implementing and scaling employer engagement to support work-based learning; and
- 3 Demonstrating the value of career pathways through culturally responsive methods.

PRIORITY 1

Designing new career pathways aligned to local labor market needs

In the early years of this initiative, the Columbus, Ohio, project team made considerable strides in aligning career pathways between and across education institutions by reviewing career pathways against quality rubrics to determine opportunities for improvement. Columbus City Schools (CCS) moved to a fully open lottery system with no prerequisites or qualifying criteria to improve access to career pathways. CCS championed this shift as a critical equity win, as learners now can participate in these programs regardless of grades and past performance, which were previously barriers to entry. The Ohio State University (OSU) and Columbus State Community College (CSCC) continued to develop partnerships among faculty to facilitate better curricular discussions about new credentialing and alignment opportunities in IT and construction management, including through a design-thinking lab that brought together instructors and administrators to begin to create four-year IT degree programs.

In year four, multiple opportunities led the project team to reprioritize action areas. These opportunities often required quick pivots, which the team was able to achieve through progress made in previous years of the grant. At the secondary level, building on the foundation of its significant expansion of CTE offerings, CCS is further expanding career pathway opportunities to all of its comprehensive high schools, in addition to its regional CTE high schools, to ensure complete and open access to district-wide programs. Programs are yet to be identified for each institution, but district staff is working to determine which career pathways will be offered at each high school to allocate resources best.

At the postsecondary level, new programs were developed in some sectors while alignment and expansion work continued in others. Due to a multi-million dollar investment from Intel, CSCC administrators developed a semiconductor fundamentals certificate, which began enrolling learners in the spring 2024 semester. This certificate is part of a larger initiative to expand opportunities for Columbus, Ohio, residents in the advanced technology field and stacks to an associate degree in advanced technology.

CSCC and OSU also worked diligently in year four to create 2+2 Construction Management opportunities by convening faculty and aligning curriculum, with a goal of enrolling learners in the 2024-25 academic year. Building on the previously mentioned design-thinking lab, OSU is doubling down on IT, particularly cybersecurity, to provide additional advanced training opportunities aligned with IT programs at CSCC. CCS is similarly expanding curricular offerings for middle-grade learners in the IT space using the CodeHS curriculum; almost 1,700 learners are leveraging these tools.

In the future, work will continue to enroll learners in these various opportunities and ensure that secondary learners have the opportunity and are prepared to enter each program. OSU hopes to fully complete its IT advanced certification, enrolling learners in the 2025-26 academic year. Professional development for both secondary and postsecondary instructors will continue, including a day specifically for CSCC educators and a weeklong summit explicitly focused on advanced technologies.

HIGH-PRIORITY INDUSTRY SECTORS



Advanced Technology



Construction Management



Health Care

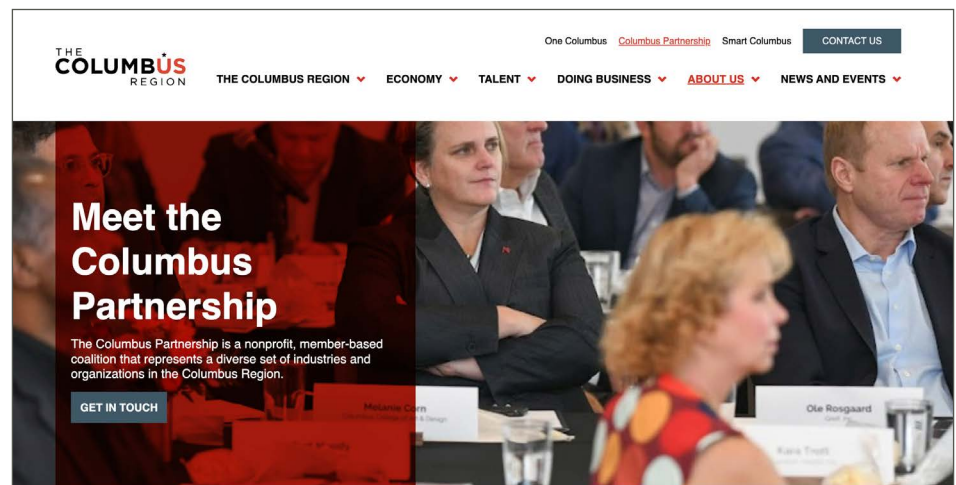


Information Technology

PRIORITY 2

Implementing and scaling employer engagement to support work-based learning

Progress on work-based learning and employer engagement strategies was in nascent stages in years one and two of this initiative, as collective work across education institutions required ample time to build partnerships and relationships and determine value for each employer. As it became evident that employer relationships and needs were unique for each education institution, OhioExcels supported, in close collaboration with the [Columbus Partnership](#) and [One Columbus](#), the hiring and onboarding of an emerging talent manager, who is responsible for further identifying the strengths and needs of different employer groups and serving as an intermediary between education and industry.



In year four, the emerging talent manager was able to work closely with CCS and employers to better understand the needs of both secondary learners and secondary educators and the challenges faced by employers to engage in work-based learning. More than 75 of the “Top 100” employers in the greater Columbus, Ohio, area were brought into conversation about how to best communicate opportunities to build relationships with educators. In August and December 2023, two roundtables were held, focusing on providing educator professional development, scaling subject matter expertise and developing clear messaging for industry partners. This focus was vital, as it helped identify potential pilot projects, including scaling work-based learning embedded in the classroom, incentivizing employer onboarding to structure meaningful work experiences and determining how to create access for more learners in specific career sectors, among others. A significant focus was developing an intake and relationship management system to better track and facilitate employer partnerships.

In the last year of the grant, implementing these systems and expanding pilot programs will be a goal of partners to ensure that learners have access to projects and engagement opportunities supported by these employer groups. Professional development and resource development will also be a major focus to ensure that educators and employers are adequately prepared to develop and implement these relationships comprehensively.

PRIORITY 3

Demonstrating the value of career pathways through culturally responsive methods



In previous years, the Columbus, Ohio, team focused heavily on messaging career pathways to learners after doing messaging focus groups with learners and family members. Through these focus groups and other engagement conversations, relevance and convenience emerged as major themes. These themes align with the Columbus, Ohio, team's desire to engage with both learners and families in timely and culturally responsive ways.

Messaging about upcoming opportunities has been part of the project team's strategy to ensure that all potential learners are aware of and can access upcoming CTE and postsecondary opportunities. With grant funds, CCS expanded its use of SchoolLinks district-wide, as both a messaging platform to communicate updates about what career pathways opportunities learners can participate in and as a connection to employers. Embedded career and community resource coordinators (CCRCs) are also building on messaging developed in early grant years to explain the value of new and emerging sectors. CCRCs work with learners to help them better understand the CTE pathways and future career and postsecondary opportunities available to them. CSCC is similarly using five *New Skills ready network*-sponsored career educators to provide relevant information about industry sectors and guide prospective and current CSCC learners, including graduating CCS learners, toward in-demand, high-wage careers.

CSCC also developed culturally responsive messaging in its expansion of advanced technology offerings. Given Ohio's long history with, and often stigmatization of, manufacturing careers, CSCC was particularly sensitive to the potential implications of a new "manufacturing" program. To help demystify this field and demonstrate its value as a future career, CSCC held multiple awareness-building events for these opportunities, including a *Build Your Future* event in October 2023. It also uses virtual reality headsets that demonstrate how an advanced manufacturing facility might operate. Career educators participate in professional development to ensure that they understand the new and emerging fields in each sector.

In the upcoming year, continuing to advise learners about the availability of opportunities at the secondary and postsecondary levels will remain a priority. CSCC is developing a series of career exploration videos featuring near-peer "career influencers" who can give learners a relevant and realistic look into what future careers can look like and are representative of diverse populations.



LOOKING AHEAD

Most of the work in the final year of the grant will be focused on long-term ongoing efforts, including further developing employer relationships and maintaining the connections among each education institution. The implementation of continuing work in health care, construction management, IT and advanced technology career pathways will be a significant focus to ensure that secondary learners are prepared to enter postsecondary opportunities and that learners can find and take advantage of these postsecondary programs. Professional development will also be vital to ensuring that educators know about these opportunities and can advise learners toward equitable future careers.



Learner Profile

MAGUETTE NIANG

EDUCATION: Transfer learner studying dentistry, The Ohio State University; associate degree, Columbus State Community College

NEW SKILLS ready network CONNECTION: Maguette is a James L. Moore III (JLM) Scholar, which has benefited from *New Skills ready network* resources to study the needs of and subsequently support transfer learners as well as provide career exploration and advising experiences to prepare for transfer.

Maguette came to Columbus, Ohio, from Senegal during high school. She attended high school in the Reynoldsburg School District. She wanted to be a doctor when she started at Columbus State.

Maguette was attracted to dentistry after exploring multiple health care options because it offered patient care with an advanced level of skill that was still hands on. Getting exposed to dentistry also reminded her of a personal motivation: *“When we first came to the United States, I wanted to make a dish from home for my dad. I cooked jollof rice for him. He couldn’t eat it because he had a toothache. But after he got his dental care, I saw how he was able to eat much better and smile his big smile. I was interested in dentistry from the job shadow but also from this one story.”*

Maguette planned to transfer from Columbus State to Ohio State in fall 2023. She was admitted for a fall start, but her adviser at Columbus State guided her that sooner was not better. If Maguette stayed for one more semester and finished three classes, she would graduate Columbus State with an associate degree in biology and not have to take general education classes at Ohio State. Maguette earned her associate degree in December 2023.

Maguette just completed her first term at Ohio State this spring. The JLM Scholars program has provided her with practical orientation, monthly meetings with the academic success coach and the required academic success activities to ensure that she had a strong first semester. Maguette said there was so many supports from JLM that she could not name them all.

