

Dallas

TEXAS

THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK

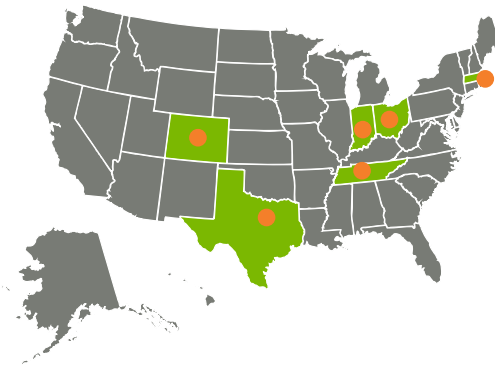
New Skills ready network, launched by JPMorgan Chase in 2020, bolsters the firm's efforts to support an inclusive economic recovery, as part of both their \$350 million, five-year New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their \$30 billion commitment to advance racial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

Dallas, Texas, 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

In the first three years of this initiative, the Dallas, Texas, *New Skills ready network* team's successes included getting buy-in and alignment on critical data sources and definitions for labor market information, launching a virtual internship toolkit and mapping the data elements needed to track and monitor learner college and career readiness. The team also prioritized reorganizing its leadership structure to best support Dallas Independent School District (ISD) learners in earlier grades. The investment allowed the Dallas, Texas, team to develop data dashboards with enhanced data architecture to simplify systems and promote insight for communicating about learner persistence in career pathways to audiences including learners, families and institutions. During year four, all middle school learners were provided an opportunity for early exploration of career pathways offered in their school district.

In 2023-24, the Dallas, Texas, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:

- 1 Implementing the personalized career pathways management tool;
- 2 Prioritizing early exposure to career pathways for learners and families; and
- 3 Expanding the talent pipeline for aspiring educators pursuing the education career pathway.

DALLAS TEXAS



LEADERSHIP TEAM PARTNERS

- Commit Partnership (*site lead*)
- Child Poverty Action Lab
- City of Dallas
- Dallas College
- Dallas Independent School District
- Dallas Regional Chamber
- United Way
- University of North Texas – Dallas
- Workforce Solutions



VISION FOR SUCCESS

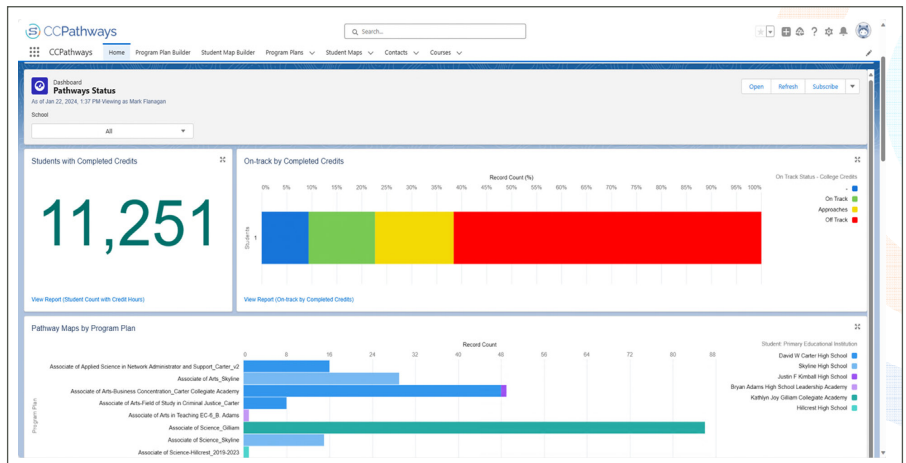
The *New Skills ready network* work in Dallas, Texas, is driven by a vision for success that is anchored in a community-wide strategy called Dallas Thrives, which aims to create pathways out of poverty for the youngest residents. The “north star” of this work is to double living-wage attainment, with a focus on achieving racial equity in living-wage employment, by 2040. By braiding the Dallas Thrives strategy, momentum and community support with the *New Skills ready network* framework and partner expertise, the team is looking to create a career pathway design and maintenance process that is financially sustainable after the grant ends and scalable across the community as pilot projects evolve into routine practices and programs. Through true systems change, the community can make measurable and sustainable progress toward its economic mobility goals for learners and young adults.



PRIORITY 1

Implementing the personalized career pathways management tool

The Dallas, Texas, team’s focus on developing the personalized career pathways management tool in year three shifted to implementation of the tool in year four. Improvements in data collection and data-sharing efforts between Dallas ISD and Dallas College through the tool have created an opportunity for more frequent reporting for administrators, which will help better align staffing needs with course offerings at both institutions. The initiative’s support for this effort has also allowed practitioners to leverage the tool to determine where learners are having challenges with transitions to postsecondary and need more support.



The personalized career pathways management tool is designed to be user-centered and focused on a variety of applicable uses of the data collected. While the tool was released at the opening of the school year during year four, it has primarily been leveraged by administrators and educators. It is a priority for the Dallas, Texas, team in year five to introduce learners and families to the tool so they can use it to better understand each learner’s career pathway journey.



PRIORITY 2

Prioritizing early exposure to career pathways for learners and families

Throughout the initiative, the Dallas, Texas, team has prioritized early exposure to career pathways. During year four, the team fully implemented a required course, Path to College and Career, designed for more than 10,000 seventh-grade learners in 47 Dallas ISD middle schools. The course focuses on in-demand, high-wage career opportunities with employment options connected to the course curriculum. It aims to prepare learners to choose the career pathway that best aligns with their interests when transitioning to high school.

In alignment with the course, more than 1,200 participating learners from 20 middle schools were able to take part in two inaugural regional career exploration showcase events. The goal of these showcase events is to deepen learners' experience with and exposure to all career pathways available in each of the high schools with support of industry partners. This engagement bolsters the Dallas, Texas, project team's goal of creating more opportunities and better supports for learners to make career pathway choices by the end of their eighth-grade year given that Dallas ISD is a district of choice.

While family engagement is a focus area for the Dallas, Texas, team in year five, the success of the one-day showcase events accelerated their strategy for including more learners and families in experiential activities. With implementation of the required course and the need for learners to make a career pathway decision in eighth grade, the team has recognized that engaging learners in the process also requires equipping parents and families with information that will help guide learners' decisions. In hopes of empowering learners and families, parents will be provided with a curriculum companion guide that aligns with the career-connected learner kit for the course to prepare them for conversations with school counselors and career advisers alongside their child.

HIGH-PRIORITY INDUSTRY SECTORS



Education



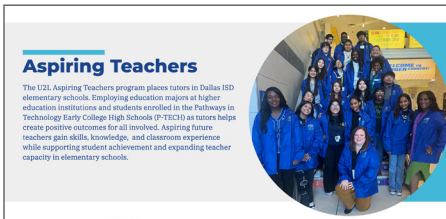
Health Care



Information Technology

PRIORITY 3

Expanding the talent pipeline for aspiring educators pursuing the education career pathway



The Dallas, Texas, team has worked to improve opportunities for learners to leverage their career pathway journeys to expedite their access to high-quality, in-demand careers. Through the education career pathway, the journey ultimately provides a two-way benefit by growing the local talent pipeline for Dallas ISD with learners who are aspiring educators.

As part of advancing the education career pathway and exploring the expansion of the Dallas ISD educator pipeline, the Dallas, Texas, team collaborated with [United to Learn](#) to engage learners in the Aspiring Teachers program. Not only does the program support aspiring educators, but it also helps increase the reading level of third-grade learners. During year four, more than 100 educators-in-training in the education career pathway served as tutors and serviced more than 280 learners across 28 partner campuses. This support resulted in academic growth and achievement among third-grade learners, with 49% scoring at or above reading level compared to 17% scoring in that range two years prior.

The impact of the Aspiring Teachers program has led to increased engagement with the University of North Texas – Dallas as well as Paul Quinn College, another four-year postsecondary institution in the area. The Dallas, Texas, team plans to continue engaging with the Aspiring Teachers program, connecting their goal to encouraging the participation of more Dallas ISD learners.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Dallas, Texas, team is looking forward to continuing to focus on early exposure to career pathways, which will require more coordinated family engagement opportunities. The team is also focused on ways to further improve and use the personalized career pathways management tool to more impactfully inform learners about how career pathways will affect their subsequent career choices and support them in this decisionmaking. As the initiative moves into year five, the partner institutions hope to continue leveraging the network to learn about more ways to guide their objectives.



**Learner
Profile**

DEION GUTIERREZ

EDUCATION: Learner, Dallas College

If relevant, what prompted you to participate in the program or initiative?

When I graduated high school in 2019, I had to work a full-time job at an Amazon warehouse to support the financial needs of my family. I also needed money to save up for college tuition and other expenses. This meant I was attending Dallas College part time. When I found out about Aspiring Teachers through the Dallas College education program, I knew I had found a group of people who would help me pursue my desire to be an educator, while also financially supporting me.

What were your educational and/or career goals before participating in the program or initiative?

From a young age, I've had a strong passion for education and a natural ability to share knowledge with others.

I've always wanted to be a teacher; I just didn't know how I could become one given my financial situation when I graduated high school. I had to take a medical break from school. Despite a long leave and recovery, my determination to pursue a career in education remained unwavering, and the Aspiring Teachers program was a way for me to get back into the swing of things and only deepened my desire to become a teacher.

What did you find to be most beneficial from participating in the program or initiative?

It's given me a chance to see what I've always believed, which is that education has the power to transform lives and communities. There has been a group of people supporting me for years, and I know I can always come back to them for help.

