



Dallas, Texas

Dallas, Texas, is one of the six sites selected to participate in the *New Skills ready network*. This five-year initiative, launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in 2020, aims to improve student completion of high-quality career pathways.

In the first year of this initiative, the Dallas, Texas, *New Skills ready network* team's successes included getting buy-in and alignment on key data sources and definitions for labor market information, launching a virtual internship toolkit and mapping the data elements needed to track and monitor student college and career readiness.

Dallas, Texas, continued to make progress on these efforts in the second year of the initiative, including by reorganizing its leadership structure to achieve greater impact, identifying key supports employers need after the first year

of hosting virtual internships, reorganizing a division within Dallas Independent School District (ISD) to better connect all career-focused options for learners and moving forward on key findings from a comprehensive landscape analysis of career exploration efforts across Dallas ISD.

In 2021-22, the Dallas, Texas, *New Skills ready network* team focused on:



Establishing and formalizing an effective cross-sector governance and staffing model;

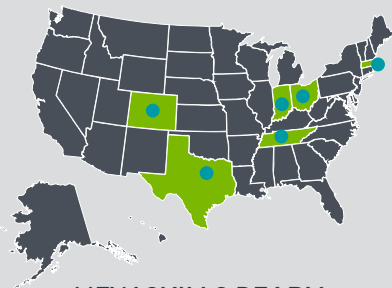


Strengthening advising systems across the middle grades; and



Launching marketing campaigns to promote opportunities in technology and health care.

THE NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK



NEW SKILLS READY NETWORK SITES:

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

New Skills ready network, launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. 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 new \$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 second 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.

Partners engaged on the leadership team

- 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

Dallas, Texas

The *New Skills ready network* work in Dallas, Texas, is being 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.

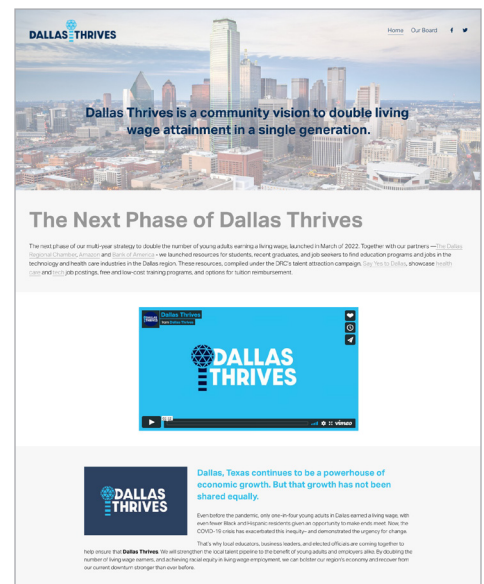
PRIORITY 1



Establishing and formalizing an effective cross-sector governance and staffing model

Launching the *New Skills ready network* after aligned initiatives, including the Dallas County Promise and Dallas Thrives, were launched led to significant governance and operational challenges. In year two, the partners decided to stand up a steering committee, which falls under the Dallas Thrives umbrella, that will drive all pathways-related work in the region. This steering committee brings together and supports the alignment of the eight major systems in Dallas that are serving youth and young adults. These eight systems currently serve 80 percent of the learners and youth in the Dallas region, the target population for *New Skills ready network* and Dallas Thrives.

Importantly, as Dallas Thrives takes a holistic approach to meeting its living-wage attainment goal and engages a wide variety of stakeholders, this new steering committee is enabling a more focused approach to aligning metrics, data, resources and priorities focused squarely on education and workforce development. In many ways, this new steering committee is now at the foundation of Dallas Thrives and will help focus the work going forward through the lens of career pathways. The steering committee members are meeting monthly and have dedicated staff members to participate in working groups and drive the work internally as well. A priority for year two has been mapping each partner’s priorities, programs and metrics to maximize the capacity of each organization.





Strengthening advising systems across the middle grades

In year one of *New Skills ready network* initiative, Dallas ISD commissioned an extensive landscape analysis of the career exploration and advisement opportunities available to middle school learners. Dallas ISD undertook this work because a previous analysis, also funded through the *New Skills ready network*, demonstrated that the district was not fully taking advantage of the state-level incentives provided through the College, Career & Military Readiness (CCMR) outcomes bonus. A takeaway from the CCMR funding analysis was a need for more intentional advising to ensure that students were engaging in high-value college- and career-ready pathways and programs.

The career advisement landscape analysis engaged a wide array of stakeholders, including families, learners, community members, educators, local school board members and others. The analysis intentionally used a broad lens to understand where the district was successful and where there were gaps. A key finding was that the district was offering far too many options, with little consistency across and within schools. A recommendation was for Dallas ISD to come together to identify a consistent approach to middle school advising.

Dallas ISD is a unique district in that it is truly a district of choice. Learners have an array of high school options including comprehensive high schools, Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH), early college high schools and regional Career Institutes. By January of eighth grade, all students need to identify which school they want to enroll in for the following year. To ensure that all learners can make informed decisions that align with their interests and post-high school plans, Dallas ISD decided to invest in a new curriculum, which will be required for all seventh-grade students starting in the 2022-23 school year, after a pilot in eight middle schools in spring 2022. The curriculum intentionally focuses on career exploration so learners can understand their options and then map their interests to career pathways, which then map to the various school options. The goal is to help students identify a program of choice and then direct them to the best school option that offers that program. The curriculum is designed to be embedded in the seventh-grade technical applications course, which is already required, giving learners and families enough time to make an informed decision in the following year.

This middle grade curriculum is part of a larger district-wide effort to expand opportunities and access to meaningful career-focused programs. Dallas ISD made a critical choice in the last year, in part due to the support of and discussions driven by the *New Skills ready network*, to bring Career Technical Education and the Career Institutes into the same division as P-TECH, early college high schools and other college- and career-ready initiatives. This restructuring is allowing the district to better communicate about the array of options and embed the various career pathways into students' broader career exploration efforts, starting in the elementary schools. For example, starting in summer 2022, the district will be providing opportunities for approximately 80 middle school learners to attend Career Institutes to explore the model and opportunities.

This work is still in the early stages, and much will be learned from the pilot to inform the full roll-out in the 2022-23 school year. Dallas ISD is focusing on how to ensure consistent implementation of the curriculum and how to support comprehensive K-12 career counseling.



Launching marketing campaigns to promote opportunities in technology and health care

As part of the Dallas, Texas, steering committee's work to map priorities, they identified a lack of engagement in the various education and workforce opportunities being provided throughout the region in the in-demand sectors of technology and health care. Despite the many careers pathways and programs that prepare learners for employment in these key sectors, enrollment and participation remained relatively low, while demand from employers continued to increase. The steering committee decided to leverage an existing marketing campaign ("Say Yes to Dallas") and directed the Dallas Regional Chamber to launch two industry-specific campaigns — "[Say Yes to Tech](#)" and "[Say Yes to Health Care](#)."



These campaigns are using digital and physical channels to connect with target audiences to direct them to educational programs and jobs in health care and technology. Through the *New Skills ready network* partnership, the Dallas Regional Chamber convenes major information technology and health care employers to launch industry partnerships tied to high-demand middle-skills occupations providing a living wage. Through direct employer partnership, the campaigns aim to promote the opportunities within these sectors for living-wage careers and elevate the region's industry-aligned education and training programs — including programs offered by the district's Career Institutes; two- and four-year partners; and other intermediaries, such as Per Scholas. Early data indicates high interest in these campaigns as they generated more than 1 million web impressions in just the first two weeks after their launch in February 2022.

While the campaigns are not currently funded by the *New Skills ready network*, several *New Skills ready network* initiatives will be featured. Additionally, in recognition that learners, particularly those in middle and high school, may need more intentional outreach, the steering committee is planning to invest *New Skills ready network* resources in more deliberate engagement and hands-on support for the target populations. In addition, the campaign is leveraging the *New Skills ready network*-supported Greenlight database to identify and target messages to the 70,000-plus learners who participated in Dallas County Promise but are not currently enrolled in postsecondary.

Looking Ahead

The reset on the leadership team structure is fostering a new model of collaboration and impact, with the outcomes of this new governance just beginning to pay off at the end of year two. In the year ahead, a major priority for the steering committee is building on existing informal and bi-lateral data sharing agreements to develop and formalize multi-lateral agreements to identify and track key metrics and resources with an emphasis on information technology, health care and education career pathways. They will also continue to advance work that began in year one to better leverage and coordinate shared labor market data.

To support the new middle school curriculum, Dallas ISD will be developing a year-long framework, which charts out a monthly — and potentially weekly — approach to advising and counseling to support principals in implementing systemic advising. The district will also be providing all teachers responsible for the technical applications course professional development on the new curriculum and will be deploying trainers from the district level to schools.