



NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

DATA SOURCES

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NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

New Skills for Youth Evaluation Data Sources

This document summarizes RTI's data collection strategies for the *New Skills for Youth* (NSFY) Phase 2 evaluation, from the initiative's start in early 2017 through its conclusion in December 2019. RTI arrived at the evaluation findings by triangulating and synthesizing information from three sources:

- Interviews
- NSFY Documentation
- Key Indicator Data



Interviews

RTI conducted semistructured interviews with state and local stakeholders each year to understand states' NSFY strategies, implementation progress, and plans for sustaining NSFY work (**Exhibit 1**).

EXHIBIT 1

Summary of NSFY Interviews

INTERVIEW ACTIVITY	INTERVIEW TIMING	FOCUS OF INTERVIEW(S)	PRIMARY INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS	
			STATE	LOCAL
Telephone interviews with state leaders	June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition of NSFY State Teams • Approaches to organizing and administering NSFY work • State definitions of career pathways 	●	
Telephone interviews with data specialists	Aug 2017 - Oct 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of key indicator data • State data system capabilities 	●	
Site visit 1	Sept 2017 - Jan 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program administration • Key NSFY activities in each state • State implementation progress • Perceived effects of NSFY 	●	
Site visit 2	Oct 2018 - Jan 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State implementation progress • Local implementation progress • Perceived effects of NSFY 	●	●
Phase 1 only interviews	June 2019 - Aug 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career pathway activities in states that received NSFY Phase 1 funds, but not Phase 2 funds • Perceived effects of NSFY 	●	
Site visit 3	Sep 2019 - Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local implementation progress 		●

Detailed information on interviews conducted before June 2019 can be found in the [annual evaluation reports](#). The annual reports do not incorporate two sets of interviews conducted since the release of the [2019 evaluation report](#):

- Interviews with career pathway administrators in Phase 1 only states, which received NSFY Phase 1 funds to develop plans to expand high-quality career pathways, but were not selected to receive Phase 2 funds to implement the plans; and
- Site visits to high schools and career academies identified by NSFY state leads and coaches as reflective of progress during NSFY.

Exhibit 2 provides additional information on interview topics, participating states, research questions, and subtopics for the two most recent sets of interviews.

EXHIBIT 2

2019 Interview Topics, Participating States, Research Questions, and Subtopics

INTERVIEW ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATING STATES	INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT(S)	TOPIC & RESEARCH QUESTION	SUBTOPICS
Phase 1 only interviews (n=9)	HI, IL, IN, NC, NH, NJ, PA, VT, WA	Career pathway administrators	State-level policy and programming <i>Comparing states that did and did not participate in NSFY phase 2, how did the two groups differ in terms of statewide career pathway development?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career pathway priorities and activities since NSFY Phase 1 • Stakeholders involved in career pathways work • Policies and incentives related to high-quality career pathways • Barriers to implementing high-quality career pathways • Perceived effects of NSFY
Site visit 3 (n=102)	DE, KY, LA, MA, NV, OH, OK, RI, TN, WI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and school administrators • Career and technical education (CTE) and work-based learning coordinators • Career pathway teachers • Guidance counselors and other advisors • Community Partners • Employer partners • Postsecondary partners 	Local implementation progress <i>What progress did states make in expanding access to and participation in high-quality career pathways at the district and school levels, in accordance with NSFY objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local career pathway design and implementation • Changes to career pathways resulting from state NSFY activities • Local efforts to engage key stakeholders, including local education agencies, employers, postsecondary partners, community members, parents, and students • Perceived successes, challenges, and lessons learned

For each set of evaluation interviews, RTI staff prepared role-specific interview guides reflecting data collection priorities, and then tailored the guides for each state using information from previous data collection, NSFY documentation, and insights from NSFY state coaches.

Two RTI researchers conducted each interview. Most interviews took between 30 minutes and 1 hour, and all were audio recorded with permission from the participants. Following data collection, RTI had the interview recordings professionally transcribed. Interviewers then conducted thematic analyses to synthesize findings.

NSFY Documentation

Exhibit 3 lists documentation containing information on NSFY implementation reviewed by RTI and analyzed throughout the evaluation. The volume and content of documentation varied across states.

EXHIBIT 3

NSFY Documentation

TYPE	FREQUENCY	CONTENT AND RELEVANCE
State documents and program artifacts	During site visits or through ad hoc communication with states	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State presentations, newsletters, websites, and other materials reflecting implementation progress• Materials from local education agencies reflecting local career pathway practices
NSFY snapshots	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State legal and policy contexts• Highlights of implementation activities• Current and future strategic priorities
NSFY state profiles	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal review of state work by NSFY objective• Summary of project spending
Non-NSFY resources	Continuously monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local, state, and national media reports related to NSFY work, on topics including graduation rates, the launch of new pathways, and pathway grant awards

NSFY Key Indicator Data

As a condition of receiving grant funds, NSFY states were required to provide data on key indicators reflecting students' career pathways access, participation, completion, and related outcomes (**Exhibit 4**). For indicators with asterisks, data were requested overall and restricted to high-skill, high-demand (HSHD) sectors.

EXHIBIT 4

NSFY Key Indicators

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION
Career pathways access*	The number of students, disaggregated by subgroup, with access to high-quality career pathways that span secondary and postsecondary levels, 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 with labor market value. Students could access such pathways through their high school, a CTE center, or other course delivery system.
Career pathways participation*	The number of grade 9-12 students, disaggregated by subgroup, enrolling in one or more courses in a career pathway by the end of the academic year (AY).
Career pathways completion*	The number students, disaggregated by subgroup, who completed one or more secondary career pathways by the end of high school.
Dual credit attainment	The number of students, disaggregated by subgroup, who earned high school and college credit for at least one dual or concurrent enrollment course by the end of high school.
Industry-recognized credential (IRC) attainment*	The number of students, disaggregated by subgroup, who earned at least one IRC by the end of high school.
Postsecondary enrollment	The number of high school graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education or training programs within 6 months of graduation.
Employment*	The number of high school graduates who obtained employment within 6 months of graduation.

*For this indicator, states also provided data restricted to HSHD sectors.

NSFY states provided four phases of NSFY key indicator data, mostly corresponding to four consecutive academic years: 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 (**Exhibit 5**). Data for postsecondary enrollment and employment reflect student outcomes following graduation and thus lag by one academic year.

EXHIBIT 5

NSFY Key Indicator Reporting Phases

INDICATOR	REPORTING PHASE			
	BASELINE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Career pathways access	AY 2015-2016	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019
Career pathways participation				
Career pathways completion	Fall 2012 9th grade cohort	Fall 2013 9th grade cohort	Fall 2014 9th grade cohort	Fall 2015 9th grade cohort
Dual credit attainment				
IRC attainment				
Postsecondary enrollment	2014-2015 graduates	2015-2016 graduates	2016-2017 graduates	2017-2018 graduates
Employment				

The report [Career Pathways-Related Indicators: Findings from the New Skills for Youth Initiative](#) documents the strengths and limitations of state data systems in supplying data on college and career readiness using NSFY key indicators and related measures. As the report indicates, most NSFY state data systems currently cannot provide student-level career pathway data in accordance with the NSFY indicator definitions. Seven states are using state-approved CTE programs of study, as defined by the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV)*, as a proxy for career pathways. The exceptions are:

- Louisiana, which reported access to the state’s recently implemented Jump Start programs;
- Delaware, which used programs of study for non-HSHD pathways and Delaware Pathways for HSHD; and
- Massachusetts, which provided data on its CTE programs, but intended to supplement those data with information on the state’s recently implemented early college and innovation pathways.

Although the career pathways data do not reflect all elements of a high-quality career pathway as defined by NSFY, they provide an overview of student access to and engagement in CTE programs, which are a foundation for pathways development.

In addition to their inability to operationalize career pathways as prescribed, states faced other challenges in providing key indicator data. RTI prepared detailed data submission instructions to clarify each indicator; improve the consistency of data collected across states; and collect supporting documentation critical to understanding the data. Submissions revealed that some states' available data differed from the indicator definitions in the instructions. In other cases, states flagged data for some indicators as being of low quality or not comparable over time, precluding trend analysis. RTI worked with each state to obtain the best data available for measuring the indicators with fidelity and assessing changes during NSFY.



Exhibit 6 summarizes Year 3 data submissions from each state for each indicator, noting data inconsistencies and limitations.

EXHIBIT 6

Year 3 NSFY Indicator Reporting Summary

State	Career Pathways Access	Career Pathways Participation	Career Pathways Completion	Dual Credit Attainment	IRC Attainment	Post-secondary Enrollment	Employment
DE	CP for HSHD only	CP for HSHD only	CP for HSHD only	–	CTE, T	–	CTE for HSHD only, T
KY	–	–	–	–	CTE for HSHD only	Def	T
LA	CP	CP	CP	Def	CTE for HSHD only	–	T
MA	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
NV	–	–	–	AY, Q, T	CTE, Def	T	T
OH	–	–	–	–	–	T	CTE
OK	–	–	AY	AY, Def, S	AY, CTE, T	AY, Def, S	CTE, T
RI	–	–	–	Def, T	CTE, T	–	–
TN	T	T	T	Def	CTE, Q, T	–	–
WI	HSHD	HSHD, T	AY	AY, Def, T	AY, CTE for HSHD only, Def, T	–	CTE

Key:

- **AY:** Numerator or denominator data were inconsistent with the requested cohort, grades, or academic year.
- **CP:** Data reflected a more nuanced definition for career pathways than used in other states; LA restricted reporting to Jump Start programs, and DE used programs of study for non-HSHD reporting and Delaware Pathways for HSHD reporting.
- **CTE:** Data were limited to CTE students (relevant only for the final four indicators).
- **HSHD:** When requested, HSHD counts were unavailable.
- **Q:** Data were inaccurate, low quality, or inconsistent.
- **S:** Data disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, income, English proficiency, and/or disability status were unavailable.
- **T:** Year 3 data were not comparable to baseline, Year 1, or Year 2 data, or the state did not have data for one or more years.
- **Def:** The indicator was operationalized differently from that requested in ways not captured by other data flags.

The final report does not include data on career pathway access because most states reported more than 90 percent of students having access to career pathways, in accordance with state policy or school offerings. The estimates likely overestimate access, however, because states lack data on school- and district-level barriers to access, such as distance from or transportation to sites where career pathways are offered, administrative barriers to enrolling, and capacity issues. The final

report also excludes data on postsecondary enrollment and employment because students were just beginning to complete the programs developed (or redesigned) through NSFY by its conclusion.

Exhibit 7 provides detailed data notes regarding figures showing indicator data in the final report.

EXHIBIT 7

Notes Regarding Indicator Data in the Final Report

FIGURE	INDICATOR	DATA NOTES
Participation in HSHD career pathways across states	Career pathways participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE and LA: Included for all years, but data reflect a more stringent definition for career pathways than those used in other states. • MA: Excluded from Y3 data only because the state did not submit Y3 data. • TN: Included for all years, but baseline and Y1 data are not comparable to Y2 and Y3 because early submissions included some students in grades 7 and 8. • WI: Excluded for all years because the state cannot provide data on participation in HSHD pathways before students reach CTE concentrator status.
Completion of HSHD career pathways across states	Career pathways completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE and LA: Included for all years, but data reflect a more stringent definition for career pathways than those used in other states. • MA: Excluded from Y3 data only because the state did not submit Y3 data. • OK: Excluded for all years because the state is unable to provide cohort data. • TN: Included for all years, but baseline and Y1 data are not comparable to Y2 and Y3 data because state requirements for career pathway completion changed. • WI: Excluded for all years because data reflect grade 12 and 12 students only and do not represent the full cohort.
Participation in HSHD career pathways by state	Career pathways participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE and LA: Data reflect a more stringent definition for career pathways than those used in other states. • MA: Y3 data not submitted. • TN: Baseline and Y1 data are not comparable to Y2 and Y3 because early submissions included some students in grades 7 and 8. • WI: Data reflect participation in all pathways (not only those aligned to HSHD sectors) because the state cannot provide data on participation in HSHD pathways before students reach CTE concentrator status; baseline, Y1, and Y2 data censored because the state adopted a new data system, and Y3 data are not comparable to previous years.

FIGURE	INDICATOR	DATA NOTES
Completion of HSHD career pathways by state	Career pathways completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE and LA: Data reflect a more stringent definition for career pathways than those used in other states. • MA: Y3 data not submitted. • OK: Data reflect completion among all grade 9-12 students, as the state was unable to provide cohort data. • TN: Baseline and Y1 data censored because the state's requirements for career pathway completion changed in Y2. • WI: Data reflect grade 11 and 12 students only and do not represent the full cohort.
IRC attainment in Kentucky	IRC attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data displayed for a single state because of wide variation in the data reported for IRC attainment. • Data reflect certifications or credentials offered by third-party organizations and through pre-apprenticeship programs. • HSHD reporting limited to IRCs aligned to and earned in HSHD career pathways. • Data collected from districts and from vendors issuing the IRCs.
Participation in and completion of pathways by student subgroup	Career pathways participation Career pathways completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA: Excluded from the participation and completion analysis because Y3 data not submitted. • TN: Excluded from the participation and completion analysis because baseline and Y1 data are not comparable to Y2 and Y3 data. • WI: Excluded from participation analysis only because the state cannot provide data on participation in HSHD pathways before students reach CTE concentrator status and because Y3 data are not comparable to previous years.
Dual credit attainment in Ohio	Dual credit attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data displayed for a single state because of wide variation in the data reported for dual credit attainment. • Data reflect students who earned high school credit and postsecondary credit at any point in high school. • Data include students who earned partial credit.

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