

What
Works

Business partnerships that grow talent pipelines



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Strong talent pipelines aligned to business needs have the potential to enhance regional economic vitality and expand pathways for worker mobility. Creating these pipelines requires cross-sector solutions. Roughly six in ten workers will require skills training before 2027, but only half have access to adequate training opportunities.¹ As emerging technological changes such as AI continue to impact labor market outcomes, this training will be even more critical. Employers have a vital role to play in these efforts by providing insight into growing sectors and occupations, in-demand skills, and other workplace trends.

Regional partnerships with engaged business leaders are often most effective at bringing together stakeholders from across the education, training, social, and business sectors to create talent development strategies.² While these partnerships can take many forms, they typically bring together local organizations to establish a collective vision, agree on shared goals, and create a roadmap to advance their priorities.³ Through planning and collaboration, these partnerships can tackle challenges stemming from an evolving workforce landscape (e.g., advancements in technology including the rapid growth of AI, shifts in worker demographics, and occupational skill needs) and promote strategies that increase access to career pathways that offer a living wage. By centering the needs of both workers and employers, these partnerships can help to advance a stronger US economy that benefits all communities.

Our commitment to careers and skills

As an employer of over 300,000 workers globally, JPMorganChase is committed to expanding opportunities for skills development and career mobility. Over the last 5 years, we hired, on average, over 54,000 workers per year across a wide range of occupations. We are deeply engaged in regional talent partnerships that contribute to economic growth in cities across the US, including Chicago, Columbus, Dallas, Houston, New York City, and Washington, DC.

In the last 5 years, we have invested more than \$500 million in expanding career and wealth-building opportunities nationally. Because of our business needs and dedication to expanding access to opportunities at the firm, we have also supported efforts to bring workers who are often overlooked back into the workforce through apprenticeships and other hiring strategies that support veterans, those re-entering the workforce after a career pause, and justice-impacted individuals.

Regional talent partnerships

Addressing talent needs requires cross-sector collaboration and investment. A regional talent partnership supports economic growth and worker mobility by aligning education and business efforts, and enhancing economic inclusivity by focusing on accessibility for underserved populations.⁴ Regional talent partnerships can unlock additional resources and reach greater scale by attracting outside funding from member companies, foundations, or state and federal policymakers. Supplemental funding beyond the resources of participating organizations helps workforce development efforts maintain flexibility and evolve alongside rapidly changing market conditions. For example, P33, an intermediary in Chicago, played a critical role in the launch of the Discovery Partners Institute, a transformational \$500 million initiative to bring the University of Illinois' world-class faculty and programs to downtown Chicago, expanding tech career opportunities for workers from all local communities.

Regional talent partnerships can also improve the communication of real-time market insights between businesses, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations that lead job training and upskilling efforts, improving alignment with demand-driven learning opportunities.⁵ These mutually beneficial relationships may help more people access opportunities to earn credentials connected to well-paying jobs and careers. Nearly 70 percent of US workers say that earning an alternative credential has helped them progress in their careers.⁶ Similarly, these partnerships can strengthen work-based learning experiences like internships and apprenticeships by focusing on employer needs, engaging educational institutions, connecting workers to these opportunities, and elevating promising practices. In a survey of 1,000 registered apprenticeship program sponsors, nearly all cited apprenticeships as helping meet their need for skilled workers.⁷

Regional talent partnerships can contribute to increased investment that leads to economic growth across local communities. For example, The Greater Washington Partnership announced that its leading employers collectively invested \$3.2 billion in 2 years toward economic growth strategies, including programs focused on entrepreneurship, health access, and affordable housing.⁸ This transformative pledge was part of a \$4.7 billion commitment over 5 years.



Employers are most likely to engage in these partnerships when they see a benefit for their business, workers, and the local economy—namely, when the effort helps them meet their talent needs and supports their employees. Through their participation in these partnerships, businesses can provide:



In-demand skills and occupations

Signals from the private sector based on real-time market information help educators and training programs understand which occupations to prepare students for, how to ensure future workers are prepared to enter the workforce, and how to best support workers looking to update their skills.



Exposure and experience

The private sector provides projects, internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning experiences critical for giving students the ability to convert classroom learning into marketable skills and experiences they can leverage in future job opportunities.



Hiring pipelines

Businesses can create new career pathways for college graduates or job training programs to expand the talent pipeline.⁹

Effective regional talent partnerships are comprised of representatives from several companies who are aligned on a shared set of goals and organize to help increase the supply of employable talent and expand career opportunities in living-wage occupations.

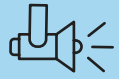
No one company can do this alone: Many individual companies do important and impactful work on these issues, but solutions that meet a region's demand for talent while advancing an economy that works for all require collective business engagement.

Elements for success

When effective, these partnerships are a powerful driver of broad growth that expands opportunity to low- and moderate-income communities, while also improving regional vitality.¹⁰ While the organizations that lead regional partnerships differ in needs, structure, size, and focus, we have identified 10 critical elements for success based on our experiences supporting and engaging these collaboratives in more than 6 cities.

1. Right people at the table

From the CEO to senior line of business leaders (e.g., Chief Human Resources Officer, Head of Engineering) to programmatic leads (e.g., Head of Early Careers), intermediaries should maintain relationships at various levels of seniority within member companies, with a focus on engaging leaders in business and talent functions.



Local strategy spotlight:
P33

P33 is a nonprofit organization in Chicago that seeks to transform the city into a leader in technology innovation, inclusivity, and economic growth. P33 facilitates connections between the education and workforce systems and employers in the tech sector and creates targeted solutions that expand access to high wage tech jobs for low-income Chicagoans. Their work aims to increase career pathway initiatives and expand access to high-wage tech jobs for all Chicagoans by working with public and private sector organizations and employers.

P33 established the Tech Talent Alliance (TTA), a coalition of technology and human resources leaders from more than 50 Chicago companies, focused on addressing tech talent challenges. TTA guidance led to employer-driven talent solutions such as Strong Start, which brought 9 employers into undergraduate computer science classes at 4 minority-serving institutions, resulting in 700 college students participating in industry relevant projects to better equip them for future tech employment. The TTA also played a role in securing \$4 million through the U.S. Department of Commerce, with the goal of establishing apprenticeship pathways into tech for residents with non-traditional backgrounds.¹¹



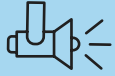
Insight: Through their work, P33 learned that their target employers prioritize work-based learning experiences that prepare people for the workforce when compared to micro certifications or credentials, information that is valuable as they consider how to best allocate resources. P33 also found that a key to scaling - hiring from across local communities within tech is moving these efforts from Social Responsibility functions to IT and HR departments, highlighting their importance as part of a company's overall talent strategy.

“ At P33 in Chicago, we are very intentional about building relationships with our business partners from Level 1 (CEO) to about Level 5. This ensures we are staying aligned on strategy with executives and executing operationally with managers, and that our partnership is resilient through turnover. This approach works in large part because those relationships are focused on delivering business value via two to three ambitious solutions member executives are excited about. The quarterly convening table plays a role, but we win by cultivating relationships throughout the year and delivering business value.

- **Brad Henderson**
CEO, P33

2. Shared perspective

Regional partnerships that effectively engage the private sector encourage businesses to be clear about their challenges and goals to pursue the most effective response to their talent needs, while also engaging with public, educational, and nonprofit partners in the service of shared goals.



Local strategy spotlight:

Greater Washington Partnership and Education Strategy Group

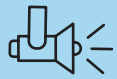
The Washington, DC-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) metro area is the 4th largest regional economy in the United States and among the 10 largest in the world.¹² With support from JPMorganChase, the Greater Washington Partnership (the Partnership) and Education Strategy Group (ESG) launched TalentReady in 2019 to expand career pathways opportunities across five jurisdictions: Fairfax County, VA; Montgomery County, MD; Prince George's County, MD; Baltimore, MD; and the District of Columbia.

TalentReady has two objectives: (1) provide regional leaders with the support necessary to align curricula to local labor market needs in high-demand industries, and (2) promote strategies to expand access to quality jobs for all communities. Leveraging data, employer engagement, and partner alignment to achieve these objectives yielded a number of positive outcomes. For example, from 2019 through 2023, the 5 participating communities collectively launched or expanded 19 technology-related pathways serving more than 25,000 students.¹³

Critical to the success of TalentReady was establishing direct engagement with jurisdiction leaders, to secure the necessary buy-in and accountability at the highest levels and ensure prioritization for this work across partners. TalentReady also took a cross-jurisdictional approach that enabled peer-to-peer learning and established shared language around in-demand skills and components of high-quality career pathways. This strong foundation enabled the jurisdiction teams to maintain efforts through disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Critical mass

The number, size, and aggregate brand-value of member companies mobilized through a single intermediary organization draws additional attention and resources to a regional partnership. A critical mass of participating organizations can potentially open doors with other partners, while also creating a cohesive narrative for the region on talent development strategies that work for all communities.



Local strategy spotlight:
Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance

The Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance, Advocate Healthcare, and several other partners launched the Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative (CHWC) in 2015, creating a new healthcare industry workforce partnership, which brought together Chief Human Resources Officers from leading health

systems to discuss their shared talent challenges and develop solutions that benefited the industry. CHWC's membership now includes a dozen health and hospital systems supported by 20+ strategic partners to execute research projects, host peer learning events, work in committees, and launch pilot programs.¹⁴

4. Sufficient staffing

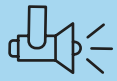
Too many civic collaborations bring the right people into a room to generate ideas but lack the staff—in bandwidth or skills—to activate those ideas after the meeting. Intermediaries should mitigate bandwidth or skills-based shortages by hiring or narrowing the scope of work to align with resources. When hiring, seek skills in project management, effective collaboration, product development, or operations; commercial acumen to establish credibility with partners; and a foundational understanding of the region's education and workforce systems.

5. Flexible funding

Flexible organizational funding allows intermediaries to be entrepreneurial, adaptive to changes in the market, and responsive to opportunities. Funding narrowly tied to specific programmatic activities should be kept to a minimum.

6. Commercial orientation & community Voice

Regional talent partnerships need to clearly and continually articulate the business problem(s) they are solving. They should ensure that solutions will work within the operating context and constraints of local businesses to achieve the greatest degree of collaboration and buy-in from private sector partners. At the same time, partners with roots in these communities can help elevate community voices, prioritize ensuring all communities benefit, and identify opportunities to help maximize the social impact of these investments. Philanthropy, often including Corporate Social Responsibility, contributes to bringing these partners together and securing resources to sustain these efforts.



Local strategy spotlight:
New York Jobs CEO Council

In order to support increased economic opportunities in today's evolving workforce, including for traditionally underserved New Yorkers, JPMorganChase and other leading businesses launched the New York Jobs CEO Council ("Jobs Council")—a coalition of employers that partner with education institutions and community organizations to help drive results across New York City. Launched in 2020, the Jobs Council seeks to increase access to career readiness training, apprenticeships, and internships to cultivate long-term, stable career pathways. Jobs Council member companies have hired nearly 40,000 low-income New Yorkers—almost halfway toward their overall goal of hiring 100,000 low-income New Yorkers into family-sustaining careers by 2030.¹⁵

Leveraging the strengths of strategic partnerships and community engagement, the Jobs Council supports several initiatives—such as the Career Readiness and Modern Youth Apprenticeship program, the Faculty Fellowship, and the AWS Tech Alliance—which help expand economic opportunity for all and create a future-focused, resilient workforce for New York City. JPMorganChase is leveraging lessons learned from its collaboration with the Jobs Council to promote policy solutions, including efforts to strengthen apprenticeships by linking them to credit-bearing postsecondary coursework.





Local strategy spotlight: **Ohio Excels**

Columbus, one of the fastest-growing regions in the Midwest, has been a major driver of economic growth in Ohio, with significant increases in its population and workforce from 2000 to 2020.¹⁶ To sustain this growth and to maintain its competitiveness, local leaders are investing in education and skills development, aligned with business needs, to strengthen Columbus' workforce.¹⁷ Over the past 5 years, JPMorganChase has committed \$14.6 million in advancing high-quality career pathways, including those in emerging industries that demand highly technical skills, for Central Ohio residents. These commitments build on JPMorganChase's 155-year commitment to the Columbus community and its role as one of Central Ohio's largest private employers, with over 18,000 workers. The firm supports Ohio Excels, a nonpartisan education nonprofit, to lead Columbus' New Skills Ready Network (NSRN). NSRN aligns educational pathways with workforce needs, expanding access to career and technical education, and fostering partnerships between educational institutions and businesses, as part of the firm's broader global strategy to help prepare people for careers that enhance economic mobility.

Through NSRN and more recent commitments, Ohio Excels is advancing a statewide career-connected learning strategy to better align education and workforce systems with labor market needs. Local leaders have noted the importance of career connected learning, as studies indicate that 75 percent of job growth in Ohio will occur in occupations requiring at least a postsecondary non-degree credential, and 58 percent of growth will be in occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher. However, Ohio lags in the availability of skilled workers to fill these roles, underscoring the need for a systems-based approach. Ohio Excels has helped respond to this need through robust partnerships, innovative, data-driven strategies, and significant public and private sector commitments. The following are examples of essential elements of Columbus' approach and early results:

- **Collaborative Business-Driven Talent Development:** Columbus engages employers in education and workforce coalitions to help meet regional labor market needs. For example, Ohio Excels and its partners have engaged with more than 75 local businesses to strengthen talent pipelines.¹⁸ These partnerships have informed curricula design and enhanced work-based learning experiences that prepare students for in-demand jobs, particularly as technological advancements such as AI reshape the workforce landscape. Ohio Excels prioritized investing in partner development because trust-based partnerships that go beyond transactional relationships are crucial for driving meaningful systems change. Additionally, One Columbus spearheads a regional workforce collaboration, with a focus on emerging industries like advanced manufacturing and automotive technology. This initiative unites key business and community organizations, including Zora's House, NationSwell, Ohio Excels, and Columbus City Schools, to align educational and training programs with industry demands.
- **Innovative Education and Workforce Alignment:** Columbus City Schools, Columbus State Community College, and The Ohio State University are developing coordinated curricula and work-based learning experiences aligned with industry needs, particularly in IT and healthcare, including expanding IT learning experiences into

middle schools. Over the past 3 years, according to Ohio Excels, student participation in IT and health career pathways has risen by 7 percent across all partner institutions, with a 117 percent increase among economically disadvantaged students in Columbus City Schools, demonstrating the potential of cross-sector collaboration in creating seamless transitions from education to employment. Moreover, the adoption of an open lottery system for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs has significantly increased participation, with healthcare and IT programs reaching near full capacity. The introduction of a lottery system for CTE programs at Columbus City Schools increased applications by 29.8 percent, with 72.3 percent of students receiving their first-choice program.¹⁹ By removing barriers to workforce entry, Columbus is fostering economic growth that benefits the entire community.

- **Building and Scaling Career-Connected Learning Across Ohio:** Ohio Excels is leveraging lessons from its deep relationships with the business community and Columbus New Skills Ready Network to advance a statewide vision: ensure every student in Ohio has access to high-quality career-connected learning. Recognizing that many regions are program rich but systems poor, Ohio Excels work with business leaders, policymakers, and educators to strengthen the infrastructure and policy support needed to scale what works. The goal is to embed career-connected learning earlier and ensure it's available to all students—not just those in career-tech programs. By aligning education and workforce systems across the state, Ohio Excels helps more students graduate with a plan, real-world experience, and in-demand skills.

To further strengthen the region's workforce and build on the progress made by Ohio Excels, in 2024, JPMorganChase committed \$2.1 million to support a newly formed regional workforce collaborative. Led by One Columbus, Central Ohio's leading economic development organization, this collaborative will enable five local organizations, including Ohio Excels, to better align the Columbus Region's workforce system to address employment disparities, enhance workforce development, and create an environment where individuals and families can fully benefit from the region's economic growth. By uniting local organizations from across the public and private sector, this network of Columbus partners is continuously assessing its progress to date, broadening its coalition, and identifying opportunities for additional targeted commitments that will further strengthen local systems.

“Ohio's long-term prosperity and success depends on whether its education system can meet the needs of students and employers alike. Ohio Excels has spearheaded a coalition-backed roadmap to expand career-connected learning—calling for legislative action to ensure that all students graduate with a meaningful plan, relevant skills, and real-world experiences. The inclusion of the business community in the development of this plan ensures critical alignment between the systems.

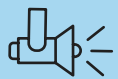
- **Lisa Gray**
President of Ohio Excels

7. Client service approach

Effective regional talent partnerships should take a systematic, disciplined, and aggressive approach to recruiting companies, then deepen their engagement and participation in talent solutions, similar to how businesses develop customer and client relationships to build long-term value. Identifying target partners, leveraging networks for introductions, and being persistent with follow-ups are strong foundations for initial success.

8. Spread the knowledge

Education and workforce leaders are hungry for intelligence on the jobs they should be preparing people for and how to do so effectively. Intermediaries should recognize the unique knowledge assets they possess, due to their partnerships with the private sector, and leverage partners to help advise on curriculum and necessary skill sets, as well as proactively share insights in digestible, actionable ways, such as published content or newsletters, local convenings, or direct conversation.



Local strategy spotlight:

Greater Washington Partnership's Employer Signaling

System Greater Washington Partnership's Employer Signaling System (ESS) is an interactive platform that combines labor market insights from technical experts representing the Partnership's employer partners. The system demonstrates the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) needed for high-value entry-level tech jobs across the region, from Baltimore to Richmond. The ESS creates a feedback loop between employers, who use it as a systematic way to communicate changing talent needs in their industries, and educators, to leverage KSAs contained in the ESS to better prepare learners for the in-demand jobs in the regional workforce.

9. Mobilize for scale

In mobilizing partners to be part of solutions, regional talent partnerships can become ecosystem entrepreneurs, unlocking the potential of organizations to collectively improve collaboration and advocate for critical public policy reforms. To achieve this goal, these partnerships should utilize large-scale funding from corporations, philanthropies, and public investments in talent and economic development.



Local strategy spotlight:
Ascend Indiana

Ascend Indiana was formed in 2016 as Central Indiana Corporate Partnership's cross-sector initiative focused on talent development. Over the years, the organization has played a leadership role in helping corporate, higher education, government, and philanthropic partners address Indiana's talent needs.

Ascend connects young professionals with Indiana career and internship opportunities, provides consulting services to companies to help meet their high-demand workforce needs, and delivers research that enables systems-level change. The Ascend Network online platform connects current students or recent graduates to internships and part-time and full-time jobs in Indiana. From 2018 through mid-2024, Ascend helped nearly 13,600 students navigate the internship and job search process, connecting 1,269 students with internships.

10. Emphasis on Impact

Taking a data-driven and evidence-based approach is a key element of success. To be transformative for their regions, these partnerships need to drive growth by expanding career opportunities and should identify metrics

to measure and track that impact over time. Setting goals and managing performance indicators around overall effectiveness and social impact differentiates high-performing intermediaries from the broader field.



Local strategy spotlight:
Dallas County Promise

Dallas County Promise (DCP) works on solving the workforce talent gap using a countywide initiative to ensure all students in participating high schools have access to postsecondary education, support during the transition, and complete college with the skills regional employers seek. Part of their strategy was an investment in shared systems for student outcomes tracking and analysis. So far, the year-to-year college enrollment rate increase of DCP participants surpasses that of the statewide high school graduate population (+5 percent vs. +3 percent). Amid a year of significant challenges with the financial aid application, 2024 DCP participants submitted FAFSA applications at a rate surpassing the state and nation by 12 and 21 percentage points, respectively, a critical indicator of postsecondary access and persistence.

Call to Action

The future workforce will be shaped by how well leaders across sectors collaborate to align priorities, share resources, address challenges, and invest in strategies aimed at developing talent pipelines that support economic growth benefiting all communities. Business leaders have an opportunity and obligation to shape talent development strategies and ensure that the needs of employers are met by actively engaging in regional talent partnerships. Leaders of talent partnerships across the U.S. can use the principles outlined here to identify areas for potential improvement to further their impact. By refining their approaches, these collaboratives can unlock the economies of scale, insights, and convening power required that facilitate systems-level change and help to transform local economies and pave the way for increased career mobility and wealth-building for workers.



About the What Works Series

The JPMorganChase “What Works” series leverages learnings from our firm’s business practices, philanthropic strategies, economic research, community engagement, and policy advocacy to elevate insights for scalable impact. When JPMorganChase does business in a community, we invest in the future of the people who live and work there. Whether meeting the demand for skilled workers, strengthening the resilience of small businesses, or helping families build and preserve intergenerational wealth, we advance proven strategies to drive broad economic growth.

Disclaimer: The metrics in this paper are derived from a variety of public and private sources, including data that were self-reported by JPMorganChase grant recipients. JPMorganChase has not independently verified these data and makes no representation or warranty as to the quality, completeness, accuracy or fitness for a particular purpose. The metrics as reported are not directly tied to funds or other support provided by JPMorganChase but rather are a result of a variety of factors.

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