



New Skills for Youth

RHODE ISLAND

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

Rhode Island was one of 10 states selected to participate in New Skills for Youth (NSFY), an initiative enhancing state efforts to increase the number of learners across the country who are prepared for success in both college and career. Between 2016 and 2019, Rhode Island strengthened its career readiness system through NSFY by:

Refreshing all statewide Career Technical Education (CTE) standards and aligning state funding with industry priorities

Through NSFY, Rhode Island focused on improving CTE program quality. To ensure that all CTE programs are aligned with industry expectations for entry-level work, the state's Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees, a body consisting of business and education leaders from across the state, created CTE standards in 57 career pathways across 13 high-priority sectors. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) also changed state policy to restrict state CTE funds to programs that are aligned with high-wage, high-demand industry sectors and created a new report card system for CTE programs so that CTE program approval and renewal can be based on considerations of student performance.



Establishing a statewide work-based learning intermediary

One of Rhode Island's major accomplishments was operationalizing work-based learning across the state through a statewide intermediary, [Skills for Rhode Island's Future](#). Supported by funding from the Governor's Workforce Board, Skills for Rhode Island's Future helps recruit, train and place high school students in internships and other work-based learning experiences aligned to their career pathway. Students recruited through the PrepareRI internship program complete a five-day bootcamp to prepare them for the world of work and earn wages and college credits once they are on the job. After its early success, Skills for Rhode Island's Future is expanding to serve postsecondary students in partnership with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner.

“This internship is an amazing experience for upcoming seniors. I get to tap into my passion for computer science, while earning a stipend and college credits!”

— Demitri Waite, 2019 PrepareRI Intern and Student, Academy for Career Exploration



Expanding equitable access to high-quality career pathways

In 2018, RIDE launched a new program called [CTE Innovation and Equity Grants](#) to reach under-served students. The program, which was funded by repurposing \$1.2 million in state CTE funds, provided two-year grants to help school districts recruit and support under-represented students. RIDE awarded grants to [eight local sites](#), which used the funds for efforts such as recruiting female students in information technology programs, students of color and low-income students in finance programs, and English language learners in pre-engineering programs. After the success of the first round of grants, Rhode Island is continuing the program with funding from the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V).

Seeding local innovation through a network of PrepareRI ambassadors

To foster local innovation, RIDE organized a network of teachers, administrators and school leaders to serve as [PrepareRI ambassadors](#) in their communities. Each ambassador receives a \$5,000 stipend to support a project focused on improving quality and access in PrepareRI career pathways. Since the launch of NSFY, RIDE has recruited 50 PrepareRI ambassadors across three cohorts.

MAJOR STATE POLICY WINS

Advanced Course Network (2016) [↗](#)

RIDE launched the Advanced Course Network, which allows high school students to pursue work-based learning, career preparation courses, dual enrollment and Advanced Placement courses through a variety of venues and providers. If an opportunity is not available at a learner's school, he or she can enroll in state-approved courses offered by nearby schools or community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, area technical centers, or Rhode Island Department of Labor training course providers.

State Accountability System (2017) [↗](#)

Rhode Island designed a new state accountability system in 2017 through the Every Student Succeeds Act. The new system established a postsecondary success indicator counting the number of students graduating high school with an industry-recognized credential or postsecondary credit. The first round of data for the postsecondary success indicator was published in 2019.

Governor's Work-Based Learning Guidance (2018) [↗](#)

Gov. Gina Raimondo's Workforce Board issued guidance in January 2018 to high schools, postsecondary institutions, training providers, and other entities involved in the delivery of work-based learning. The guidance articulated a statewide vision for work-based learning and provided definitions, guidelines and standards.

CTE Program Accountability (2018) [↗](#)

The Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees adopted a system to hold CTE programs accountable for learner success. Key metrics include credential completion rates, graduation rates, postsecondary outcomes and equity for CTE participants or concentrators.

Rhode Island NSFY Impact *by the Numbers*

61%

Increase in number of state-approved CTE programs since 2015

488

Number of students who completed PrepareRI internships in 2018 and 2019

32,504

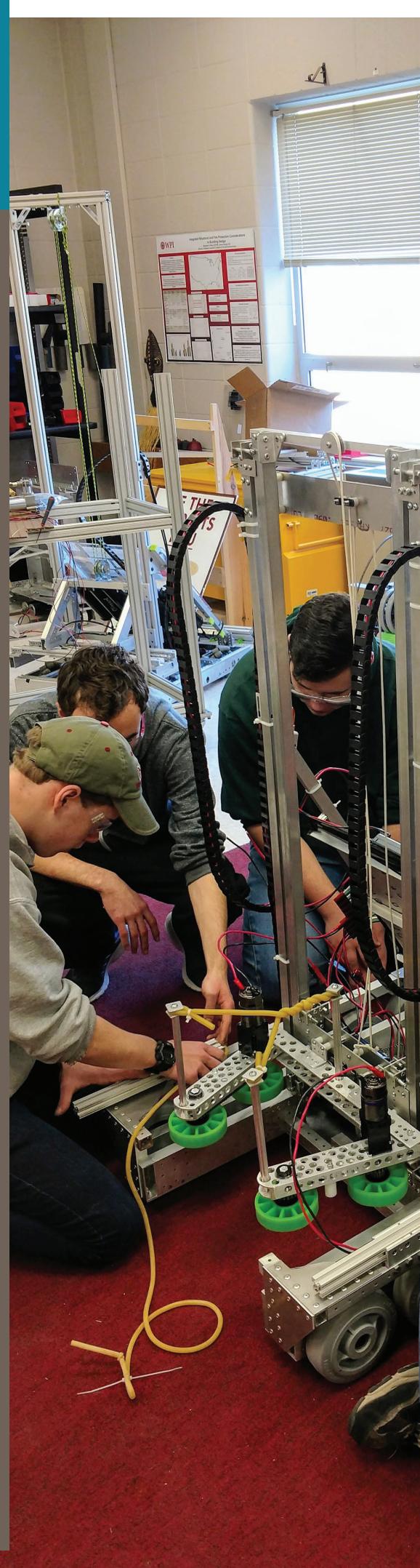
Number of hours worked through PrepareRI internships

20%

Percentage of the high school class of 2018 who concentrated in a CTE program in a priority sector, an increase of 3 percentage points from the 2014 cohort

50

Number of PrepareRI ambassadors recruited since 2017





Sustainability Strategy



Rhode Island has enjoyed strong support from state leaders since the beginning of the NSFY initiative. Gov. Gina Raimondo has been an ardent champion since she launched the PrepareRI initiative in 2016, and the state Legislature has provided additional funding to sustain PrepareRI internships. RIDE has worked to diversify funding for PrepareRI to include state funds and philanthropic dollars. In 2019, RIDE announced a partnership with XQ, a non-profit that is providing grants to help transform Rhode Island high schools with a focus on work-based learning, academic proficiency, and postsecondary credits and industry credentials.

Rhode Island NSFY Local Impact: The Met School

PrepareRI has helped learners get a leg up on college and their future careers through work-based learning, industry-aligned career pathways and access to advanced courses. For example, Aaliyah Ortiz, a student at the Met School in Providence, RI, earned 17 college credits and completed three internships — all before graduating high school. These experiences helped her recognize her passion for computer science and develop her skills, abilities and credentials in the field before transitioning to college. Students at the Met, along with all students across the state, benefit from increased access to dual credit and CTE opportunities through the Advanced Course Network. They can also complete a PrepareRI internship aligned to their program of study. And as a recipient of one of RIDE's CTE Innovation and Equity grants, the Met has been working to bolster enrollment of students of color and low-income students in finance programs.



ABOUT NSFY

NSFY is a \$75 million national initiative developed by JPMorgan Chase & Co. As part of this initiative, the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group worked with states to improve their career readiness systems. NSFY consisted of two phases. During Phase One (March-October 2016), states conducted a comprehensive needs assessment and developed action plans to examine and transform their career readiness systems and expand the opportunities available to learners. During Phase Two (January 2017-December 2019), states executed their three-year plans to transform their career readiness systems.