



MICHIGAN



Invest Forward is an initiative that encourages districts and states to prioritize investing a significant portion of their American Rescue Plan resources in helping students successfully access postsecondary education and succeed in future career pathways. As part of the effort to equip district and state leaders with high-impact strategies to guide their investments, Invest Forward will continue to highlight the work of **innovative local and state leaders** who are using the once-in-a-lifetime stimulus funding to give students a better tomorrow by investing in postsecondary pathways today.

ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY AND CREATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

Investments in strong postsecondary pathways—the meaningful connections between K-12 education and college and career—are vital to ensuring a better future for our young people.

While the American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides \$123 billion in dedicated education funding for local and state education agencies, the State Fiscal Recovery Fund within the ARP offers another opportunity for state leaders to support students' postsecondary pathways during pandemic recovery efforts. A Michigan effort to build more work-based learning experiences for students, with a particular focus on health care opportunities, illustrates how state legislators can play a role in supporting postsecondary pathways with their American Rescue Plan appropriations priorities.

A CREATIVE RESPONSE TO HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES



Like states and communities across the country, Michigan found itself facing a concerning **shortage of healthcare professionals** as the

coronavirus pandemic stretched into 2022. As state legislators considered ways to address the shortage, a connection with leaders from NAF presented an innovative potential solution.

NAF focuses on building students' college and career readiness by partnering with communities to implement **NAF academies**, which are small learning communities within existing high schools. NAF academies provide students with courses and work-based learning experiences in growing industries, including **finance, hospitality & tourism, information technology, engineering**, and—most notably for Michigan leadership—**health sciences**. Employers work with NAF academies to offer a wide range of work-based learning experiences including worksite tours, classroom speakers, job shadows, mentorships, and many students complete a paid internship with a local employer in the designated field of their NAF academy during their junior year of high school. The model enables students to gain real work experience and explore different career pathways while also giving local employers the chance to connect with growing talent.

THE STATE LEGISLATURE'S ROLE



NAF leaders met with Michigan's House Appropriations Committee Chairman Thomas Albert and discussed ways that the NAF model could help the state meet

its **healthcare workforce needs**. They shared the list of certifications that students could earn through participation in a health science-focused NAF academy, examples of partnerships with local employers, and ways that the program could be scaled over time to reach more students and more communities.

Michigan's legislature was creating a COVID-specific state appropriations bill at the time, and state leaders decided to build work-based learning funding into the legislation. **Public Act 9 of 2022**, signed into law in February 2022, includes a \$250,000 American Rescue Plan funding appropriation (from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund) for health science NAF academies in the state. Districts can apply for grants drawn from the appropriated funds, covering the \$12,500 one-time startup fee to implement a **NAF academy or build additional academies** within existing footprints. State leaders are hopeful that opening this opportunity to Michigan students will enable more of them to pursue careers in healthcare, serving the dual purpose of providing clear pathways to good jobs for individuals and addressing the state's workforce needs.



THE ROAD AHEAD

The Michigan legislature's interest in supporting work-based learning experiences for high school students is likely to extend beyond the initial focus on health sciences. As state legislative leaders consider the role they can play in addressing the learning loss that students have suffered during the pandemic, NAF is advocating an **additional \$500,000 investment** for an expansion of academies in other industry fields outside of health sciences. Providing quality work-based learning experiences in fields of high local demand is a key strategy for expanding student opportunities and accelerating overall economic and educational recovery.