

Building Upon West Dallas as the Model, Toyota USA Foundation's 'Driving Possibilities' Expands Across the Country, Opening Career Pathways for Students

December 06, 2024

Image not found or type unknown



At Toyota, we believe in empowering the next generation. The Toyota USA Foundation's 'Driving Possibilities' initiative aligns with our mission to create pathways for success and inspire young minds to dream big. The initiative, funded in part by Toyota Motor North America and Toyota Financial Services, began with a vision to make a real difference, and it all started in West Dallas – which served as a model for Driving Possibilities as it expands across the country.

Driving Possibilities looks unique in each of the eight locations. As of December 2024, eight U.S. communities have launched their programs, with plans to expand where Toyota has facilities. One thing remains constant: we partner and listen to our communities. We work together to address needs and collaborate for tailored solutions.

By helping address key challenges in STEM education, from language barriers to access to resources, providing translation assistance and hands-on learning experiences, we want to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

For a glimpse at the first year of the program, here are some highlights from the Driving Possibilities locations launched in 2023:

Michigan

Toyota USA Foundation's Driving Possibilities initiative in Michigan is a strategic effort to bolster Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), Career Technical Education (CTE), and transportation needs through a collaboration effort with Eastern Michigan University's College of Education with Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Ypsilanti Community Schools and Washtenaw Intermediate School District.

Its primary focus is on creating enriching, hands-on learning experiences in STEM for students and providing essential support services for both students and their families.

Key components of this initiative include:

- The establishment of a new STEM Institute which aims to serve as a central hub for STEM resources. This institute will not only enhance classroom curriculum but provide vital industry exposure.
- Supporting professional development for teachers.
- Transportation study resulting in the funding of 6 Sienna minivans to transport students to STEM and career-related activities. Additionally, Toyota Financial Services (TFS) funded warranty extensions for all of these minivans.

Kentucky

Toyota USA Foundation's Driving Possibilities initiative in Kentucky is designed to improve education and tackle transportation challenges as well as assisting those with language barriers. This initiative is supported through partnerships and funding from various organizations, all aimed at benefiting local schools and students in both Scott County Schools and Fayette County Public Schools.

Driving Possibilities in Kentucky centers on three key areas:

- Expand literacy and language resources.
- Build education and industry partnerships strengthening STEM and Career & Technical Education (CTE) pathways.
- Study of transportation barriers resulted in:
 - Funding the purchase of 10 Sienna minivans to transport students to STEM and career related activities. Additionally, Toyota Financial Services (TFS) funded warranty extensions for all of these minivans.
 - Additional bus routes/stops positively impacting over 100 students.

Indiana

Toyota USA Foundation's Driving Possibilities initiative in Southern Indiana is a forward-thinking program designed to enrich STEM education in partnership with North Gibson and Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporations.

This 5-year Driving Possibilities initiative focuses on:

- Hands-on STEM learning.
- Essential support for student mental health.
- Enhancing language learning capabilities for students and families, showcasing a holistic approach to community and educational development, and comprehensive approach to professional growth for educators.
- Providing early education.

In North Gibson School Corporation, the Outdoor Learning Center opened to provide STEM education, critical thinking and problem-solving skills as part of the early education program. Support for teachers and administrators is also provided through curriculum, technical assistance, assessments and capacity building.

In Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, Driving Possibilities introduced new STEM Lab curriculum, critical classroom supplies, and student success mentors to enhance the classroom experience and increase teacher capacity. The addition of a bilingual Family and Community Engagement (FACE) liaison helps connect the community to the school, provides multi-language support and interpretation services, and plans experiential field trips.

Alabama

Toyota USA Foundation's Driving Possibilities initiative in Alabama is set to make a significant impact in the Huntsville community through a strategic collaboration with the Huntsville Chamber Foundation, focusing on enhancing STEM education. This initiative focuses on three core areas:

- Creating direct pathways into high-demand manufacturing careers.
- Fostering industry partnerships.
- Bolstering teacher support through professional development.

This initiative not only promises to equip students through enhanced STEM education but also aims to foster a sustainable model for workforce advancement in the region, highlighting a commitment to long-term community development and educational excellence.

We're all in this together. By involving educators in the co-design process, Toyota and partners of Driving Possibilities are helping to develop the initiative so that it meets the unique needs of each community and maximizes its impact. Not only are students preparing for future careers, but they are also inspired by having these educational experiences as a springboard to their future.

We invite partners and supporters to join us in this transformative journey. Together, we are driving possibilities.