

OPTIONS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Apprenticeship

Who: If you would like career training without attending a technical program or college and if you learn best by a hands-on approach, you may want to begin an apprenticeship.

What: Apprenticeship is an organized system through which you learn the practical skills of a trade. A craft worker supervises the learning process while teaching you skills of the trade on the job. Examples of apprenticeships include automotive utilities and energy, and construction.

How Long: Depending on the trade, your training term can last from one to four years. While you are learning your trade, you must also take classes on related subjects. This is usually provided by the employer, a community or technical college, or through an approved correspondence course.

Cost: The apprentice earns a wage while enrolled in an apprenticeship program.

Community and Technical Colleges

Who: Community or technical colleges offer two-year liberal arts programs or specific career training programs. After completing their studies, students receive a certificate, diploma or an associate's degree. Many students then transfer to a four-year college or university to continue their education. Other graduates go directly into the work setting.

What: Community and technical colleges offer numerous degrees and certificates in a wide variety of academic professional and technical fields. Check with the community or technical college of your choice for more information.

How Long: Associate degrees usually require two years. Technical associated degrees, certificates and diplomas may be two years or less.

Cost: Costs for attendance varies depending on the school you attend. Community and technical colleges are usually less expensive than a 4-year college or university.

Private Career Schools

Who: These schools are for students who have chosen particular occupations and want to learn specialized training in a specific field. Many colleges of technology function like a community/technical college and offer general courses that students can use for transfer. These programs are available at privately owned schools and at many community/technical colleges or colleges of technology. Students usually receive a license, a certificate/diploma, or an associate's degree.

What: These programs offer practical training in specific employment fields such as computers, electronics, automotive, cosmetology and health occupations.

How Long: Program completion varies from several weeks to several years, depending on career requirements.

Cost: Varies with the program selected and length of the program.

Gap Year

(Travel, Volunteer or Community Service)

Who: Some students choose to take time after high school or in between college breaks to explore another culture, travel, or volunteer.

What: There are many programs available for students such as: -American Field Service (AFS) Intercultural Programs:

Offers students a choice of full-year, semester or summer programs abroad. - AmeriCorps Corporation for National Service: Offers students opportunities for community service through full and part-time programs. National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS): Offers wilderness education expeditions in the US and abroad.

How Long: Formal programs can last from weeks to months. Many students schedule their breaks from school with college calendars.

Cost: Many programs are in a volunteer capacity, but stipends may be available for housing and food. Participants may be awarded scholarship incentives for education.

Military Options

Who: The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard offer a variety of options for part-time and full-time service. Other training and education opportunities for high school students to investigate include: Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at a traditional college, or the service academies, which offer baccalaureate degrees tuition-free; The US Military Academy (West Point, NY), The US Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD), The US Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO), and the US Coast Guard Academy (New London, CT).

How long: Varies with the specific option selected and associated service obligation. For more information about the military, visit www.military.com or www.usmilitary.com.

Work Full-Time

Who: If you are interested in earning a paycheck and not attending school, you may choose to work full-time.

What: Full-time work for high school graduates varies, but most jobs are available in the service industry (retail, food industry, etc.)

How Long: Most jobs available for high school graduates do not require formal structured training.

Cost: The full-time worker usually earns money on an hourly basis.

Colleges and Universities

Who: Colleges and universities offer four-year degrees such as a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS), as well as graduate degrees. Some also offer two-year associate degrees. Universities offer a huge course selection and have extensive resources. Class size varies with the subject area, course level and total student enrollment.

What: Colleges and universities offer many programs of study. They may provide a liberal arts education or more specific specialization such as nursing. College professors see teaching as their primary responsibility and classes tend to be smaller than those in universities. University professors are usually involved in both teaching and research. Graduate students, rather than professors, may teach some of the classes at universities.

How Long: Bachelor's degrees usually require four years or longer of study. Master's and doctoral degrees require more time following the bachelor degree.

Cost: Costs for colleges and universities vary depending on the type of institution (public or independent) and other factors such as housing, books and supplies.

