



Empower **E**mploy **E**ducate

FOR A SUSTAINABLE FAYETTE COUNTY

Fayette County Education and Career Guide

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To request an electronic copy of this guide, please contact Fay-Penn Economic Development Council.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

Educate, Employ, Empower: Fayette County Education and Career Guide is the brainchild of the inaugural class of the Fayette Leaders Academy. The purpose of this guide is to provide young adults, ranging from high school age to young adulthood, with information regarding educational and career opportunities specific to Fayette County and the surrounding region. It is no surprise that Fayette County has been losing population for many years. This is due, in part, to young adults leaving the area in hopes of seeking better paying, more stable jobs. Our region's survival is dependent upon young people remaining here, raising their families, and contributing to our community. Too often we hear about the negative issues facing our region, such as lack of well-paying jobs. We have researched the issue and found that there are well-paying, in-demand jobs available in the area. The purpose of this guide is to bring awareness to the numerous educational and employment opportunities in Fayette County and to provide resources to help prepare young adults for careers to help grow our region's economy and create a better, stronger, more stable Fayette County.



GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF: ASSESS YOUR INTERESTS

What do you want to be? Starting a new career can be an adventure, a journey that leads you to new and rewarding opportunities. It can also be confusing and frustrating if you aren't sure what it is you want to do. People who choose careers that match their interests are more likely to achieve greater job satisfaction and greater success. Self-assessment tests, along with guidance from career counselors, can help guide you towards careers that best suit your unique set of skills, talents and abilities. There are many free interest inventories that you can take online including O*NET Personality assessment, DISC assessment, and Myers-Briggs Personality assessment. The following is based on the Holland Interest Inventory, a widely used method of matching one's personality to specific career types.

Which Career Pathway is right for you?

RESULTS OF THE RIASEC TEST

R = Realistic

These people are often good at mechanical or athletic jobs. Good college majors for Realistic people are...

- Agriculture
- Health Assistant
- Computers
- Construction
- Mechanic/Machinist
- Engineering
- Food and Hospitality

Related Pathways

Natural Resources
Health Services
Industrial and Engineering Technology
Arts and Communication

I = Investigative

These people like to watch, learn, analyze and solve problems. Good college majors for Investigative people are...

- Marine Biology
- Engineering
- Chemistry
- Zoology
- Medicine/Surgery
- Consumer Economics
- Psychology

Related Pathways

Health Services
Business
Public and Human Services
Industrial and Engineering Technology

A = Artistic

These people like to work in unstructured situations where they can use their creativity. Good majors for Artistic people are...

- Communications
- Cosmetology
- Fine and Performing Arts
- Photography
- Radio and TV
- Interior Design
- Architecture

Related Pathways

Public and Human Services
Arts and Communication

S = Social

These people like to work with other people, rather than things. Good college majors for Social people are...

- Counseling
- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Travel
- Advertising
- Public Relations
- Education

Related Pathways

Health Services
Public and Human Services

E = Enterprising

These people like to work with others and enjoy persuading and performing. Good college majors for Enterprising people are:

- Fashion Merchandising
- Real Estate
- Marketing/Sales
- Law
- Political Science
- International Trade
- Banking/Finance

Related Pathways

Business
Public and Human Services
Arts and Communication

C = Conventional

These people are very detail oriented, organized and like to work with data. Good college majors for Conventional people are...

- Accounting
- Court Reporting
- Insurance
- Administration
- Medical Records
- Banking
- Data Processing

Related Pathways

Health Services
Business
Industrial and Engineering Technology

NOW THAT YOU HAVE A CAREER IN MIND, TRY IT OUT FIRST

FIND SOMETHING YOU ENJOY DOING, THEN FIND A WAY TO GET PAID FOR DOING IT

That was the simple, yet profound, advice a mentor once offered his young protégé. Too often, however, students and career seekers do the opposite: they decide on a high-paying or high-prestige job first, and then try to make themselves “like” the job or the course of study necessary to obtain it. Or they choose an occupation based on what sounds good (or that others want them to pursue) rather than a career that is actually something they would enjoy doing and that is a good fit.

The key is to learn more about various occupations and determine what appeals to you. Interest inventories are a great place to start, and actual experience is the next best step. But if you are still in school, or between careers, how do you do that? Luckily, there are several ways to gain information and experience in fields you might find interesting.

Part-time Employment: A part-time job offers many advantages beyond earning some extra money. It’s also a way to gain valuable experience in a particular field – experience that will allow you to judge whether you would like to make the job your career. As a bonus, performing well at your job will earn you good references for future employment.

Job Shadowing: Job shadowing allows you to directly observe someone at work. You can observe firsthand the day-to-day activities you would be performing in a particular job and learn what skills you would need to obtain it. Job shadowing also gives you a chance to ask any questions you might have about the job and how to prepare for it. Go to www.jobshadow.org for more information.

Volunteer Work: While it doesn’t provide a paycheck, volunteering is another way to gain experience in a field before deciding to pursue it as a career. It’s also an opportunity to give back to the community while building your résumé. Many employers – particularly those in the human services field – welcome enthusiastic volunteers who offer their time in exchange for work experience.

Temporary Help Firms: As the name implies, a temporary help firm places career seekers in temporary positions within a company looking for help. The main advantage of this arrangement is that you’re not making a long-term commitment to the job, since the employer knows it’s temporary. It’s a great opportunity to test your skills and to see if you like the type of work the company does. Plus, you can get a feel for several different types of jobs in a fairly short period of time.

School Clubs: Many schools have clubs that focus on specific careers and cater to students interested in those fields. Student clubs often host guest speakers, arrange workplace tours and sponsor trips to conferences and competitions – all of which are excellent opportunities for résumé building and networking.

Community Agencies: If there is a YMCA, YWCA or similar agency in your community, check to see what types of classes they offer. This is a way to gain exposure to a wide range of experiences, one of which could inspire you enough to consider a career in the field.

Internships: Internships are temporary working arrangements – usually offered to students – made with a company or organization. An internship may last a few weeks or a few months, and can be paid or unpaid. Often, they are done for college credit, depending on the circumstances. Completing an internship will give you valuable work experience, a résumé credit, a good reference and professional contacts.

Regional Career Education Partnerships for Youth (RCEPs): The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established Regional Career Education Partnerships for Youth, “RCEPs,” to help students make informed choices about the education and training they need to pursue careers that are right for them. These RCEPs work to give students better opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills critical for success in college and the workplace.

In recent years, almost 235,000 students have connected to more than 9,000 businesses that provide them with career awareness and work-based learning opportunities like job shadowing, mentoring, paid and unpaid internships and apprenticeships. Employers also visit classrooms to discuss the knowledge, skills and education level they expect their employees to possess. Experiences like these, combined with rigorous academics and career-related skills development, will better prepare students for post-secondary education, and ultimately their career.

Apprenticeships: If you are a high school student planning your future, or out of high school and looking for a new career, then perhaps you can consider an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a journey-level craft person or trade professional in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation.

The United States Department of Labor website (www.dol.gov) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) section provides a list of contacts to help you locate apprenticeship opportunities near you.

Pennsylvania Apprentice Coordinators Association’s website (www.apprentice.org) allows users to find apprenticeship organizations by county. Clicking on the interactive map by county will bring up a list of organizations and unions which offer apprenticeship programs.

RESOURCES IN FAYETTE COUNTY FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS

Students can enroll in Career and Technical schools geared toward “hands-on” training while in high school. Connellsville Area Center and Technical Center and Fayette County Career and Technical Institute both provide such training.

Connellsville Area Career and Technical Center

720 Locust Street Extension, Connellsville, PA 15425

724-626-0236

<http://www.casdfalcons.org>

CACTC is a comprehensive high school within the Connellsville Area School District that provides fourteen (14) quality technical programs and core academic courses on a full-time basis to 11th and 12th grade students. 9th and 10th grade students attend the technical programs only during either a morning or afternoon session.

The programs offered at Connellsville Area Career & Technical Center are designed for the college-bound student, as well as those preparing to enter directly into the workforce or military upon graduation.

Fayette County Career and Technical Institute

175 Georges Fairchance Rd., Uniontown, PA 15401

724-437-2721

<http://www.fayettecti.org>

FCCTI is a regional career development and technology center that serves as a vocational alternative high school offering high school diplomas and skill certifications. FCCTI’s School Counseling Department offers support to incoming and enrolled students in making the most of their educational opportunities.

Students have support available to them through an on-staff Certified School Counselor. The Counselor works in conjunction with other Fayette County Career & Technical Institute Faculty, Administrators, and external support agency personnel to provide the needed services to all students in attendance.

GED AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Intermediate Unit 1

1 Intermediate Unit Dr., Coal Center, PA 15423

724-938-3241

<http://www.iu1.org>

The IU1 offers a variety of instructional programs throughout Fayette, Greene, and Washington counties. Whether you are seeking a GED in order to find employment or need to improve your math and writing skills to attend at postsecondary program, Intermediate Unit 1 offers a convenient location with a comprehensive educational experience specifically tailored to assist you toward achieving your career goals.

Services include Adult Basic Education, Literacy Services, GED Preparation, ESL classes, Workplace Services, Distance Learning Services, Corrections Education Services and Move-up Services. Classes are offered mornings, afternoons, and evenings. The programs are located in Washington, Fayette and Greene counties, although they are open to anyone within the Southwest Corner or Westmoreland and Fayette WIA.

Classes are offered at the following locations:

- Adult Learning Center of Fayette
Fayette County Health Center, 100 New Salem Rd., Suite #175, Uniontown, PA 15401
- Connellsville Area Career and Technical Center
720 Locust Street Extension, Connellsville, PA 15425
- Penn State University Fayette, the Eberly Campus
2201 University Drive, Lemont Furnace, PA 15456

Pittsburgh Job Corps Center

7175 Highland Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15206

412-441-8700

<http://pittsburgh.jobcorps.gov>

A career technical training and education program helping teens and young adults learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find a good job.

Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette

112 Commonwealth Drive, Lemont Furnace, PA 15456

724-434-5627

<http://www.privateindustrycouncil.com>

Services include Adult Basic Education, Literacy services including Family Literacy, GED Preparation, Correctional Education services, Workplace Services and Move-up Services. Classes offered mornings and afternoons.

POST SECONDARY SCHOOLS

California University of Pennsylvania

250 University Ave., California, PA 15419
724-938-4000
www.calu.edu

The University is located on 294 acres in the borough of California, Pa., just 35 miles south of Pittsburgh on the banks of the Monongahela River. A member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, Cal U serves more than 8,600 undergraduate and graduate students. Each year since 2004, The Princeton Review has included California University in its Best in the Northeast listing, recognizing Cal U as one of the best regional universities in the northeastern United States.

Fayette Institute of Commerce and Technology, Inc.

45 West Kerr Street
Uniontown, PA 15401
724-438-4568
www.fict.com

Fayette Institute has been providing technical and business school instruction for the past 64 years. It is reviewed and licensed by the Pennsylvania State Board of Private Licensed Schools under the Department of Education in Harrisburg. Fayette Institute offers a Maintenance Electricity diploma program with full-time instruction on electrical house wiring, commercial-industrial wiring and electric motor repair.

Laurel Business Institute

18 N. Beeson Blvd., Uniontown, PA 15401
724-439-4900
<http://www.laurel.edu>

Laurel Business Institute (LBI) is a post-secondary institute located in Downtown Uniontown. LBI offers numerous programs including Accounting, Administrative Office Technology, Business Administration, Computer Software with Digital Media & Design, Cosmetology, Master Teacher of Cosmetology, Welding & Fabrication with Pipeline Technology, and many more.

Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus

2201 University Drive, Lemont Furnace, PA 15456
724-430-4100
<http://www.fayette.psu.edu>

Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus is part of a multi-campus public research university, giving students direct access to the extensive educational resources and services of the entire Penn State University. Degrees offered: Associate Degrees in Business Administration, Electrical Engineering Technology, Human Development and Family Studies, Information Sciences and Technology, Letters, Arts, and Sciences, Mining Technology, and Physical Therapist Assistant; Baccalaureate Degrees in Administration of Justice, Business, Corporate Communication, Human Development and Family Studies, Nursing B.S., Nursing RN to BS, Project and Supply Chain Management, and Psychology.

Pennsylvania Institute of Health & Technology

1015 Mount Braddock Road, Mount Braddock, PA 15465
724-437-4600
<http://piht.edu>

PIHT has been serving students and employers in southwestern Pennsylvania for over 25 years. This long term experience is a benefit to our students. Today, PIHT offers the following in-demand programs: Medical Assisting, Medical Office Administration, and Practical Nursing

Westmoreland County Community College, WCCC-Fayette

140 North Beeson Avenue, Uniontown, PA 15401
724-437-3512
<https://wccc.edu/>

WCCC-Fayette is located in the Fayette County Community Action Agency building in Uniontown. The center houses three traditional classrooms, a computer classroom, a videoconferencing classroom, and offices for staff and guidance counselors. Our schedule features day and evening classes for career preparation in medical assisting, computers, business management and office technology as well as general education courses that will transfer to bachelor's degree programs at four-year universities. Full and part-time study is available as well as online classes.

MILITARY TRAINING & CAREERS IN THE ARMED FORCES

<http://www.recruitmilitary.com>

U.S. Army Recruiting Station

1368 Mall Run Road (Uniontown Mall), Uniontown, PA 15401
724-438-1121

US Air Force Recruiting Office

1231 D Pineview Drive, Morgantown, WV 26505
304-599-3087

US Marine Corps Recruiting Office

1368 Mall Run Road (Uniontown Mall), Uniontown, PA 15401
724-438-1791

US Navy Recruiting Office

1500 W. Chestnut Street, Washington, PA 15301
724-225-5540

COLLEGE PREPARATION

STANDARDIZED TESTING

While good grades in high school are important in helping you get accepted to the college of your choice, colleges also strongly consider each applicant's scores on usually one of two standardized entrance tests, the SAT Reasoning Test and the ACT (American College Test). Colleges take these standardized tests very seriously when determining admission, scholarships, financial aid and even enrollment into some specific programs of study. If at all possible, regardless of the exam you take, try to take it twice, beginning as early as your sophomore or junior year in high school. Both tests have practice exams and other useful test preparation available on their respective websites. Keep in mind that colleges generally place more weight on the higher set of scores. Though the SAT is more common in Pennsylvania, schools recommend taking both exams. Some students will score better on the ACT than the SAT.

The SAT has changed in format several times over the past decade, with a new design for 2016. In order to find the most up-to-date information, please visit the following website:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>.

And to find more information about the ACT, visit: <http://www.actstudent.org/>.

FINDING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

So you have chosen a career path and have determined that it requires a college degree. Now you must decide which college or university you want to attend. This can be a daunting task for students and their families, especially when considering there are over 3,000 institutions of higher learning in the United States alone. Below are five easy steps students and their families can take to help pick the right college. *(Provided by the US Department of Education)*

1. Research prospective schools and consider the total cost and student success in the job market and other outcomes. Check out The Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center to get started: www.collegecost.ed.gov/.
2. Apply to several schools. There are a lot of great options, and your job is to find the highest quality education you can get for the best value.
3. Fill out the FAFSA. Make sure you can get the financial aid you need to be successful. Get started at: studentaid.gov
4. Compare financial aid awards from different schools. Understand how much you will have in grants and scholarships, and determine if loans are necessary. ED's new "Shopping Sheet" makes this process easy and straightforward: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/sectletter/120724.html>.
5. Pick the best school for you. Study hard, get involved and keep focused on your end goals.

For other useful resources and tips to use in this decision-making process and to conduct a broad search for colleges, check out the websites listed below:

ACT College Planning - <http://www.actstudent.org/college/choosing.html>

The College Board Big Future - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started>

My College Options - <https://www.mycollegeoptions.org/home>

THE COST OF COLLEGE

Pursuing higher education is not only an increasingly popular decision; it is also an expensive one. Depending on the institution, tuition combined with room and board charges can total anywhere from \$6,000 to more than \$40,000 a year.

Don't forget there may be additional costs:

- Laundry
- Transportation
- Basic toiletries
- Cable TV/internet/phone
- Computer and school supplies
- Social activities such as artistic events, athletic tickets and nights out on the town
- Textbooks

FINANCIAL AID

Although education after high school can be quite expensive, there are many financial aid options available for postsecondary education. Essentially there are five options for financial assistance, each differing in terms of repayment and eligibility.

Grants: Typically grants are based on financial need and do not have to be repaid

Scholarships: Like grants, scholarships do not have to be repaid. They can be awarded based on academic merit or athletic ability

Work Study: Based on financial need, work-study programs provide employment opportunities to students both on and off campus

Military Funding: Several military branches offer substantial financial aid packages in exchange for varying terms of service

Loans: Loans are a form of aid that must be repaid with interest after leaving school. The most common of these are Perkins and Stafford loans although private and alternative loans are also available

For more information on how to apply for financial aid, visit the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency website at <http://www.pheaa.org>. For additional information about the education benefits available to military veterans, visit the US government student website at <http://www.studentloans.gov>.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO FAYETTE COUNTY STUDENTS

The Community Foundation of Fayette County (CFFC) has many scholarship opportunities available to Fayette County residents. In 2014, CFFC awarded over \$125,000 to high school seniors and college students enrolled for the 2014-2015 school year.

Criteria vary for each scholarship fund. There are awards for students pursuing various careers, including nursing, music education, education, international studies or culinary arts. Some awards are designated to students planning to attend a specific school. Some awards are based on GPA, financial need and others are not. All students residing in Fayette County are eligible to apply. In addition, through the Community Foundation's partnership with the Pennsylvania Access to Higher Education Program (PATH), match money may be available for students attending a college in Pennsylvania.

If you would like to create or donate to one of the scholarship funds at CFFC, please contact Donor Relations at 724-437-8600. <http://www.cffayettepa.org>

SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

College Board – <http://www.collegeboard.org>

College Net - <https://collegenet.com>

Education Planner - <http://www.educationplanner.org>

Fast Web - <https://fastweb.com>

Sallie Mae Scholarships - <http://www.salliemae.com/scholarships>

Scholarships - <https://www.scholarships.com>

Scholarship Page - <https://www.scholarship-page.com>

Students Scholarships - <http://www.studentscholarships.org>

STUDENT LOAN INFORMATION WEBSITES

American Educational Services – <http://www.aesSuccess.org>

FASFA – <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>

Financial Aid – <http://www.ed.gov/finaid.html>

Guide to Financial Aid – <http://www.finaid.org>

PA Association Financial Aid – <http://www.pasfaa.org>

Private Student Loans – <http://www.estudentloan.com>

LOOKING FOR A JOB

WRITING THE PERFECT RESUME

Before you start developing a resume, you need to gather information to include, even if you are still in high school or if you only have minimal work experience. If you have no work experience, it makes it a little more difficult to prepare a resume. Difficult, but not impossible. One way to help make your resume preparation and your job application process easier is to develop a *Personal Data Sheet* that includes your employment history, education information, military experience, references, volunteer experience, clubs, and organizations.

Personal Data Sheet

Employment History: Include the company name and address, dates of employment, and your job title. If you don't have any formal work experience, brainstorm a bit. What about that paper route or babysitting your cousin's kids? How about doing odd jobs for your parents or neighbors, such as yard work, shoveling snow, or helping to clean out the garage? What about caddying at the local golf course, working on your family's farm, or even tutoring someone in a class? It may have only paid a few bucks, but including it on your resume shows responsibility.

Education Information: Schools attended, major or course title and the dates you attended, graduation date (if applicable) and/or credits earned. Think about the subjects you excel in and why you like those classes. Always list your computer knowledge, even if you are applying for a job as a carpenter, truck driver or fast food worker. You may be surprised how many jobs require basic computer knowledge.

Military Experience: Branch of military and dates served, special training and discharge type. Don't forget to include ROTC, if applicable.

References: Names, addresses, telephone numbers and emails of at least three (3) people you know professionally, and three (3) you know personally. Make sure you ask all of those you list on your reference sheet for their permission to distribute their names and addresses and telephone numbers. Remember employers do check references. References can be on a separate sheet of paper and listed in alphabetical order. If you do not have much work experience, having strong references is very important. Reference can include a favorite teacher or instructor or someone you have volunteered with. Only use a pastor or priest as a reference if you really know them, not because you think it will look good!

Volunteer Experience: Listing volunteer experience is vital, especially when you have very limited or no work history. Volunteer work shows responsibility and leadership skills. This can include volunteering at your church nursery, at a bake sale for Girl Scouts, or at a hoagie sale to raise money for your Fire Department.

Clubs/Organizations: List any clubs or organizations you have belonged to and any position you may have held such as President or group leader. Were you on the baseball team, in the band, or in the chess club? Have you painted or performed in the high school musical? Those special skills or talents can and should be included on your resume.

You may not use all of the information gathered on the data sheet; however, it is a good idea to gather as much information as possible. You can use this information in completing applications, compiling your resume, and creating an objective. An *objective* is one or two optional sentences about the kind of job you want and what you can contribute to the company in return for this job.

Types of Resumes

Chronological: The most common form of a resume. It is a chronological listing of job titles and responsibilities, starting with the most recent employer and working backwards to your first job.

Functional: Focuses on the professional skills you have developed over the years rather than when or how you acquired them. Useful for people who have many different skills that were not obtained by the specific jobs they held.

Blended: Combines the description of functional skills with the names and dates used in a Chronological Resume. Used often by students.

Electronic Resumes: Becoming the norm. There are three kinds of electronic resumes: scan-able resumes, email resumes and a webpage resume.

Scan-able Resumes: Most Fortune 500 companies receive over 1000 resumes a week. They just cannot physically review them individually. Instead of a person reading your resume, someone will scan it into a computer program where the resumes are scanned for key words that the employer feels meet the jobs requirements. The paper version will be filed or thrown away. To make sure your resume is scan-able you should remember the following tips:

- Avoid non-traditional fonts. Choose Arial or Times New Roman.
- Font should not be any smaller than 10 pt. and no larger than 14 pt.
- Make sure when you choose the font that the letters do not touch each other when they are printed. Scanners have trouble discerning the shapes of letters that are touching.
- You should not underline in a scan-able resume.
- Do not use special characters that resemble letters such as a hollow bullet point.
- Do not use leader dots.
- Never use paper with a background such as marble shades or speckles.
- Only print on one side of the paper.
- Do not staple or fold your resume.

E-mail Resume: To make sure your document can be read by everyone regardless of software, you should save it as a text file. A text file is simply words. No pictures, special fonts, page numbers, bold faces or italics. It may look very plain, but it still describes your history to employers. When emailing your resume, cut and paste it into the message screen and attach it to the email. Doing both allows the employer to read it right away and print a copy from the attachment. Also, if the program you are using is not compatible with the program they are using, they should be able to get the information from the body of your email.

Webpage Resume: Many employers want you to only use their webpage to submit a resume. It can be frustrating, repeatedly typing your information; however, you should take the time to fill in your information the same way you have it presented on your resume. Sometimes you can cut and paste the information from your original resume. Some websites give you the opportunity to submit your resume as a whole by copying and pasting it in or even attaching it. Remember when you copy and paste, sometimes it does not look the same as your original file. Always take the time to review your resume for grammar, spacing, etc.

Some information just doesn't belong in resumes!

- Never use a title such as Resume, Fact Sheet, etc. Their appearance on a resume is redundant.
- Never say anything about your availability in your resume. If you were not available, you would not be applying. Special circumstances can be discussed in an interview setting.
- Never list on your resume why you left another job. This topic should only be discussed during an interview.
- Never mention age, race, religion, sex, national origin, physical description or marital status.

Finalizing your resume

Preparing a good resume is not easy. If you find you are having trouble getting a job, you may want to take a second look at your resume. You may be surprised by the little things that may be keeping an employer from choosing you for an interview. Remember: your resume is your first impression.

Edit and proofread your resume. If you are preparing your own resume, or if you are having someone else prepare your resume, make sure YOU proofread it carefully. It is YOUR resume and YOUR responsibility to find errors. If you give your approval for printing, it is your fault if there are errors. You will be responsible for the cost of reprinting, so always proofread carefully.

Present a neat polished resume. You always want your resume to be clean and neat. A professional resume will open the door to a professional career.

- Print your resume on quality paper. Your choice of paper can change the look of your resume. White, cream or ivory color is most often preferred. Do not use purple or florescent orange. They may catch your eye; however, they do not present a very professional image of the applicant.
- Cover letters should also be printed on paper that matches your resume. It looks very unprofessional if you send your resume printed on cream or ivory paper and your cover letter on plain white paper. Bordered papers can be used as well as colored ink, in moderation. But, sticking with white, cream or ivory paper and black ink is your best bet.
- It is a good idea to have a few copies of your resume printed on plain copy paper if you are giving your resume to CareerLink® or any other organization that will be faxing or scanning your resume. Copies from colored paper may come out dark and sometimes unreadable.
- Be very careful of making photocopies of your resume. All it takes is a small drop of white out on the glass of the copier, and you will have a black mark on all your resumes.
- Make sure you do not use white out on your resume. If you move, get new resumes printed. Do not cross out your old address and pen in your new address.
- Never staple or fold your resume. Always send your resume in a large envelope so they do not need folded. You can purchase envelopes that match the papers, also giving your resume a professional look.
- Normally, you only need one page, and two at the most, to relay your information to an employer. Three is too many. The main rule to follow is to keep your information succinct for an employer to find what they need.

Cover Letters

If you are hand delivering your resume, you do not need to have a cover letter. However, if you are mailing your resume, you should submit a cover letter, even if one is not requested. Cover letters are rarely longer than two to three paragraphs. They are the summary of what you have to offer an employer along with a closing, thanking them and telling them you are looking forward to an interview. Cover letters, along with resumes, are not the place to put personal information such as your marital status or how many pets you have. Such information is not necessary at all. There are three types of cover letters: newspaper referral, cold mail, and personal referral. Each of these cover letters is constructed a little bit differently.

Newspaper Referral cover letter is used when you get your information from an advertisement in the local newspaper. It is important that you read the ad carefully so you know exactly what you are applying for and make sure you follow any specific instructions given within the ad. For example, if the ad requests a salary requirement, make sure you put that information within your cover letter. The best advice is to give a salary range. Don't sell yourself short, put the amount you need to survive and end with an amount that is reasonably increased. However, if your work experience only consists of volunteer and/or extracurricular activities, you may want to start at minimum wage (\$7.25).

Cold mail is directed to a company that perhaps you found their name and address in the phone book. You would address it to “Dear Sir or Madam” and apply for any position for which they feel you are qualified. You want to highlight some of your strong points and ask to discuss them more in a personal interview.

Personal Referral cover letter is directed to a specific individual within the company to whom you have been referred to by another individual, such as a friend or relative. You should ask permission to use that friend or relative’s name within the cover letter as a point of reference for the employer. You may say something like “Joe Green, a mutual friend of ours, mentioned that I might contact you in regards to a position within your organization”.

Thank You Letters

Don’t forget about thank you letters. A thank you letter can, ultimately, get you the job. Some employers are so impressed to receive a thank you letter that it helps them make their final decision. If possible, use the same kind of paper you use for your cover letter. It helps maintain that professional appearance. Cover letters, resumes, thank you letters, and reference sheets are all very important parts to your job search.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Pre-career preparation should start as early as High School. You should start with the basics:

Grooming: Everyone needs to take a bath/shower daily and wash their hair as often as needed, especially the day of or before an interview.

Attire: Wear basic conservative colors such as black or navy.

Attitude: Attitude is very important; stay positive during the worst situations and remember your life is made up of 10% what goes on around you and 90% attitude. Your attitude is the difference between success and failure.

When you first meet someone and take that initial look at them, you immediately form an opinion about how they look, how they present themselves, how they might be having a bad hair day, etc. And in that instant, you decided if it is worth the effort to listen to them or just blow them off.

Well, that is called a first impression. Now you might say, “If I take a bath, and wear black, and smile, I should make a great first impression at an interview, right? Well, unfortunately, the interview is not your “first impression”. Your resume is. It is the first opportunity a potential employer has to get to know you.

TIPS AND HINTS FOR COMPLETING AN APPLICATION:

1. Know the deadline for applying and where to submit your completed application.
2. Read the entire application before starting to write. (Hint: Make a copy of the application to complete before you complete the “real one”)
3. Answer all questions honestly and accurately as possible. Being dishonest on a job application may result in termination of your employment.
4. Use a blue or black pen unless a pencil is required.
5. Print all information legibly.
6. Be sure spelling is correct.
7. If you have limited work experience, focus on job-related volunteer work, hobbies, or training.
8. Answer ALL questions. If a question does not apply to your background, write “N/A” or “Not Applicable.”
9. Have copies of transcripts, diplomas/degrees, evaluations, letters of recommendation and other documents ready to attach to your application. If you have a gap in your work history, supply information depicting your major activities during that time period. (Example: searching for employment or caring for parents.)
10. When asked for salary desired, you can put “open” or “negotiable” or give an actual salary range. (Don’t go too low and don’t go too high, especially if you have never held a job before. In that case, minimum wage is probably your best starting point.)
11. Use “will discuss” or “will discuss in interview” rather than listing potentially negative responses such as a felony conviction, health problems or disability, or firing.

DON'T DISMAY IF YOU LOSE YOUR JOB

If you are laid off from your employer, there are steps you should take to get you started back on the road to employment.

1. File your unemployment claim. Call (888)313-7284 or go online www.uc.pa.gov . Even if you think you might not be eligible, file anyway. Let them make the determination. Don't cheat yourself out of money.
2. Contact a healthcare navigator to get healthcare. Go to www.healthcare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596. If you are under age 19, contact CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) at www.chipcoverspakids.com or call 1-800-986-KIDS (5437).
3. Go to your local PA CareerLink®, not only to update your resume information, but to check out their workshop calendar and find out if any employers are holding interviews.
4. You are going to feel like staying in bed with the covers over your head eating bonbons, but you can't do that any longer than 2 days. After that you need to get back out there and start your job searching. Finding a job is a full-time job.
5. Sometimes you have to think outside the box when searching for employment. You may need to take some assessments that will help you with identifying your transferrable skills. Some online resources you may want to check out are: www.onetonline.org and www.mynextmove.org.

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Starting your own business can be a rewarding, but stressful career choice. It requires planning and long hours. However, with patience, hard work, and a great idea, it can be personally and financially rewarding.

In the *Wizard of Oz*, the Munchkins told Dorothy as she was heading for Emerald City on the Yellow Brick Road, "It's always best to start at the beginning". Before you can embark on the road to starting your own business, you must start at the beginning - with an idea. Not only does this idea need to be something you have an interest, talent or passion for, but something that is needed, in demand and that people are willing to pay for. Be prepared to do your homework. What is it that you can do as well as or better than anyone else in the area?

Once you have your idea, you need to develop a business plan. A solid business plan will help you determine how much money you will need to start and maintain your business in the beginning months before you start making a profit. A plan will be necessary when meeting with investors or banks and should include production or startup costs, licensing fees, wages, and overhead expenses such as rent and utilities. Your business plan also should include information about your potential customers or clients and how they will be using your business as well as any roadblocks you anticipate, i.e. identifying your competition. Finally, your plan needs to include information regarding restrictions, regulations, laws, and business taxes.

Seek advice from an attorney or legal professional regarding whether you should establish your business as a sole proprietor, limited liability company (LLC), or corporation. You will also need to file paperwork with the Department of State to register your business name as well as obtain a federal tax ID number if needed. Although you may be able to do this on your own online, if you don't know what you are doing, it can have a negative impact on your business, even before you get started.

Where do you find the money to get your business off the ground? There are numerous places you can turn to for financing. The most obvious place to go is a bank. Most banks have someone who works with small businesses to determine how much money they need to get their business started and will need to keep the business going once it is off the ground. They will run a credit check to see if you have a positive credit history. It is important that you contact several banks to see who offers the best business loan interest rates.

Other sources of financing include local investors, venture capitalists, friends and relatives, and most recently crowd-funding websites. Crowd-funding offers some advantages: you do not have to pay interest on the money you receive, and it will also help you gauge the public's interest in your business idea. In addition, there are federal and state grants available for those wishing to start their own business. See a listing of local resources below.

After you have your idea, your business plan and financing in place, you will begin marketing your business (with a budget in mind). There are many sources for marketing your business, such as newspapers, phone books, billboards, flyers, social media, the internet and television commercials.

You have heard many times, “location, location, location”, and for good reason. If your customers cannot find you or you are not conveniently located, people will not come to you. You need to locate adequate space from which to run your business. Perhaps you only need a home office if you require little space and will not have any employees. Perhaps you need a warehouse or workshop. Explore several neighborhoods and research the rental fees to determine what best suits your needs and how much you can afford.

Once you have found the perfect site to operate your business, you need to purchase equipment. This includes desks, computers, printers, telephones, office supplies, and operating equipment.

It is so very important to create a system of record-keeping, such as tracking orders, purchases, taxes, account receivables, bills, and licenses. There are many computer programs available to assist in record-keeping. Maintaining accurate records in an organized system is a vital tool in running a successful business.

Make use of your marketing plan and public relations to build a customer base. Take advantage of business organizations such as Chambers of Commerce to network with potential customers or clients. Attend training seminars, conferences, and charity events as a way to meet people who can be a point of reference for you. Old-fashioned word of mouth is often your best advertising tool.

If you think you would like to start your own business, do your research. The internet can be an outstanding resource for information needed to determine whether owning your own business is for you. One excellent source is [www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses & Self-Employed/Starting-a-Business](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses%20&%20Self-Employed/Starting-a-Business).

STAFFING AGENCIES

Adecco – <http://www.adeccousa.com>
Aerotek – <http://www.aerotek.com>
Carol Harris Staffing, LLC – <http://www.chstaffing.com>
Crown Services – <http://www.crownservices.com>
Gregg Staffing – <http://www.greggservices.com>
Kelly Services – <http://www.kellyservices.com>
Labor Ready – <http://www.laborready.com>
Manpower – <http://www.manpower.com>
Staffmark- <http://www.staffmark.com>
Staff Masters – <http://www.staffmastersinc.com>
Spherion Services – <http://spherion.com>
TRC Staffing Service – <http://trcstaffing.com>
Tops Staffing – <http://topsjobs.com>

JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

Indeed – <http://www.indeed.com>
Monster – <http://www.monster.com>
Flip Dog – <http://www.flipdog.com>
Get A Job – <http://www.getajob.com>
Headhunters – <http://www.headhunters.com>
Help Wanted – <http://www.helpwanted.com>
Need A Job – <http://www.needajob.com>

LOCAL BUSINESS RESOURCES IN FAYETTE COUNTY

Greater Connellsville Chamber of Commerce

100 S. Arch Street, Connellsville, PA 15425

724-628-5500

<http://www.greaterconnellsville.org/>

The Greater Connellsville Chamber of Commerce has been serving the Connellsville Community and surrounding areas for many years. The Greater Connellsville Chamber believes that every business should be able to have an input and opinion on ways to improve the atmosphere of Connellsville, thus making it a wonderful place to work, live, shop, and play. Some of the Chamber's functions include: providing unity for the local business sector; encouraging economic development; providing a networking center for new residents, new and existing businesses, industry, tourists, and referrals; promote pride in Connellsville; encourage transportation improvements; acting as a watchdog for local and national legislation for information and issues affecting the Greater Connellsville Area; recognizing outstanding achievement and service for the betterment of our community; planning and promoting special events in Downtown Connellsville to encourage shopping locally; offering varied services for members of the Chamber; and cooperating and working closely with other organizations working on common areas of concern.

Fayette Chamber of Commerce

64 W. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401

724-437-4571

<http://www.fayettechamber.com/>

The Fayette Chamber of Commerce is Fayette County's Largest Business Advocacy and Marketing Organization and has been in existence since 1925! The Fayette Chamber of Commerce is located at 65 West Main Street in Uniontown, the beautiful county seat of Fayette County, Pennsylvania and in the magnificent area known as the Laurel Highlands.

An investment in the Fayette Chamber, with a membership of approximately 600 businesses and individuals, is a great investment in the future of your business and in our community! Members of the chamber let their customers know that they are a proud supporter of Fayette County. It tells them that business chooses to invest their dollars in an organization that supports the businesses and organizations that work every day to make Fayette County a great place to work, play, and live.

Every day the Fayette County Chamber works with its members to:

- Fight for pro-business legislation
- Provide members with all types of networking and marketing opportunities
- Partner with many local businesses and organizations to promote the community and strengthen the local economy
- Market member businesses to the world through their website and social media services
- Provide members with workshops and trainings that are important to the business community
- Offer members the opportunity for members-only benefits and discounts

The Fayette Chamber is also proud to work with the community through our associated non-profit organization, The Redstone Foundation. The mission of the Redstone Foundation is to support the work of Chamber in regards to educational activities, workforce development, and civic projects. The Redstone Foundation together with the Fayette Chamber operates Fayette County Television - Channel 77 in Fayette County.

Fay-Penn Economic Development Council

1040 Eberly Way #200, Lemont Furnace, PA 15456

724-437-7913

<http://www.faypenn.org>

Fay-Penn Economic Development Council's mission is to maintain and increase employment opportunities (jobs) in Fayette County in an effort to improve the quality of life for all of its residents. This mission is met through a comprehensive strategy of specific economic development objectives. The organization primarily focuses on the manufacturing sector, in addition to a concentration on workforce issues and infrastructure development.

Our primary objectives are to: Provide superior development services that meet the needs of Fayette County by building local resource capacity and professional capabilities. Generate new commerce by revitalizing commercial areas through new community development, tourism and local economy initiatives. Encourage new investments at existing business sites throughout Fayette County. Support ongoing improvements in workforce development and public education to ensure that Fayette County is a great place to live and work. Develop new community development practices that lead to long-term economic and ecological sustainability and self-reliance.

Fay-Penn offers a full range of confidential services and works closely with each client to provide customized service. In summary, the staff works hands-on with each company guiding them through the necessary procedures and providing the following types of assistance, wherever possible, to ensure the successful completion of their business location, expansion or start-up projects.

Saint Vincent College Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650

724-537-4572

<https://www.stvincent.edu/sbdc/>

The mission of the Saint Vincent College Small Business Development Center is to grow the economy of the Westmoreland and Fayette County area by providing entrepreneurs with the education, information and tools necessary to build successful businesses.

The Small Business Development Center at Saint Vincent College began in 1984. The Saint Vincent College SBDC is one of 18 Small Business Development Centers in Pennsylvania and is an accredited affiliate of the national network of Small Business Development Centers.

The Saint Vincent College SBDC provides consulting services and educational programs to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a small business in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. From helping aspiring entrepreneurs turn ideas into businesses, to helping small firms expand, to providing the information every business person needs to make critical decisions, the SBDC is the resource entrepreneurs in all industry sectors can turn to for help - help that can make the difference between success and failure.

The Saint Vincent College SBDC is funded by: US Small Business Administration, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, United States International Trade Administration, Saint Vincent College, and private sector partners.

Southwestern PA SCORE

140 N Beeson Avenue, Uniontown, PA 15401

724-437-4222

<https://southwesternpennsylvania.score.org/chapters/uniontown-score-now-sw-pennsylvania-score>

Southwestern PA SCORE is a chapter in the nationwide SCORE nonprofit association dedicated to educating Southwestern PA area entrepreneurs and helping Southwestern PA small businesses start, grow, and succeed. Because Southwestern PA SCORE is part of the nationwide SCORE nonprofit association we are also a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), which has been mentoring small business owners for more than forty years.

Southwestern PA SCORE is a valuable Southwestern PA association that has offered small business entrepreneurs in the Southwestern PA area confidential business counseling services at no charge. Southwestern PA SCORE volunteers have the knowledge and experience to help any Southwestern PA small business owner get the help they need. Our dedicated volunteers help an average over 100 small business cases in Southwestern PA per year.

Southwestern PA SCORE also provides local workshops and events in Southwestern PA to connect small business owners with the people and information they need to start, grow, and maintain their Southwestern PA businesses. Southwestern PA SCORE provides resources, templates and tools to assist Southwestern PA entrepreneurs in developing tools and plans they need to navigate their way to small business success in Southwestern PA.

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES IN FAYETTE COUNTY

PA CareerLink® Fayette County

112 Commonwealth Dr., Lemont Furnace, PA 15456

724-434-5627

<https://www.jobgateway.pa.gov>

Private Industry Council Westmoreland/Fayette

112 Commonwealth Drive, Lemont Furnace, PA 15456

724-434-5627

<http://www.privateindustrycouncil.com>

Uniontown Public Library

24 Jefferson St., Uniontown, PA 15401

724-437-1165

<http://www.uniontownlib.org>

Fayette County Veteran Affairs

22 E. Main St., #2, Uniontown, PA 15401

724-430-1241

<http://www.co.fayette.pa.us>

TOP 50 EMPLOYERS IN FAYETTE COUNTY

1	State Government	26	Crown Cork & Seal USA Inc.
2	Nemacolin Woodlands Inc.	27	Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services
3	The Uniontown Hospital	28	Pennsylvania State University
4	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	29	PIC of Westmoreland & Fayette Inc.
5	Connellsville Area School District	30	Lowes Home Centers Inc.
6	Fayette County	31	Pechin Super Foods Market
7	Teletch Services Corporation	32	Frazier School District
8	Albert Gallatin Area School District	33	Lynn Dairy Queens Inc.
9	Uniontown Area School District	34	Chevron USA Inc.
10	Fayette Resources Incorporated	35	LaFayette Manor Inc.
11	Laurel Highlands School District	36	Cherry Tree Nursing Center
12	Cenveo Corporation	37	Berkley Medical Resouces Inc.
13	Federal Government	38	Johnson Matthey Inc.
14	Brownsville Marine Products, LLC	39	Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
15	Highlands Hospital	40	Ohiopyle Prints Inc.
16	Lady Luck Casino Nemacolin	41	Anova Healthcare Services Inc.
17	McDonald's Restaurants of PA Inc.	42	Shallenberger Construction Inc.
18	Sensus USA Inc.	43	Nikae Foods Inc.
19	Universal Well Services Inc.	44	Uniontown Newspapers Inc.
20	Vertex Business Services	45	Argon ST Inc.
21	Amedisys Holding LLC	46	C&J Welding and Construction LLC
22	Intermediate Unit 1	47	United Dairy Inc.
23	Brownsville Area School District	48	Goodwill of Southwestern PA
24	TPUSA Inc.	49	Advanced Acoustic Concepts LLC
25	Mount Macrina Manor Nursing Home	50	Pento Homecare Agency Inc.

Thank you to the following contributors...

Fayette County Career and Technical Institute

Fayette Leaders Academy

Fay-Penn Economic Development Council

Higinbotham Law Offices

PA Department of Labor & Industry

Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc.

Somerset Trust

