Liberal Arts Colleges



- Broad education across disciplines: humanities, sciences, arts, and social sciences before choosing a major
- Small class sizes: typically 10-20 students,
- discussion-based learning
- Close relationships with professors: faculty know students by name, mentor directly
- Focus on critical thinking, writing, communication skills for varied career paths
- Undergraduate-focused teaching and research opportunities
- Tight-knit residential campus community with strong student life

Private Colleges and Universities



- Range from small liberal arts to large research universities
- Often smaller class sizes and more personalized attention
- Tuition varies; many offer significant financial aid
- Religious-affiliated and non-affiliated options
- Families should explore fit based on values and budget

Technical/Specialized Colleges



- Career-focused programs in engineering, art, design, film, music, culinary arts, business
- Hands-on, practical learning with real-world projects and industry experience
- Faculty often working professionals
- Faster career paths: 2-4 year targeted training programs
- Strong industry connections through internships and job placement

Community Colleges



- Affordable with significantly lower tuition than four-year universities
- Transfer pathways to UC, CSU, or private universities after two years
- Flexible scheduling: evening, weekend, online classes
- Open enrollment, accessible regardless of high school grades
- Career certificates and Associate degrees for technical training and workforce entry
- Smaller class sizes and personalized attention, especially foundational courses
- Local campuses throughout California, including Laney, Merritt, Berkeley City College