

CONTINUING EDUCATION & CAREERS

Higher Ed Track

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

After an individual has graduated from high school in the United States, the following options are available for entering the workforce and/or continuing education:

Enter Workforce Directly

- Start working immediately after high school.
- Gain experience and earn money.

Technical Training/Certification

- Short-term programs focused on specific skills.
- **Examples:** Electrician, Plumber, Medical Assistant.

Some College, No Degree

- Attend college but leave before obtaining a degree.
- Gives some experience but can be a costly choice.

Associate's Degree

- Two-year degree from a community college.
- **Examples:** Nursing, Information Technology.

Bachelor's Degree

- Four-year degree from a college or university.
- **Examples:** Business, Engineering, Education.

Graduate Degree (including master's or another professional degree)

- Advanced degrees after a bachelor's degree.
- **Examples:** Master's, Doctorate, Professional Degrees (e.g., Law, Medicine).

For most individuals, all choices ultimately lead to getting a job. Most high school graduates pursue some form of education after high school, in the form of technical training or higher education.



INDIVIDUALS THAT PURSUE A TRADITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PATH OFTEN EXPERIENCE:

Better Job Opportunities: Higher education can open doors to more job opportunities.

Higher Earnings: People with higher education often earn more money.

Personal Growth: Education helps you grow personally and professionally and make important connections with people.

Lower Unemployment: People with more education have lower chances of being unemployed.

Economic Success: A bachelor's degree can increase your chances of financial success, but it is not a guarantee.

Majors Matter When You Choose a College

Research conducted by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce indicates that choosing a college major will play a bigger role in what you earn over your lifetime than the decision to attend college. Research what jobs need what majors, what you will be interested in for the long-term, and understand the income of that job, so you can make an educated decision on what you will pursue.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND RESOURCES TO USE:

Review this [Toolkit | CareerOneStop](#) to take assessments and understand your resources to help explore and answer some of the questions below.

Ask: What are the educational requirements (major or schooling) of the career that I am interested in? Research: [Occupational Profiles](#)

Ask: If post-secondary degree education is required for that career, how much does that additional education cost and how will I pay for it?

Ask: If I need to take out student loans to pay for the education needed to enter the career of my choice, how much will I be paying each month on those loans, and for how long? Will I need a co-signer for that loan?

Ask: How do I know if the number of loans needed for the post-secondary degree institution, I want to attend is too high relative to the likely income available in that career?

Ask: What is the income of the career I want?

- Research: Bureau of Labor Statistics - [Highest paying jobs](#), [Fastest Growing Occupations](#) : [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and [most new jobs](#).

Ask: During school or after how much will I need to make to live in a particular location?

- Use the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) to calculate the cost of living in a state or place of interest.

If you have a moment, try your hand at Time for Payback. A game that gives the player an idea of the types of choices one would have to make around expenses (not just college tuition).

It is important to understand from this resource that there are multiple ways to get a job and make money. **You do not need a college degree to be economically successful in life.** Your path to your career could include a combination of educational pursuits. There is no one way to do it. It is important to ask yourself questions and understand the answers that will lead to informed decisions on your next steps after school.