

Choose a Career School Carefully

Need training for a job?

Before you go to school for career training, first think about the type of training you'll need.

- **Define your goals.** Do you want to learn a skill, prepare for a test, or get a license or certification? Does on-the-job training, a community college program, an online course, or a career school make the most sense?
- **Talk to someone you trust.** If you're in high school, ask your school counselor to help you focus on your needs and goals. He or she will have information about different types of schools and can help you with the application process.

You also can explore careers, salary and benefits, and education and training at [StudentAid.gov/careersearch](https://studentaid.gov/careersearch).

Going to school is a lifetime investment. Shop around.

Getting training after high school will help you get a better-paying job doing work you like. However, attending school is a big investment in your time. Chances are you'll also have to invest your own money or take out a student loan to go school. So be sure that you're choosing the right school. Check out more than one school, and take the following steps:

- **Do a background check.** Does the school offer affordable fees and a solid education? Ask employers you might want to work for what they think about the school. Talk to recent graduates to ask about their experience at the school.
 - Not sure where you want to go to school? Use the U.S. Department of Education's college search tool, *College Navigator*, at nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator to find colleges and career schools that may fit your needs. You can search for a school based on its location, size, degree offerings, and other factors.
 - You also can use the *College Scorecard* at collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard to get information about colleges and career schools, including cost, graduation rates, the average amounts its students borrow, and more. The College Scorecard provides an easy-to-use tool for comparing schools.
 - Check your state higher education agency or the consumer protection division of your state attorney general's office to find out whether there have been any complaints about the school.
 - Finally, make sure the school you want to attend clearly lists its costs. Schools are required to list this information in their net price calculator. You can search for a school's calculator at collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx. Remember that any financial aid you get will be applied first to paying the school's tuition and fees. If there's any money left over, the school will give it to you to help you pay for things such as food and rent.
- **Visit the school.** Contact the school and schedule a visit, preferably while classes are in session. Talk with current students. Make sure you're comfortable with the facilities, the equipment, the teachers, and the students.
- **Ask questions.** A good school will gladly answer your questions about its programs.

Important points:

- **Take your time.** Don't sign a contract until you've read it and understood it. Ask questions about repayment terms, refund and cancellation policies, and finding a job after you finish the course. In addition, make sure all guarantees and promises are written into the contract. Also, find out what happens if you have to quit before you finish. It's a good idea to ask someone you trust to read and evaluate the forms too.
- **If you're unhappy** with the school or program you chose—or if you think you were misled—you can submit a complaint or report suspicious activity using Federal Student Aid's Feedback System at [StudentAid.gov/feedback](https://studentaid.gov/feedback).

To learn more about choosing a college or career school, visit [StudentAid.gov/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools](https://studentaid.gov/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools).

For information about federal student aid, visit our website at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov). If you have general questions about federal student aid, you can also call the Federal Student Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID.

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