

College and Career Readiness Toolkit



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Dear Out of School Time Program Providers;

We know that when you design your before and after-school, weekend, holiday and summer programs that you have specific goals and objectives in mind. Often these goals are focused on the here and now - building concrete social and emotional learning skills, getting students on track for reading or math, broadening knowledge within specified content areas, fostering creativity and problem solving. These goals are excellent interim outcomes for our larger and broader goals of helping students become successful in life and in seeking education, training beyond high school and eventually embarking into careers.

Unfortunately too many students don't get enough exposure through school to the broad array of possibilities and tracks for additional education and careers that inspires students to reach high and follow passions. Too many students don't get introduced to the steps along the pathways they need to follow to achieve their dreams. Intentional career and college readiness often isn't brought down to Middle School where the choices students need to make really begin. Once they reach High School, schools often can't cover all the bases alone. According to the American School Counselor Association there should be a student to counselor ratio of 250 to 1. Maryland has an average of 369 to 1 and in Baltimore City the ratio is just 1 counselor to 900 students.

Given the need for more caring and informed adults to provide guidance to young people, OST programs can and should play a critical role in starting early and continuously incorporating career and college readiness activities, culture and mindset. Research indicates that OST programs are effective and play an important role in building 21st century skills. We have built this toolkit to provide practical how-to's, activities, and additional resources for you to help bridge the information, awareness and opportunity gap for students. These opportunities can make the difference for the long term outcomes and quality of life, not just for the students you serve, but for families and communities.

Students who end their education at high school are more at risk for experiencing poverty and less likely to earn living wages than students who pursue skilled trade or college degrees. Students who earn bachelor's degrees have a 3.5 times lower poverty rate than those who earn only a high school diploma. Skilled trades often offer another path, with fewer years required to achieve degrees and often less debt encumbered, many trade paths also offer well paying jobs. The National Association of College & Employers estimates the average starting salary for a college graduate in 2019 was \$55,280. The average technical and trade school graduates will make \$49,002, often starting their earnings earlier than a 4 year degree earner and will likely spend less for their degree or certificate. In contrast a high school graduate who is in the workforce in Maryland will earn \$41,543 a year annually and those without advanced certifications or degrees are much more likely to be unemployed.

Of even greater concern is the inequity in earning for Baltimore City high school graduates at all levels of educational attainment. According to the 2018 Baltimore Education Research Consortium Study, *Launching into Adulthood*:

The median income for all graduates after six years was \$15,093. For those who had completed a bachelor's degree, it was \$18,968, and for those with an associate's but no bachelor's degree, \$22,060. Among graduates who enrolled in college but had not completed a degree, median income was \$15,604. For those who never enrolled in college, it was \$13,374. In contrast, the livable wage threshold — the minimum annual amount one adult needs to cover basic household expenses — was \$27,622.

The BERC study recommends additional counseling for middle and high school students to align with student interests and to provide detailed information and support for the kinds of choices students need to make to proceed on their chosen career pathways. Additionally, they recommend educating students on the definition of liveable wages and how to determine the earnings potentials for a variety of career pathways.

Our goal is for you to use this toolkit to make the difference for youth participating in your programs by opening up options to them ***as early as possible***; increasing the quality and frequency that students are exposed to career and college readiness; and having more opportunities to practice and apply the necessary skills.

We hope that as you utilize the toolkit in your program you will provide feedback to the Maryland Out of School Time Network on what works and what we can improve. We will continue to update the toolkit and make it available free and available online along with any additional training and professional development opportunities we make available at www.mostnetwork.org and you can provide direct feedback to info@mdoutofschooltime.org.

Thank you for all you and your programs do to support young people in Maryland!

Sincerely,

Ellie Mitchell
Executive Director, Maryland Out of School Time Network

Introduction

Many of us may remember playing the board game Life as a child. The game is supposed to provide an understanding of the many decisions and opportunities life presents along the road and provides a relatively simplistic cause and effect formula of failure and success. Unfortunately for too many students the real game of life provides more roadblocks, potholes, and off ramps than ever imagined by the game designers at Hasbro.

The pathways toward careers and college can be complex to navigate. Some pathways require early decisions in coursework (for instance completing certain levels of math in middle school). College and other post-secondary choices are directly related to family finances, planning, eligibility for different types of aid, and accessibility of completing financial aid forms. Financial challenges are just part of the list of barriers facing first generation college goers including racial disparities, unfamiliarity with college going cultures, and lack of broader support networks. Immigrant and English Language Learners face similar challenges with the additional burden of language barriers and illegal immigrants are left with even fewer options and closed directions. Understanding and being aware of these concerns when guiding the diverse and varied student populations served by afterschool programs is critical to opening the roadways.

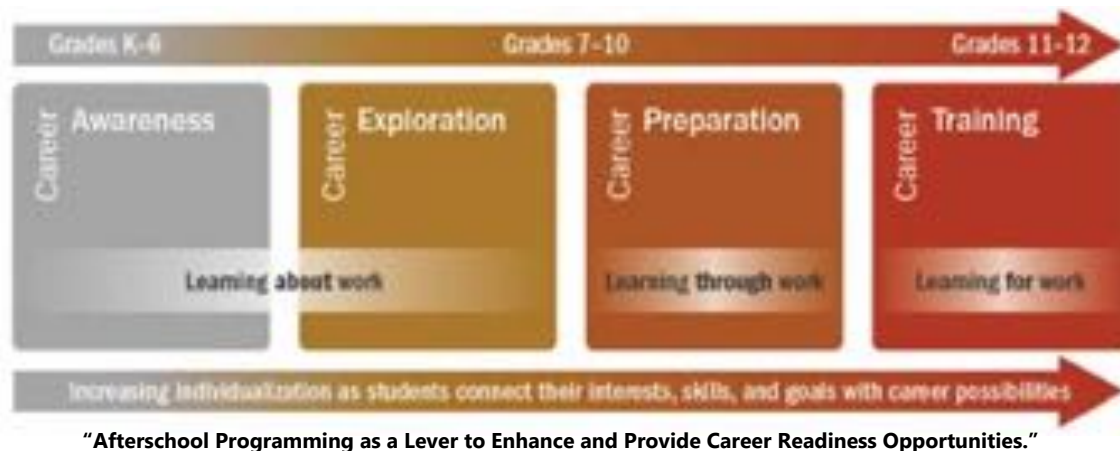
With 80% of a young person's life spent outside of the school day and school year, afterschool programs can play an important role in providing guidance, support and even inspiration for students' career and college pathways — helping to remove barriers and open new avenues. Afterschool: A Path to College & Career Readiness a brief created by Ignite Afterschool in partnership with the Asia Society identifies three main roles of out-of-school time program can play:

1. Raising college & career aspirations
2. Fostering 21st Century skills
3. Connecting youth to workforce - particularly STEM careers

Betsy Brand, of the American Youth Policy Forum, goes further to say that out-of-school time programs help connect learning to college, career, and future plans by offering opportunities to develop and apply skills in teamwork and through complex projects, real world challenges and connecting students directly to work experiences like internships.

There is a great need to begin earlier than high school with these connections because on-time graduation and avoiding drop-out is rooted to engagement and academic success in middle school. In a study of middle schoolers, less than 1 out of every 4 students with at least one "off-track indicator" graduated high school in five years or less. Beginning with elementary school, students should be on a pathway of learning about work, learning through work, and learning for work — all the time differentiating these experiences based on students interests.

Our toolkit provides practical resources, information and activities for out-of-school time programs to move through this continuum, starting with foundational skills, career and college readiness culture building, and awareness. As students move closer to high school graduation, the toolkit offers



how-to's on building partnerships with colleges and industry to make the transition to applied learning that prepares students for the next steps.

Toolkit Overview & How to Use

Each section of the toolkit will begin with an overview of the area of focus including any relevant research. Throughout the toolkit there will be adaptations to the material to be age appropriate for middle school and high school. Following the overview, each unit will include some combination of the following resources:

Knowledge Sharing

- Offers the reader with basic information that provides important background for all program providers to know in order to best serve a diverse population of students.

How-To's

- Provides step by step approaches for helping your program design learning opportunities, implement innovations, build new partnerships, and access new information.

Activities

- Details specific interactive activities that can be incorporated into your program anytime with descriptions of learning objectives and the time and materials needed.

More Links to Explore

- Lists additional resources you can explore online to extend and deepen learning in this topic area.

This toolkit can be used to:

- Design your program model and create curriculum.
- Make the case for your program in applying to career and college readiness grants by utilizing the research and best practices.
- Provide resources and training to staff.
- Share with potential career and college readiness partners to build new opportunities for your students.

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The Career and College Readiness Toolkit is an initiative of the Maryland Out of School Time Network. To learn more and find more resources, visit www.mostnetwork.org/initiatives/CCR.

Unit 1:

Overarching Principles of College and Career Readiness



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1) CREATE A COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS CULTURE



Out-of-school time (OST) is an opportunity for students to connect with job skills and expand career readiness in authentic and engaging settings. **OST can be particularly beneficial for historically underserved students who don't have access to the same resources** through their schools or family connections as their more advantaged peers.

Establishing a culture of college and career readiness (CCR) is an essential component of programs aiming to set youth up for future success. According to the [Berkeley Center for Educational Partnerships](#), this is typically called “college-going culture”, referring to the environment, attitudes, and practices in schools and communities that encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspective to enhance access to and success in post-secondary education. The big picture goal of establishing such a culture is for youth to believe that they can have a great future and that they can plan and prepare for many options following high school (NACAC 5). This type of culture sets high expectations for all students and generates important values such as appreciation for learning, desire to succeed, and motivation to become a lifelong learner.

Youth need a combination of academic, professional, and social and emotional skills to be ready for post-secondary opportunities. While schools typically bear most of this responsibility, out-of-school time programs can play an important role in teaching these skills, supporting youth, and providing additional learning experiences to youth. OST programs are often uniquely positioned to reach youth in ways that school personnel may be unable to and to offer a broader range of experiences beyond what their school makes available to them.

When working to establish a college and career readiness culture in your program, focus on **three main elements**:

- ▶ **1)** Offer students opportunities to learn about a variety of options for their future (including careers and the education they require). You can begin this as early as elementary school, but it should definitely be a focus in middle school.
- ▶ **2)** Your program and staff should convey the expectation that ALL youth can prepare for the opportunity to attend and be successful in a post-secondary experience - either college or other alternative.
- ▶ **3)** All stakeholders (staff, families, community, etc.) are on the same page and communicate the same message of high expectations for the future of their youth (NACAC 4).



HOW TO CREATE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IN OST PROGRAMS:

- 1) **Be a champion for all youth** in your programs. Advocate that all youth can achieve and realize their full potential and clearly communicate this as an expectation.
- 2) **Set specific goals** related to college and career readiness for your programs and **measure the impact** of those goals over time. How will your program specifically address the topic of college and career readiness? How will you know if you're doing a good job?
- 3) To fully embrace a CCR culture, it is crucial to **have buy-in at every level**. Leadership, frontline staff, parents, youth, and other stakeholders must all be on-board and involved in setting and maintaining this culture.
- 4) **Create positive relationships** among staff and youth. Building trust and mutual-respect, and establishing supportive, encouraging relationships with youth could make all the difference for those who may not have that type of relationship with other adults in their lives.
- 5) **Open opportunities and experience to *all* youth**, not just those who are "the best", have the most resources, or are likely college-bound.
- 6) **As early as elementary school**, begin having youth think about their future goals and seek out information about their aspirations. **Do not wait** until youth are in high school to begin talking about their futures. By starting early, you ensure that youth can be exposed to a wide variety of opportunities and experiences that could help them make more informed decisions.

7) Connect with and engage families early and often. Include families in all steps of the process and host activities and events that provide knowledge, ease uncertainties, and build their confidence in supporting their child through the college and career readiness journey. Also take the time to get to know families and their hopes, dreams, and goals for their child(ren)'s future.

8) Offer youth opportunities to **demonstrate and practice leadership skills**, such as creating youth advisory boards or a youth leadership team. Invite all youth to participate in these opportunities and provide ways to practice learning, refining, and demonstrating leadership skills.

9) Establish a **regular practice of discussing the future** with youth and learning more about their thoughts and feelings about post-secondary options. Making these decisions can be intimidating and overwhelming, especially for first-generation college students who don't have models in their family to follow after. Regular check-ins can help youth navigate the wide variety of opportunities and decisions they will encounter throughout this process.

10) Ensure your **physical space looks, feels, and sounds like a place that promotes college and career readiness** and is a safe place for learning. What can you add to your space to achieve this goal? College brochures, career posters, college alma-mater insignia for your staff, etc. are a good start. Again, having regular, open discussions about future options and encouraging collaborative exploration among youth can be helpful in working toward this goal.

This [College-Going Culture Toolkit](#) from the Oregon GEAR UP program is a good resource for getting started with culture-setting in middle school.

2) RAISING THE BAR ON EXPECTATIONS



As part of creating a college and career readiness culture within your programs, **setting and maintaining high expectations for all youth** will be a key element. Research shows that when youth have supportive, caring adults in their lives - their parents, teachers, coaches, etc. - who hold high expectations for them, they will have higher self-esteem, perform better in school, be more determined and persistent, and believe they will have a good job.

To begin raising the bar on expectations, look at your current program offerings and evaluate what you are already doing to encourage and support great expectations for your youth and determine areas where you'd like to amp up your efforts. The goal here is to develop a specific plan of action for setting high expectations for ALL youth across your programs and identifying ways to support and encourage them to meet those expectations.

As you begin implementing higher expectations, you may experience resistance from the youth themselves, their families, staff members, etc. However, setting (even slightly) higher expectations will raise the self-esteem of your youth, show them their full potential, and teach them that they are more resilient than others might believe

Having a detailed and solid plan for how you intend to raise expectations and hold youth to higher expectations in your program will help ensure you are prepared to address concerns from stakeholders.

Youth are generally more capable than we give them credit for. If we set high expectations and they are unable to meet them, we can always make adjustments, but we should aim high to start. If we never give them the opportunity to show us how high they can soar because we've held them back with low expectations, they will never reach their full potential.



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR RAISING THE BAR

- What are the **hopes and dreams** of the youth in our program? How do they plan to achieve them?
- What do our youth **expect of themselves**? What do their families expect of them?
- Are we **clear about the expectations** we have for our youth? Have we clearly and consistently communicated to youth, families, and other stakeholders about our expectations?
- Are the expectations set for **ALL** youth in a given program? What accommodations or additional supports are in place to meet the needs of each youth?
- Where are the expectations and supports built into our curriculum? How do we **organically provide support and encouragement** to youth as they work through our curriculum?

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR RAISING THE BAR

- Are we **consistent and fair** in communicating and upholding expectations? Do all stakeholders receive the same message regarding our expectations?
- Do we have a specific plan for what support looks like in our program? **How will staff know what to do** when a youth is frustrated or fails to meet expectations? How should staff respond?
- Do we meet each youth with **kindness, understanding, and positivity** when they struggle or encounter setbacks?
- How do we **make adjustments** when youth encounter roadblocks or setbacks? How do we make the most of the opportunity these circumstances present?
- What are the **specific goals and benchmarks** we want youth to reach at which intervals?
- Where do we need to make adjustments based on results? (This will likely come after implementation).



For more information on raising expectations, here are a few resources:

- [How Afterschool Programs Can Most Effectively Promote Positive Youth Development as a Support to Academic Achievement](#), National Institute on Out-of-School-Time (NIOST), 2003
- [Why Kids Thrive When We Set High Expectations](#), Parent.com, May 2017
- [5 Ways to Set 'High Expectations' without 'High Pressure'](#), Melbourne Child Psychology

3) MENTORSHIP



Preparing for post-secondary opportunities can be stressful, overwhelming, and confusing for youth and their families. Having a mentor to help youth and their families work through the process can be beneficial, particularly if the mentor has experience with the process themselves. It is important to note that this can be especially true for youth who are first-generation college students.

Mentors do not specifically have to focus on college preparation, but can also be beneficial for those youth who want to take a different path. Mentors can provide information about their own career paths and share their experiences with youth who might be interested in pursuing a trade or employment alongside attending college.

Mentorship can play a pivotal role in college and career readiness for youth. As mentioned previously, youth benefit greatly from relationships with supportive adults in their lives and mentors can be crucial to some youth who may be lacking those relationships otherwise. You may already have mentorship as a component of your OST programs, which is great! If not, you might consider making this part of your plan for integrating more college and career readiness into your program offerings.

Finding mentors in your community can be as easy as posting a call for them through your established networks, online and in-person. However, in the case that you are not able to find mentors easily or are looking for more variety in your mentors, you may want to check out the [Maryland MENTOR Mentoring Connector](#), a free national database of mentoring programs. The site also provides additional resources about mentoring programs, starting a mentoring program, mentoring stories, and more.



ACTIVITY: FIVE POSSIBLE MENTORS

Have youth to participate in an exercise to identify five people whom they already know who might be a good mentor.

1. Ask youth: "Who are five people who might be able to help you on your journey toward college and career? Why did you choose each of these people?"
2. Help them to think of supportive and trusted adults or slightly older peers who would be able to offer advice, support, and generally be a cheerleader for them as they navigate their path to their future.
3. Guide youth through the process of identifying specific ways that each person on their list could be helpful to them and contacting them to ask for guidance, support, and mentorship for those specific things.

HOW TO SUPPORT A MENTOR

Supporting mentors is a very important aspect of a good mentoring program that is often overlooked. By following just a few simple steps, you will be able to create a solid mentorship relationship for students and mentors.

- 1) **Make matches wisely** to ensure that youth and their mentors get along, respect and appreciate one another, and can build a productive relationship. Consider expertise in the mentor, needs of the student, and general personality and interest in both participants.
- 2) **Share tools and resources with mentors** to aid in their support of their youth partner. This would include any resources students are using, information on mentorship, and tools to help them best help youth. The more you can share with mentors and trust them with information and resources, the more help they will be to students and, ultimately, to the success of your program.
- 3) **Grant the same access to mentors as youth** in order to maintain continuity across the program. If your program uses a specific tool to manage aspects of this process, make sure that you allow mentors to have similar access as students so that they can access information that will help them provide the best support and guidance to students possible.
- 4) **Provide training to mentors** to help them learn about youth development topics. You may create this as a separate training just for mentors who work with youth in your program or integrate this into staff training. Training topics such as how to work with youth, bias training, program details and goals, organizational culture, and common youth concerns will go a long way toward preparing your mentors and ensuring more success of the mentoring component of the program.

Additional resources that might be helpful as you consider how to use mentorship in your programs:

- [College and Career Success Mentoring Toolkit](#), National Mentoring Resource Center
- [College and Career Readiness Resources](#), MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
- [The Role of Mentoring in College Access and Success](#), Institute for Higher Education Policy
- [Upholding the Covenant: State of Mentoring in Maryland](#), Maryland Mentor

4) COLLECTING DATA RELATED TO COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS



While the long-term goal for career and college readiness programs is clear — young people thriving in their chosen future work — we understand that it “takes a village” to support young people along this journey. No single person, program or institution can do it alone, so it is critical to understand the role your program has in the larger ecosystem of support for young people to be career and college ready. By being clear on your program’s role in supporting young people, you can then **prioritize the information and types of data you need** to understand your program’s progress and outcomes. In considering what data to collect, reflect on what data you need and why.

What is your program model and how do you most tangibly support young people in getting career and college ready? Do you primarily support young people directly, providing them with specific information, skills or experiences such as SAT/ACT prep, college visits, job internships or social emotional learning (SEL) supports? Or do you more directly serve their caregivers or provide trained mentors who support young people with specific academic needs or help complete college, financial aid or scholarship applications?

While your program contributes to many outcomes of career and college readiness, what aspects of career and college readiness can you attribute to your program? What framework or theory of change does your program follow or fit into?

▶ FOUR STEPS ◀

To support your ongoing learning, follow the next four steps. These steps will guide you to articulate your program strategy, prioritize your progress indicators, identify your data collection resources and sources and encapsulate all this into an evaluation plan.

STEP 1: DETERMINING YOUR FRAMEWORK

Review the frameworks on the following pages and see how your program model ties in. By leveraging an already established framework, your program:

1. Has a starting point for its own logic model and a stronger understanding and demonstration of your role in the larger career and college readiness process.
1. Can leverage lessons learned, research, and, possibly, data collection tools, provided by those frameworks.

Identify where in the larger ecosystem of supports your program is focused. Check out the following summaries of youth development ecosystems as described as “field frameworks” and “logic models” to better contextualize your program’s role in a young person’s future success.

As defined by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a program logic model is “a picture of how your organization does its work — the theory and assumptions underlying the program. A program logic model links outcomes (both short- and long-term) with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/ principles of the program.”

STEP 1: DETERMINING YOUR FRAMEWORK

Ready by 21: Getting Youth Ready



Ecosystems Logic Model Examples



AVID: College and Career Readiness Framework



P21 Frameworks for 21st-Century Learning



STEP 1: DETERMINING YOUR FRAMEWORK

U.S. Chamber Foundation CCR Framework



U.S. Department of Education Employability Skills Framework



Hello Insight Logic Model



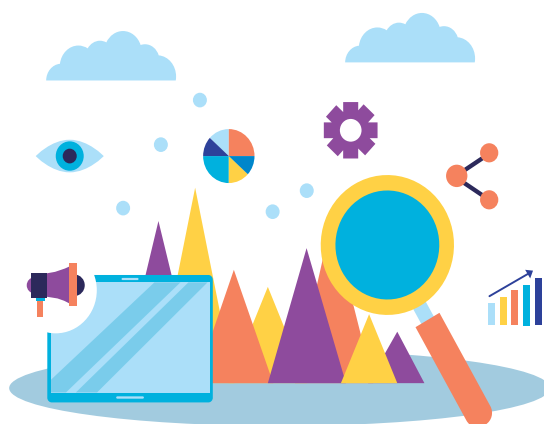
STEP 2: BUILD YOUR LOGIC MODEL

In reflection of the field frameworks and sample logic models, answer the following questions:

1. What is your logic model, especially your most direct (attributable) results?
2. What components are most important to share information about? To whom and why?
3. What data do you already have?
4. What resources are available to invest in learning and evaluation?

Especially in prioritizing short-term outcomes, consider your program's emphasis. Is it...

- Motivating young people to consider different/new college and career options?
- Providing knowledge about the variety of college and career options?
- Building technical skills for college and career readiness?
- Giving specific opportunities to explore college and career options?
- Developing social, emotional, and learning capacities related to college and career options?



STEP 3: BALANCE PRIORITIES & RESOURCES

To balance your learning priorities with learning resources (staff time, funds for data collection and analyses, etc.), review the typical information sources and methods below. What information or data do you already have in hand and what data do you need?

	Example Indicators	Example Data Sources	Time-\$ Range
Outputs Direct “outputs” of program activities, usually # of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # youth participants • # ACT/SAT mock tests taken • # college visits • # hours of tutoring (hours per student) • # advisory hours • # trainings/workshops • # mock job interviews conducted • # scholarships awarded/applied for • # individualized college/career plans • # college applications • # internship placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance sheets • Participant information systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$-\$\$
Short-term Outcomes Direct, tangible or attributable results of program activities, especially related to change in knowledge, skills, behavior, status, etc. Timeframe is usually immediate to one year or so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPA improvements • AP/Honors course completions • ACT/SAT improvements • Broader knowledge of range of future pathways • College admissions/ financial aid knowledge • Workplace skill development (use of technology, SEL, life skills, etc.) • College/Career confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student scores/ records • Knowledge surveys • Skill surveys or observation rubrics • Youth surveys • Advisor or supervisor observations/ reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$\$-\$\$\$\$

STEP 3: BALANCE PRIORITIES & RESOURCES

	Example Indicators	Example Data Sources	Time-\$ Range
Long-term Outcomes Changes occurring after a longer timeframe, such as 2+ years, and supporting overall social impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school graduation College admission or graduation Transfer from community college to university Lower college debt Living wage / stable careers (hourly to salaried positions, part-time to full-time) Self-sufficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longitudinal tracking of individual young people Program alumni surveys Comparisons with national norms (AECF, Kids Count) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$

In collecting data from youth, measurement tool examples include:

► **Academic/Cognitive Tests**

- Academic knowledge and skills: [OECD \(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development\) - PISA \(Programme for International Student Assessment\)](#)
- Cognitive competencies: [College and Work Readiness Assessment Plus \(CWRA+\)](#)

► **Social Emotional / Youth Development**

- Research Collaboration: [College and Career Competency Assessments](#)
- Hello Insight: [Career and College Tools](#)

► **Workplace Scenario Testing**

- ACT WorkKeys: [Assessments](#)
- [21st Century Skills for Workplace Success: NOCTI Business Solutions](#)

Also refer to the framework/logic models that best align with yours and see if they offer any tools or guides to evaluate progress.

STEP 4: CREATE AN EVALUATION PLAN

Finally, be sure to complement your logic model and your measurement/learning priorities with an **evaluation plan**.

Pull together your decisions above into your own evaluation plan and regularly revisit both your plan and your logic model to ensure you're making progress.

Use Exercise 4 in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, [Logic Model Development Guide](#).



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The Career and College Readiness Toolkit is an initiative of the Maryland Out of School Time Network. To learn more and find more resources, visit www.mostnetwork.org/initiatives/CCR.

Unit 2:

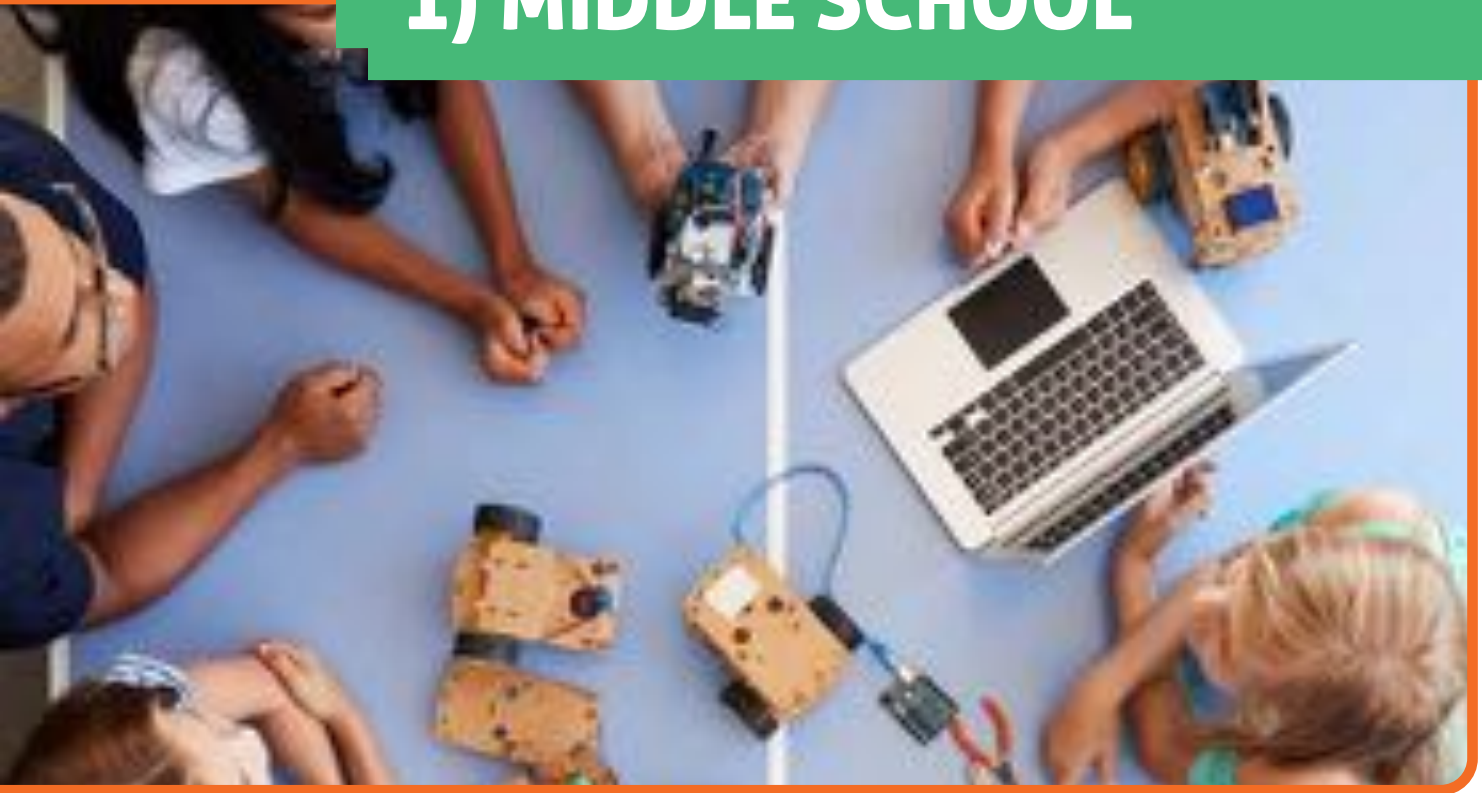
Guiding Youth Through College and Career Decisions



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1) MIDDLE SCHOOL



The process of making decisions about whether or not to attend college, which college to attend, and your future career can be overwhelming, intimidating, and daunting. **We ask youth to make these huge decisions when they are still very young** and, likely, have had very limited exposure to potential jobs and the wide variety of options available. Now, as a result of School Choice and the popular development of high school pathways, we are asking youth as young as 11 and 12 years old to begin making decisions about their futures. **OST programs can play a pivotal role in providing the necessary support and exposure** youth need as they explore their options and navigate the decision-making process.

Research has shown that middle school is the time when youth can benefit the most from career exploration through “a process of building self-awareness, learning about potential careers, and developing a plan for reaching future goals” (McAvoy 1). By the end of middle school, many youth are given the opportunity to select their high school with the advent of School Choice programs, Magnet schools, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway programs. This is often seen as the first step toward college and career decisions, however, it is important to remember that when making this decision, youth are not locked into any particular choice. Throughout high school their tastes and preferences

may change, they may learn of new opportunities and possibilities, or simply change their mind. Any number of factors can influence a change during this time of adolescent development.

During the middle school years, it is important to provide a wide variety of college- and career-focused experiences for youth and expose them to many different possible career paths. Youth should be able to envision themselves in a variety of career fields. A foundation can be laid during elementary school by integrating information about the variety of careers throughout the curriculum, but during middle school this should become an active focus.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER EXPLORATION IDEAS

- 1) **Career Exploration Activities:** Using sites like the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Student Desk](#), invite students to learn about careers that seem interesting to them. Then learn about the education and experience requirements needed to enter various fields.
- 2) **Career-Related Projects:** Incorporate projects and activities that center around learning about aspects of different careers.
- 3) **College Tours:** Middle school is a great time to tour a variety of local colleges and universities to give youth an idea of what nearby schools could be options for them. Include community colleges!
- 4) **Family Career Interviews:** Have youth conduct interviews of their family members to learn more about their careers and the path they took to get there.
- 5) **Career Day:** Invite local adults from a wide variety of careers to your program to share information about their career paths.
- 6) **Job Shadowing:** Arrange opportunities for youth to visit someone on the job and learn more about what a typical day looks like for that particular job or career.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been developed as a building sequence aimed at helping middle school youth identify their interests and conducting research to find high school programs and activities that align with their interests.

The focus here is not so much on career and college selection, but more on using interest-driven research to explore their immediate ideas to take a first step (choosing a high school) in this long and winding path.

#1 - This is Me Web

This activity leads middle school youth through the exercise of taking an inventory of their interests and what they know about high school and themselves already. Their interests may align with career aspirations, or not. Either is okay! Click [here](#) for a link to the worksheet.

1. Explain to youth that they are going to create a web of things they are interested in and what kinds of things they may want to consider about choosing a high school or high school activities.
2. Once you've introduced the activity, have youth complete the [This is Me Web Worksheet](#) by writing their responses to each question on the web.
3. Circulate during the activity to help youth think through their responses if they get stuck or just check-in with them.
4. To wrap up, you can have youth share their responses with one another or invite them to share with the group. Have youth hold on to their This is Me Web for use in the next activity.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

#2 - School Alignment Research

The second activity in this sequence uses information from the **This is Me Web** to guide research on the high school options available to them. Click [here](#) for a link to the worksheet.

1. Explain to youth that they will be conducting research on the local area high schools and determining which schools they might be interested in attending based on the responses in their This is Me Web.
2. Then, share the [School Alignment Research Worksheet](#) with them as well as a list of websites for each of the schools in your area that would be possible for them to attend.
3. Set them up on computers to conduct their research and complete the School Alignment Research Worksheet by writing in responses to each question based on the information they are able to find.
4. Circulate during the activity to help conduct searches or direct youth toward information on the school's sites and check-in on their progress.
5. To wrap up, have youth share their findings as well as which schools are most interesting to them and why.
6. As a follow-up to this activity, it may be helpful to have representatives from as many of the high schools as possible to come visit and talk with the youth about their programs and activities and answer any questions youth may have.
7. This could also be a great opportunity for a family night where parents and guardians could also attend.

NOTE: You may want to conduct this sequence of activities each year from 6th grade through 8th grade as youths' choices and interests may change.

2) HIGH SCHOOL



The goal in middle school is to have youth work toward identifying which high school is a good fit for them, that may or may not be connected to their college and career pathway. However, in high school youth should really shift toward planning their future and embark on their college and career decision-making process.

During high school, it is recommended to continue with the career exploration activities mentioned above in the middle school section, such as college tours, career days, and more. As an OST program, these are all activities that you can organize for your participants as an enhancement to what they may be offered through their schools.

HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been developed as a building sequence aimed at helping high school youth research careers that align with their interests, strengths, and ideas about their future and create profiles on the pathways to those careers.

#1 - HS Interest Inventory

Similar to the Middle School This is Me Web, this activity leads high school youth through the exercise of taking an inventory of their interests, strengths, weaknesses, and desires for the future. Click [here](#) for a link to the worksheet.

1. Introduce the activity by explaining to youth that they will be identifying their interests and strengths and weaknesses, as well as thinking about some aspects of their future life.
2. After introducing the activity, have youth complete the [Interest Inventory Worksheet](#) by writing their responses to each question or prompt.
3. Circulate during the activity to help youth think through their responses if they get stuck or just check-in with them.
4. To wrap up, you can have youth share their responses with one another or invite them to share with the group. Have youth hold on to their Interest Inventory for use in the next activity.



HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

#2 - Career Alignment Research

In this activity, youth will use the information from their Interest Inventory to research careers that align with their interests, strengths, and desired lifestyle. Click [here](#) for a link to the worksheet.

1. Explain to youth that they are to use the information from their Interest Inventory to begin finding and researching careers that align with their interests and strengths. Explain that this information will help them begin to understand which careers might be of interest to them and will provide valuable information for the next activity.
2. Share the [Career Alignment Research Worksheet](#) with youth and set them up with a computer to work on to begin researching careers that incorporate their interests and skills. Make yourself (and maybe others) available to youth who may need some help thinking of careers that align with their interests and skills. Others may need help with specific search terms or finding the information to complete their research. Youth should complete this worksheet by writing in the information they find through their research.
3. To wrap up, have youth share their findings as well as which careers are most interesting to them and why.
4. As a follow-up to this activity, it may be helpful to have professionals in each of the youth's careers of interest visit to speak with youth about their experiences, pathways, and advice. This could also be a great opportunity for a family event.

It is worth mentioning to youth in high school that it is okay to change careers! This is an important point that should be emphasized to students early on. If students feel locked into one particular choice for the rest of their lives, it may have debilitating effects on their ability to make decisions regarding their future.

HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

#3 – Pathway Profiles

The final activity in this sequence invites youth to use what they have learned so far about careers of interest and begin researching the educational pathways into those careers. The goal of this activity is to give youth a starting point for researching post-secondary opportunities that are of interest to them and aligned with their interests and skill sets.

From here, youth will be able to begin researching each of the schools, training programs, or other experiences they’ve identified more deeply to identify which might be a good fit for them. Click [here](#) for a link to the worksheet.

1. Explain to youth that in this final activity, they are going to research the possible pathways into their careers of interest and create a profile for each one. This will include schools that offer degrees or training programs and details about those schools and programs.
2. Share the [Pathway Profiles Worksheet](#) with participants and set them up with a computer. Explain that they should use the template to complete one profile for each possible pathway into their careers of choice by responding to each question or prompt in the template. Youth should plan to complete many profiles.
3. Throughout the activity, make yourself available to youth to help with their searches and answer questions as needed.
4. At the end of this activity, you may want to meet one-on-one with youth to discuss their findings and help them identify the next steps for learning more about the opportunities they’ve identified.

Note: These activities may take more than one session. They can take as long as you’d like, given that youth are engaged in the process and find it valuable.

3) ECONOMIC CONTEXT



It is important to make sure youth have some understanding of the economic context surrounding the decisions that lie ahead of them related to post-secondary education and careers. Understanding salaries and wages and the associated economic implications can help inform their decision-making process related to higher education and their future careers.

The following resources can help you provide some necessary economic context to your students:

- [Lesson Plan: Understanding Salaries and Wages](#), Wells Fargo
- [Lesson Plan: Calculating Wages and Income](#), Consumer Math Course
- [ALICE Report](#), United Way
 - ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. This is a new way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford a bare-bones household budget.
- [ALICE: Who is Struggling in Maryland?](#), United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore
- [Planet Money Podcast](#), NPR

4) ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Here are some additional resources for guiding youth through the college and career research and decision process:

- [Career Exploration in Middle School: Setting Students on the Path to Success](#), ACTE Online
- [College and Career Planning Worksheet](#), EverFi
- [K-12 Student Resources](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Understanding Employment Projections](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [How to Choose a Career](#), College Factual
- [College and Career Awareness Activities for Elementary and Middle School Students](#), American Council on Education (Please Note: this link initiates an automatic download of the document)
- [Teen Career Exploration: Resources for High School Students](#), Career Vision
- [10 Things for High School Students to Remember](#), Live Career

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Unit 3:

Foundational Skills for College and Career Readiness



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1) BUILDING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS



Soft skills, 21st century skills, social and emotional learning, employability skills, people skills — these are all terms that describe the type of skills that are necessary for success in the workplace. We are all familiar with these skills and many will argue that “soft skills” is a misnomer for critical attributes that will be required of today’s youth in order to succeed in an ever-changing world. Research shows that having strong social and emotional skills and intelligence are more important than IQ for experiencing success in a work environment (AIR 1). The practice and development of these essential skills is a cornerstone of a strong college and career readiness program and will help to establish a firm foundation for your youth to build on. According to Tobie Baker Wright, the former senior program manager for JFF (formerly Jobs for the Future), “Good career exploration today is working to develop things in young people — the ability to work as part of a team, the ability to communicate effectively, personal responsibility — that help them have agency in making decisions about careers” (qtd. in Strom).

Working with young people to develop these skills can have a significant positive impact on their future as they work through college and begin to enter the workforce, and, OST programs can (and should) play an intentional role in building 21st century skills at all age levels. On average, a Maryland student spends 7 hours a week in an Out of School Time program and 6 hours a week for 5 weeks on average in the summer ("America After 3PM"). Interpersonal skills are needed for youth to not only succeed in the future, but to thrive as well.

Out-of-school time programs are helping to address this skill gap by: integrating these foundational skills into their programs; connecting youth to the workforce through helping them to discover new interests and undiscovered professions; and providing a "ladder of supports" to help youth reach their career goals ("Building Workforce Skills" pp. 1,3). Additionally, OST programs are helping to close the skill gap between youth from low-income communities and their more affluent peers. By creating opportunities such as internships, work-study programs, job shadowing, and career development activities, OST programs are helping youth to understand and develop a work-oriented mindset (AIR 1). Maintaining high expectations in your OST program helps prepare youth for the expectations they will meet in the workplace, such as punctuality, communication, and good work ethic.

It is worth mentioning that this work is not just for youth in high school; the earlier you begin working on these skills, the stronger their foundation will be and the more benefits youth will experience. "Research has found that younger students participating in quality afterschool and summer learning programs get along better with their peers and see gains in their pro-social behavior, as well as reductions in aggressive behaviors" ("Building Workforce Skills" 3).

FROM AN AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE REPORT:

"Data spanning more than a decade indicate that there are sets of foundational skills and competencies that are strongly desired among employers, but challenging to find among potential employees.

The ability to work in teams, solve problems, and communicate effectively are among the principal skills that employers consistently report desiring in their future hires" ("Building Workforce Skills" 1).



The concept of 21st century skills was born from the realization that “yesterday’s focus on memorization and rote learning would not prepare students for a fast-changing, increasingly automated, information-saturated world” (Boss).



According to Ken Kay, founder of the Partnership for 21st Century Learning, there have been three main phases in the development and widespread adoption of 21st century skills. The first phase was focused on defining these skills and outlining the competencies to be considered. The second phase centered on communication about the skills and competencies where the long list was condensed down into the **memorable 4Cs: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity**. The third phase, which we currently find ourselves in, is working to empower communities to adopt and customize the 4Cs framework at the local level (qtd. in Boss).

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Click the links for the worksheets of these activities!

- 1) [Cup Stacking Teamwork](#)
- 2) [Time Management List](#)
- 3) [Compliment Yarn](#)
- 4) [Barometer - Taking a Stand on Controversial Issues](#)
- 5) [Body Sculpting - Using Theater to Explore Important Ideas](#)
- 6) [Town Hall Circle](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information and ideas for teaching social and emotional learning or 21st century skills, check out the following resources.

- [Navigating Social and Emotional Learning from the Inside Out: Looking Inside and Across 25 Leading SEL Programs: A Practical Resource for Schools and OST Providers \(Report\)](#), Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2017
- [Tenacity Professional Character Skills Curriculum](#), DC Public Schools
- [Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](#), U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy
- [Social Skills for Middle School Students](#), Contra Costa County Schools
- [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills](#), youth.gov
- [Critical Thinking Lesson Plans](#), TEDEd
- [Problem Solving Lesson Plans](#), TEDEd
- [Creativity Lesson Plans](#), TEDEd
- [Collaboration Lesson Plans](#), TEDEd
- [How to Teach 21st Century Skills in Middle School](#), Applied Educational Systems
- [Career Readiness and Competencies](#), National Association of Colleges and Employers

2) PREPARING YOUTH FOR THE WORKPLACE



There are a variety of new skills, concepts, and mindsets that youth need to understand to be successful in the workplace. Some of your youth may have already had jobs, while others might have no idea what to expect. Read on to learn important strategies to help youth get ready for life beyond school and feel confident in a workplace environment.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUTH FOR THE WORKPLACE

In addition to teaching youth 21st century skills and providing them lots of opportunities to practice those skills, it is also valuable to help prepare youth for being part of a workplace community.

- 1) **Model workplace norms** by asking youth to attend your program for specific hours and hold them accountable to being on time and present, possibly creating a dress code, providing stipends, and by requiring that they behave as they would be expected to in a workplace.
- 2) Involve youth in the task of **creating a mission statement and class expectations** to teach about participation and collaboration in the workplace.
- 3) **Use role playing** to provide opportunities to practice how to act and respond in specific workplace situations such as an interview, a disagreement with a coworker, or more complex incidents of racism or harassment.
- 4) **Introduce youth to working professionals**, or mentors, that they can meet with and discuss what it's like to work in a specific workplace and what it takes to do their job.
- 5) **Arrange job shadowing opportunities** for youth to visit a variety of workplaces and observe how people behave, dress, and talk at work. Invite them to report back on what they've learned. (FYSB)

WORKPLACE BEST PRACTICES

Of course, you won't know exactly what your students' future workplace community will be like, but there are **best practices** that will provide a good foundation for any career they may enter. Review and discuss the suggestions found in the [Best Practices in the Workplace Handout](#) with your youth. Throughout your discussion, you may want to ask the following questions:



- What does this mean to you?
- Give an example of a behavior or activity that shows you are following this best practice.
- What activities and behaviors would not be appropriate under this best practice?
- Are there additional things you think should be added here?
- What questions do you have about this best practice?

Additionally, you may decide to incorporate some of these practices into your program and provide an opportunity for youth to gain experience with each one. The following resources provide activities you can conduct with youth in your program centered around job readiness and role playing a variety of scenarios.

- [Career-Ready Workplace Scenario Cards](#), Realityworks
- [7 Fun Ways to Teach Teens Job-Readiness Skills](#), Mercy Home for Boys and Girls
- [4 Essential First Job Tips for Teens](#), LiveAbout.com

Problem Solving at Work

Employers look for and value employees with strong problem solving skills. From the U. S. Department of Labor, "Employers say they need a workforce fully equipped with skills beyond the basics... These skills include critical thinking and problem solving" ("Mastering Skills for Workplace Success" 98). Employees who are adept at problem solving can better overcome unexpected obstacles making them very valuable for important projects.

A simple way to get students introduced to the concepts of Problem Solving is through a course from MIT's Office of Digital Learning, [Introduction to Problem Solving Skills](#). This self-paced web-based course takes students through a series of short video clips and then presents prompts for feedback from the students. At the end, a PDF of the student's responses can be printed.

Another resource is from the U.S. Department of Labor and their "[Skills to Pay the Bills](#)" program. This particular activity, [Problem Solving and Critical Thinking](#), provides an introduction to the value employers put in problem solving skills and includes 5 activities to do with your students.

Presentation at Work

Personal presentation is how one presents themselves in everyday situations. This is a communication skill that youth may not have been taught, but one that is essential in gaining employment and being part of a workplace environment. What one says and does is part of their personal presentation, as well as their appearance. Dressing smartly, being clean and having good personal hygiene, and carrying oneself well is all part of making a strong first impression and appearing professional.

Regardless of how we feel about it, people are constantly being evaluated and re-evaluated by the people around us, particularly by employers. One's appearance at work sends many messages about how they view the environment, how much respect they have for themselves and their work, what groups they identify with, and where they think they belong within the organization. Making just a few adjustments to one's appearance may lead to opportunities for advancement.

Review and discuss the suggestions found in the [Personal Appearance in the Workplace Handout](#) with your youth. Feel free to use the following discussion questions or make up your own.



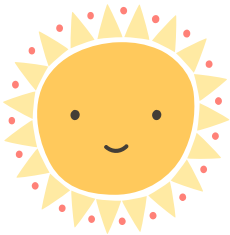
Discussion Questions:

1. Why do employers want their employees to look professional?
2. How does your appearance as an employee reflect back on the company image?
3. By instituting and enforcing dress codes, are employers stifling people's individuality and freedom of expression? Is this justified?
4. Is it more important to stand out or fit in at the workplace? Why?

Additionally, you may choose to conduct the [Dress and Groom Checklist Activity](#) with your students. The activity encourages students to think through the dressing and grooming steps they would need to take in order to prepare for an interview and when they are on the job. There is an optional extension to have youth attend your next session dressed as they would for an interview as an opportunity to practice and receive feedback.

Socializing at Work

Workplace relationships are a new type of relationship that youth will need to navigate as they enter the workforce. This type of relationship can be especially confusing for youth because they may encounter other people near their own age who hold positions of authority. Navigating these new waters effectively can increase the likelihood of advancement in the workplace. The areas below are meant to provide insight into some areas of focus as you support youth with this transition.



- Co-workers are different from friends or family. They are their own relationship and have their own rules and guidelines to be aware of. This does not mean that a co-worker could not cross into one of those other groups at some point, but they start as co-workers.
- Make sure youth know when it is okay to socialize at work. Socializing at the wrong times or too often can leave managers with bad impressions.
- Remind youth to always be friendly. They will want to put their best self out there, so say hello, smile, and be positive.



- Youth should know to avoid topics that are too personal or inappropriate. Here are [15 Topics Of Conversation You Should Avoid Like The Plague At Work](#).
- When an employee is socializing with other co-workers off the clock, they are still representing themselves as an employee and may even face penalties for actions taken outside of the work environment. This is of special consideration for anyone using social media.
- Dating in the workplace can be another challenge one might encounter in the workplace, but young people may not be aware of some of the workplace pitfalls. First off, students should understand that some workplaces require you to disclose relationships and before a relationship is pursued, students should check their HR manuals for corporate guidance. Beyond the corporate paper trail, there is always the possibility that a co-working relationship may last longer than a romantic one. You can break up with your partner but in a workplace romance, that doesn't mean you get to stop working with them. Employees will be expected to maintain a professional, friendly, and effective work relationship regardless of the circumstances or status of the romantic relationship.



Socailizing for Shy People

It is important that even those uncomfortable with socializing develop some techniques for building workplace relationships with co-workers. Students need to know they will not have to participate in every social event at work, but they need to attend them occasionally and sincerely. By not participating, folks will miss opportunities to get in front of people they may not normally have access to.

Here are a few tips for those who struggle with socializing:

1. Set a goal for yourself to improve your social skills:
 - Say "Good Morning" to everyone I see when I enter the office.
 - Ask people about their weekend plans on Fridays.
 - Meet two new people at a work event and ask them what they do for the company.
2. Watch a sports game or watch/listen to highlights to have talking points.
3. Try to have a relevant question to ask at every meeting with management.
4. Have one or two conversation starters that you use.

By building effective workplace relationships, one can find co-workers and colleagues who will be key to their professional development in the form of mentors and advocates. Strong relationships can benefit employees across multiple company transitions and even careers. The more advocates someone has throughout their employment, the potential for more career opportunities in the future is increased. You don't have to be naturally outgoing to be a great networker!



IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING



You may want to consider providing implicit bias training for your staff and / or students centered around race, gender, sexuality, and class. These types of training are designed to make participants aware of the implicit biases around diversity and inclusion topics, provide tools and strategies for interrupting and adjusting patterns of thinking, and aim to eliminate discriminatory practices and behaviors.

Providing implicit bias training or training on diversity and inclusion to your program providers will help them translate this information to students and enable them to incorporate their learnings into their teachings. Ensuring that your staff are comfortable addressing tough questions and issues that arise around race, gender, sexuality, and class will go a long way toward creating a safe environment for all youth in your programs. To learn more, check out the following resources:

- [Active Bystander & Implicit Bias Resources](#), Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
- [Implicit Bias Online Training Modules](#), Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
- [Diversity Training](#), University of Maryland
 - (Although this training may be limited to UMD staff and students, it might be worth a try to contact their office to see if they can provide training to your organization or refer you to other organizations and programs who could.)
- [Baltimore Racial Justice Action](#) (BRJA)
- [Showing Up for Racial Justice](#) (SURJ)
- [Both / And](#)
- [National Implicit Bias Network](#)
- [Implicit Bias Key Sites](#), Racial Equity Tools
- [Talking About Race](#), National Museum of African American History & Culture - Smithsonian
- [Seeing White](#), Scene on Radio Podcast
- [Implicit Bias Resource Guide](#), SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management)

IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

RACE

In our society, public discussions about race and racism are on the rise. **As educators, there is a responsibility and a need to address these topics with youth in your programs.** These conversations can be difficult and uncomfortable, but young people want and deserve to be part of the conversation. Race, racism, and social justice are not issues youth will only encounter in the workplace and starting the discussion early with them will give them a better understanding of the issues as they navigate the world around them. **These resources will help you learn more about race issues and guide you through activities to lead with your students:**

- [Facing History](#)
 - "Through rigorous historical analysis combined with the study of human behavior, Facing History's approach heightens students' understanding of racism, religious intolerance, and prejudice; increases students' ability to relate history to their own lives; and promotes greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities in a democracy."
 - Educator Resources and Online Professional Development
- [Racial Justice Resources](#), Wide Angle Youth Media
- [Teen Racial Justice Curriculum](#), Lisa Graustein
 - Written for a Quaker school audience, easily adapted to general audiences
- [Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism](#), Anti-Defamation League
- [Resources for Educators, Parents & Families](#), Anti-Defamation League
 - Lesson plans, educational programs and training, anti-bias tools and strategies, children's literature on bias, diversity, and social justice, and more
- [Race and Ethnicity Resources](#), Learning for Justice
- [First Encounters with Race and Racism: Teaching Ideas for Classroom Conversations](#), The New York Times
- [Talking about Race and Privilege: Lesson Plan for Middle and High School Students](#), National Association of School Psychologists
- [15 Classroom Resources for Discussing Racism, Policing, and Protest](#), Education Week
- [How to Engage in Anti-Racism Work: 70+ Resources for Teens](#), Courtney Harris Coaching
- [Teaching Race: Pedagogy and Practice](#), Vanderbilt University's Center for Teaching



IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

GENDER & SEXUALITY

Sexual orientation and gender identity issues can often be encountered in the workplace, and it is important for youth to be aware of these issues and the rights and laws surrounding them. Below is some general terminology that may be helpful:

LGBTQ: Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.

Sexual orientation: A person's physical and/or emotional attraction to the gender to which they are attracted; being heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.

Gender identity: A person's perception of having a particular gender, which may or may not correspond with their birth sex.

Gender expression: The way in which people express their gender identity through their appearance, dress, and behavior.

Transgender: A person whose sense of personal identity and gender do not correspond with their birth sex.

LGBTQ WORKPLACE ISSUES

Source: 2020 Catalyst Research Brief



- In June 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the 1964 Civil Right Act protects employees from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. As a result, employed persons across the US cannot be fired for being LGBTQ.
- 93% of Fortune 500 companies have instituted non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and 91% have policies that include gender identity. Many companies also provide other benefits such as domestic partner benefits (53%) and transgender-inclusive benefits (65%).

IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

GENDER & SEXUALITY



LGBTQ WORKPLACE ISSUES

- One-fifth of LGBTQ Americans have experienced some form of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity when applying for jobs.
- LGBTQ people of color (32%) are more likely to experience this type of discrimination than white LGBTQ people (13%).
- Harassment, bullying, and offensive jokes are top on the list of issues encountered in the workplace by LGBTQ people.
- Transgender employees experience different kinds of harassment in the form of bathroom accessibility, deliberate incorrect pronoun usage, and tolerating inappropriate questions.
- LGBT employees refrain from being their full selves at work out of a response to fear. 46% of LGBTQ employees in the U.S. are closeted in the workplace.
- "LGBT people often cover or downplay aspects of their authentic selves (e.g., by hiding personal relationships or changing the way they dress or speak) in order to avoid discrimination" (Quick Take).
- This often leads to a feeling of exhaustion from spending time and energy concealing who they really are. For transgender people who wish to start transistioning, concealment is not an option.
- 25% of LGBTQ employees have stayed at a job because the work environment was inclusive while 10% report leaving a job because the environment was not accepting of LGBTQ people.

IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

GENDER & SEXUALITY

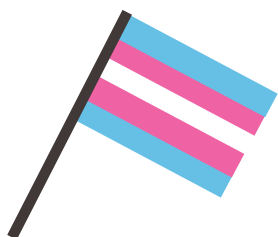
Gender expression refers to the way in which people express their gender identity through their appearance, dress, and behavior. Company policies may require men and women to dress in ways that conform to gender stereotypes, such as men wearing suits and women wearing dresses as professional attire. It is far preferable to have policies that require “professional attire” as a gender neutral requirement, but that is not necessarily a standard practice in 2020.

To help your youth think about how society, biology, and personal preference contribute to the relationship they have with their body and to better understand gender expression, check out the interactive [Gender Identity and Expression Map](#).

- Developed by IMPACT, The LGBT Health and Development Program at Northwestern University
- This interactive graphic provides a general “map” of gender identities and expressions that people use, with their definitions and a few examples and further links/videos. Instead of the man vs. woman binary, this map uses Masculine, Feminine, Both, and Neither to describe a spectrum of identities.

These additional resources can aid in your conversations with youth on this topic. The resources marked with an * are appropriate to share directly with youth.

- [Sex? Sexual Orientation? Gender Identity? Gender Expression?](#), Learning for Justice
- [Legal Protections for LGBT People and their Families in Maryland](#), Lambda Legal
- [LGBTQ Resource List](#), GLAAD*
- [DOL Policies on Gender Identity: Rights and Responsibilities](#), U.S. Department of Labor



IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

HARASSMENT

It is important for youth to know what harassment looks like, sounds like, and feels like in the workplace so that if they experience it, they can take the proper action. The following resources can help you teach students about harassment in the workplace, their rights, and the actions they can take if they find themselves as a victim of harassment. The resources marked with an * are appropriate to share directly with youth.



- [Sexual Harassment is Against the Law - Fact Sheet](#), Youth at Work - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission *
- [Youth at Work Classroom Materials](#), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
 - Videos, Teacher Manual, Student Manual
- [Sexual Harassment Fact Sheet](#), YoungWorkers.org *
- [Sexual Harassment at Work Kahoot Quiz](#), YoungWorkers.org *
 - [Answer Key](#)
- [Workplace Harassment: An Unacceptable Risk](#), Maryland NonProfits *
- [Teaching About Sexual Harassment](#), NextGen Edition
- [Addressing Sexual Harassment with Teens](#), Building Healthy Relationships Across Virginia Facilitator's Guide
- [Teens Take on Sexual Harassment - Study Guide](#), Youth at Work - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- [Resources to Guide Discussions about Consent, Sexual Harassment, and Misconduct](#), Online MSW Programs

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! IN THE WORKPLACE



It is important for youth to know that they can advocate for themselves in the workplace and to be aware of their rights and responsibilities within the workplace. In most cases, students should be taught to consult with the HR department at work to discuss any questions or concerns they may encounter regarding personal safety, well-being, workplace harassment, discrimination, or other workplace happenings. There are federal and state employment discrimination laws that students should be made aware of as well as pointed in the direction of where they can learn more. These resources provide a foundational understanding of these rights and key sites to be used as reference.

- [Employees & Job Applicants Overview](#), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- [Employee Rights](#), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- [Harassment](#), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- [Prohibited Practices](#), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [What Do I Need to Know About Workplace Harassment?](#), U.S. Department of Labor

3) INTERVIEWING SKILLS



For most jobs youth will apply for, even as teens, they will be required to take part in at least one interview. Helping youth prepare for the interviewing process is a great way for OST programs to support career and college readiness. Outside of employment, youth may also be asked to participate in an interview for scholarships or grants or other opportunities that come their way. It is important that youth know what to expect in an interview generally and have some opportunity to practice interviewing skills before they need them so that they can present their best selves when the time comes.

Do This!

Review and discuss the suggestions found in the [Interviewing Basics Handout](#) with your youth that covers the following topics:

- What to Expect
- Types of Interviews
- How To Prepare for an Interview
- Strategies for Good Interviews

Interviewing Resources

- [How to Teach Interview Skills in High School](#), Applied Educational Systems
- [Interview Skills Lesson Plan](#), Barclays Life Skills
- [Interview Success Lesson Plan](#), Barclays Life Skills
- [Interview Tips for Young Adults with Disabilities](#), Include NYC
- [Interviewing Tips for Youth with Disabilities](#), Mission Empower
- [10 Types of Interviews and How to Ace Them](#), The Muse
- [Most Important Interview Tips for Job Seekers](#), Career Profiles
- [What to Expect in an Interview and 10 Steps to Prepare](#), Indeed
- [Career Guide: Interviewing](#), Indeed
- Kahoot! Quiz: [Effective and Ineffective Interview Practices](#)

Code Switching

Code-switching is the practice of changing one's language, dialect, or speaking style, as well as appearance, behavior, and expression, to better fit one's environment. For example, most adults speak differently when they are with their friends than when they are giving a presentation at work. In order to communicate effectively in multiple environments, people have learned to code-switch to address different audiences.

- People who speak two (or more) languages may code-switch in the middle of a sentence, mixing words from one language with words from another. This often happens as a result of limited vocabulary in the second language or as a way to signal membership in a group or leave others out of the conversation.
- People who speak in non-standard or dialectal English, such as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), in casual conversation with friends and family may code-switch to more standard English in business, academic, or formal settings.
- "Text speak" is an abbreviated language used in texting and digital communication such as instant messaging and chat room discussion. The so-called "digital natives" and more digitally-adept generations may write, speak, and even think in this alternate language and may need to learn to code-switch in formal communication forms.



While code-switching exists in many contexts, it is perhaps the most problematic and impactful on Black individuals. "Code-switching is one of the key dilemmas that Black

employees face around race at work. While it is frequently seen as crucial for professional advancement, code-switching often comes at a great psychological cost” (McCluney). “Downplaying one’s racial group can generate hostility from in-group members, increasing the likelihood that those who code-switch will be accused of ‘acting white’. Seeking to avoid stereotypes is hard work, and can deplete cognitive resources and hinder performance. Feigning commonality with coworkers also reduces authentic self-expression and contributes to burnout” (McCluney).

It is important to educate youth on the concept and nuances of code-switching as they navigate school and home life, and embark on their college and career journey. The following resources will help you learn more about code-switching and offer activities you can conduct with your students.

- **The Costs of Code-Switching**, Harvard Business Review
 - As part of a 5-part series on Advancing Black Leaders, this article includes information and research findings on code-switching among Black employees and actionable suggestions to begin addressing this issue.
- **Code-Switching Activity**, Boys Town
 - In this activity, students will practice code-switching by mocking various social situations
- **The Cost of Code Switching** | Chandra Arthur | TEDxOrlando, YouTube
- **To Code Switch or Not to Code Switch? That is the Question.** | Katelynn Duggins | TEDxMaysHighSchool, YouTube
- **Everyday Struggle: Switching Codes for Survival** | Harold Wallace III | TEDxPittsburgStateUniversity, YouTube
- **Know Your Terms: Code Switching**, Cult of Pedagogy
- **How Code Switching Explains the World**, Code Switch, NPR
- **Five Reasons Why People Code-Switch**, Code Switch, NPR
- **Code Switch Podcast**, NPR
- **Flipping the Switch: Code-Switching from Text Speak to Standard English**, National Council of Teachers of English

4) FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



It is important that youth learn financial literacy as part of their preparation for college and career, and adult life in general. If youth are not taught financial responsibility, good financial habits and the reasoning behind them, they will likely adopt the same relationship with money of the adults in their lives, which may not be productive. “When [youth] learn financial literacy at an early age, they become less impressionable to the attitudes of money held by the adults around them. Once kids know proper money management skills, they tend to keep them and use them throughout their lives” (“Why is Financial Literacy Important...”).

The following resources will help you learn more about the importance of financial responsibility, financial literacy topics, and activities that you can conduct with your youth to increase their financial literacy skills.

General Information

- [Why is Financial Literacy Important for Youth?](#), National Financial Educators Council
- [Facts About Financial Knowledge and Capability](#), youth.gov
- [Why It’s Important to Teach Your Students Financial Literacy - And Three Ways to Do It](#), EdSurge
- [Youth Financial Education - Practitioner Resources](#), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
 - Tools and resources to support K-12 financial education
- [Maryland Financial Literacy Education Standards](#), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)

Resources for Families

- [Ready, Set, Launch! 6 Steps to Teaching Your Teen Financial Responsibility](#), Mint
- [How to Teach Teenagers About Money](#), Dave Ramsey
- [Kids Financial Education](#), Sagevest Kids

Curriculum / Lesson Plans

- [High School Financial Planning Program](#), National Endowment for Financial Education
 - Free curriculum for grades 8-12 featuring lesson plans, slides, and learner materials
- [Practical Money Skills Lesson Plans](#), Financial Education for Everyone
 - Lesson plans and comprehensive courses for grades Pre-K - College, including specific resources for those with special needs
- [Watt Kids Financial Literacy Workbook and Coloring Book](#), Watt Kids
 - A Baltimore-based financial literacy education program
- [MoneySkill](#), American Financial Services Association Education Foundation
 - A FREE online personal finance course for middle school, high school, & college students

Activities

- [Middle School Financial Literacy Activities](#), Junior Achievement
- [High School Financial Literacy Activities](#), Junior Achievement
 - These sets of resources from Junior Achievement for middle and high school are downloadable activities aimed at students and parents that could also be used in your OST program
- [12 Fun Saving and Budgeting Activities for High School Students](#), We Are Teachers
- [MyMoney.gov Resources for Youth](#), Federal Financial Literacy and Education Commission
- [Financial Literacy Resources for Educators](#), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
- [Financial Basics Lesson Plans](#), Biz Kids
- [Saving and Investing Lesson Plans](#), Biz Kids
- [Credit and Debt Lesson Plans](#), Biz Kids
- [Financial Planning Online Games](#), Biz Kids



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The Career and College Readiness Toolkit is an initiative of the Maryland Out of School Time Network. To learn more and find more resources, visit www.mostnetwork.org/initiatives/CCR.

Unit 4:

Career Readiness



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1) CAREER AWARENESS



Preparing youth for the careers of tomorrow, whether or not they currently exist, is perhaps one of the biggest challenges to face education in recent years. As a result, there has been (and continues to be) a shift toward “ensuring that students have transcending and transferable skills, including academic, technical, and employability skills” (Cohen, 1) so they are able to access current post-secondary education and training opportunities and future career opportunities.

Out-of-school time programs can play a pivotal role in college and career readiness for their participants in authentic and engaging ways, such as “exposure to and exploration of special interests, building relationships with trusting mentors, and career exploration and preparation” (Cohen, 2). OST programs have an opportunity to contribute to student’s career readiness across a continuum from career awareness in the elementary school grades, to career exploration in the middle grades, and career preparation and training in the high school grades. The information, resources, and activities included in this section are all career-facing and focused on career exploration and preparation.

To engage youth in some interesting and fun activities to raise their awareness of careers and explore different careers, you can refer back to the activities included in the “Guiding Youth Through College and Career Decisions” section in this toolkit, or find other activities in the following resources:

- [Career Exploration Activities](#), Indeed
- [Career Exploration Activity Library](#), Exploring.org
- [Middle School Work and Career Readiness Resources](#), Junior Achievement
- [High School Work and Career Readiness Resources](#), Junior Achievement
- [Career Village](#) - a community where students can get free personalized career advice

REMINDER!

It is important to emphasize to youth in high school that it is **okay to change careers!** If students feel locked into one particular choice for the rest of their lives, it may have debilitating effects on their ability to make decisions regarding their future. It's important for youth to know it's okay to change their minds, and to know this as early on as possible in their research about post-secondary opportunities and potential careers.

Job Exploration Sites

To begin increasing awareness of possible careers and gauging career interests, it is critical to create opportunities for youth to explore a variety of careers and learn more about lots of jobs and careers. This can be done in many ways and this list of websites is a great place to get started or go deeper in career exploration.



- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Career One Stop - Explore Careers](#), U.S. Dept of Labor
 - This website allows you to search by occupation or location and provides information about wages, employment trends, skills needed, and more. This site also has career profiles and career videos and the ability to compare occupations.
- [My Next Move](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [Life Skills: Careers Course](#), Khan Academy
- [Career Speakers Video Library](#), Junior Achievement
 - Explore the various career clusters and meet people who work in each of the clusters in a variety of occupations. Includes accompanying optional assignments. You may be required to complete an interest form to access the videos.
- [Build Your Path - A Guidebook for Built Environment Careers](#), Maryland Center for Construction Education & Innovation
- [Hats & Ladders](#) - An award-winning career development program that youth love
- [Gladeo.org](#)
 - An inclusive, next-generation career navigation site that uses videos, storytelling, and informational interviews to share all kinds of knowledge crucial to successful career development.

-
- [Way to Be Magazine 2022](#), Maryland Business Roundtable
 - Written & designed with students in mind, Way to Be offers guidance in navigating their way through high school, college, & career to lead them toward success
 - [2021 Edition](#)
 - [Mobile App](#)
 - [Videos about Government Careers](#), USA.gov
 - This site features videos that explore and provide information about possible careers in government in the areas of animal care, engineering and science, military and security, creative careers, and healthcare.
 - [Engineering, Go For It! \(eGFI\) Career Information and Advice](#), American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)
 - This site has mini profiles for careers in engineering as well as lesson plans and activities for teachers and students.
 - [Science Careers](#), Science Buddies
 - Great for middle school and elementary audiences. Learn more about careers in science, engineering, and other STEM fields. Each profile contains information about salary, job outlook, degree requirements, videos featuring interviews with real professionals on-the-job, and more.
 - [Cool Jobs \(STEM Jobs\)](#), KidsAhead.com
 - Features a variety of activities and information on interesting STEM-related careers.
 - [We Use Math](#), Brigham Young University
 - This site features information on careers in math, careers that use math, and resources for teachers.
 - [KnowItAll.org Career Explorations](#), South Carolina ETV Commission
 - This site features a huge collection of career education and job shadowing videos to provide insight into a wide variety of professions.
 - [Carnegie STEM Girls](#), Duquesne Light Co. Center for STEM Education and Career Development
 - This is a comprehensive site with activities, resources, and links aimed at getting teenagers excited about STEM and features sections for students, teachers, and parents to learn about cool careers.
 - [Girls Communicating Career Connections](#), Education Development Center
 - Videos, games, and activities about STEM careers, created by middle school girls.
 - [Maryland's Labor Market Information](#), Maryland Workforce Exchange
 - This site hosts the most up-to-date information available on employment, wages, jobs, and training in Maryland.
 - [Washington Career Bridge](#), WA Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board
 - Explore careers, view job trends, and find education all from this career and education planning site.



Interest Inventories

Career interest inventories are a great way for middle and high school youth to figure out where their interests lie and how that might be able to help them find a career path. Career inventories are “a career tool for self-assessment that aids in career planning to assess the likes of particular objects, activities, and personalities, using the theory that individuals with the same career tend to have the same interests” (Business Dictionary). These assessments and inventories will be useful in aiding your students in identifying their interests as they relate to possible careers.



1. [Find Your Calling](#) helps youth answer the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” through the completion of an interest assessment and detailed data matching occupations to interests.

2. [Career One Stop - Self-Assessments](#), U.S. Department of Labor

- This portion of the Career One Stop website offers an interest assessment, skills assessment, and work values matching tool to help youth consider different options and confirm types of careers that might be a good fit for them.
- The [Interest Assessment](#) will generate a list of careers that might be a good fit based on a 30 question quick assessment.
- These sources can help youth identify their skills and find related types of work:
 - ◇ The [Skills Matcher](#) helps you identify your skills. Use the Skills Matcher to create a list of your skills and match them to careers that use those skills.
 - ◇ Enter your previous occupation in [mySkills myFuture](#) to see types of careers your skills and experience will transfer to.
 - ◇ Look up your strongest skills in [O*NET](#) to see which occupations match them best.

3. [O*NET Interest Profiler](#), U.S. Department of Labor

- This tool is a 60 question interest survey that can help youth find how their interests relate to the world of work and connect them to careers to explore.

4. [Career Clusters Activity](#), EducationPlanner.org

- An online activity for students that explore career “clusters” (groups of careers that share common themes or similar skills) based on their responses to a series of questions. This site also features skill matching, a career search, career videos, and schools for specific careers.

5. [Student Interest Survey for Career Clusters](#), Advance CTE

- This is a career guidance tool that allows students to respond to questions and identify the top 3 Career Clusters of interest based on their responses.

6. [Secondary Transition Toolkit: Career Assessments](#), Maryland Department of Education (MSDE)

- A variety of assessments and inventories to guide students through identification of their interests and careers related to their interests.

CAREER FAIRS

Career Day and Career Fair events can be helpful in exposing students to a variety of career paths, some of which they may not have considered or thought to be not for them. Becoming aware of the opportunities available to them, especially in their local area, can be transformational to their career exploration efforts.

How to Provide Career Fair Experiences

1. Host your own career day / career fair for youth in your program to learn more about local jobs and industries.
 - You may even consider hosting multiple career days / fairs, each one focused on a different type of career or industry. For example, hosting a career day focused specifically on entrepreneurship or jobs in health care. This may help provide a deeper and more specialized understanding about careers in specific pathways.
2. Take a field trip to a career fair near you with a group of youth.
3. Plan a virtual career fair. Here are a few resources that might help you.
 - [“These Students Glimpsed Their Future Without Leaving Their Desks”](#), Teach for America
 - [“How One Rural District Hosted a Virtual College and Career Fair”](#), District Administration
 - [How to Host a Virtual Career Fair](#), Counselor Clique
 - [How to Plan a Virtual Career Fair](#), Betterteam
4. Help youth practice and prepare for career fairs so they better understand what to expect and what will be expected of them.
 - [How to Prepare for a Job Fair](#), Indeed



Career Fair Resources

- [Maryland Career Consortium](#) shares Job Fair events across the state and hosts an annual career fair
- [Upcoming Recruitment & Job Fairs](#), Maryland Department of Labor
- [Maryland Career Fairs](#), National Career Fairs
- [Tips for Organizing a High School Career Fair](#), Kuder
- [How to Setup a Mock Career Fair in Your School](#), Next Gen Personal Finance
- [Career and College Day Toolkit](#), Oregon GEAR UP
- Also check out college and university career fairs! Nearly all MD universities offer career fairs on a somewhat regular basis, though these are mostly offered to enrolled students.

Researching Local Business

Research is a big part of the career and job search process and can help youth identify companies in their field of interest, prepare for interviews, learn more about industries and businesses, find companies that share their values, and more. A simple approach to researching businesses and careers is made up of these three steps:



1. Identify Companies of Interest

- Use the U.S Department of Labor’s Business Finder to locate and get contact information for employers in the local area.
- Career exploration activities that youth may have completed previously would likely provide useful information for identifying companies of interest.

2. Conduct Research

- After identifying companies of interest, visit their websites and social media accounts and conduct a Google search on each one to learn more about them.
- The [Research Employers](#) resource from the U.S. Department of Labor outlines a series of questions to guide research on each company of interest as well as where to find the answers and information.
- [The Complete Guide to Researching a Company](#) resource from Indeed contains a lot of great information on how to work through this step.
- If the company or business is local, it may be helpful to check-in with your network and find out if anyone you know works there and if you could shadow them for a day or visit for a tour. You may also be able to request an informational interview to learn more about the company.

3. Organize Findings

- As research is being conducted, come up with a digital or paper-based way to organize and manage the information.
 - Discard the information that has little or no immediate relevance.
 - Keep the rest organized by adding it to a digital document (such as Word, Google Docs), emailing it to yourself, or printing it out.
- You may want to use the [Company Research student resource](#) with youth to help guide their research and note-taking efforts. If using this template, students should complete one per company they research.

Job Shadowing

Job Shadowing is a method for learning about a particular job or career by spending time following (or “shadowing”) a professional as they work. Accompanying and observing this person as they complete the tasks related to their job can provide a deeper understanding of their career and particular job. Job shadowing experiences look good on resumes and college applications and provide valuable learning experiences.



- ▶ **Watch and discuss this video series on job shadowing from the HashtagCareerGoals YouTube Channel:**
 - [What is Job Shadowing? | How it Can help You Choose a Career Path](#)
 - [5 Benefits of Job Shadowing](#)
 - [Job Shadowing Questions](#)
- ▶ **Review and discuss the information found in the [Job Shadowing student resource](#) with your youth.**

The following resources contain more information about job shadowing and will aid in your efforts to help prepare students for possible job shadowing opportunities or design additional activities.

- [What is Job Shadowing? Complete Guide for Students](#), Tallo
- [Job Shadowing](#), Baylor University
- [Job Shadow Email Templates](#)
- [SnapShot Job Shadowing Guide](#), Hamilton College
 - Includes general information, as well as templates for email communication, sample questions, and more. (Specifics related to their unique program can be ignored).
- [Complete Guide: Job Shadowing for High School Students](#), PrepScholar
- [How to Successfully Request a Job Shadow](#), This Girl Knows it
- Video: [Virtual Job Shadowing Tips | How to Job Shadow Virtually](#), Ryan Reflects by Dr. Ryan

Individualized Plans & Software Solutions

Regardless of the career path youth would like to pursue, one fact remains the same, they will need to be organized. This means keeping track of application deadlines, organizing information, and managing tasks related to exploration and pursuit of their career path milestones. There are many methods for helping students get and stay organized and on top of this process.

Software Solutions

As is typical for most problems we encounter, there are many software solutions that will help manage the college and career exploration process and track student progress. Naviance, Xello, and Overgrad are three great options. There are plenty more options available in the realm of software solutions and can be found with a quick Internet search.

Naviance Readiness Solution is a leading tool for understanding students' interests, strengths, and needs to aid educators in individualizing support to help them reach their goals. Naviance also offers collaboration across families, staff, and administrators to facilitate a 360 degree support system for students. Naviance is widespread across high schools in most states, but OST programs may not be able to gain access to their district's account.



Xello is an alternative college and career planning software tool to Naviance. Xello puts students at the center of their planning experience. They also offer solutions for elementary and middle school, not just high school.

Overgrad is yet another Naviance alternative that is open to districts, high schools, community-based organizations, parents, students, and Independent Educational Consultants. There are different plans for the variety of needs any one of those groups may have, including a free Essentials version.

Career Prep Binder

While software solutions might be nice, not all programs will have access to those systems or be able to afford the costs associated with them. However, most programs can put together a simple binder for their students to keep track of important information and relevant documents. Here are some suggested documents to include in your Career Prep Binders:

- **Worksheets and activities from this toolkit** would make good additions, such as those from Unit 3: Guiding Youth Through College and Career Decisions.
- Providing **checklists** for students throughout the year to ensure they have everything included in their binder that should be there would be a great idea.
- **Extra copies** of templates and practice worksheets would also be helpful for multiple attempts.
- **Calendars, schedules, and timelines** for applications, exams, or any related events should also be included and utilized.
- Making room for youth to include **brochures or pamphlets** from colleges or company visits would be handy. This could be a folder or pocket divider included in the binder setup.
- If you work with youth to create an **Individualized Learning Plan** (see below) that would be a foundational piece of this system.
- Basically any document or information that will be used by students or aid them as they work through the college and career readiness process should be included.



Individualized Learning Plans

An individualized learning plan (ILP) is a document and a process used by students, with support from counselors, teachers, and parents, to define their career goals and post-secondary plans to help inform decisions about courses and activities in high school. While this specific type of plan is most commonly used among students with disabilities, it is a good idea for all students to develop a similar plan. These resources will help determine if an ILP approach is a good fit for your program and provide more information about developing ILPs.

- [Kickstart Your ILP](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [ILP Checklist](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [Use of Individualized Learning Plans: A Promising Practice for Driving College and Career Efforts](#), National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability
- [Fact Sheet: Individualized Learning Plans](#), National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability
- [Charting a Path to the Future Through Individualized Learning Plans](#), Rennie Center on Education Research and Policy
- [Individual Learning Plans for College and Career Readiness: State Policies and School-Based Practices](#), National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
- [Achieving Their Goals: Implementing an Individualized Learning Plan Process to Build Student Success](#), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Webinar: [The Use of Individualized Learning Plans to Help Students to be College and Career Ready](#), American Youth Policy Forum

Green Careers

Green careers or green jobs are occupations that work to preserve the environment found in traditional industries, such as agriculture and manufacturing, as well as “green” industries such as renewable energy. Activities such as energy conservation, alternative energy development, pollution reduction, or recycling and waste management are all categorized as green jobs.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, green careers typically fall into three categories:

1. **Green Enhanced Skills:** These are jobs focused in traditional industries that are adding new tasks or areas of specialty as a result of the demand for green goods and services. For example, farmers and ranchers who need to expand sustainable farming practices.



2. **Green Increased Demand:** The duties of jobs in this category aren't necessarily changing, but these areas are expected to experience growth and increased demand as a result of the growing demand for green goods and services. For example, bus drivers, who will be needed in areas that experience an increased interest in public transportation.
3. **Green New and Emerging:** These occupations are emerging as a result of the trends toward green initiatives and practices and are often brand new positions and roles within industries or companies. Some examples of these jobs include energy auditors, Chief Sustainability Officers, or wind energy engineers.

Learn more about green careers from these resources:

- [Green Careers](#), CareerOneStop
- [Green Jobs](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Greening Career and Technical Education](#), National Wildlife Federation
- [The Worldwide Web of EcoCareers: A Resource for Job Seekers](#), National Wildlife Federation
- [Greenforce Initiative](#), National Wildlife Federation & Jobs for the Future
- A program for community colleges to "green" the skills of our workforce.
- [20 Green Careers for the Environmentally Conscious](#), Indeed
- [Sustainability Careers and How to Get Them Fast](#), Zety

Career Awareness General Resources

- [Maryland Career Development Framework](#), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
- [K-12 Resources for Teachers and Students](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [K-12 Education Resources Site](#), Junior Achievement
Resources for teachers, students, and parents with downloadable resources, teacher-led virtual courses, career speaker videos, and economic resources with a focus on COVID-19.
- Article: [Helping Youth Prepare for Careers](#) - What Can Out-of-School Time Programs Do?
- Article: [3 Keys to Building a Career Mindset in High School](#)
- [Career Planning for Higher Schoolers](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- ['What Do You Like to Do?' Career Inventories for Middle Schoolers](#), National College Attainment Network
- [Individualized Career Development Plan for Youth](#), Institute for Educational Leadership
This resource contains a process to help youth make decisions and plans for their future by responding to prompts on self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management.
- [Career Convergence K-12 Archives](#), National Career Development Association
- [CareerVillage Lesson Plans and Resources](#), CareerVillage.org
- [When I Grow Up: Career Lessons and Activities for Grades 9-12](#), Workforce Solutions
- [Career Readiness and Competencies](#), National Association of Colleges and Employers

2) ENTREPRENEURSHIP



In the work of helping youth become more aware of their career choices and explore the breadth of options, **there is also a responsibility to teach about entrepreneurial pathways.** As the future of work continues to evolve, it has become increasingly important to teach young people about entrepreneurship and the ability to think outside the box to generate creative and innovative solutions. Career possibilities fall within a wide range, including working for others, starting your own business, and making contributions to your community, and youth need to be exposed to all of these possibilities.

Entrepreneurship education focuses on creative problem solving, leadership, effective teamwork, and adaptability, which are also some of the top skills that employers are seeking in candidates. These skills are necessary for success in any field or position in the current and future age of work. The earlier students are taught these skills, the longer they will have to practice before entering the workforce, the more opportunities will be available to them, and the more successful they will be.

Tina Seelig, the Professor of the Practice in the Department of Management Science and Engineering at Stanford School of Engineering, offers a framework for teaching entrepreneurship built upon our natural ability to imagine:

- Imagination is *envisioning* things that don't exist.
- Creativity is *applying* imagination to address a challenge.
- Innovation is *applying* creativity to generate unique solutions.
- Entrepreneurship is *applying* innovations, scaling the ideas by inspiring others' imagination.

Using this framework, educators (at all levels) can “help young people engage with the world around them and envision what might be different; experiment with creative solutions to the problems they encounter; hone their ability to reframe problems in order to come up with unique ideas; and then work persistently to scale their ideas by inspiring others to support their effort” (Seeling).

OST programs are a great place to practice entrepreneurship and have youth engage in entrepreneurial activities to help develop the above mentioned skills. Schools are bound to testing and standards and a long-standing practice of ‘one correct answer’ teaching and learning, but OST programs have a lot more flexibility. “In this age of educational accountability through standards and assessments with only one right answer and success measured by test scores, we need to keep young minds open for alternative ways of thinking, allow innovative ideas to spark and grow, to create an entrepreneurial culture that will grow great people and great communities” (Coulson) and OST programs are well-positioned to take on this challenge.

Social Entrepreneurship

A growing trend under the umbrella of entrepreneurship is social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs are focused on creating a business to solve societal or environmental problems and work toward the greater good over the pursuit of profit. However, unlike nonprofits, social enterprises are still aiming to make a profit. This avenue may be of interest to your youth as their generation is generally more environmentally and socially conscious than those before them. Here are some resources to check out:



- [5 Reasons Why Social Entrepreneurship is the New Business Model](#), Forbes
- [Social Entrepreneurship: 7 Ways to Empower Student Changemakers](#), Edutopia
- Video: [Building a Culture of Kindness with a Day of Service](#), Edutopia
 - Features Tilden Middle School in Rockville, Maryland
- [Becoming a Social Entrepreneur Lesson Plan \(High School\)](#), PBS
- [Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship Lesson Plan \(High School\)](#), Wharton High School (Wharton University of Pennsylvania)
- [Social Entrepreneurs Lesson Plan](#), BizKids
- [Elementary Social Entrepreneurship: A Perfect STEAM Lesson](#), User Generated Education

Freelancing and ‘The Gig Economy’

Today more people than ever are working as freelancers, meaning independent workers who run their own businesses, rather than being employed by a company. In 2019, approximately 57 million Americans were freelancing, and if trends continue, more than half of Americans will be freelancing in the future (Ozimek).

Freelancers are self-employed, though they take on work from companies. Freelancers can make a good living working for themselves, depending on the industry. There are two different types of independent workers: freelancers and gig workers.

Freelancers are typically found in the knowledge work professions, such as software engineering, copywriting, and graphic design. They are one-person companies responsible for all their own marketing, financial organization, HR, and task management. Freelancers set their own pay rates and must cover all their own costs related to insurance, benefits, and taxes.

Gig workers are technically freelancers, but in modern days this type of work is generally managed through some type of app or software platform. Gig workers earn money on their own, but their marketing and job routing or assignment are often handled by a company. Gig workers may use this type of work to supplement their income from other, more traditional employment. Companies such as Uber, Lyft, TaskRabbit, and DoorDash are all examples of gig economy jobs.

FREELANCING PROS

- **Flexibility** to work where you want, when you want, full-time or part-time, and choose the work you want to do.
- **Work independently** and be able to control how the work gets done, as long as it gets done to client specifications and within the timeline.
- **Set your own price!** Freelancing allows you to set your own price and determine the worth of your time and effort. This means you can often charge more than what you'd make as an employee doing the same work.
- **Low Startup Costs** because there isn't much involved in getting started, especially if you have been doing the same type of work already. Costs will be incurred for equipment, training, and experience.
- **Select your clients.** You will likely take on any client who will hire you initially, but as you grow and gain more experience you can be more selective about who you work with.
- **High Demand** for freelancers who are reliable and deliver quality work. Many businesses only hire freelancers, and the trend is growing.

FREELANCING CONS

- **Client schedules** might conflict with your ideal schedule and preferred working hours, but to get the job done and satisfy the client, you will need to be flexible to meet when they are able and deliver results according to their deadlines.
- **Inconsistent work** can also be problematic. If you are only hired for one job, when that is complete, you will have to put in effort to find more work. This can be helped by working with clients who have a large volume of potential work.
- **It will take time** to be successful. It will take time to get your name out there and build a client base. It will take time for people to trust that you provide quality work.
- **You're completely in charge** of your career. This may be liberating, but it is not for everyone. Invoicing, marketing, and bookkeeping are all parts of the business that you will solely be responsible for. You also need to manage your own work schedule and that can be tricky when you are lacking motivation.
- **Benefits and taxes** need to be accounted for and paid by the freelancer. When you work for a company, they pay half of your taxes into Medicare and Social Security, but freelancers have to cover that cost on their own. Health insurance also falls solely to you to select and cover costs for.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FREELANCING



COVID-19 has increased the use of independent contractors, or freelancers, by companies in 2020. Freelancers are most commonly being hired in the areas of writing, creative, web, and software development. Here are some data points from Upwork's 2020 Future Workforce Report:

- 73% of hiring managers are continuing or increasing their usage of freelancers
- 47% of hiring managers are more likely to engage freelancers in the future due to the COVID-19 crisis
- 57% of hiring managers prefer ongoing freelance engagements for large, strategic projects

There is definitely a growing opportunity for freelance work as more companies move to less in-person, more remote situations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

More Resources for Freelancing & The Gig Economy

- [A Freelancer's Guide to the Gig Economy](#), The Balance Small Business
- [The Gig Economy Data Hub](#), The Aspen Institute & Cornell University's ILR School
- [Working in a Gig Economy](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [How Project-Based Learning Prepares Youth for Freelance Nation](#), Getting Smart
- [Resource Center](#), Upwork

Starting a Business in Maryland

For older youth who may have a business idea or be interested in learning more about starting and owning their own business, there are a few important first steps they will need to be aware of to register their business in Maryland. The steps outlined in [Five Steps to Starting a Business in Maryland](#) from the [Maryland Chamber of Commerce](#) are a good starting point for learning about the necessary steps to start a business in Maryland. The article also contains links to other resources and departments who handle different parts of the process. Below are more resources:

- [Starting a Business in Maryland](#)
 - Resources for starting a business in Maryland including what type of business to start, how to register a business, permits and licenses, tax ID and employer identification numbers, business plan development, and more.
- [Maryland Business Express](#)
 - Maryland businesses must register using this portal, which offers a step-by-step process to register a business online.
- [Common Business Structures](#), U.S. Small Business Administration

Local Business Organizations

If youth are interested in small business ownership, it's a good idea to get involved in local business organizations as soon as possible. These organizations provide resources, support, and more to business owners. Young people interested in this topic can access resources on many of the sites and may even be able to attend events for the purposes of learning and networking.

- [Maryland Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - Maryland's statewide business advocacy organization works to impact policies that directly affect Maryland business. Offers membership and other resources.
- [Local Chambers of Commerce \(County, District\) in Maryland](#)
- [Maryland Small Business Development Center](#)
 - If you are an aspiring entrepreneur or an existing business owner in Maryland, the Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers FREE individualized consulting and training programs from start-up to established businesses.
- [Maryland Entrepreneur Hub](#)
 - Resources for networking and supporting your business
- [National Federation of Independent Business, Maryland](#)
- [Maryland's Women's Business Center](#)
- [U.S. Small Business Administration - Baltimore District](#)
- [Greater Baltimore Urban League](#)
 - Offering programs and resources for youth empowerment, education, entrepreneurship, and workforce / professional development.
- [Greater Washington Urban League](#)
- [Small Business Resource Guide - Maryland](#), U.S. Small Business Administration
- [The 6 Essential Local Small Business Associations You Should Belong To](#), Forbes
- [18 Best Small Business Associations for Entrepreneurs in 2020](#), Fundera



Entrepreneurship Activities & Resources

- [VentureLab](#)
 - Free (for non-commercial use) entrepreneurship education curriculum, resources, and activities for grades 1-12.
- [12 Free Youth Entrepreneurship Activities for Learning Pods](#), VentureLab
 - Learning pods have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic as an alternative to sending youth back to the school building that families are using to keep their kids engaged, learning, and spending time with peers as safely as possible.
 - These activities can also be used for in-person instruction, even if they need some adaptation.
- [NFTE Venture - Entrepreneurial Expedition](#), EverFi
 - Free youth entrepreneurship curriculum designed to teach students to think entrepreneurially about business and life.
- [Advice for Entrepreneurs](#), Khan Academy
- [Middle School Entrepreneurship Resources](#), Junior Achievement
- [High School Entrepreneurship Resources](#), Junior Achievement
 - These sets of resources from Junior Achievement for middle and high school are downloadable activities aimed at students and parents that could also be used in your OST program
- [Entrepreneurship Lessons and Videos](#), BizKids
- [Characteristics of the Entrepreneur Activity](#), Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
- [How to Think Outside the Box with your Entrepreneurship Lesson Plans](#), Applied Educational Systems
- [Qualities of an Entrepreneur Activity Sheet](#), Twinkl
- [The Entrepreneur Lesson Pack](#), Twinkl
- [Research an Entrepreneur Activity Sheet](#), Twinkl
- [Entrepreneurial Thinking Activities](#), Eastern Illinois University
- [Young Entrepreneur Pitch Challenge](#), Young Entrepreneur Institute
- [Young Entrepreneurs Course](#), U.S. Small Business Administration
- [Entrepreneurship Lesson Plans](#), Wharton High School (Wharton University of Pennsylvania)
- [The Youth Entrepreneurship Toolkit](#), All India Council for Technical Education

3) JOB READINESS SKILLS



Alongside developing strong 21st Century Skills (soft skills, employability skills) in youth, it is important to also focus on job readiness skills that help students prepare for the processes of job searching and interviewing. Preparing youth to get the job begins with aiding them in how they present information about themselves, their skills and knowledge, and their experiences through their resume, portfolio, and LinkedIn. The Job Search Skills lessons and activities found in [When I Grow Up: Career Lessons and Activities for Grades 9-12](#) from Workforce Solutions would be applicable in this area.

Creating a Resume

For high school youth, the process of writing a resume can be overwhelming and intimidating. How are you supposed to make yourself seem like the best candidate when you probably don't have any formal work experience? However, it's important to help build up their confidence in the skills and experience they do possess, which is likely more than they realize. Providing opportunities for youth to practice writing resumes and evaluating examples is the best way for them to become comfortable with this type of document and creating their own.

TIP: Provide an opportunity for youth to practice writing a high school resume either during the summer between middle and high school, or at the very beginning of their freshman year of high school, as a way to help identify where any gaps may exist in their skills or knowledge and to help inform activities they may want to participate in throughout their high school career. For example, if a student is missing leadership activities on their resume, they may want to consider joining the student government (or some other club) to gain those skills.

CRAFTING A RESUME ACTIVITY

This activity will guide students through the process of learning all about resumes and creating their first high school resume. Students will follow a full writing workshop process to draft, revise, and finalize a resume that can be maintained and updated throughout their high school career. Find the activity guide [here](#).



Additional Resume Activities & Resources

- Tailor Your Resume: Have students practice adjusting their resumes to respond to a variety of job postings
- Kahoot Quiz: [What is a Resume?](#)
- [Lesson Plans: Resumes and Cover Letters for High School Students](#), Read Write Think
- [How to Write a High School Student Resume](#), resume.io
- [Student Resume Examples, Templates, and Writing Tips](#), The Balance Careers
- [Resumes & Cover Letters Career Guide](#), Indeed

Portfolio Development

The term digital student portfolio was coined by David Niguidula in 2010 and defined as “a multimedia collection of student work that provides evidence of a student’s skills and knowledge” (qtd. in Renwick). Through a collection of artifacts and reflections, portfolios create an opportunity for students to curate the story of their own learning experiences.

In terms of college and career readiness, a digital portfolio is an important supplement to an application, resume, and cover letter when applying for a job, college, or other post-secondary opportunity. Portfolios can provide tangible proof of learning, skills, and abilities and will set individuals apart from other candidates.

What to Include in a Portfolio

Portfolios can serve multiple purposes and include a variety of artifacts - which are any type of content such as text, files,



photos, videos, audio recordings, screenshots, code samples, etc. - to demonstrate learning, progression, and achievement. There are three main classifications of artifacts that can be included in a portfolio:

- ▶ **Performance** items that show a student's best work. Students should select these items and write an explanation as to why they've selected it as the best work.
- ▶ **Process** artifacts show multiple versions of a piece of work to demonstrate how the piece developed over time.
- ▶ **Progress** pieces will demonstrate development over time. This might include something from early on in a student's high school career compared to something from their senior year to show progression and growth in a certain skill set.

Each artifact that is included in a student's digital portfolio should provide evidence of their education and experience. The [Brainstorm Artifacts](#) activity from Auburn University guides students through the thought process of selecting artifacts and determining how they represent their skills or knowledge. The following is a list of suggested artifacts to include:

- **About Me** - A brief biography or introduction to the person and their aspirations.
- **Career Goals** - A summary of professional goals to give readers a sense of where they see themselves in the future.
- **Resume** - Include a link to a resume or a copy of the resume itself.
- **Relevant Skills** - This could be included as part of the About Me section and lists essential skills related to a student's career aspirations.
- **Work Samples** - This is the most important component of any portfolio. This should make up the majority of the portfolio and include a student's best work as evidence of their relevant skills. These samples can take nearly any digital form, but should be included in the form that best demonstrates the knowledge and skill that went into the project or experience. Work samples might look like:
 - ◊ Artwork or designs
 - ◊ Blueprints, renderings, or digital models
 - ◊ Essays or papers
 - ◊ Capstone Project output
 - ◊ Recorded presentations or slideshows
 - ◊ Video or audio projects
 - ◊ Lab reports
 - ◊ Research posters
 - ◊ Photos or videos from learning experiences or demonstrations of knowledge and skill

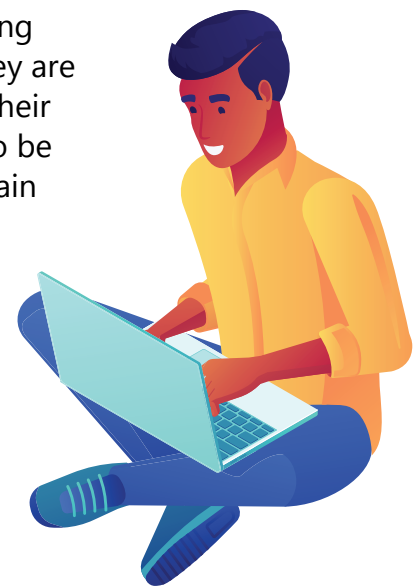


- **Awards or Recognitions** - Including any awards and recognitions students have received is also a worthwhile element to include in a portfolio.
- **Certificates or awards**
- **Newspaper articles or press clippings**
- **Evidence of Internships, Work, Leadership, or Volunteer Experiences** - It is a good idea to include any evidence available of any of these experiences to show well-roundedness and additional experience a student might have had outside of the classroom. Evidence might include:
 - ◊ Flyers or brochures from the host organization
 - ◊ Written summary of and reflection on the experience
 - ◊ Any output / product created by the student during the experience
 - ◊ Photos or videos of student participation in the experience
- **Letters of Recommendation** - It never hurts to gather 2-3 letters of recommendation from trusted adults, mentors, teachers, or other adults who have had a positive influence on the student's educational journey and include these in the portfolio as well.
- **Reflection** - A critical component of portfolios is reflection. Students should be given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and experiences and the evidence they gather as part of their portfolio and include these reflections as part of the portfolio also. This can be as simple as why they chose to include a specific artifact or a more involved exploration of how they've developed certain skills. This could be included as written accompaniments to the artifacts or as a blog.

Tools for Digital Portfolios

There are many tools that have been developed specifically for creating digital student portfolios and many other online tools that can be used just as well. The most important consideration for any digital portfolio tool is ensuring that students have access to them outside of your program and that they are shareable with others. If students are to use these portfolios as part of their application processes to post-secondary opportunities, they will need to be able to give a link to external institutions. The following resources contain recommendations for portfolio tools and relevant information:

- [Tools for Creating Digital Student Portfolios](#), Edutopia
- [Student Portfolio Apps and Websites](#), Common Sense Education
- [Top 10 Sites for Creating a Digital Portfolio](#), Tech & Learning
- [How to Create Powerful Student ePortfolios with Google Sites](#), Shake Up Learning
- [K-12 ePortfolios with GSuite](#), Dr. Helen Barrett
- [Video: Google Sites Student Portfolio in Ten Minutes](#), Granite School District, Salt Lake City, UT



Additional Resources for Digital Portfolios

- [MakerEd's Open Portfolio Project](#) combines research and practice in order to develop a common framework for documenting, sharing, and assessing learning through portfolios.
 - Note: Contains information and resources specifically relevant for OST programs.
- [11 Essentials for Excellent Digital Portfolios](#), Edutopia
- [Digital Portfolios in the Classroom](#), Matt Renwick, ASCD
- [Documenting Learning with Digital Portfolios](#), David Niguidula
- [How Digital Portfolios Empower Student Ownership of Learning](#), Getting Smart
- [5 Ways That Digital Portfolios Can Expand Learning Opportunities](#), EdSurge
- [How to Make a Digital Portfolio in 5 Steps](#), Indeed

LinkedIn

There are many benefits to high school youth having a LinkedIn profile including gaining the attention of college admissions officers, looking for internships and part-time jobs, and getting a headstart on crafting their online professional persona. In 2013, LinkedIn lowered its minimum age requirement from 18 to 14, and now high school students are able to join the estimated 660 million people worldwide who are networking, learning new skills, exploring opportunities, and working toward expanding their career horizons.



For more on why high school students should join and participate in LinkedIn, **check out these resources:**

- **Podcast:** [The Power of LinkedIn: Why Every High School Student Needs to be on LinkedIn](#), Smart Social
- [Eight Reasons High School Students Should be on LinkedIn](#), Forbes
- [Why Secondary Students Need LinkedIn](#), Socially Savvy
- [Career Development in High School: Why You Need to Create a LinkedIn Profile](#), Youth Career Compass

How to Help Youth Get Started with LinkedIn

1) Create Your Own Profile

In order to help youth in your program get started with LinkedIn, you should first set up your own profile, if you don't already have one. Walking through the process yourself first will help prepare you for the type of information students will need to provide and give you ideas on how to best support them in their profile setup.

2) Host a LinkedIn Workshop

If you have a handful of youth who are ready to join LinkedIn, it may be beneficial to host a workshop where you walk them through the setup process, review the basics of LinkedIn, and help them begin populating their profile.

3) Set Up a Photo Shoot

As part of your LinkedIn workshop, or separately, set up a simple photo shoot with students so that they have a professional-looking photo that they can use for their profile. All you need is a mobile phone with a good camera, or an actual digital camera, a clear background, and a way to share photos with students. For your background, find either a solid colored, clean wall or a natural background such as trees or a brick wall. You want something plain enough that it will not be distracting in the photo. You will also want to avoid any green walls as those can be overlaid with any image (think green screen technology). Once you've picked a good background, take headshot-style photos of students from the shoulders up. Make sure students are smiling or look friendly in their photo. No grimaces allowed!

4) Offer Advisory Sessions

After the initial setup, offer to help students further enhance their profile or learn more about LinkedIn through one-on-one or small group advisory sessions. You can even learn about topics together by watching videos or reading tutorials. A quick Internet search will find you just about any information you'd need.

5) Integrate LinkedIn into the Program

Finally, look for ways to integrate LinkedIn into your program. This could be something as simple as setting aside time at the end of a project for students to update their LinkedIn profile with information about the project. You could also build lessons for learning more about using LinkedIn into your program. If all of your students are using LinkedIn, you can use it as a communication tool to share professional resources with them or engage them in discussion about a particular topic related to college and career readiness. Remember, at its core, LinkedIn is a social networking tool.

Additional Resources for LinkedIn for High School Students

- [Video: LinkedIn Tutorial for Beginners and Students \(2018\), ShareSpark](#)
- [Video: LinkedIn for Teenagers Applying to College, Smart Social](#)
- [Video: Why High School Students Should be on LinkedIn NOW!, Jamila Sams](#)
- [Video: A Geek's Guide: LinkedIn for Students, Studios Anjy](#)
- [High School Students - How to Write the Perfect LinkedIn Profile Summary, Knowledge Matters](#)
- [LinkedIn Tips for High School Students, LinkedIn](#)
- [LinkedIn Profile Checklist - High School Students, LinkedIn](#)
- [Building a Great Student Profile, LinkedIn](#)

Practice Interviews

As discussed in Unit 4 in the Interviewing Basics section, it is advisable to help students prepare for job interviews as part of their college and career preparation. One way to help them prepare is by staging mock interviews as an opportunity to practice interviewing skills and become familiar with the process.

The activities included here are designed for students to practice interviewing in a variety of scenarios, specifically over the phone and via video. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many interviews and exchanges that are typically held face-to-face have moved to virtual platforms and students will need to be prepared for this shift.

These activities are written so that students are interviewing each other as an entry level to practice. However, you could also arrange mock interviews where students are interviewed by volunteers and professionals from the community, perhaps as a next level up from these activities.



1. Activity Guide: [Phone Interview Simulation](#)

2. Activity Guide: [Video Chat Interview Simulation](#)

- This activity could be modified to model a traditional in-person interview with just a few simple changes.

3. [Interviewing Skills Lesson Plan](#), North Carolina Agriculture Teachers Association

You may also want to check out this [Kahoot! Quiz on Effective and Ineffective Interview Practices](#) that can be facilitated with students in conjunction with these activities.

Professional Email Habits

Just as it is important for youth to practice their interviewing skills, it is equally important for them to learn and practice professional email habits. As youth get older and are preparing to enter the workforce or college application process, they will find themselves working with adults in a professional context more and more. Knowing how to craft emails in a courteous and competent manner will be critical to communicating effectively.

Email Writing Simulation Activity

In this activity, students will use templates to craft emails for specific professional use cases. In the second part of the activity, students will be prompted with unique scenarios and be asked to draft professional emails in response. **Find the activity guide [here](#).**



Additional Resources for Professional Email Habits

- [A Comprehensive Guide to Email Etiquette for High Schoolers](#), CollegeVine
- [How to Write a Professional Email: A Guide for Students](#), The Scholarship System
- [The Best First Writing Lesson of the Year: Email Etiquette 101](#), TeachWriting.org
- [Lesson Plan: Email Etiquette](#), Common Sense Education
- [The 7 Best Lesson Plans for Teaching Email in Middle School](#), Applied Educational Systems

Cultural Considerations

Most workplaces today employ people from diverse cultural backgrounds. As a result, students will need to be culturally aware as they enter the workforce. Depending on their career, students may also need to be prepared to interface with international colleagues or travel internationally for business. In these situations (and, perhaps, many others), they will encounter differences in cultural expectations and customs surrounding dress, communication, timeliness, and greetings in the workplace. Making students aware of some of these differences they may encounter out in the world, not just in the workplace, will go a long way to make them more culturally aware.



From an article titled "How to Bridge Workplace Issues That Arise from Cultural Differences", Catherine Skrzpinski highlights some of the cultural differences that appear in the workplace, including:



- **Dress Code:** "In North America, safety in the workplace trumps wearing religious [attire]. For example, a Sikh must remove his turban to put on a helmet if working on a construction site."



- **Concept of Time:** "In North American, being 'on time' typically allows for a 5-minute grace period...In contrast, 'on time' in Germany is arriving 5-minutes early, while in Mexico, time is more flexible - colleagues may show up within a 30-minute time frame."



- **Office Layout:** "Open-plan offices are becoming more commonplace in North America. In Japan, many offices are set up like North American university lecture halls, where a senior manager sits front and center, facing everyone."

These are just a few examples of the cultural differences that can be present in a workplace. For more information on cultural considerations in the workplace, see the resources listed below.

Additional Resources on Cultural Considerations

- Professional Development: [Culture in the Classroom](#), Teaching Tolerance
- [How to Bridge Workplace Issues That Arise from Cultural Differences](#), SHRM
- [When Culture Doesn't Translate](#), Harvard Business Review
- [A Deeper Look at Cultural Awareness in the Workplace](#), Anne Loehr
- [How to Properly Shake Hands in 14 Different Countries](#), Business Insider
- [Avoiding Cross Cultural Faux Pas: Clothes](#), MindTools
- [Examples of Cultural Differences in Business](#), Chron
- [6 Examples of Cultural Differences in Business Communication](#), Berlitz



4) WORK EXPERIENCE



After learning some job readiness skills and figuring out some potential career paths, the next step youth should take is to gain some work experience. Work experience is any activity in which a student is at a worksite doing real work for pay. This can take the form of internships or apprenticeships, work-based learning experiences arranged through a school's CTE program, or part-time employment.

Work experiences are designed to:

- Promote hands-on, real-world experience in a field of interest
- Provide productive value for the employer
- Offer opportunities to develop, practice and demonstrate employability skills
- Build occupational knowledge
- Create awareness of the education needed to be successful in the industry ("Work Experience Fact Sheet")

Teaching youth about the value of work experience as early as possible in the middle grades is helpful because by the time they are of age to work (14 years old in Maryland) they can begin seeking out opportunities that will provide them with experience and information about the world of work and career paths of interest.

Student Resource: Work Experience is an accompanying resource for students to reference for similar information to what is found here. You can also check out these [lessons on employability skills](#) for grades 9-12 from Workforce Solutions.

The Value of Work Experience*

- 1) Having prior work experience will make you more likely to be successful in your job search.
- 2) Work experiences are a great way to explore different career paths, industries, types of work, and workplace environments. If you are unsure about your desired career, work experiences can help you figure it out.
- 3) It's the best way to understand a particular job or industry. You will have opportunities to see the job in action, ask questions and learn from actual employees in the industry, and gain firsthand experience in the career field. This is a great way to know if it is for you or not.
- 4) Seeking out and participating in work experiences such as internships or part-time jobs in your chosen field demonstrates interest and dedication. It tells future employers that you are motivated to work in that field.
- 5) If you are struggling with career decisions, or have no clue what you'd like to do for a career, trying out a variety of work placements may help you narrow down your options and make decisions about your potential career path.
- 6) Internships, service learning, and part-time or summer jobs can all help you learn what it means to be an employee and about work in general. This is definitely valuable to figure out before your first full-time job.
- 7) Experiencing work will teach you about yourself. Learning what you like and dislike about that particular industry, what your skills and strengths are, any potential weaknesses or areas that need improvement, and more before you land your first "real world" position will be beneficial.
- 8) These experiences may lead to a job offer! If you enjoy the work and are doing a good job in your position, you may be offered more responsibilities or even a full-time position.
- 9) Work placements are a great opportunity to network with people in your community and/or desired career path. This will help you build your contacts and could lead to possible recommendations or referrals.
- 10) Work experience builds your resume. Having a couple experiences described on your resume will put you further ahead than those without work experience.

*Adapted from [Why is Work Experience Important?](#) From All About Careers

Paid Internships

Paid internships are a type of pre-professional work experience where students “gain relevant knowledge and the skills required to succeed in a specific career field while making some money through an hourly wage, weekly salary, or stipend over the course of the internship” (Loretto). Companies will offer paid internships because they understand the value that interns can bring to the company and that they may be investing in a future employee.

Internships can open the door to employment opportunities, either within the company of the internship or otherwise. Internships on a resume tell employers that a candidate has had some hands-on experience and that will outshine those who do not have an internship on their resume. Internships also offer an immersive learning experience showing what it is like to work in a particular field that research and informational interviews cannot provide.

What to Expect

- Prospective interns should seek out internship opportunities in their career field(s) of interest.
- There will likely be “busy work” that is required of interns. Tasks such as making copies or other menial tasks may be required.
- Interns need to be professional and exhibit good work habits. Things like being on time (or a few minutes early), dressing appropriately, and keeping conversations and actions inclusive and appropriate at all times are expected.
- Interns will make mistakes and have to ask for help. That’s okay! It’s expected that there will be a learning curve to any position and that mistakes will happen.
- Interns may be paid weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or provided a stipend (a fixed amount paid as a salary or allowance).
- For 2019, the average hourly wage earned by bachelor-level interns was \$19.05 (“2019 Internship & Co-op Survey Report” 5).
- Internships may require between 8-40 hours per week.
- Finding an internship can be achieved through networking, online databases and listings, and through school guidance offices or college career centers.
- An internship may lead to an offer of employment, but it is not guaranteed. In 2019, the offer rate for interns was 70.4 percent (“2019 Internship & Co-op Survey Report” 4).
- Internships for high school students may be volunteer positions, or unpaid.
- Internships at smaller companies may offer more access to mentorship and networking opportunities that may be more helpful than an internship at a larger company.



QUESTIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE INTERNS TO CONSIDER

1. Is this internship in my career field(s) of interest?
2. Is this a paid internship?
3. How much of my time is required each day / week?
4. Where is the internship located? Is this near or far from home and school?
5. How will I travel to and from the internship?
6. What is the size of the company? How might this impact my experience?
7. What will I be working on during this internship? Will this lead to new skills that I can show prospective employers?
8. What is most exciting about this opportunity to me?
9. What would I like to gain from this experience?



Resources to Learn More or Find an Internship Opportunity

- [How to Get Paid for an Internship](#), LiveAbout.com
- [Paid vs. Unpaid Internships: How to Decide](#), WayUp
- [The Differences Between Paid and Unpaid Internships](#), Internship Finder
- [Internship Opportunities for Students of Color](#), The Balance Careers
- [Top 10 Things You Should Look for in an Internship](#), WayUp
- [9 Common Mistakes Students Make When Applying for Internships](#), WayUp
- [Building Your Resume: How Many Internships Do You Need?](#), WayUp
- [Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [Internships](#), Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- [Internships](#) on WayUp
- [Paid Internships](#) on Internships.com
- [Internship Finder](#)
- [Internships in Maryland](#), Internships.com
- [Maryland State Internships & Resources](#), Maryland.gov

Virtual Internships

Virtual (or Remote) Internships allow students to gain work experience without physically showing up to an office. This type of internship is solely completed online. Virtual internships have gained popularity as more companies are offering remote work to their employees, meaning that more people are working from home. Virtual internships are also popular among students who do not live in the city where they wish to intern or do not have transportation available to them.



The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on internship programs. By the end of April 2020, more than 80% of reporting companies planned some type of change to their internship program ("Special Report: Coronavirus"). Many companies have opted for virtual internships in 2020 as a result of the lockdowns and closures due to coronavirus and this may continue into the coming years. It is likely that your students will encounter virtual internships as part of their search and the information and resources below will aid in helping them decide if it's a good fit for them or not.

What to Expect

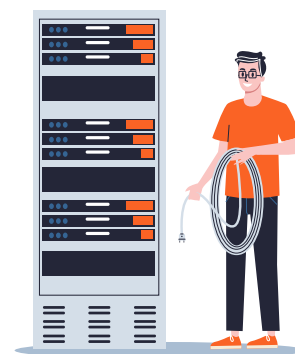
- Virtual Internships require increased planning and preparation on the part of the intern and their supervisor to ensure success.
- It should be expected that interns will spend a lot of time on the computer and sitting at their desk. This is one key difference between in-person internships and virtual.
- A reliable Internet connection and video call capabilities will be required.
- Interns still get to be part of the team. Just because the internship is not taking place in person does not mean that teams are any less effective or communicative and interns will be included.
- Interns will still receive support and mentorship from their supervisors and teammates and will not be expected to figure everything out on their own.
- There may be increased flexibility in terms of schedules in a virtual internship.
- In a virtual internship, one will not be required to travel to an office, except, perhaps for the rare occasion.
- Well-developed written communication skills will be more important in a virtual internship because most communication will be taking place via email, chat, or comments in a project management system. Interns will have to be able to express themselves clearly in writing, both formally and informally.
- It will be important to maintain a professional attitude, presentation, and environment even though you are working from home.
- Working from home is not for everyone. It requires a person to establish boundaries between home life and work life and routines that support both. When working from home, work hours can easily extend into all hours of the day and it may cause burn out if it seems like there is no end to the work day.

Resources to Learn More or Find an Internship Opportunity

- [What is a Virtual Internship?](#), Virtual Internships
- [How Virtual Internships Work](#), The Balance Careers
- [How to Make the Most of a Virtual Internship](#), Princeton University Center for Career Development
- Video: [How to Excel at a Virtual Internship](#), Forbes
- Video: [How to Be Successful at a Virtual Internship!](#), The Intern Queen
- Video: [Preparing for Your Virtual Internship](#), Afzal Hussein
- Video: [How to Build Relationships During Your Virtual Internship](#), The Intern Hustle
- [All About Virtual Internships](#), FastWeb
- [Virtual Internships](#), Notre Dame of Maryland University

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a program designed to train individuals for a specific type of job through on-the-job learning under another, more experienced employee. Apprenticeships combine a company's need for highly skilled employees with a training program for new hires or employees who need to upgrade their skills. It is common to find apprenticeship programs in manufacturing and construction industries, but they are also becoming more widely available in growing industries such as IT, healthcare, energy, transportation, and logistics ("What is an Apprenticeship?").



What to Expect

- An apprentice is typically paid throughout the program.
- An apprentice will "undergo hands-on training under the guidance of an experienced mentor" ("What is an Apprenticeship?").
- Many apprenticeships will require accompanying academic courses to gain knowledge related to the industry or career.
- As an apprentice gains new skills and knowledge and reaches pre-determined goals and milestones throughout the program, they may be compensated with pay increases and increased responsibilities.
- Typically a nationally accredited certification is awarded at the completion of an apprenticeship program. This will be valid in all states that participate in the program.
- Apprenticeships may last between 1-6 years depending on the occupation and program design.

Resources to Learn More or Find an Internship Opportunity

- [Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program \(MATP\)](#), Maryland Department of Labor
 - [Be an Apprentice](#), MATP
- [Apprenticeship Maryland](#), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
 - A youth apprenticeship program for ages 16 and older
- [Apprenticeship.gov](#)
- [Discover Apprenticeship Fact Sheet](#), Apprenticeship.gov
- [American Institute for Innovative Apprenticeship](#)
- [6 Differences Between an Internship and Apprenticeship](#), Glassdoor
- [What is an Apprenticeship? \(Plus Benefits & 4 Types\)](#), Indeed

Community Service Learning / AmeriCorps

Another work experience option is participation in community service learning opportunities through organizations such as AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is the only federal agency in America tasked with elevating service and volunteerism. They work with local partners to help “Americans improve their lives and the lives of their fellow citizens through service” (AmeriCorps).

AmeriCorps works to connect individual members and volunteers to nonprofit organizations in communities of high need so they can serve directly to address “critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks, preparing for disasters, and more” (AmeriCorps). Students looking to make a difference in their communities or in the U.S. may be interested in joining AmeriCorps before entering the workforce or attending college.



How does it work?

- Choose where you want to serve.
- Pick your organization to serve with.
- Choose your focus.

Benefits

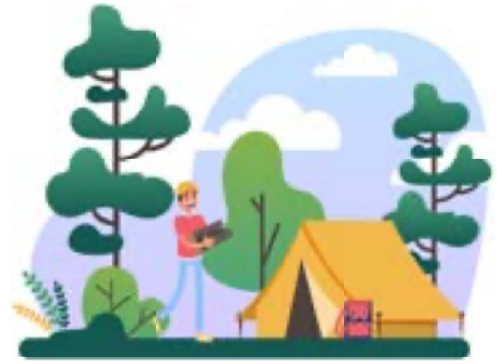
- Earn an education award.
- Earn a living allowance.
- Gain professional skills.

Learn More

- [AmeriCorps](#)
- [AmeriCorps Programs](#)
- [AmeriCorps FAQ](#)
- [AmeriCorps YouTube Playlist](#)
- [Maryland Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism](#), Maryland.gov

Conservation Corps

In addition to AmeriCorps, with a specific focus on environmental conservation, an option for volunteer service work experience is Conservation Corps. This program of the American Conservation Experience, is for Americans aged 18-35 who are interested in land management as a career path or course of study. These volunteers serve under a professional supervisor as part of a team to “explore future outdoor careers, learn practical field skills, and develop confidence as emerging leaders in the field of conservation” (“Conservation Corps”). Participants in the program learn and train under the guidance of staff from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and more.



“ACE’s Conservation Corps and Conservation Volunteer projects represent the spectrum of practical environmental restoration work accomplished on America’s public lands. In 2012 ACE completed crew projects for 22 National Parks, 13 National Forests, 7 Wildlife Refuges, 7 Bureau of Land Management Field Offices, and in partnership with dozens of local parks, non-profits, and land trusts” (“Conservation Corps”).

How does it work?

- Serve for a minimum of 12 weeks with the possibility to serve for up to 6 months or longer.
- No prior experience in practical conversation necessary to participate.

Benefits

- Work in the great outdoors!
- Earn an education award.
- Earn a stipend during service.
- Gain professional skills in the area of environmental conservation and land management.

Learn More

- [Conservation Corps](#), American Conservation Experience
- [Maryland Conservation Corps](#), Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- [The Corps Network](#)
- [Chesapeake Conservation & Climate Corps](#), Chesapeake Bay Trust
- [Natural Resources Careers Camp](#), Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Full-Time / Part-Time Employment

In the United States, full-time employment is categorized primarily as working between 30 and 40 hours per week and part-time employment generally captures anything less than 30 hours per week. Part-time and full-time employment can also be confused for hourly and salaried employees, but the two have nothing to do with one another. “A salaried employee is paid an annual salary, while an hourly employee is paid a specific rate per hour worked” (Murray) regardless of whether they work full- or part-time hours.

Full-time jobs tend to be what we think of when we think of a career. But part-time jobs are valuable as well, especially if a student wants to incorporate freelance work into their career plan. Part-time jobs typically allow for more flexibility in schedule and work well with attending school or seeking educational opportunities. It is often a good experience for high school students to obtain a part-time job to help prepare them for the world of work and give them hands-on experience in a workplace.

Full-time

- Work at least 30 hours per week
- Receive the full range of employee benefits
- Insurance, paid time off, retirement, etc.
- More rigid schedule

Part-time

- Work less than 30 hours per week
- May receive none, some, or all employee benefits depending on the employer
- Flexibility in scheduling

Resources to Learn More or Find an Employment Opportunity

- [How to Decide Whether Part-Time or Full-Time Work is Right for You](#), Flexjobs
- [How to Get Your First Part-Time Job for Teens](#), The Balance Careers
- [Full-Time Employment](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [When Should a Part-Time Employee Be Reclassified as Full-Time?](#), SHRM
- [State of Maryland Job Openings](#)
- [Maryland Job Resources](#), Maryland.gov
- [Maryland Workforce Exchange](#), Maryland Department of Labor
- Job Search Sites:
 - [Indeed](#), [Monster](#), [Glassdoor](#), [FlexJobs](#), [Snagajob](#)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is legislation that was passed in 2014 to replace the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The act is “designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers” (“Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act”). This is achieved by helping those looking for jobs find employment, education, training, and support services. To learn more about WIOA and access relevant information, visit these resources:

- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#), U.S. Department of Labor
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Resource Page](#), Maryland Dept. of Labor
- [Maryland Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) State Plan](#) - 2020-2024, Maryland Dept. of Labor
- [Maryland Eligible Training Provider List - WIOA](#), Maryland Department of Labor

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The Career and College Readiness Toolkit is an initiative of the Maryland Out of School Time Network. To learn more and find more resources, visit www.mostnetwork.org/initiatives/CCR.

Unit 5:

Alternative Post-Secondary Options



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1) INTRODUCTION



There are a wide variety of options available to students after completing high school and while pursuing a bachelor's degree at a traditional college or university is often seen as the standard path for post-secondary education in the United States, **there are a growing number of alternatives and an increasing number of people choosing an alternative path.** There have been alternate options for post-secondary education for decades such as trade schools and work-based training, but recent years have yielded a wider variety of options such as bootcamps and online micro-credentials. "Since 2000, participation in certificate programs, apprenticeships, and competency-based education programs has increased rapidly, and MOOCs [Massive Open Online Course] and bootcamps have emerged and grown quickly in a short time. As one example, the number of certificates awarded by Title IV–eligible post-secondary institutions increased by 73 percent from 2000 to 2013, a period during which the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 49 percent" (Brown and Kurzweil 3). For many students, for many reasons, a direct-to-college pathway is not the best option and college in general may not be their best option.

As with all considerations of post-secondary options, these alternative options should also be researched and addressed through the activities and suggestions found in **Unit 2 - Guiding Youth Through College and Career Decisions** of this toolkit.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Post-Secondary Alternatives

There are many benefits to pursuing an alternative post-secondary pathway. “While there is a great deal of variation, alternative credentials and pathways typically take less time, have more flexible formats, and are more directly aligned with employer-defined skills than traditional degree programs” (Brown and Kurzweil 3). Many certificate and licensure programs last as little as one to two years and cost less than pursuing a bachelor’s degree. These programs may be offered by trade schools, community colleges, private organizations, nonprofit organizations, traditional colleges and universities, employers, or industry associations and be taught in-person, online, or on the job. Perhaps most importantly, these alternatives often focus more directly on the skills needed to perform a specific job and work within a specific industry than bachelor’s degrees; meaning that students should be able to walk away from these programs and right into employment.



One major down-side to alternative post-secondary options is that they often lack quality assurance and thorough assessment of the value they are providing, as well as longitudinal data to support evidence of their success. In other words, they may make false claims, have insufficient data to support their claims, or simply not deliver on the promises they make to participants. Alternative pathways can also be quite costly and may not offer scholarships or financial aid that is typically available to college-going individuals. Additionally, “employers routinely report that advancement in management, creative, and professional roles requires not only ongoing skill development but also critical thinking, communication skills, and adaptability. These more general professional competencies are rarely the focus of short-term skills-focused programs but are (or should be) the domain of degree programs” (Brown and Kurzweil 42).

The Impact of COVID-19 on Post-Secondary Options



The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting closures will have significant and lasting impact on education systems at all levels that is hard to predict. However, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center’s COVID-19 Monthly Update on Higher Education Enrollment, “undergraduate enrollment is running 4.0 percent below last year’s level, and... overall post-secondary enrollment is down 3.0 percent as of September 24 [2020]. Most strikingly, first-time students are by far the biggest decline of any student group from last year (-16.1percent nationwide and -22.7 percent at community colleges).”

This impact stretches all the way through the education pipeline from high school to the workforce. Current high school juniors and seniors have limited access to the ACT and SAT exams which are typically required for college entrance. In some cases, colleges and universities, such as Case Western Reserve University, have waived this requirement for the current / forthcoming

semester stating that they will not require scores from these tests for applications (Horn). Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 has reached the workforce-learning arena and companies and organizations have been forced to cancel in-person training and companies are increasingly concerned about the talent pipeline from colleges and universities since recruiters aren't able to be on-campus.

"It's often said that education is "countercyclical" to the market, meaning that demands for educational services increase in times of economic downturn" (Horn), but that is no guarantee in these unprecedented times. "Given the uncertainty around the length of this recession, and the availability of short-term "bootcamp" like programs, people may be unwilling to enroll in longer (and often costlier) programs. Bootcamps and other programs that offer income-share agreements (ISAs) to help students finance their education face both an opportunity and challenge" (Horn). As people are already facing job losses, the lure of pursuing a program that requires no up-front costs is appealing, but the business model for these types of programs threaten their very existence since they only get paid if their graduates find employment.

HOW TO SELECT THE BEST FIT FOR POST-SECONDARY TRAINING

In their [Career and College Planning Guide](#), Howard County Public Schools recommends this short checklist to help youth select the training that is right for them. This applies most directly to career and trade schools, but can also be applied more broadly to all post-secondary experiences.

- ☐ **Make sure the school is authorized to operate.**
- ☐ **Find out about support services offered.**
- ☐ **Find out if the school is accredited.**
- ☐ **Find out if the school qualifies for federal financial aid.**
- ☐ **Ask about the admissions policy.**
- ☐ **Ask about the refund policy.**
- ☐ **Check the program carefully.**
- ☐ **Get all the policies in writing, in the school catalog.**
- ☐ **Check out the instructors' qualifications.**
- ☐ **Read and understand what you sign.**
- ☐ **Ask about job placement.**



Activity: Post-Secondary Alternatives Presentation

In this activity, students will research an alternative post-secondary pathway and give a small presentation. This activity could be done in one session or over the span of a few days.

- 1) Assign or have students select** one of the following alternative post-secondary pathways: certificates, licenses, two-year degrees, or military.
 - You can also break this list down into smaller categories if you like.
 - Students can work as individuals, pairs, or small groups depending on how you'd like to structure the activity.
- 2) Provide time for students to research the pathway** and complete information on the [Alternative Post-Secondary Pathways Research](#) sheet.
 - You will also want to make sure to point students in the direction of solid resources to use for their research. The resources listed below in each pathway section can provide a good starting point.
- 3) After completing their research, instruct students to create a brief presentation** about their assigned or chosen pathway that includes all the information from their research.
 - You may choose to add in additional questions / prompts to further guide their research.
- 4) Students will share their presentations** with the group and answer any resulting questions or be able to point others toward more information.



General Resources for Alternative Post-Secondary Options

- [Private Career Schools in Maryland](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- [Non-Degree Credentials, Work-based Learning, and the American Working Class](#), American Enterprise Institute
- [Types of Post-secondary Options](#), Maryland Public Schools
- [Post-High School Options, Career Schools in Maryland - Career and College Planning Guide \(p.4\)](#), Howard County Public Schools
- [Selecting a Private Career School: A Consumer's Guide for Students](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- VIDEO: [Comparing Vocational vs. 2-year vs. 4-Year Colleges](#), Khan Academy
- [Gaining Traction After High School Graduation: Understanding the Post-Secondary Pathways for Baltimore's Youth](#), Baltimore's Promise
- [Grads2Careers](#), Baltimore City Public Schools, Mayor's Office of Employment Development
- [Secondary Transition Planning Guide for Individuals with Disabilities](#), Maryland Public Schools
- [National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Build Your Path - A Guidebook for Built Environment Careers](#), Maryland Center for Construction Education & Innovation // [Related Videos](#) // [Related Podcasts](#)

2) CERTIFICATES



Post-secondary certifications are vocational awards that require less than two years to complete, usually in middle-skill jobs with a goal to quickly prepare workers for the job. “Certificates are the fastest growing post-secondary credential, and second only to Bachelor’s degrees in the number earned each year” (Carnevale, et al, “Certificates”). Certificate programs are typically offered by community colleges, trade schools, and through non-degree courses at colleges and universities. Most certificate programs are designed for people with a high school diploma or GED.

“People usually earn certificates to help them prepare for a specific occupation; in other words, certificates are for people who want to train for a job rather than to earn a college degree. In some cases, however, a certificate can pave the way to college because certain programs’ credits count toward a future degree. And for some people, certificate programs help them prepare for licensure, certification, or other career-related qualifications” (Torpey 3).

Program Length: Certificate programs can last anywhere from a few months to several years.

- Short-term certificates require less than one year of instructional time.
- Medium-term certificates require one to two years of instructional time.
- Long-term certificates require two to four years of instructional time.



Types of Jobs: There are a multitude of jobs that certificate programs can lead to, mostly within the fields listed below:

- Aviation
- Agriculture / Forestry / Horticulture
- Auto Mechanics
- Business / Office Management
- Computer and Information Services
- Construction Trades
- Cosmetology
- Culinary / Food Service
- Drafting
- Electronics
- Healthcare
- Metalworking
- Police / Protective Services
- Refrigeration, Heating, and Air Conditioning
- Transportation and Material Moving

For more information about specific certifications for these jobs:

- [Appendix A from the Maryland Community Colleges Continuing Education: Workforce Training Reports \(p. 10\)](#), Maryland Association of Community Colleges
- [Certificates: A Fast Track to Careers](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Types of Certificate Programs](#), Campus Explorer

Earning Potential: "Certificate holders' earnings are similar to those of workers with some college but no degree, and at the midpoint between a high school diploma and an Associate's degree" (Carnevale, et al, "Certificates" 19). **On average, certificate holders earn slightly less than \$35,000 a year.** "People who work in the occupation in which they earned their certificate usually benefit more financially than those who work outside their certificate field" (Torpey 11).

General Resources for Certificates

- [Certificates: A Fast Track to Careers](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Will I Need a License or Certificate for My Job?](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees](#), Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce
- [Types of Training: Certifications](#), CareerOneStop
- [Certification Finder](#), CareerOneStop
- [Exploring Post-secondary Certificates and Their Relationship to Earnings: High School Graduates at Age 25](#), Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center
- [What Are Certificate Programs?](#), Campus Explorer
- [Do Students Benefit from Obtaining Vocational Certificates from Community Colleges?](#), The Brookings Institution
- [Accredited Online Certificate Programs](#), Accredited Schools Online
- [Certificate Programs that Lead to Well-Paying Jobs](#), The Balance
- [10 Six-Month Certificate Programs That Lead to High-Paying Jobs](#), Indeed

3) LICENSES



Licenses, just like certifications, **demonstrate that an individual has specific knowledge or skills necessary to perform a certain job**. Licenses are required, by State law, for workers in certain identified fields as a measure to ensure that only individuals who are skilled, competent, and ethical practice in a given occupation. In order to obtain a license, you must provide evidence that you meet the state's standards for that occupation or career. "Steps include completing specified training, logging a designated amount of work experience, and taking a licensure exam. Most exams assess knowledge of work processes, codes, policies, standard practices, and more" ("Licensed Occupations"). Many licenses require a degree as part of the standards for a particular profession, such as lawyer, doctor, or teacher.

The terms 'certification' and 'license' are often used interchangeably, however, they are not the same. **The key difference between them is that a certification is not usually required for a job, but a license is legally required for anyone practicing certain professions.**

Types of Jobs: In many states, licensed occupations include the following list of professions:

- Building Contractors
- Counselors
- Cosmetologists
- Doctors
- Electricians
- Land Surveyors
- Lawyers
- Nurses
- Teachers
- Therapists



Earning Potential: As with all professions, the earning potential of licensed occupations can vary depending on the level of education or experience and the state where the individual practices. "Workers with licenses earn considerably more than those without: \$18.80 per hour for the median unlicensed worker versus \$25.00 for the median licensed worker" (Nunn).

General Resources for Licenses

- [Licensed Occupations](#), CareerOneStop
- [Do You Need a License?](#), CareerOneStop
- [License Finder](#), CareerOneStop
- [Maryland Community Colleges Continuing Education: Workforce Training Reports](#), Maryland Association of Community Colleges
- [More and More Jobs Today Require a License. That's Good for Some Workers, but Not Always for Consumers](#), Harvard Business Review
- [Will I Need a License or Certificate for My Job?](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

4) TWO-YEAR DEGREES



A two-year degree, typically known as an **associate degree**, can prepare someone for some of the fastest growing professions in a relatively short amount of time. The completion of an associate degree can increase earning potential, lead to further education, and more employment opportunities. Associate degrees generally offer more flexibility in what to study and how to study it through scheduling and online learning options. Pursuing an associate degree has many benefits such as:

- **Saving money** - If the goal is to earn a bachelor's degree, starting out with an associate degree can be a cost-saving way to make progress toward a bachelor's without committing to a 4-year college or university right out of high school.
- **A chance to catch up** - For students with low grades exiting high school, pursuing an associate degree can provide an opportunity to gain more educational experience before transferring to a more traditional college or university.
- **Programs and coursework tailored to industry expectations** - If entering a career is more of a focus, an individual can gain more hands on experience (via co-ops, internships, and work-study opportunities integrated into the degree program) and industry-relevant skills through an associate degree than pursuing a bachelor's degree.
- **Learn and gain more experience** - Starting out with an associate degree can provide more time for individuals who don't know what they want their career to look like to explore their options. This could be a good opportunity to try out a few

different interests while still gaining experience, learning new things, earning credit, and saving money. Trying on a variety of careers is much less expensive at a community college than a 4-year institution.

Types of Associate Degrees:

- **Occupational degrees** train individuals for specific occupations. With an occupational degree, graduates should be able to move directly from coursework into a job.
- **Transfer degrees** are designed as a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree. When planned and executed properly, all classes and credit earned during this type of associate degree will transfer to a 4-year college or university.

Program Length: It typically takes about 2 years, 60 credits, or 20 classes, to complete an associate degree offered by public community colleges, private 2-year colleges, for-profit technical institutes, and many 4-year colleges and universities.

Types of Jobs: There are a wide variety of jobs available to those with associate degrees in an even wider variety of industries and fields. To get a better idea of the jobs available to associate degree holders, visit these resources:

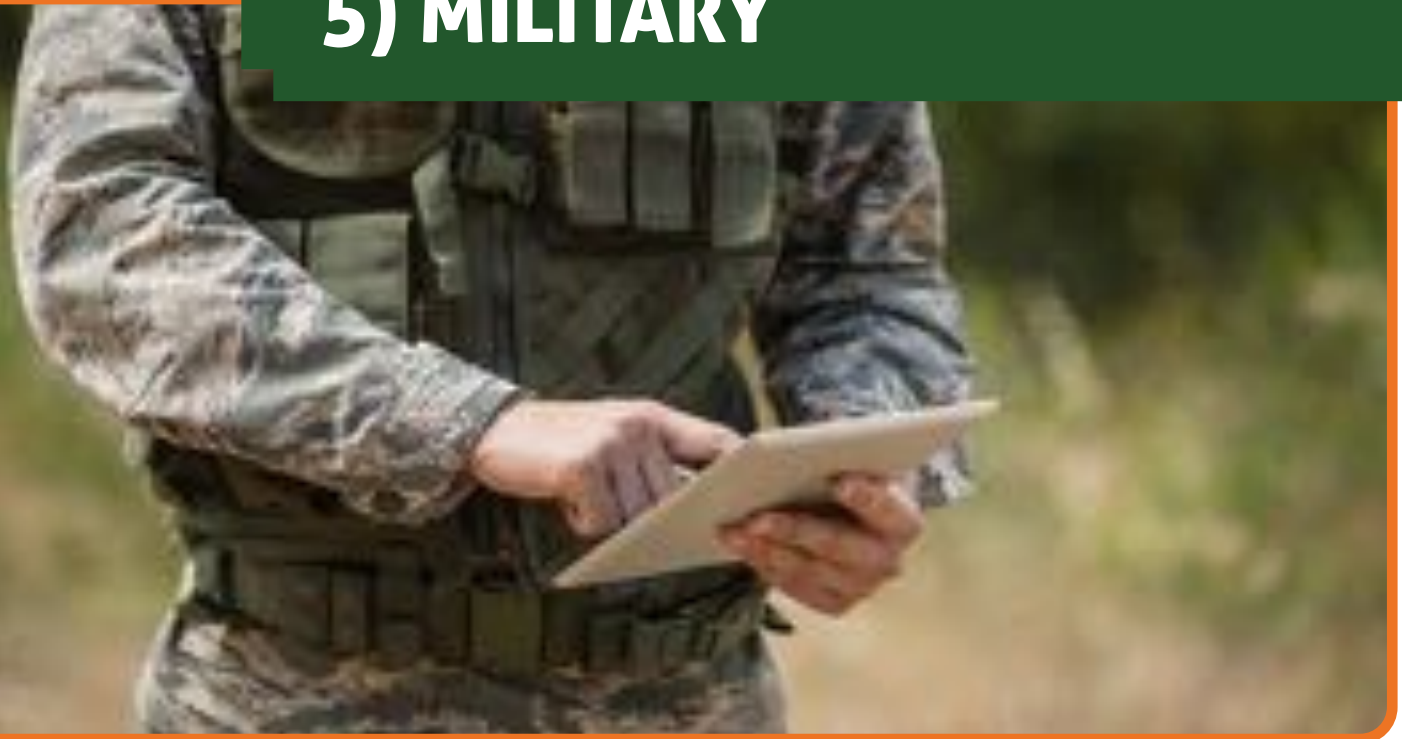
- [Associate Degree: Two Years to a Career or a Jump Start to a Bachelor's Degree \(pg. 5\)](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Highest Paying Associate Degree Jobs](#), University of the Potomac

Earning Potential: Individuals with an associate degree only (no higher degree earned) earn a weekly income of \$874 on average, compared with \$749 for high school graduates with no diploma and \$1,281 for those with a bachelor's degree ("The Economics Daily").

General Resources for Two-Year Degrees

- [Why Community College?](#), Maryland Association of Community Colleges
- [Maryland Community Colleges](#), Maryland Association of Community Colleges
- [Associate Degree: Two Years to a Career or a Jump Start to a Bachelor's Degree](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Two Year Public Designated Statewide Programs](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission
 - Certain community college programs are designated as statewide programs and students may enroll in these programs at the same rates as in-county residents if a particular program is not offered by the local community college or a student cannot enroll due to enrollment limits.
- [Academic Program Inventory](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission
 - Search for programs offered at colleges and universities in Maryland
- [The Pros and Cons of Pursuing a 2-Year College Degree](#), OSAU
- [Highest Paying Associate Degree Jobs](#), University of the Potomac
- [24 Highest Paying Associate Degree Jobs](#), GetEducated.com

5) MILITARY



Joining the military after high school comes with a vast array of considerations and potential benefits. It is definitely a serious decision that should not be taken lightly, but if one decides to enlist, there can be some major lifelong benefits. Some jobs within any of the five branches of the U.S. military mimic that of a civilian job, where the individual works Monday through Friday with typical hours. Other positions, however, may involve more commitment, more unpredictability, and more volatile situations. A few of the potential benefits include:

- A steady paycheck and potential for bonuses
- Education benefits through programs such as the GI Bill and Tuition Assistance Program
- Advanced and speciality training
- Possibility for travel
- Tax-free room and board
- Health and Dental care
- Special home loans and discounts
- Highly sought-after skills, leadership, and training experience

There are both full- and part-time service options available for military service. For example, enlisting in the Army Reserves means that, under normal circumstances, you “work” one weekend a month and two weeks a year for training. People who are enlisted in the Army Reserves still have lives and jobs outside their military obligations, such as other meaningful employment. Learn more about [**full- and part-time options**](#) from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Program Length: Enlistment terms vary in length depending on the branch of service and position. All recruits will go through Basic Training (aka "bootcamp") which lasts between 8-13 weeks depending on the branch of service. Find more info at [Bootcamp Information](#).

Type of Jobs: There are a plethora of jobs available through the various branches of the U.S. military, and far too many to list here. To explore military careers, check out the [Career Exploration Tool](#) from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Earning Potential: The military provides a salary that is competitive with most civilian (non-military) jobs. During the first year of service, a single individual can be making between \$25,000 and \$33,000 with no college degree. To learn more about and explore military salary, visit the [Compensation Estimator](#) from the U.S. Department of Defense.



Resources for More Information on the Military

There is a wealth of information available on each branch of military service and all the positions available and training and commitment requirements. It is highly recommended to bring in military recruiters or those with military service experience to share information and experience with students in your program. You can find contact information for each branch on their website and it is recommended to contact them directly for specific questions or information. The following resources can help you get started in learning more or to share information with your students.

General Info

- [Military Options](#), CareerOneStop
- [Career Exploration](#), U.S. Department of Defense
- [MyFuture.com](#), U.S. Department of Defense
- [Operation Military Kids](#)
 - A site designed to inform young adults on various military careers available to them written by U.S. Military Veterans.
- [Deciding Which Military Service to Join](#), LiveAbout.com
- [Things to Consider When Deciding to Join the U.S. Army](#), LiveAbout.com
- [Questions to Ask a Recruiter](#), U.S. Department of Defense

Careers & The Branches of Military

- [Service Branches](#), U.S. Department of Defense
- [Things to Consider When Choosing a Military Branch to Join](#), Sandboxx
- [Air Force Careers](#)
 - [Space Force Careers](#)
- [Army Careers](#)
- [Coast Guard Careers](#)
- [Marine Corps Careers](#)
- [Navy Careers](#)
- [U.S. Military Careers](#), LiveAbout.com
- [Full and Part Time Options](#), U.S. Department of Defense
- [Enlisted and Officer Paths](#), U.S. Department of Defense

Benefits

- [Careers and Benefits](#), U.S. Department of Defense
- [Salary and Compensation](#), U.S. Department of Defense
- [Military Pay Charts](#), MilitaryRates.com
- [10 Benefits of Joining the Military After High School](#), Operation Military Kids

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Test

- [What is the ASVAB Test?](#), U.S. Army
- [ASVAB Fact Sheet](#)
- [ASVAB Career Exploration Program](#)
- [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery \(ASVAB\) Practice Test](#)

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El paquete de herramientas de preparación universitaria y profesional es una iniciativa del Maryland Out of School Time Network. Para obtener más información y encontrar más recursos, visite www.mostnetwork.org/initiatives/CCR

Unit 6:

College Readiness



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1) COLLEGE AWARENESS



Attending college after high school is still considered the most traditional post-secondary pathway for many students, and many, if not most, careers require some level of college education. According to a Georgetown University study, 65 percent of all jobs in the economy will require post-secondary education and training beyond high school by 2020 (Carnevale, et al, "Recovery" 3). Of the estimated 55 million job openings in 2020, "35 percent of job openings will require at least a bachelor's degree; 30 percent of the job openings will require some college or an associate's degree; 36 percent of the job openings will not require education beyond high school" (Carnevale, et al, "Recovery" 5).

Early awareness of college and education on the variety of options is necessary to ensure post-secondary and college success for students. Working with students (and families) beginning as early as fifth grade to gain information, skills, and resources needed to successfully participate in higher education has become more of a focus in recent years and is a strategy that OST programs can employ to support student success.

The primary goal of early awareness activities and college readiness initiatives is to create the expectation for all students that they can, and will, go to college and to help prepare them with the information and resources necessary to get there. Early college awareness activities and strategies should be designed to educate youth and families on types of college experiences and prepare them for college selection, admissions, financial aid, and what to expect. Beginning

as early as possible with college awareness activities and education increases the likelihood that students will be prepared when the time comes to begin actively pursuing post-secondary options. It is important to begin integrating college awareness into programs and education as early as elementary school for students because in middle school they will, in many cases, begin making choices that start them down the path toward college.

College awareness becomes even more important when working with low-income or first generation students because oftentimes these students lack the awareness of the “costs of college, the availability of student aid, the job market, or the economic gains of college attendance. When low-income students aren’t fully aware of the benefits of college or the availability of resources to help them complete college, they already start further behind on the path to college than their higher-income peers” (Glaser and Warick 4). Check out the resources below to learn more:



- [The Potential of Career and College Readiness Exploration in Afterschool Programs](#), American Youth Policy Forum
- [What Does the Research Say about Early Awareness Strategies for College Access and Success?](#), National College Access Network
- [Benefits of Promoting College Awareness for Low Income Middle and High School Students](#), California State University, Monterey Bay Capstone Projects and Master’s Theses

HOW TO PROMOTE COLLEGE AWARENESS IN YOUR OST PROGRAM

1. Develop partnerships with local colleges and universities.

Developing partnerships with local community colleges and universities can help you learn more about the college experience and related processes to be able to pass on that information to students and families. These partnerships may also lead to the development of opportunities to benefit youth directly such as tours, shadowing opportunities, and even college credit. Having staff from your organization serve on committees or advisory groups at local institutions is a great way to get more involved in the college community in order to benefit your families.

2. Design activities for youth and their families related to college awareness.

Organize workshops, events, and activities that include both students and their families to engage them in the college planning process together. Plan activities to inform families about the variety of college experiences, affordability, scholarships

HOW TO PROMOTE COLLEGE AWARENESS IN YOUR OST PROGRAM

and financial aid opportunities and processes, and how to make the most of high school in preparation for college. Integrate specific college awareness activities into your curriculum. See the “Guiding Youth Through College and Career Decisions” section of this toolkit and the resources listed below under “General College Awareness Resources” for specific college awareness activities you can implement.

3. Create opportunities to experience college.

Experiences such as college visits and campus tours, shadowing a college student, and sitting in on college classes will be beneficial in the college awareness process to help students envision themselves as college-going. Hosting a panel of current college students to share information about their college experiences and the importance of preparation can also be worthwhile.

4. Provide financial literacy education for youth and families.

You can help demystify the options for paying for college by hosting financial literacy and financial aid events and activities for youth and their families. Invite experts to present financial planning information, build a resource library for scholarships and aid information and opportunities, build financial literacy activities into your program, and connect families to college financial aid directors and advisors.

5. Offer help with the college application process.

Providing assistance to students and families in the actual college application process as well as applying for scholarships, loans, and grants would be a huge help. Building these activities and processes into your program can also be hugely beneficial. This could also be designed as more of a concentrated effort to occur during a College Application Week or similar. Recruiting volunteers who have experience with the process would help in off-setting the workload and allow you to potentially help more people in this process.

**This list was adapted from [Oregon GEAR UP “Raising Awareness”](#)*

General College Awareness Resources

The following resources contain information and specific activities that can be used to design your curriculum, program, or events to support college awareness with your students and families.

- [College Advising Essentials](#), College Board
- [College & Career Planning Support for Educators](#), College Board
- [College & Career Planning Support for Families](#), College Board
- [College Basics](#), College Board
- [College Awareness Games and Activities](#), Oregon GearUP
- [My Future, My Way: First Steps Toward College, A Workbook for Middle and Junior High School Students](#), Federal Student Aid
- [About College](#), CareerOneStop
- [College U: College Curriculum for Middle School](#), NYC DoE
- [Family U: Middle School Curriculum](#), NYC DoE
- [Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning for Families, Counselors and Communities](#), National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
 - Includes Middle School Curriculum, Early High School Curriculum, Late High School Curriculum, and Parent / Guardian Workshops
 - [Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning Elementary School Curriculum](#), NACAC
- [Early College Awareness Activities: Bringing Higher Education to Younger Students](#), EverFi
- [Unit: Exploring College Options](#), Khan Academy
- [College 411: A Student Guide to Higher Education and Financial Aid in Maryland](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- [College Knowledge Games and Activities](#), GearUP Washington
- [The ABCs of College Posters](#), Oregon GEAR UP
- [Help Your Child Make College a Reality: A Family Guide to College Planning](#), College Board
- [Career / College Planning Guide](#), Howard County Public Schools
- [College Preparation Checklist](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [Way to Be Magazine 2022](#), Maryland Business Roundtable
 - [2021 Edition](#)
 - [Mobile App](#)



2) FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS



A 2010 study, conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, estimated that nearly 50 percent of those attending college were students whose parents did not graduate from college. Research shows that those students whose parents have only earned a high school diploma are significantly less likely to graduate from college than their peers whose parents earned at least a bachelor's degree ("First Gen. College Student Opportunities..."). Only 9 percent of students from low-income families earn a bachelor's degree by age 24, compared to 77 percent from high-income families ("Statistics for First Gen. College Students"). However, those first-generation students who do graduate from college report positive outcomes throughout their college experience and into their careers ("First Gen. College Student Opportunities...").

First-generation college students can be from low-income families or middle- or high-income families without college-going parents. Some of these students have parental support for their higher education plans and others are under pressure to enter the workforce upon high school graduation. These students are often unaware of their higher education options and may have a lot of misinformation about what college is like, whether or not it is for them, and its costs ("First-Generation Students").

First-generation college students face a number of barriers. For starters, they have to make it to college, and the pathway can begin as early as middle school by learning about the available options, exploring careers of interest, and getting serious about academics in high school. However, once they reach college, even more barriers await them as they are often lacking college readiness, financial stability, familial support, and self-esteem (Falcon). You can read more about the challenges facing first-generation college students in the following resources:

- [Challenges for First-Generation College Students: A Firsthand Account and Expert Advice for Overcoming Them](#), Peterson's
- [First Gen Challenges and Triumphs](#), Huffington Post
- [The Challenge of the First-Generation Student](#), The Chronicle of Higher Education
- [Breaking Down Barriers: First-Generation College Students and College Success](#), League for Innovation in the Community College
- [5 Big Challenges for First Generation College Students](#), verywellfamily.com
- [Understanding the Challenges Facing First-Generation College Students](#), Faculty Focus

HOW TO HELP PREPARE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

1. Identify your first-generation youth early to begin talking with them and their families about their options and how to navigate the options as they are early in their high school career.

2. Involve the family in researching colleges and universities, specific careers of interest, and financial support.

3. Offer additional help when it comes to college searches, selection, and application. Help explain terminology to youth and their families that may be unfamiliar and help guide them to finding a good fit.

4. Provide opportunities to learn more about the college experience through field trips and school visits, mentors or guest speakers who have gone to college (bonus if they were a first-generation college student themselves!), or near-peer partners with first-generation students who are alums of your program or from your community.

5. Work with schools and other organizations to find opportunities and support these youth and their families throughout the process.

First-Generation Student Resources

- [Defining First-Generation](#), Center for First-Generation Student Success
- [Prepping first-gen college students begins in high school](#), EducationDive
- [College Prep for First-Generation Students](#), Edutopia
- [First Generation Foundation](#)
 - Connecting first-generation students to colleges and universities and organizations dedicated to helping 1st Gen students succeed
- [Rise First](#)
 - An online community for first-generation student achievement
- [First-Generation College Students](#), Towson University
 - Note: most colleges and universities in Maryland have similar resources for their first-gen students
- [40 Great Scholarships for First-Generation College Students](#), Great Value Colleges
- [Collegiate Directions](#) (Bethesda, MD)
 - A non-profit organization committed to closing the education, achievement, and opportunity gap for low-income, primarily first generation students
- [First Generation College Bound](#), Inc (Prince George's County, MD)
 - A grassroots organization whose mission is to increase the participation of low- and moderate-income youth in higher education, particularly first-generation college students
- [How to Succeed as a First-Generation College Student](#), Pearson
- [I'm First](#)
 - An online community for first-generation college students, and their supporters.



3) SUPPORTING DACA RECIPIENTS AND “DREAMERS”



Created during the Obama administration, **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** is a U.S. immigration policy that provides temporary relief from deportation (deferred action) and work authorization to certain, young, undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children. There have been nearly 800,000 DACA recipients who have been enabled to work lawfully, attend school, and plan their lives without the threat of deportation (American Immigration Council). DACA does not provide permanent legal status, must be renewed every two years, and does not offer a pathway to citizenship for those who are eligible.

In 2017, the Trump administration attempted to rescind the DACA program and was challenged by U.S. district courts in California, New York, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The Supreme Court agreed to review the challenges of these courts and, in June 2020, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that the Trump administration's attempt to terminate DACA was unlawful, citing that the administration failed to properly explain its decision or consider alternatives to a full rescission of the program and was in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (American Immigration Council). Following this decision and a federal court order, DACA was technically reinstated. However, a new memorandum, issued June 28, 2020 has made significant changes to DACA, and as a result, renewals will need to be done

annually instead of every two years for existing DACA recipients, pending and future first-time DACA applications will be rejected, and the initiative is being reviewed and reconsidered in its entirety (American Immigration Council).

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minorities Act (DREAM Act) was first introduced in 2001, and gave us the term “DREAMers” for young, undocumented immigrants. With a goal of providing a pathway to legal status for undocumented young people who came to the United States as children, at least ten versions of The DREAM Act have been introduced in Congress since 2001, with bipartisan support for each, yet none has become law. The most recent proposal,

The American Dream and Promise Act of 2019, would provide current, former, and future undocumented high-school graduates and GED recipients a pathway to U.S. citizenship via college, employment, or service in the Armed Forces.

For more information on DACA and related news, check out these resources:

- [What is DACA and Who are the DREAMers?](#), Anti-Defamation League, June 2020
- [What is DACA? And Where Does it Stand Now?](#), New York Times, July 2020
- [The Dream Act: An Overview](#), American Immigration Council, August 2020
- [DACA, Explained](#) (Video), Vox, September 2017

“DREAMers” and College

Colleges and universities hold their own policies about admission of undocumented students, some deny admission, while others allow it. However, the cost of attending can be prohibitive because these students are ineligible for federal aid and if students are unable to prove legal residency in a state, they are often charged the out-of-state or international-student tuition rates. To help make college more accessible and affordable to undocumented students, 19 states (including Maryland) have passed legislation that offers the opportunity to receive in-state tuition. Maryland residents are eligible for in-state public tuition rates regardless of immigration status, provided they meet certain criteria.



Maryland law (SB 167) requires students to first attend a community college prior to qualifying for in-state tuition at a four-year institution. **To qualify for in-state tuition at a community college, students must meet the following conditions:**

1. Attended a Maryland secondary school for a least three years
2. Graduated from a Maryland high school or received a GED
3. Register at a MD community college within 4 years of high school graduation or receiving GED
4. Provide documentation that the student or the student's parent or legal guardian has filed a Maryland income tax return annually for three years the individual attended a high school in the State

To qualify for in-state tuition at a four-year college or university, a student must earn an associate's degree or complete 60 credits at a Maryland community college before transferring. The student must also meet the following conditions ("Maryland Enacted Legislation..."):

1. Meet all other conditions for in-state tuition eligibility at community colleges
2. Sign an affidavit stating that they will apply for permanent residency within 30 days of becoming eligible
3. Register at a public four-year institution within four years of finishing a community college degree (or 60 credits)
4. Provide documentation that the student or the student's parent/legal guardian has filed a Maryland income tax return annually since the student entered community college.

Unaccompanied Minors and Refugee Youth

Families often flee to the United States to seek political asylum and escape violence and oppression in their home countries and are considered to be refugees. In recent years, the number of youth under the age of 18 crossing into the U.S. from Central America without their parents has been increasing. These youth, considered "unaccompanied alien children" are often caught by border patrol or the Department of Homeland Security and placed under the care of Health and Human Services. You may encounter youth in either of these categories in your OST program and the following resources provide information on the rights of these youth and how to support them.



- [Supporting Refugee Children and Youth: Tips for Educators](#), National Association of School Psychologists
- [Unaccompanied Children in Schools: What You Need to Know](#), Colorin Colorado
- [Information on the Rights of Unaccompanied Children to Enroll in School](#), U.S. Department of Education
- [Financial Aid and Undocumented Students](#), U.S. Dept. of Education
- [Across the Border and Into School](#), The Atlantic
- [Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff](#), Learning for Justice



COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

- [Tangible Support for Immigrant Communities During COVID-19](#), ImmigrantsRising.org
- [Maryland Resources for Immigrants During the Coronavirus Crisis](#), Informed Immigrant
- [COVID-19 Resource Page](#), Justice for Immigrants

WAYS TO SUPPORT UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH

1. Be aware that youth in your program may be undocumented.
2. Understand DACA and be knowledgeable about the program and current requirements.
3. Ensure your staff are familiar with the options available to DREAMers in their pursuit of college and career.
4. Connect youth to resources (those listed below are a good starting point).
5. Engage families in the process as much as possible through resources (see below) and events.
6. Keep a file of resources on hand to give to students or families as needed.
7. Utilize translation services to ensure clear communication with youth and families.
8. Make it known in your community that you are a safe place for resources and programs for immigrant and undocumented youth and families.



Using Translation Services

As a support to undocumented youth in your programs and their families, as well as those with Limited English Proficiency, it is recommended to use a translator to ensure clear communication between your program and families. Communication with families in languages they understand creates a welcoming community, fosters a strong relationship between the program and families, and enables families to be active participants in their child's education and development, all of which provide a solid foundation for student success.

If you are able to find a translator in the community, that may be best because they may already know the family and be invested in the relationship you are trying to build and maintain. However, you may not be able to find a translator in your immediate community. The following resources will help you find a translator to work with and learn more about what to expect when working with a translator or interpreter.

Translation Resources:

- [Collaborating with Interpreters](#), American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- [National Language Service Corps](#)
- [National Virtual Translation Center](#)
- [Maryland Interpreters and Translators](#), Interpreters Unlimited
- [Directory of Translators and Interpreters](#), American Translators Association
- [Tools and Resources for Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](#), U.S Department of Education
 - [Page 8 of this resource](#) contains a list of federal resources, more information on translation and interpretation services, and national organizations and associations for both.
- Additionally, each school system in Maryland offers some type of translation services that you may be able to tap into. You can find them by conducting an Internet search for your county and “translation services for school” or contacting the local school system directly.



Resources to Support Undocumented Youth

According to [TheDream.us](#), there are **1,300,000 undocumented youth eligible for DACA** and of those 98,000 graduate from high school. However, only 5-10% of those graduates enroll in college because they get no federal aid. Here is an extensive list of resources that OST programs can use to help support undocumented youth on their college and career journey.

- [How Afterschool Programs can Support their Immigrant Students, Families, and Community](#), Afterschool Alliance, 2017
- [Career Readiness for Undocumented Students](#), UCI Division of CareerPathways
- [Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth](#), U.S. Department of Education, 2015
- [College Guide for DACA & Undocumented Students](#), BestColleges.com
- [List of Scholarships & Fellowships](#) that don't require proof of citizenship or legal permanent residency via ImmigrantsRising.org
- [English Learner Tool Kit](#), U.S. Department of Education
- [Scholarships for DACA Recipients & Undocumented Students](#), Get Schooled
- [Guide to Online College for Undocumented Students](#), Affordable Colleges Online
- [Income and Career Alternatives for Undocumented Students \(Webinar\)](#), ImmigrantsRising
- [TheDream.US](#)

- The largest college access and success program for DREAMers. Scholarships, resource guides, and more available on their website.
- [Resources](#) - Tons of resources, guides, and information for DREAMers and those who educate and support them.
- [Guide on the Educational Rights of Immigrant Students](#)
- [15 Things Educators Can Do To Protect Undocumented Students and Their Families](#) - 15 concrete things educators, school support staff, and communities can do to help protect undocumented students and their families.
- [Immigrant and Refugee Children - A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff](#) - A guide created for educators, school support staff and service providers who teach, mentor and help open the doors of opportunity for undocumented youth and unaccompanied and refugee children currently living in the United States.
- [Informed Immigrant's Educator Guide](#) to supporting undocumented students and their families
- [Home is Here Educator's Guide](#)
 - A guide for educators in a Post-DACA, Covid-19 crisis world that includes information on what educators can do, ways to take action and a resource library, including lesson plans for grades K-12 for talking to students about the lives of undocumented people.
- [United We Dream](#)
 - The largest immigrant youth-led community in the U.S. aiming to empower people to develop their leadership and organizing skills, and develop youth-led campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels to fight for justice and dignity for immigrants and all people.
 - [UWD #HereToStay Toolkit for Educators](#) - Designed to help undocumented students and educator allies work with their institutions to increase the resources and support systems available to undocumented students.
- [College Advising Guide for Undocumented Students](#), Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling

Maryland-Specific Resources

- [Undocumented Students](#) | Global Maryland, University of Maryland
- [DACA & Maryland DREAM Act](#) | Towson University
- [Undocumented Students Scholarship and Financial Aid Resources](#), Towson University
- [Undocumented Student Resources](#) | Loyola University
- [Resources for Undocumented Students](#) | Salisbury University
- [Attending UMBC as an Undocumented Student](#) | UMBC
- [Financial Aid and Scholarships - Undocumented Students](#), UMBC



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- [Maryland Higher Ed Immigration Portal](#)
 - MD has passed statewide legislation granting in-state tuition to all undocumented students, this resource provides more information on this

Resources to Support *Families* of Undocumented Youth

Supporting the families of youth in your programs who are undocumented is a crucial component of supporting youth themselves. The more families are in the know about DACA and related issues the more support youth will have as they pursue post-secondary opportunities.



- [Steps to Apply for DACA For the First Time](#), ImmigrantsRising.org
- [Steps to Renew DACA](#), ImmigrantsRising.org
- [Help for Immigrant Families: Guidance for Schools](#), Immigrant Legal Resource Center
- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
 - A government agency who administers the nation's lawful immigration system. A search for "DACA" on this site accesses the latest information on the act and related resources.
- [National Immigration Law Center \(NILC\)](#)
 - One of the leading organizations in the U.S. dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of immigrants with low income. Here is [NILC's DACA Information Page](#)
- [Immigrant Legal Resource Center's DACA information and resources](#)
 - ILRC provides civic engagement opportunities to immigrants, legal assistance, and policy and advocacy to strengthen immigrant communities.
- [National Immigration Legal Services Directory](#)
 - Maryland organizations that can provide a variety of legal services to immigrants
- [CASA](#)
 - An organization working to organize, advocate for, and expand opportunities for Latino and immigrant people in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia through employment placement, workforce development and training, health education, citizenship and legal services, and financial, language, and literacy training.

4) COLLEGE SEARCH



Public vs. Private Colleges and Universities

When searching for colleges of interest, one of the decisions that students will have to make is whether or not they want to attend a public or private institution. The main difference between the two is in how they are funded. Public universities were founded by state governments to bring college education opportunities to their residents and funding is largely provided by state governments. This often results in lower tuition, particularly for in-state students.

Private colleges, however, do not receive state funding and their funding comes from tuition and private donors. Because they don't receive state funding, private institutions generally have higher tuition costs. Each has their benefits and drawbacks and one is not "better" than the other, just a "better" fit for each individual. Check out the video "[Comparing Public vs Private Colleges](#)" to learn more.

Resources on Public vs. Private Colleges and Universities:

- [Public University vs. Private College](#), Petersons
- [How to Choose Between Public or Private College](#), College Raptor
- [Public or Private College? Weigh the Pros and Cons](#), FastWeb
- [Public vs. Private College: Understanding the Differences](#), College Initiative
- [Private Colleges Fact File](#), National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
- [Maryland Private Universities & Colleges](#)
- [Maryland Public Universities & Colleges](#)

COMPARING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
SIZE	Public universities can be quite large, serving an average of 6,445 undergraduate students (Moody, "10 Colleges...").	The average enrollment at private colleges tends to be smaller than public universities, around 1,920 students ("Quick Facts").
TUITION	In 2020-21, the average public university tuition for in-state students was \$10,560 and \$27,020 for out-of-state students ("Trends in College Pricing").	The average cost of tuition at private colleges for the 2020-21 academic year was \$37,650 ("Trends in College Pricing").
DIVERSITY	Public colleges and universities admit higher numbers of in-state students.	Private colleges attract students from all over the country and world.
STUDENT LIFE	Public colleges, that are larger in scale, will offer more social, athletic, and academic activities.	Private colleges will offer student activities but will have fewer options, depending on the size of the school.
CLASS SIZE	Larger class sizes, some as large as 200 students in a lower-level lecture course, will be common at public colleges and universities with larger student bodies.	Smaller class sizes commonly found at private colleges offer easier access to professors and more student participation.
DEGREE OFFERINGS	The degrees and programs offered will be much greater at large, public universities and cover a wider variety of options.	Private colleges generally offer fewer degree and program options and may have a specific focus in their offerings (such as liberal arts or technology and engineering.)

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Recognized as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are defined as “any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation” (“WHIHBCU”).

Did you know that...

- 25% of Black graduates earn their degree at an HBCU
- 50% of Black public school teachers graduate from an HBCU
- 50% of all future Black lawyers graduate from an HBCU
- 80% of all Black judges graduated from an HBCU
- 38% of all Black healthcare professionals graduated from an HBCU
- 41% of all degrees in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) were earned by Black students who graduated from an HBCU (“What is an HBCU?”)



Click [HERE](#) to see
a map of all the
HBCUs in the country!

Following the Civil War, these institutions were established to meet the educational needs of Black students who had previously been refused access to higher education. More than 100 HBCUs exist across 19 states in the U.S., the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands and still play a very important role in modern society. Elwood L. Robinson, Chancellor of Winston-Salem State University, has stated, “Our value is in the ‘HBCU experience.’ We provide a culture of caring—a culture that prepares students to contribute to their communities, a culture that builds confidence and that gives them the essential skills they need to cultivate a career. That is a culture that is good for everyone and can help bridge the academic achievement gap that exists in America today” (“The History of HCBUs”). Though their original mission was to provide educational opportunities for Black students, HBCUs have served students regardless of their race, ethnicity, or economic status.

HBCU First houses a list of every HBCU by state that includes links to the school’s website, video about the school, student testimonials, and more. The links below are more resources to learn more about HBCUs!

- ◇ [What is an HBCU & Why Are They Important?](#), Affordable Colleges Online
- ◇ [Why America Needs its HBCUs](#), The Atlantic
- ◇ [HBCUs](#), Blackout Coalition
- ◇ [The Hundred-Seven](#)

- ◇ [White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#), U.S. Department of Education
- ◇ [HBCU First](#)
- ◇ [HBCU Lifestyle](#)



International Universities

Studying internationally for all or part of one's college experience might be of interest to your students. International universities are funded by the governments of many countries, controlled by those governments, and formed by regional and international organizations. Public international universities have a specific designation as such issued by the [International Association of Universities](#) (IAU). International study, no matter what form it takes, can provide a lot of value and richness in one's college experience, but should not be considered lightly.



Opportunities offered by these institutions often come in the form of study abroad programs, but they also offer full degree programs where students would enroll full-time at an international university. While these two options may seem similar, they are actually quite different. An article from U.S. News, [3 Differences Between Studying Abroad, Pursuing a Degree Overseas](#), highlights some key differences that students should factor in when considering international study experiences:

- ▶ **Curriculum:** Curriculum designed as part of a study abroad program, where U.S. students would be attending school internationally for a semester or year, are often designed by the home college, not the international university. When pursuing a degree abroad, the curriculum may not adhere to U.S. standards (not because it is inferior) and may be more targeted toward a specific major rather than focusing on general education requirements.
- ▶ **Sociocultural Experience:** Short term study abroad programs are designed primarily for U.S. students and may not offer as culturally immersive an experience as spending a few years living in another country completing a degree program at an international university.
- ▶ **Cost:** Study abroad programs vary in cost depending on the inclusivity of the package being offered and the cost of living in the host country. Pursuing an international degree may actually be less expensive than the same degree at an American university, as many international schools have lower tuition costs than their American counterparts. However, airfare and travel costs back and forth to the U.S., lodging, food, and entertainment are all additional costs that would need to be factored into a multi-year program abroad.

Resources on International Study:

- [International Association of Universities](#)
- [U.S. Students Who Should Weigh a Degree Abroad](#), U.S. News
- [4 Ways to Narrow an International College Search](#), U.S. News
- [Best Global Universities](#), U.S. News
- [Most Popular International Universities Among U.S. Students](#), CollegeChoice.net

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- [Generation Study Abroad Initiative](#), Institute of International Education
 - [Passport Study Abroad](#) - an online directory of Study Abroad programs, Institute of International Education
 - [Study International](#)
 - [Foreign Universities vs. U.S. Colleges: What You Need to Know](#), College Express

Community Colleges

Community colleges (sometimes known as junior colleges) are higher education institutions that offer affordable educational opportunities to students. Most community colleges offer associate degrees as the highest level of education, but they also offer certifications and job training for continuous education. Many students choose to attend community college following high school before transferring to a 4-year college or university to pursue a bachelor's degree.

The biggest differences between community colleges and 4-year colleges and universities are the types of degree programs offered and that nearly all community colleges are 'open-access' which means that they accept nearly all applicants. Community college students tend to be older as a result of the certification and continuous education training programs offered and many students are attending school on a part-time basis. Additionally community colleges typically do not offer any on-campus housing or living facilities, meaning most students are commuting to campus.

On the next page, you will find a graphic comparing the benefits and drawbacks of attending a community college. As always, this option will work better for some students, but might not be the right choice for others!

Resources on Community Colleges:

- [Maryland Community Colleges](#)
- [American Association of Community Colleges](#)
- [Reasons to Consider Community College](#), U.S. News
- [Everything You Need to Know about Community Colleges](#), U.S. News
- [Community Colleges: FAQs](#), College Board
- [Pros and Cons of Community Colleges](#), Scholarships.com
- [7 Pros and Cons of Community College, From Cost to Classes to Campus Social Life](#), Huffington Post
- [Why Starting at a Community College is Better \(And Why It's Not\)](#), Forbes



Benefits to Community College

Cost of Tuition: Tuition costs at most community colleges are less expensive than tuition at a 4-year college or university. This can be a major benefit if a student is unsure what they'd like to study or can't afford a 4-year school right out of high school.

Flexible Schedule: For students who plan on working while attending college, community colleges often offer the most flexibility in class schedules to accommodate working individuals.

Opportunity to Explore Majors: Not all students will know what major they'd like to pursue in college when they graduate high school. Attending community college and trying out a variety of classes in different majors is a much less expensive option than doing the same at a 4-year college or wasting money on a major they're not really interested in. Attending community college allows students more time to select the career and continuing education path that is a good fit for them.

Smaller Class Size: Class sizes are typically smaller at a community college than larger, public universities. This could be a great advantage to those students who need more face-time with professors and instructors or more support in a classroom. This also means that instructors have more opportunity to learn more about their students and more class participation.

Qualified Instructors: Community colleges offer a mix of less experienced instructors who are eagerly beginning their careers and those who have longer, more impressive resumes. A major difference among the teaching staff at a community college versus a 4-year college or university is that they are focused on teaching rather than research.

Drawbacks to Community College

Limited Degree Options: Typically community colleges only offer degrees as high as an associate degree, in addition to certificates and other professional training. If students are seeking a bachelor's degree or higher, they will have to transfer to a 4-year college or university.

Lack of Campus Life Activities: Since community colleges are typically smaller schools with a large commuter population, their campus life activities are often limited. Some clubs and organizations exist on community college campuses, but it is far less than one would find at a 4-year university.

COLLEGE MATCHMAKING

Researching and selecting a college or university that's a good fit for you is a challenging and overwhelming task for students to undertake. There are some really helpful tools and processes that have been developed to help students along the way and assist them in picking a school that will be best for them.

START
HERE

[Quick Guide: Starting Your College Search](#), College Board

There are thousands of colleges and universities students can choose from. This guide aids students in the initial phases of their search and includes information on everything from talking to your family about their experiences and thoughts to visiting a campus to get a sense of what college looks and feels like.

STEP
2

[College Search Step-by-Step](#), College Board

This interactive guide leads students through a series of questions on topics related to college choice including kinds of colleges, location, campus setting, cost, majors, and learning environment. After responding to the questions, the tool generates a College Snapshot that provides a summary of responses and suggestions for what to do next based on the results.

STEP
3

[BigFuture College Search Tool](#), College Board

This tool is a free college planning tool that helps students research and make decisions about college from their first thoughts about college all the way through their first day on campus. The tool was created with input from college admissions officers, college counselors, families, and students in order to provide the information and guidance necessary to successfully move through the college planning and application process.

Using the output from the College Matchmaking search guide on the previous page, students can then complete a more comprehensive search and conduct deeper research to find out more information about schools they might be interested in. This tool provides information on test scores and selectivity, type of school, location, campus and housing, majors and learning environments, sports and activities, academic credit, paying, additional support programs, and diversity.

COLLEGE FAIRS

Attending college fairs is a great way to learn more about the wide variety of colleges and universities available and to practice conducting school research. As an OST program, you can organize visits to college fairs and help students find virtual college fairs to participate in. You could even organize an in-person or virtual college fair for your students to expose them to the options available to them. Use the [College Fair Questions Student Resource](#) to help students become familiar with and practice the questions they should ask of college representatives.

The following resources will further help with college fair preparation:

- [College Fair Checklist](#), College Board
- [How to Prepare for College Fairs](#), College Board
- [Three Steps to Making the Most of a Virtual College Fair](#), Common App
- [Virtual College Fair Events](#), NACAC
- [Organizing a College Fair](#), College Board



Resources for College Matchmaking

- [Student Search Services](#), College Board
- [How Do You Choose a Career College?](#), Petersons
- [Academic Program Inventory](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
 - Search for programs offered at colleges and universities in Maryland
- [BigFuture Live](#), College Board
 - Virtual events where career experts and college reps will answer your questions about taking the best first step after high school
- [The Best College Planning Apps for Teens in High School](#), Parenting Teens & Tweens

COLLEGE VISITS

In these digital times we live in, it can be tempting to skip the traditional in-person college visits for any number of reasons. However, this is still an important part of the college search process that should not be skipped, if possible.

Exploring a college campus physically can tell someone a lot about the school they may not otherwise learn. Virtual campus tours have become very popular and can be used to give students a general feel of college campuses across the country. Virtual campus tours would also be a great tool for narrowing down a student's options by visiting schools virtually and deciding if they are interested in visiting in-person.

How to Help Youth Prepare for College Visits

1. Prior to scheduling any in-person visits, have students conduct virtual campus tours of the colleges and universities they are most interested in. Use the [Virtual Campus Tour Summary](#) to help them organize their research.
2. Watch this video, [What to Look For In a College Visit](#), to give students an idea of what to look for when they visit colleges.
3. Once students have scheduled in-person college visits, review the [College Visit Guide](#) with students to help prepare them for a college visit.
4. Then, share the [College Visit Checklist & Summary](#) with students and help them identify all of the "must-do" activities and research during their visit.
 - Alternatively, you can use the [Campus Visit Scorecard](#) from College Board.
5. Invite students to reflect on their college visit and share with the group what they've learned and about their experience.



Resources for College Visits

- [The Importance of the College Visit](#), College Transitions
- [Campus Exploration Activity Checklist](#), YouthBuild
- [Tips for an Effective College Visit](#), U.S. News
- [Get the Most Out of Your College Visits](#), The Princeton Review
- [Campus Visits: Before You Go](#), College Board
- [Campus Visit Checklist](#), College Board
- [Campus Visit Scorecard](#), College Board
- [Planning for College Tours - Tips for Students with Health Conditions and Physical Disabilities](#), Accessible College

Resources for *Virtual* College Visits

- [ECampus Tours](#)
- [Virtual Tours](#), Princeton Review
- [Campus Tours](#)
- [How to Choose Colleges with Virtual Tours](#), New York Times
- [How to Make the Most of Virtual College Tours](#), U.S. News
- [How to Plan Your Virtual College Visits](#), Lifehacker
- [Virtual College Tour Scavenger Hunt](#), Brilliant Pathways
- [Go On a Virtual College Visit](#), ACT
- [Assessing Virtual College Tours for Students with Physical Disabilities & Health Conditions](#), Accessible College



COLLEGE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

There's no question that the cost of attending college is quite an investment and, as with any investment, it is important to ask what the return on investment is or, in other words, if you're getting what you pay for. Families and students are increasingly concerned about the return on investment, or ROI, for pursuing a college education. Understanding how much a degree will cost you for a specific major at a specific school, how that cost compares to the salary you will earn in the career you pursue, and whether or not those costs make financial sense is a smart consideration all students should be taking into account as part of their college search. This consideration can be as simple as figuring out how much money one would earn in their desired career and then deciding how much they'd be willing to spend to prepare for that career. For example, pursuing a degree at a \$150,000 private college to become a teacher making a \$35,000 salary probably does not make much financial sense.



Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce ranked the ROI of 4,500 U.S. colleges and universities and found that "bachelor's degrees from private colleges, on average, have higher ROI than degrees from public colleges 40 years after enrollment. Community colleges and many certificate programs have the highest returns in the short term, 10 years after enrollment, though returns from bachelor's degrees eventually overtake those of most two-year credentials" ("Ranking ROI...").

Calculating College Return on Investment (ROI)

The article, ["College ROI Calculator: How to Determine Your Degree's Return on Investment,"](#) identifies a four-step process to figuring out the ROI on a college investment:

1. Evaluate whether or not a degree is necessary. While controversial, a degree may not be required for a student's desired career path. Knowing this and knowing that the alternative path to that career is can save thousands of dollars.
2. Research career starting salaries. It is crucial to know how much money is typically earned when starting a new career so that informed decisions can be made about college education. This is a critical step in the college search process.
3. Compare starting salary to college costs. Deciding how much one is willing to spend on a college education can (and should) be a huge deciding factor in the college search process and should be based on the knowledge of their desired career's starting salary.
4. Find the most affordable path. Taking the time to compare schools, degree programs, and costs is the second most important step in this process. With a little time and research, students will likely be able to find a program at a price they're willing to pay.

Resources on College ROI:

- [A First Try at ROI: Ranking 4,500 Colleges](#), Georgetown University
- [Colleges with the Best ROI](#), BestColleges.com
- [College Tuition vs Investing: Is it Worth It?](#), Investopedia
- [Colleges with the Best Return on Investment](#), U.S. News
- [How to Calculate Your College Education ROI](#), Forbes
- [How to Calculate Your Degree's Return on Investment](#), Pearson
- [College ROI: 6 Tools to Gauge the Return on Your Degree](#), Credible
- [Colleges with the Best ROI](#), Credible



COVID-19 RESOURCES RELEVANT TO COLLEGE

As with most things, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting closures have had an impact on the processes and procedures related to college. Many schools have moved to remote learning environments, application and testing processes have been disrupted, and in-person college visits are likely not taking place. At the time of publication, we are still very much living through the pandemic and have not yet seen all the ways that this will impact the college search, application, and attendance experiences. The following resources are relevant at this time:

- [Coronavirus Updates](#), College Board
 - Regular updates on all College Board programs (SAT, AP, etc.) impacted by COVID-19
- [Relief and Assistance: COVID-19 Resources for Students](#), Rise First
 - This page serves as a consolidated directory of resources offered by businesses, organizations, universities, and people in response to the devastating effects of COVID-19 on first-generation and/or low-income college students across the country.
- [COVID-19 Blog: FGLI COVID-19 Stories](#), Rise First
 - COVID-19 has greatly impacted many people around the world, especially first-generation and/or low-income (FGLI) students. With this special edition COVID-19 blog initiative, Rise First hopes to achieve three key objectives:
 1. Raise awareness of the challenges FGLI students are experiencing during this unprecedented crisis,
 2. Provide a platform for FGLI students to share their stories,
 3. Offer support to the best of our ability (through financial assistance and a curated COVID-19 resources list)
- [5 Ways the COVID-19 Pandemic Could Affect Your College Application](#), The Conversation
- [Resources Students Need During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), CollegeXpress
- LISTEN: [How Coronavirus Has Upended College Admissions](#), NPR

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Dual enrollment is a program that provides the opportunity for high school students to take college-level courses and earn college credit alongside their high school requirements. These programs have become a popular way for students to explore college before their high school graduation. Dual enrollment programs often exist as a partnership between local area high schools and nearby community colleges and usually include discounted tuition for a limited number of courses.



In Maryland, dual enrollment programs offer at least a 25 percent discount for up to four courses, sometimes as much as 50 percent or 100 percent depending on the county, and students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) receive a 100 percent discount, statewide ("College in High School"). Courses in these programs may be offered on the college campus, at the student's high school, or online.

According to a 2011 survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 53 percent of credit-bearing institutions surveyed offered dual enrollment programs in the 2010-11 academic year and reported approximately 1,277,100 high school students participating in a dual enrollment program (Marken, et al 3). Additionally, 82 percent of high schools reported that students were enrolled in dual credit courses and 69 percent were enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses (Thomas, et al 3).

Dual enrollment programs provide many potential benefits to those students who participate. Some of those benefits include:

- Less time required after high school to finish a college degree
- Provides students with a head start on the college experience
- Dual-enrollment classes often save students money on tuition
- Students may enjoy access to college library and resources
- Grades earned become part of the student's permanent transcript
- Students may be able to transfer credits earned to a four-year school
- Classes may offer a lower ratio of students to instructors
- Students may explore fields of study that help them choose a major later
- Students may choose from classes not currently available at their high school (Chen)

How to Support Youth in Pursuing Dual Credit

1) Be a Source of Information: Provide information to high school students participating in your programs about dual enrollment opportunities available to them. If there are costs associated, seek sponsorships and grants that will allow them to participate. In many cases, there is no tuition charge for high school students participating in the dual enrollment program.

-
- All school districts in Maryland offer a dual enrollment opportunity for upper high school students. Search on the school district name and dual enrollment to learn more about opportunities in each jurisdiction.
 - Resources for helping students explore dual enrollment opportunities in Maryland:
 - [College in High School: Dual Enrollment Opportunities in Maryland](#), Maryland Association of Community Colleges
 - [Dual Enrollment & Early College](#), University of Baltimore

2) Develop a Dual Enrollment / Credit-Earning Program: OST Programs can develop dual enrollment and college credit earning opportunities in partnership with colleges and universities. If you are serving high school youth and have developed a robust curriculum that could align to course work and majors offered at a local college, you may be able to establish a partnership that would allow students participating in your program to earn college credit for their work. If this is of interest to your organization, here are some steps you can take to get started:

1. Research the coursework and majors offered by the college or university and look for areas of alignment with the curriculum your program offers. Specialized programs that focus on technical and career skills have the greatest opportunity for overlap.
2. Reach out to the college through their Dual Enrollment / Early College Office, if the school has one. If not try the Admissions Department or Community Engagement. You may also want to talk directly with a contact at the school who may have influence in a particular department.
 - Make the case that your dual enrollment program will serve as a recruitment tool for the college.
3. Consider the following:
 - Does your program have an academic focus? Is it more skills / CTE based?
 - What are your targets for enrollment? What is your plan to recruit students and retain students throughout the course of the program to meet those targets?
 - What are the minimum requirements to earn credit and do these match the college's expectations?
 - What will the costs be for your students?
 - What is your budget for this program? How will you fund this program? Can this be subsidized by the school district?
 - Do you have space within your building for this program to take place? If not, where will it be held?
 - What administrative support will this program require? What staff support will this program require? Do you have existing staff who can manage this program?
 - How will credits be issued? Will credits be transferable or only applicable at the partner institution? Will credits be awarded upon completion or only once a student is enrolled?
 - For the contract / MOU, what are your responsibilities and deliverables? What are the responsibilities and deliverables of the partner college?



More Resources on Dual Enrollment:

- [Dual Enrollment in Maryland and Baltimore City: An Examination of Program Components and Design](#), Abell Foundation
- [Concurrent Enrollment Offers Students Multiple Benefits](#), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- [What Happens to Students Who Take Community College “Dual Enrollment” Courses in High School?](#), Community College Research Center
- [Dual Enrollment Works. But Who Does it Work For?](#), Diverse Education
- [What is Dual Enrollment? My Experience and Tips for Success](#), College Info Geek

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) CLASSES

Dual enrollment is not the only option available to high school students who are interested in earning college credit. Advanced Placement (AP) programs are also offered in many high schools as options for earning college credit.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are college-level courses offered in a wide variety of subjects made available to high school students within their high school curriculum. At the end of the course, participating students have a chance to take an AP exam in that subject. These tests last 2-3 hours and are scored between 1-5. Colleges and universities may accept AP credit from any of these exams following their own criteria. [Learn About the AP Program](#) from The College Board.



Some of the benefits of taking AP courses are:

- “AP courses offer the opportunity to study a subject in-depth at the college level. This better prepares you for college work.
- If you receive a high enough score on an AP Exam, you may be eligible for credit, advanced placement or both at most colleges in the United States.
- The AP Program offers a number of AP Scholar Awards to students for outstanding performance on AP Exams. If you qualify, colleges will recognize this achievement” (“Learn About AP”).

5 Ways to Support Students in AP Courses

1) Understand how colleges “count” AP courses .

How AP classes count for college credit varies from college to college. Be sure students know ahead of time how colleges and universities of interest issue credit for AP courses as this might influence their decision about what AP classes or how many AP classes to enroll in.

2) Help students determine how many AP courses to take.

The most important part of the AP course is passing the exam. If students are not going to take the exam, then it will serve them better to take an honors level course instead. If students can commit to doing well in the AP class and studying for and doing well on the exam, then AP classes are worth the time and effort they require. A 2013 study from University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, “found almost no difference in the first year GPA for students who took five college-level classes during high school compared with those who took six or more” (Moody, “AP”).



3) Check-in with students about their AP courses.

Checking in regularly with students to see how their courses are going, how their grades are, and what they need additional help with can help them feel like they can be successful in the course and get the help they need. These regular check-ins can also be used to monitor students’ progress and make sure they are on track.

4) Provide homework help and/or mentorship.

Having a dedicated time for students to get specific help with homework or other assignments is a great way to support students in AP courses (and all courses). This will be especially helpful if you are able to connect students with college students, volunteers, or staff who have taken AP courses themselves.

5) Teach study habits

The biggest difference between college level courses (also AP courses) and regular high school courses is knowing how to study and being able to study effectively. Teaching study habits and helping students develop and practice study habits that work for them will be key to a student’s success in AP courses, and college.

Resources on Advanced Placement (AP) Classes:

- [Supporting High School Students in Accelerated Courses](#)
- [How to Support First-Time Advanced Placement Students](#), Education Week
- [How Many AP Classes Should I Take?](#), U.S. News
- [What are AP Classes and Why Should You Take Them?](#), PrepScholar

FAMILY GUIDE TO DUAL CREDIT & ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) OPPORTUNITIES

If you are looking to support parents as they help their children make decisions about their educational pathways in high school, you can do so by sharing information and experiences with them. Whether they are considering dual enrollment or AP classes, this information aims to help them understand and weigh their options.

The [Family Guide: Introduction to Dual Credit Opportunities](#) contains information about both types of credit-bearing programs and the five most important things families should know in order to best support their child and decide if dual credit is right for them.

Dual Enrollment and AP Placement Resources for Families:

- [How to Earn College Credit Through Dual-Enrollment](#), U.S. News
- [Dual Enrollment Programs: The Pros and Cons](#), StudyPoint
- [Are Advanced Placement \(AP\) Classes Worth Your Kid's Time?](#), Medium
- [Parent Resource: Understanding AP \(Advanced Placement\)](#), College Board
- [Why I Regret Letting My Teen Sign Up for an AP Course](#), The Washington Post



5) FINANCIAL PLANNING



Paying for college is a huge financial undertaking and is a challenge for nearly all families and individuals. According to College Board, in 2020-21 the average published tuition and fees for a public four-year college or university range from \$10,560 (in-state) to \$27,020 (out-of-state) and as high as \$37,650 for a private four-year college (“Trends in College Pricing”). While these numbers are startling, this should not dissuade students (or their families) from pursuing a college education if that is the best path for them. Instead, it should motivate them to learn as much as possible about the ways to make college affordable and start planning as soon as possible. The key to being able to afford the increasing cost of college is to establish a plan early and make smart, informed decisions along the way.

Engaging Families in Financial Planning

OST programs can support students and families in their journey to college by providing opportunities for families and students to learn more about financial planning for college, as early as elementary school, through the resources identified in this toolkit or by connecting them to community resources. Hosting events, such as a college financial information session with a local financial advisor could be very beneficial to families as they work their way through this process. The earlier families have support and understand the basics of what it will cost to send their child to college, the more prepared they will be. It is important to provide support and resources to families as well as students so that everyone has similar information and insight and can plan and prepare together.

Student Resource: Financial Planning for College is an accompanying resource for students with similar information to what is found in this section!

ENGAGE FAMILIES IN FINANCIAL PLANNING

◇ **Begin in Middle School**

Financial planning, and college planning in general, begins way earlier than most people think. Beginning when students enter 6th grade, plan activities and events for families centered around topics related financial planning for college.

◇ **Partner with Local Financial Institutions**

Establish a partnership with local banks and financial planners that can co-host events with you to inform parents about the financial aid process and how to plan accordingly. Local banks will typically send a representative to discuss the different types of loans available for college and the pros and cons of each. Take every opportunity to help prepare your families for the long road of college finances.

◇ **Regular Check-Ins**

Find a way to regularly communicate with families to check-in on how they are feeling about finances and preparation for college. Use a text messaging service to make it easy to communicate with families and for them to communicate with you and ask questions or find resources.

◇ **Provide Resources**

Provide resources to families on the topics they are interested in and need support with. These might include budgeting templates, savings calculators, loan information, and more. The tools included in this section are a good starting place. Helping families support their child in developing a budget will be particularly helpful as they navigate college and living life more independently. These resources can also help:

- Track School Expenses with a College Student Budget, Mint
- Creating Your Budget, Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- The Essential Budget Spreadsheet for College Students, PolicyGenius

◇ **Financial Literacy Activities**

Conduct family financial literacy nights where you host families for a few financial literacy activities for the whole family. Refer to the Financial Responsibility section of this toolkit for ideas on specific activities.

◇ **Make Yourself Available**

Being available to your families to answer questions, sit down with them to navigate college websites, or connect them to resources or professionals who can be helpful will make all the difference in terms of building a strong relationship and partnership with your families. Working together with families increases the support students have to make it through the college planning process and will help them be more successful once they arrive.

5 Steps to Financial Awareness for College

1

Know What It Costs

The first and, perhaps, easiest step is figuring out what college will cost for the length of your education. This information is usually readily available on college websites and comparison sites. However, don't forget to include tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation costs into your equation. These will all be recurring costs from semester-to-semester and year-to-year. College Board's Quick Guide: College Costs can help with this step. Additionally, some students may qualify for additional financial support through public benefit programs to cover food, healthcare, and energy costs. For more information about these options, check out the College Affordability Resources from College Board.



2

Be Informed About Salary Potential

Another important, and often overlooked, step is to know what a starting salary is for your desired job. This will take some research and you want to be sure you are looking at starting salary not the earning potential for a given career. Knowing the expected starting salary can help you decide what degree to pursue and which college to attend based on the cost and how much you'll be earning when you graduate. For example, if you want to be a teacher and the starting salary is around \$35,000 a year, it may not make financial sense to attend a college that will cost you \$40,000 when you could attend a different school for less with as good or better credentials and experiences when you're finished.

3

Research and Secure Financial Aid Options

There are many available options for financial aid, from scholarships to grants to work-study programs and student loans. (Pro Tip: You'll want to take as few student loans as possible, if any). Financial aid is available through colleges and universities, private organizations and employers, state governments, and federal funding. This will be the most time consuming step of being financially aware, but could have the biggest payoff. You definitely want to spend the time here to research, apply for, and (hopefully) receive as much money toward college as possible.

4

Establish a Financial Plan

Work with your family, and a financial advisor or financial aid officer if possible, to establish a clear financial plan for paying for college. This should include all costs related to college (see #1), all financial aid amounts, and any contributions you or your family intend to make. Make sure that your financial plan includes information about the starting salary for your desired career and how any debt will be repaid. Start saving as early as possible, if that is part of your financial plan, and definitely spend the time to secure financial aid.

5

Create a Budget

As part of your financial plan, you should create a college budget. The purpose of a college budget is to help students manage the varying costs of tuition and other expenses throughout the year. Carefully planning and sticking to a college budget will help you graduate with less debt. The Create a Budget for College guide from The Balance provides a step-by-step process for setting a college budget and this resource, Track School Expenses with a College Student Budget, from Mint includes a free college budget template that might be helpful.

Calculating Cost and Debt

The most important step in financial planning for college is calculating all the related costs and determining how much debt you will be in upon graduation. There are a number of tools that can help with this part of the process.



What You Need to Know

- Remember, your college experience won't just cost you tuition!
- To get an accurate estimate of the full cost of college, you'll need to factor in the costs of tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation. The [College Costs](#) resource from College Board can help you consider these expenses.
- All of these costs will vary from college to college, which is why it is important to figure this out when you are in the selection process (or before) so that you can make the most financially informed decision possible.
- Once you know the costs associated with obtaining a college degree, you can find ways to save money on most expenses, but if you don't know what you're spending (or going to spend) there's no way to keep track of how much debt you'll accumulate.

- Thanks to financial aid, most students do not usually pay the published price to attend college.
- Focus on the net price for a college. This is the published price for tuition and fees minus your gift aid (grants and scholarships) and education tax benefits. Getting the estimated net price for the colleges you're interested in is the best way to find out early on in the process how much a college will really cost you. Learn more about net price in this College Board resource: [Focus on Net Price, Not Sticker Price](#).
- In their resource, "How to Get the Best Estimate of Your College Costs," College Board recommends figuring out three cost figures to help you decide if you want to further investigate a particular college:
 - **Average Net Price** - This is what a student really pays to go to this particular college. This figure is determined by subtracting any grants or scholarships you may be eligible for from the cost of attendance for the college. For example, a four-year public college has a published, in-state price of \$9,410, but the average net price might be \$3,980 - a huge difference.
 - **Average Percent of Need Met** - Most colleges won't be able to cover 100 percent of your demonstrated financial need, but you can get an idea for what they might be able to cover based on what it has typically offered students in the past.
 - **Average Percent of Gift Aid** - Scholarships and grants are considered 'gift aid', but other types of financial aid are available such as work-study jobs and loans. When you receive financial aid from a college or university, it will be divided among these types of aid. When researching schools, look to see what the average percent of gift aid (grants and scholarships) is to calculate this figure. Remember, a bigger number here is better.

Resources for Calculating Costs and Debt

- [College Cost Calculator](#), College Board
- [College Tuition Compare](#)
- [Loan Payment Calculator](#), FinAid.org
- [Calculator: How Long Will It Take to Pay Off Your Student Loans?](#), NerdWallet
- [Loan Simulator](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [Debt / Salary Wizard](#), Mapping Your Future
- [Net Price Calculator Center](#), U.S. Department of Education



Scholarships

Scholarships are **free money** for college! Unlike a student loan, scholarships are considered 'gift aid' and **do not have to be repaid** after graduation. Scholarships can be used for tuition and fees, but also room and board and textbooks (which can be a hidden expense). Applying for and trying to secure as many scholarships as possible throughout high school and college should be a priority for all students to help make college more affordable.



What You Need to Know

- **There are scholarships for everyone.** This might sound like an exaggeration, but there are scholarships available for all types of activities, hobbies, academic achievements, athletic accomplishments, identities, and interests. Some are restricted to those with high test scores or excellent grades (usually merit-based scholarships) but there are tons of others out there. TIP: Make sure to check with your local delegates and government representatives for scholarships as they are a great source!
- **Scholarships are easier than ever to find.** Thanks to the Internet, finding and applying to tons of scholarships has never been easier. There are many tools and search sites in the resources below that can help you find the best scholarships for you.
- **Start applying early and don't stop!** You want to start applying for scholarships as soon as you know you are going to college. You can apply for some scholarships even before you begin high school. Do not wait until your senior year to start searching for and applying to scholarships. It is most recommended to begin your search during your freshman year of high school. It is also important to continue applying for scholarships through your final semester of college. Yes, you read that correctly, obtaining scholarships before and during your college career will significantly help limit your debt.
- **Don't apply to everything.** Instead of applying to every scholarship you find, focus your time and energy on 3-5 applications per month. Make sure these are scholarships you are genuinely interested in and a good fit for. By reducing the number of scholarships you're working on, you will have more time to revise and submit the strongest application possible and you won't burn out on the process. TIP: Look for scholarships that require more effort and work as they will often have fewer applicants, giving you a better chance of winning.

- **Be creative and original in your applications.** If an essay is required as part of the application, make sure your response is thoughtful, original, and creative. Tell a story and make sure that you respond to the prompt or question completely, without including the prompt directly in your response. More tips for essays that will get the committee's attention can be found in [5 Things Every Student Should Know About Scholarships](#) from MoneySolver.
- **You won't win them all.** Scholarships take a lot of work, but it is work worth doing. Even if you get more rejections than awards, stick with it! The practice of applying over and over will make your applications stronger and make you more comfortable with the process. This is also why it is a good idea to start early because it gives you more time to get good at it.
- **No Federal financial aid?** Though you may not be eligible for Federal financial aid through your FAFSA, you might still be able to secure State financial aid. Check with your state's higher education commission or department. In Maryland, you can visit this link for more information: [MD State Financial Assistance Programs and Applications](#) from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).



Resources for Learning More or Finding SCHOLARSHIPS

- [The Basics on Grants and Scholarships](#), College Board
- [5 Things Every Student Should Know About Scholarships](#), MoneySolver
- [5 Things You Need to Know About the Scholarship Process](#), The Scholarship System
- [Finding and Applying for Scholarships](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [Financial Aid Resources](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- [Scholarship Finder](#), CareerOneStop
- [Maryland Scholarships](#)
- [HBCU Connect Minority Scholarship Program](#), HBCU Connect
- [United Negro College Fund](#)
- [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#)
- [Guide to Scholarships for New Americans and Minorities](#), DFW International
- [40 Great Scholarships for First-Generation College Students](#), Great Value Colleges
- [Financial Aid and Scholarships for Minorities](#), AffordableColleges.com
- [Scholarships for DACA Recipients & Undocumented Students](#), Get Schooled
- [Scholarships for Immigrants and Refugees](#), USAHello

Even More Resources for Learning More or Finding SCHOLARSHIPS

- [MD State Financial Assistance Programs and Applications](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- [Maryland State Delegate Scholarship](#)
- [Maryland State Senatorial Scholarships](#)
- [Scholarships, Grants, and Other Awards in Maryland](#), CollegeScholarships.org
- [Scholarship Search](#), College Board
- [Scholarships](#), FastWeb
- [Scholarships.com](#)
- [Find College Scholarships](#), Niche
- [ScholarshipOwl](#) - Find and apply for scholarships with one application
- [Unigo](#)
- FREE Workshop: [6 Steps to Secure Scholarships for College \(and Avoid Student Loan Debt\)](#), The Scholarship System
- COURSE: [The Search for Scholarships](#), MoonPrep
 - This course is being offered for FREE for a limited time (as of the time of publication) as part of a Planning for College Course Bundle

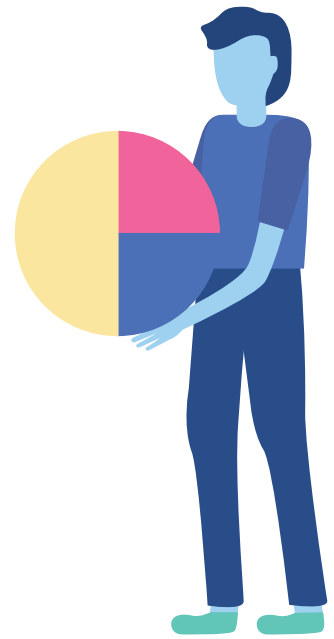


Grants

Grants are another type of 'gift aid' and are also **free money that does not have to be repaid**. Grants can be issued from college or career schools, private or nonprofit organizations, state governments, or the federal government. In most cases, these grants will be awarded by your college or career school as part of your financial aid package.

What You Need to Know

- **Most grants are need-based.** This means that they are awarded based on your or your family's financial situation. At any point, if your financial need is reduced, perhaps by other financial awards, you may no longer qualify for the grant.
- **You will need to complete the FAFSA to qualify for grants.** Because most grants are need-based, you will be required to show evidence of your financial need. Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will provide all the information required to prove your level of need.
- **Grants may have requirements you must meet to maintain eligibility.** These requirements will vary from program to program. In most cases, eligibility requirements include finishing a program you're enrolled in (i.e. earning the degree or certificate), keeping a full-time course load, a reduced need for financial aid, or not fulfilling a service obligation relevant to the grant.
- **You may have to repay a grant.** If you are not able to maintain your eligibility, you will have to repay the grant. The information on the U.S. Department of Education's [Grants](#) webpage provides more details about situations where you would have to repay a grant.



Resources for Learning More or Finding GRANTS

- [Grants](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [The Basics on Grants and Scholarships](#), College Board
- [How to Find Grants to Pay for College](#), The College Investor
- [Guide to Grants for College](#), NerdWallet
- [Grants for College](#), SallieMae
- [What is a Pell Grant?](#), College Board
- [Everything You Need to Know About the Pell Grant](#), U.S. News
- [Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Program](#), Maryland Manual Online

Work Study

Work-study is a federal (or state) government program that provides funding for part-time employment for students in financial need to finance the cost of college. As part of a work-study program, students are paid no less than the federal minimum wage. The money earned from a work-study program won't be enough to cover all your college expenses - you'll still need to pull together aid from multiple sources - but it is beneficial for students who qualify.



What You Need to Know

- **You will need to complete the FAFSA to be eligible for work-study.** Just like grants, to be eligible for participation in a work-study program you must demonstrate a certain level of financial need. There is a specific item on the FAFSA that asks if you'd like to be considered for work-study; if you are, be sure to respond 'Yes'.
- **Not all colleges and universities offer work-study programs.** According to the U.S. Department of Education, an estimated 3,400 colleges and universities have a Federal Work-Study Program (FWS), but this is not all schools. You will want to check with the financial aid office at the schools you're considering to find out if they offer work-study programs.
- **You will have to find your own work-study-eligible job** and work to earn the awarded amount. You will receive notice of your acceptance into a work-study program as part of your financial aid package alongside grants, loans, and other financial aid awards. Although your package may list a certain amount of money allocated to a work-study program, it will be your responsibility to find a qualifying job and work enough hours to earn the amount awarded.
- **You do not have to accept a work-study offer.** If you receive a work-study offer as part of your financial aid package, but do not intend to use it, you can decline. However, if this component of your financial aid will reduce the amount of student loans you need to borrow (it will), it is highly recommended to accept it to minimize the debt you'll be facing after college.

More Resources for Learning about WORK STUDY

- VIDEO: [What is Federal Work Study and How Much Does It Pay for College?](#), The College Investor
- [What is Work-Study?](#), NerdWallet
- [Federal Work-Study \(FWS\) Programs](#), U.S. Department of Education
- [8 Things You Should Know About Federal Work-Study](#), U.S. Department of Education
- [Work-Study Jobs](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [Federal Work-Study: Frequently Asked Questions](#), U.S. News

FAFSA

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid**, or FAFSA, is the way to access financial aid such as grants, work-study, or federal student loans. Completing the FAFSA is the most important step families can take toward paying for college. Nearly all students who apply for aid through the FAFSA qualify for some amount of federal aid.

What You Need to Know

- **Filling out the FAFSA can be confusing and complex.** There are more than 100 questions on the form and can take a varying amount of time to complete, though the online form is more concise. For most students (those who are considered a dependent), they will need to provide their own information and the information of their parents. It also takes longer to complete the FAFSA the first time and gets faster each year following.
- **You have to resubmit the FAFSA each year** you are enrolled in college. Financial aid is reviewed and awarded on an annual basis and therefore you have to complete a new FAFSA each year in order to continue receiving aid.
- **There are multiple ways to complete the FAFSA.** You can complete a paper version of the application or online version via the [FAFSA website](#).
- **You will need to start by creating an FSA ID.** An FSA ID is an electronic signature that is a required first step before filling out the FAFSA. This is required to sign into the FAFSA online and myStudentAid mobile app. After setup, it takes a few days to be able to use it so make sure you create your FSA ID at least a few days before you plan to start completing the FAFSA. You will need your social security number, date of birth, and official name to set up your FSA ID and your parents will need to generate their own ID as well if you are under 24 and considered dependent.



Resources for Learning about FAFSA

- [Apply for Financial Aid / Complete the FAFSA Form](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Dept. of Ed.
- [How Financial Aid Works, Federal Student Aid](#) - U.S. Department of Education
- [Completing the FAFSA: Everything You Should Know](#), U.S. News
- [Edvisors Guide to Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#)

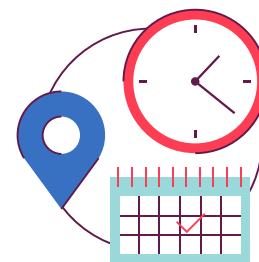
... and More Resources for Learning More about FAFSA

- [Filing the FAFSA: A Simple Guide for Students](#), Edvisors
 - Documents Needed for FAFSA:
 - Your FSA ID if you are completing your FAFSA online or through the mobile application.
 - Your [Tax Records for the previous two years](#)
 - [Records of Untaxed Income](#), including, child support received, interest income, and veterans non-education benefits
 - [Records](#) of Your Assets
 - A List of Schools You Are Considering
 - Your Driver's License (if you have one)
- [8 Easy Steps for Parents Completing the FAFSA](#), U.S. Department of Education
- [Understanding the FAFSA Process for Parents](#), U.S. Department of Education
- VIDEO: [After the FAFSA](#), USA.gov
- VIDEO: [Types of Federal Student Aid](#), USA.gov
- [FAFSA Tips & Common Mistakes to Avoid](#), National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
- [Financial Aid Basics](#), College Board
 - [Everything You Need to Know About the FAFSA](#), College Board
 - [Financial Aid Checklist](#), College Board
- [Staying Eligible](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education



PART-TIME ATTENDANCE

Attending college part-time may be the best situation for you. Part-time status is defined differently from college to college, but a full-time student generally takes between 9 -12 credits per semester. There are a number of factors that could influence the decision to attend part-time such as flexibility to work, look after family, or other commitments and responsibilities.



Among these considerations is attending part-time in order to afford college. Because you'll be taking fewer credits each semester, you will pay less. Part-time attendance also allows you the flexibility to have a part-time or full-time job, which will also help you earn money to pay for college. However, in some cases, financial aid is still available to part-time students.

What You Need to Know

- **You will need to take six credits or more a semester to be eligible.** Most financial aid requires students to be enrolled in classes to earn at least six credits a semester.
- **Many federal loans are available to part-time students.** While loans are not the ideal form of financial aid, federal student loans tend to have lower interest rates and more flexible repayment options. There are three types of federal loans available to part-time students: Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and Direct PLUS Loans. You can learn more about these types of loans in the article [Financial Aid for Part-Time Students](#) from LendingTree.
- **You will need to complete the FAFSA.** Just like all other types of financial aid, in order to receive financial aid as a part-time student, you must complete the FAFSA each year.
- **Exhaust all other aid options before taking out private student loans.** Private student loans, offered by independent banks or credit unions, are the worst type of 'aid' to take because they come with high interest rates and restrictive repayment options. You could be repaying student loans for many years after completing your degree. All other options - grants, scholarships, work-study, federal loans - should be researched and sought after before resorting to private student loans. Try to gather as much financial aid as possible through other means.

Resources for Learning about Part-Time Attendance

- [Financial Aid for Part-Time Students](#), LendingTree
- [4 Financial Factors in Making the Part-Time College Calculation](#), U.S. News
- [Part-Time Grant](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- [3 Money Mistakes for Part-Time Students, Full-Time Workers to Avoid](#), U.S. News
- [Full Time vs Part Time Student](#), SoFi Learn

GENERAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

COVID-19 Aid-Specific Resources

- [StudentAidPandemic.org](https://studentaidpandemic.org)
 - Free student aid-related COVID-19 guidance for students, families, and student loan borrowers
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Web Center](#), National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
 - This web center was created to keep NASFAA members and the financial aid community updated on pertinent news related to the coronavirus.
- [The Pandemic Has Changed How Financial Aid Offices Communicate with Students](#), National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

General Financial Planning Resources

- [Types of Financial Aid](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [College Financial Planning](#), Merrill
- [Unit: Paying for College](#), Khan Academy
- [Private or Alternative Student Loans](#), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- [How to Fund a College Education](#), Investopedia
- [10 Ways Parents Should Plan for College Financially](#), U.S. News
- [Parents Guide to Financial Planning](#), College Board
- [Create a Budget for College](#), The Balance
- [Calculate Your Cost](#), College Board
- [The Expected Family Contribution \(EFC\): FAQs](#), College Board
 - [EFC Calculator](#), College Board
- [Your College Savings Options](#), College Board
- [How Does Financial Aid Work?](#), College Board
- [How to Avoid Financial Aid Scams](#), College Board
- [Financial Aid and Undocumented Students](#), Federal Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education
- [MoneySmarts](#), Indiana University

6) APPLYING TO COLLEGE



The college application process can be daunting, overwhelming, and intimidating — and even more so for those students who are going through it for the first time without parents or siblings who have done it. This piece of the college preparation process, along with financial aid, are the largest and most time consuming steps. It cannot be overstated just how much time these two pieces will (and should) take students to complete. The college application process is something students should be navigating throughout their whole time in high school, and there are so many steps involved in the application process, each with their own set of tasks and requirements. It is important for students to get (and stay) organized to manage the process from start to finish.

OST programs can certainly help students, and their families, find and organize information and stay on top of the process. If College and Career Readiness is a part of your mission and/or program, helping students manage the application process will be a critical component to their success. This section will give you the tools and resources to be able to guide youth through their applications from start to finish. It's immensely satisfying for everyone when students create applications they're proud of!

HOW TO HELP PREPARE YOUTH FOR THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

1) Start with a Checklist

As mentioned above, the best way to help youth in your program as an OST provider is to support them in getting organized and staying on track for the long haul that is preparing for college and the application process. The first thing to do with youth is to create or give them a college application process checklist. Since this process really begins quite early, definitely by their freshman year of high school, students have at least four years that they have to keep track of and complete tasks. This will help students and families become familiar with the process, know what to expect each year or in each phase, and establish a plan for each year of high school (at least).

Familiarize students to the college application process with these resources:

- [The College Application Process](#), My Future - U.S. Departments of Defense, Commerce, Education, Labor
- [A Complete Guide to the College Application Process](#), U.S. News
- Unit: [Applying to College](#), Khan Academy
- [Applying to College](#), College Board
- [Apply to College with the Common App](#), Common App
- [Common App Ready](#), Common App
 - A complete toolkit of tips and best practices designed to help your students complete their applications successfully and on time
- [5 Things You Need to Know About College Admission](#), College Board
- [Tips for Preparing Your College Application](#), College Board
- [How Long Do College Applications Take?](#), CollegeVine
- [What \(Not\) to Do on College Applications: 8 Tips from Seniors](#), The Princeton Review
- [Official SAT Practice](#), Khan Academy
- COURSE: [Step by Step Guide for Applying to Colleges](#), MoonPrep
 - This course is being offered for FREE for a limited time (as of the time of publication) as part of a Planning for College Course Bundle



These resources will provide you with a college application checklist or provide guidance for creating your own:

- [A College Application Checklist](#), U.S. News
- [College Application Checklist](#), Khan Academy
- [College Application Checklist](#), College Board

2) Review Applications

Spending time reviewing college applications and the FAFSA can provide a tremendous amount of support to students. If you start this practice early enough, it allows them plenty of time to become familiar with the types of questions they will encounter on applications and the associated requirements. The more familiar students feel with applications and the process, the less intimidating and frustrating it will be when it comes time to complete their own applications.

3) Coach Students on How to Make It Great

Once you've reviewed applications with students and they have gained some familiarity, you should begin coaching students on how to make their applications great. Knowing how to make their college applications stand out from the hundreds or thousands of other applicants could be the difference between having a wide variety of options when it comes to choosing a college and having more limited options.

These resources will help you get started with how to submit standout college applications:

- [What Colleges Are Looking for In a Successful Applicant](#), CollegeChoice
- [Admission Deans Share Tips for College Applications](#), Forbes
- [What Colleges Look For: How to Stand Out](#), U.S. News
- VIDEO: [19 College Application Tips \(To Help You Stand Out\)](#), College Essay Guy
- COURSE: [How to Write a Winning Personal Statement](#), MoonPrep
This course is being offered for FREE for a limited time (as of the time of publication) as part of a Planning for College Course Bundle



4) Practice Writing College Essays

Another key area to provide support and plenty of practice is in writing the college essay. The best way to prepare for writing college essays is to practice and get feedback as many times as possible. A quick Internet search will provide you with common college essay prompts. Use those and have students write many over the course of their high school career to gain as much practice as possible. Provide specific and timely feedback on each one so that students understand how to improve their essay. This kind of practice and feedback loop will help prepare students and make them feel confident in their ability to write strong college essays.

These resources provide a starting point for this practice:

- [Common App Essay Prompts](#), Common App
- [35+ Best College Essay Tips from College Application Experts](#), College Essay Guy
- BOOK: [College Essay Essentials](#), Ethan Sawyer (College Essay Guy)
- [How to Write a College Application Essay](#), College Board
- COURSE: [How to Write the Supplemental Essays](#), MoonPrep
 - This course is being offered for FREE for a limited time (as of the time of publication)

5) Practice College Interviews

Students may encounter an interview as part of the college application process and practicing for these will be good for everyone, whether or not they end up having a college interview. Interview skills and practice are always good to have! Similar to preparing for college essays with lots of practice, the same is true with college interviews. Provide students an opportunity to become familiar with the types of questions that might be asked during the interview, how to respond to those questions, how to dress for a college interview, and what to expect from a virtual interview.

To get started with this practice, check out these resources:

- [Top College Interview Tips](#), The Princeton Review
- [The 14 College Interview Questions You Must Prepare For](#), PrepScholar
- [College Interviews: Practice Questions and Strategies](#), College Board
- [Frequently Asked Questions About College Admissions Interviews](#), Accredited Online Schools
- [College Interview Questions to Prepare For](#), U.S. News
- [College Interview Questions with Sample Answers](#), Indeed
- [Virtual College Admissions Interview Tips](#), College Transitions
- [Dos and Don'ts of Virtual College Interviews](#), InGenius Prep
- [Virtual College Interviews: Everything You Need to Know](#), CollegeVine
- COURSE: [The Complete College Interview Guide](#), MoonPrep
This course is being offered for FREE for a limited time (as of the time of publication) as part of a Planning for College Course Bundle



6) Help Them Make Decisions

Hopefully all of this practice and preparation will provide students with their pick of schools with many acceptances and plenty of choices to make. Deciding which college or university to attend is really the final part of the college application process and it can be overwhelming and difficult to navigate this choice if students have rounded up a few acceptance letters. This is a place where OST providers and trusted mentors who work with students can make the process a little easier with some practice and knowledge under your belts.

The following resources will help you help students make this huge decision in their lives:

- [You Got Accepted - Now What?](#), College Board
- [10 Ways to Help Your Teen with the College Decision](#), U.S. News
 - This is also a great resource for families!
- [10 Tips to Make Your Final College Choice](#), U.S. News
- [Parents: 8 Ways to Help Your Teen Make a College Decision](#), CollegeVine
 - Although this resource is aimed at parents, the information can still be used by OST professionals and mentors.
- [5 Things You Shouldn't Base College Decisions On](#), FastWeb
- [College Comparison Decision Tool](#), College Options

Getting Application Fees Waived

It generally costs money to apply to college and those fees can really add up as students apply to their top colleges and university choices. In some cases, an application fee can be waived which can really help students afford to even send in their application. Fee waivers cover the entire cost of application fees when available so that students don't have to worry about the cost of applying to each school or limit their options based on something as arbitrary as application fees.

There are four recommended programs that issue fee waivers for college applications:

▶ **1) College Board Fee Waiver**

Students who are income-eligible to take the SATs or SAT Subject Tests with a fee waiver can apply to nearly 2,000 colleges without application fees. There are eligibility requirements students must meet to qualify for this waiver.

- [Education Professionals: Fee Waivers & Reductions](#), College Board
- [How Can You Determine a Student's Eligibility for a Fee Waiver?](#), College Board

▶ **2) Common App Waiver**

This waiver can be requested by students who are using the Common App to apply to one of nearly 900 schools. It has eligibility requirements similar to those of the College Board program.

▶ **3) NACAC Application Fee Waiver**

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) also offers a fee waiver for up to four schools with eligibility requirements similar to College Board and Common App.

▶ **4) Individual College Programs**

If students are ineligible for these other programs, or if they have used their waiver to apply to four schools already, hope is not lost. Students may qualify for a fee waiver directly from the college or university itself. These school-based programs often have more flexible eligibility requirements. Students can contact the college's financial aid office directly and explain their situation to learn more about their options regarding application fees.

Resources for Learning about Application Fee Waivers

- [How to Get a College Application Fee Waived](#), Student Loan Hero - LendingTree
- [How to Get College Application Fee Waivers](#), NerdWallet
- [How to Get a College Application Fee Waiver: 3 Approaches](#), PrepScholar
- [College Application Fee Waivers: Search for Colleges](#), College Board
- [College Application Fee Waiver FAQs](#), College Board

7) MANAGING THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE



The transition from high school to college is a big one and one that can be startling and overwhelming to students if they are unprepared for what to expect in this transition. Managing their own time, juggling responsibilities, and caring for themselves can be a whole new experience for students who have lived at home with their families and may be experiencing their first time away from home. Even students who have experienced more independence can struggle with the transition to life as a college student.

To help students prepare for the transition to college, OST providers can guide students through activities to challenge students to think about what college will be like for them. Helping students learn more about themselves, identify their expectations, and become aware of the services and supports that will be available to them once they arrive at college will be useful as they work to develop a college transition plan. The [Making a College Transition Plan](#) resource for students outlines a three-step process for developing a simple college transition plan with activities for OST providers to lead students through or for them to complete on their own.

Resources for Learning about the College Transition

The following resources include a wealth of information about helping to ease this transition for students, families, and educators:

- [Transition to College Toolkit](#), Oregon GEAR UP
- [Family Resource Guide: First Year Transitions, Supporting Your Student](#), Allegheny College
- [Making the Transition to College](#), Princeton University
- [How College Differs From High School](#), Baylor University
- [Set to Go - A Jed Program](#), The Jed Foundation
 - Here you'll find information, tools, and guidance to help you feel Set to Go - whether you go to college or straight to a career. Featuring resources and information for students, families, and educators.
 - [The Transition, For Students](#), Set to Go - The Jed Foundation
 - [Tips and Considerations for Educators Providing College Guidance to Students](#), Set to Go - The Jed Foundation
 - [Set to Go For Families](#) - The Jed Foundation
- [Making the College Transition](#), Peterson's
- [A Syllabus for College Transition](#), Forbes
- [How to Transition from High School to College](#), CollegeXpress
- [Can I Do This? 4 Tips for a Successful Transition to College](#), National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS)
- [Maryland Transition Resource Guide](#), Maryland Department of Disabilities
 - Although this resource is geared toward students with disabilities and their families, there are still many good tips and suggestions for students of all abilities and their families / educators.



Summer Bridge Opportunities

Summer bridge programs are designed to help students transition from high school to college and are typically a multi-week immersive program during the summer between the senior year of high school and the freshman year of college. The goal of these programs is to provide students with academic skills and social resources necessary to their success in college. Summer bridge programs can include “(a) an in-depth orientation to college life and resources, (b) academic advising, (c) training in skills necessary for college success (e.g., time management and study skills), and/or (d) accelerated academic coursework” (“What Works, Summer Bridge” 1).



What You Need to Know

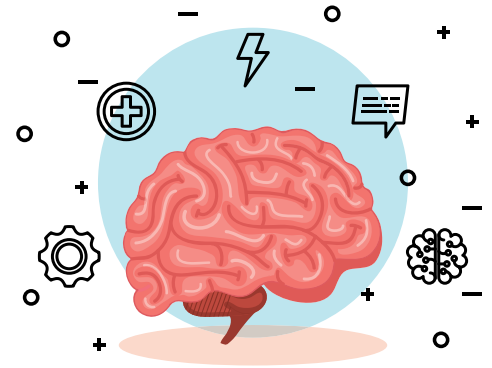
- **Summer bridge programs vary in length and design.** How a summer bridge program is designed and how long it lasts is determined by each individual college or university and, while they often have common goals, each experience will be different.
- **Historically, summer bridge programs have only been offered to specific students:** targeted minority, low-income, first-generation college students. Those students determined to be most at-risk of dropping out of college - ethnic / racial minority, low-income, first-generation, or students with diagnosed learning disabilities - have typically been offered summer bridge opportunities, however, these programs have also been used for all general education students in more recent years (“What Works, Summer Bridge” 2).
- **If there is an opportunity for a summer bridge program, take it!** Regardless of the type of student, if there is a chance to participate in this immersive program, students should take it. These programs help familiarize students with the campus, college life, and the services available to them and are extremely valuable in easing the transition to college. If students are unclear about whether or not their school offers a summer bridge program or if they are eligible, they should ask the Admissions Office.

Resources for Learning about Summer Bridge Opportunities

- [What is a College Summer Bridge Program?](#), College Parent Central
- [Summer Bridge Programs for Incoming College Students](#), College Greenlight
- [Summer Bridge Programs](#), What Works Clearinghouse
- [Summer Search](#)
 - A year-round program utilizing mentorship, summer leadership experiences, and post-secondary advising to empower young people who face systemic oppression.

Mental Health and the College Transition

As we've already established, the transition to college can be challenging and can cause strain on a student's mental health. The stress alone can cause a variety of issues for college students. Whether or not a student has a diagnosed mental health condition, they will need to be prepared to take care of themselves and address any issues that may arise immediately. For those students who have a diagnosed mental health condition, it is critical that they devise a plan for continuation of treatments and identify the supports they will need in place while living on campus or attending school to maintain their health.



Resources on Mental Health and the College Transition:

- [Starting the Conversations: College and Your Mental Health](#) - The Jed Foundation & National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- [Planning Ahead for Your Mental Health Care as You Transition to College](#), The Jed Foundation
- [Transition of Care Guide](#), The Jed Foundation
 - Primarily written for students with diagnosed mental health conditions and their families, this guide walks through important considerations related to the transition of mental health care from home to college.
- [Managing a Mental Health Condition in College](#), National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- [Five Tips to Support Mental Health for College Students](#), The Mental Health Collective
- [First-Year College Student's Guide to Mental Health](#), Accredited Online Schools
- [Mental Health and the Transition to College](#), Teen Health Matters - Howard County, MD
- [Jed's Coronavirus Mental Health Resource Guide](#), The Jed Foundation
- LISTEN: [For Students with Mental Health Issues, Transition to College is Complicated](#), NPR

Ongoing Support for Students Throughout College

Getting students into college is a victory worth celebrating, however, the work of supporting youth doesn't magically end at this milestone. As trusted adults in students' (and families) lives who have helped them reach this goal, it is important to continue checking-in with students to make sure they stay on track to graduate and have the resources they need to do so with as little struggle as possible.

This all begins with a strong, positive, supportive relationship that you've cultivated with your students and their families over the last four or five years, at least. If you're starting from a

place where students trust you and respect and honor your guidance, regular check-ins with them as they navigate through the challenging world of college and life beyond the comforts of home and high school will be appreciated and impactful.

Quick Guide to a College Support Communication Initiative

Establishing a communication initiative component of your program aimed at conducting regular check-ins with students throughout their college experience does not have to be a heavy lift or something that takes a lot of time. With a couple of dedicated staff members, and an easy-to-follow protocol, helping to ensure students and their families continue to feel supported throughout the next four years can be done quite efficiently.

First you will need to set up the parameters of this communication initiative and dedicate resources to it. Decide the frequency of communication, type of communication and communication system, who will be responsible for communication from your staff, what information you are seeking, and what will be done with that information.



► Frequency

To not burden students, or your staff, with an intense communication plan, try sending a message sent every 2-3 months throughout the first two years of college, tapering to twice per year in their third and fourth years. You can, of course, establish any other frequency of communication that best suits your needs, however it is recommended to do this more than once per year to ensure you can provide support or guidance in a timely manner.

► Type of Communication

Decide which form of communication will be best for your staff and those you are communicating with. A simple text message system such as Twilio or TextMagic might be the best solution because it is quick for both parties. Email is another easy option. Phone calls would be more time-consuming and likely not the preferred method of communication of young people. More text message systems are suggested in this article: [The 6 Best SMS Apps for Small Businesses](#). Whichever format you choose, it will be worth taking the time to create templates ahead of time to line up with your process.

► Campus Resources

In order to sufficiently support students, the staff responsible for this communication should be generally familiar with the types of resources available to students on college campuses. They do not need to know every detail and have contact information for every office on every campus, but having a base knowledge of what types of resources and services address which needs will be helpful in providing support and making recommendations to students.

► Information

Figuring out what information you are seeking and how to best support students once you've gained that information is the most important step of this process, but it doesn't have to be complicated. This simple template could be sufficient:

1. Rate how you are doing in each of these areas from 1 (this is a big problem area for me) to 5 (I am doing great in this area).

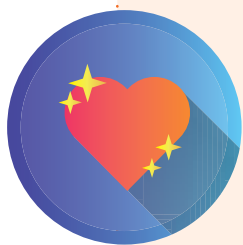
a. Planning my schedule	1	2	3	4	5
b. Managing study time	1	2	3	4	5
c. Tracking and completing assignments	1	2	3	4	5
d. Identifying and using campus resources	1	2	3	4	5
e. Meeting with my advisor	1	2	3	4	5
f. Taking care of myself	1	2	3	4	5
g. Planning and applying for financial aid	1	2	3	4	5
h. On track to graduate in 4 years	1	2	3	4	5
i. Planning my future	1	2	3	4	5

2. What areas, or specific things, do you need help with? How can we support you?
3. What unanswered questions do you have?

► Student Resources

Providing some additional resources to students as they head off to college that will help them stay organized and on track can only be helpful. These resources are a good starting point for students to understand what to expect and provide recommendations for success.

- [Success in College Guide](#), Mapping Your Future
- [Student Guide to Creating a Successful College Experience](#), Purdue University
- [Academic Success Checklists](#), Collegiate Parent
- [How to Graduate College in Four Years](#), Peterson's
- [How to Easily Stay Organized and Productive in College](#), College Info Geek
- LISTEN: [Congratulations, You're in College! Now What?](#), NPR



NOTE: This type of outreach and support initiative does not need to be limited to only those students pursuing a 4-year college degree. In fact, initiating this type of communication with all students of your program can help them all feel supported and may lead to other future engagements and relationships you may not be able to predict at this time. Ensuring that all participants from your program are on their way to a happy, productive life with meaningful employment is a wonderful gift you can give and receive.

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The Career and College Readiness Toolkit is an initiative of the Maryland Out of School Time Network. To learn more and find more resources, visit www.mostnetwork.org/initiatives/CCR.