START where you are in high school or at a tech center

Dual enrollment programs allow you to start college for FREE while you’re in high school! Talk to your school counselor and check out: programs at Vermont’s public and private colleges: http://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/dual-enrollment.

the Fast Forward program at Community College of Vermont: http://gotocollegevt.org/start-college-in-high-school/fast-forward

the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) at Vermont Technical College: https://www.vtc.edu/academics/vermont-academy-science-technology-vast

ATTEND trade school for specialized programs in specific industries, if you’ve already identified your ideal career in a certain trade. These programs often take only two or three years because they usually don’t require the general education classes (in subjects like history or philosophy) that four-year colleges do.

BTW, plumbers, mechanics, and chefs top the list of careers for which employees have been in short supply virtually every year of the past decade.

KEEP IN MIND: Look closely at tuition and other costs because sometimes these schools are expensive. Also, make sure the school is accredited and know which class credits will be accepted by colleges in case you decide to transfer later. To learn more, go to www.niche.com/colleges/search/best-trade-schools.

GO straight to a four-year school. Not sure this is the right path for you? Check out Introduction to College & Careers, a free course that high school students can take at Community College of Vermont (CCV) sites around the state. Learn more at http://gotocollegevt.org/start-college-in-high-school/ics/

CHECK OUT the two-year programs offered at Vermont colleges:

Accounting
Administrative Management
Agribusiness Management
Technology
Applied Science
Architectural and Building Engineering Technology
Audio Production
Automotive Technology
Business
Business Administration
Business by Contract
Business Management
Business Studies
Business Technology and Management
Civil and Environmental Engineering Technology
Communication
Computer Engineering Technology
Computer Information Technology
Computer Science/Gaming
Computer Software Engineering
Computer Systems Management
Computing
Construction Management
Criminal Justice
Daily Farm Management Technology
Design & Media Studies
Diesel Power Technology
Early Childhood Education
Electrical Engineering Technology
Electronic Journalism Arts
Environmental Science - Equine Studies
Fine Science - General Studies
Health Science - Medical Coding and Billing
Human Services
Landscape Design and Sustainable Horticulture
Library Science
Landscape Design
Law Enforcement Technology
Legal Studies
Medical Assisting
Music Industry Management
Music and Self Promotion
Music Industry Management
Nursing
Professional Multimedia
Communications
Respiratory Therapy
Special Education
STEAM Studies
Technical Theater
Veterinary Technology
Visual Arts
Visual Communications
Web Design and Development

TRANSFER to a four-year college to earn a four-year degree. CCV has transfer agreements with almost 20 four-year colleges in VT and neighboring states, and Vermont Technical College has transfer agreements for nine of its two-year programs. Learn more at www.ccv.edu and www.vtc.edu.

KEEP IN MIND: To maximize the benefit of this path, communicate with your target four-year school from day one at your two-year college. Make certain all of the courses you plan to take are transferrable (and keep all e-mail correspondence that says so). Your goal should be to avoid losing credits in the process of transferring. Otherwise, college may end up taking five years instead of four (which will cost you more, thus defeating the purpose of the plan).

GO TO WORK with your two-year degree while you attend night school to complete a four-year bachelor’s degree. This is a great choice if you join a company that offers tuition reimbursement for employees to upgrade their skills. Let the company help foot the bill for the next two years of your education!

earn a four-year degree

more job opportunities
higher earnings

education options map
With six years of study (a master’s degree and a license), you can become a nurse practitioner (who’s licensed to prescribe medications) and earn more than $51 an hour (about $107,460 a year).

With a high school diploma, you can become a nurse’s aid or an orderly and earn about $12.75 an hour (about $26,590 a year).

With two years of study (an associate’s degree), you can become a licensed practical nurse and earn about $21 an hour (about $44,090 a year).

With two years of study (an associate’s degree and a license), you can become a court reporter and earn around $25 an hour (about $51,320 a year).

With six years of study (a four-year bachelor’s degree and a three-year law degree), you can become an attorney and earn about $57 an hour (almost $118,160 a year).

With four years of study (a bachelor’s degree and a license), you can become a registered nurse and earn around $33 an hour (about $68,450 a year).

With two years of study (an associate’s degree), you can become a paralegal or legal assistant and earn about $24 an hour (about $49,500 a year).

With seven years of study (a master’s degree and a license), you can become a mediator and earn about $28 an hour (almost $60,000 a year).

explore other paths Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/a-z-index.htm) to compare the following pairs of jobs.

- dental assistant vs. dental hygienist
- master plumber vs. journeyman plumber
- electro-mechanical technician vs. electronic engineering technician
- distiller vs. food service manager
- bookkeeper vs. auditor
- hairdresser vs. theatrical makeup artist
- veterinarian technician vs. veterinary technologist
- librarian vs. library technician

1. Which one do you think makes more money?
2. What do you think may account for the difference in pay?
3. Out of each pair, which job would you prefer to have?