

Different Careers. Different Training.

Four-Year College

What Is It?

Private and public universities and colleges provide you with a well-rounded education, which you can use to secure professional careers.

Cost

2008-2009 average tuition and fees were \$10,193 per year for in-state students at a New Hampshire public university; and \$36,786 per year for a New Hampshire private university (excludes room and board).

What You Get

A Bachelor's degree in a field such as business, arts, education, language, physical, life, or social science, communications, or engineering.

Advantages

Depending on what you study, you are likely to earn more with a four-year degree. You get a well-rounded education. Campus life can be very rewarding.

Disadvantages

Can be tough to get accepted. Takes four or more years to finish. You may not be able to get a job once you graduate. Even with financial aid, costs can be high.

Comments

Although this is a big investment of time and money, once you do so, you can use your degree to qualify for higher paying professional jobs. Don't forget to take the ACT or SAT test, apply early to the schools you like, and arrange for your high school transcripts.

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

What Is It?

Community and technical colleges offer associate's degrees and technical certificates. Many have transfer agreements with four-year colleges and universities.

Cost

Much less than a four-year university, about \$6,000 per year for in-state students.

What You Get

An associate's degree or professional certificate in fields such as business, medical technology, construction trades, information technology, electronics, or criminal justice.

Advantages

Frequently an easy commute, so you can live at home for two more years after high school. Technical programs have good job placement rates.

Disadvantages

Most students work and attend classes, limiting on-campus social activities.

Comments

With open admissions at most community colleges, there's little chance of being rejected from the school of your choice. Junior colleges have entrance standards.

Private Career College and Technical Schools

What Is It?

Specialized education, leading directly to employment. Programs vary from a few months to two years or more.

Cost

Ranges from the very inexpensive for short-term programs to very costly for multi-year residential schools. Don't forget to factor in the cost of equipment.

What You Get

Career-related education, technical skills, hands-on training, and employability skills.

Advantages

You'll get focused, sophisticated training in a wide variety of work situations. This can open many doors.

Disadvantages

Technology changes fast. You'll be challenged to stay on top of your specialty.

Comments

Check out your career or technical school with an accrediting agency before you register. Beware of meaningless—and costly—degree mills.

Apprenticeships

What Is It?

You're hired as a trainee to learn a craft or trade from a craft person or experienced supervisor.

Cost

There may be union dues or licensing fees to pay and your own equipment to buy.

What You Get

Real-world training and experience, as well as entry into difficult-to-break-into trades like plumbing, electrical work, or chef.

Advantages

An excellent way to learn a trade. You'll get paid while you learn and also earn respect as you "learn the ropes."

Disadvantages

You'll probably earn only minimum wage or slightly higher during your training.

Comments

Apprenticeship programs exist for over 700 occupations, according to the US Department of Labor.

There are multiple ways of preparing for your future. Below are some different types of training, costs, advantages, and disadvantages.

Source: Career Success, Labor Market and Career Information, Texas Workforce Commission, <<http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/CareerSuccess.html>>



U.S. Armed Forces

What Is It?

Enlistment in the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard.

Cost

At least a two-year commitment.

What You Get

Career training and experience, and an opportunity to travel. There is also the G.I. Bill, which pays up to \$49,248 toward your education (2009 limits).

Advantages

Paid room and board. Skills training. The kind of great body that comes from having your own "personal trainer."

Disadvantages

Your wardrobe is selected for you and more haircuts than you really need.

Comments

Consider carefully the occupational specialty you choose. Some have civilian applications; others are better only for military careers.

Volunteer and Internships

What Is It?

You work for someone as a way to help others, support the environment, or check out a career field.

Cost

You earn little or no money. It may actually cost you money for transportation and lodging.

What You Get

The warm feeling that comes from knowing that what you're doing is helping others or the environment.

Advantages

Experience, opportunities, and the chance to do good.

Disadvantages

You can get bummed out, depressed, or disillusioned once you realize how tough it is to change the world. Not much money.

Comments

The feeling that you're doing positive work is worth millions, and you may meet amazing people. Plus, it's a foot in the door, and looks great on college and job applications.

Minimum Wage Job

What Is It?

You know what it is.

Cost

The tedium of working for a stunningly small paycheck.

What You Get

The real world with only a high school education.

Advantages

It's a chance to buy time to figure out what you want to do next. You might even get a free nametag.

Disadvantages

It's tricky handling your money when you earn so little. Don't fall into the trap of spending more than you make.

Comments

Avoid getting stranded here by your inertia. Use it as a path to something better.

Do Nothing

What Is It?

Slacking off, staying home watching TV or surfing the 'net.

Cost

Lost self-respect, no income, waste your brain.

What You Get

Lousy muscle tone and an unwanted gut. Great finger dexterity from channel surfing and mouse clicks.

Advantages

None

Disadvantages

No money, no skills, no life.

Comments

Watch out for your own mounting anxiety as you see your friends having lives.