



Resource Guide:

Pathway:	About:	Things to keep in mind:
College (2-year and 4-year)	Colleges can be 2-year programs, 4-year programs or offer both pathways. Students can study a variety of academic subjects and, at certain schools, can study for vocational/trade pathways such as culinary arts or automotive technology.	● College graduates, on average, earn 40% more per year than high school graduates. ● The average college graduate will take on \$20,000-\$30,000 of debt. ● Many students will qualify for financial aid, there are low-cost college options to meet students' financial needs. ● Not all colleges offer housing but, for those that do, it can be a helpful way for young people to build community and become independent.
Certification/ Vocational Programs	A certification or vocational program prepares you for a specific job or career by teaching you the hands-on skills you'll need in that field. These programs are great if you want to learn by doing and start working sooner after high school. For example, if you're learning how to fix cars, cut hair, cook in a professional kitchen, or use medical equipment, you're getting vocational training.	● An apprenticeship program is a blend of classroom work and on the job training. ● Vocational programs can be a great environment for hands-on learners. ● Many colleges, especially 2-year schools, offer vocational programs. ● Financial aid might not be available for certain programs, you may have to pay out of pocket.



Work Force	The work force includes any type of employment: full time, part time, temporary or long-term.	● Most recent high school graduates will not have the skill set to get a high-paying job. ● Opportunities for promotion may require further education. ● It can be hard to find full-time work with only a high school degree. Part-time work may not provide enough money to live independently.
Service/Volunteering	Service and volunteering programs give you the chance to help others and make a difference in your community or around the country. These programs focus on supporting people, organizations, or causes like education, the environment, disaster relief, or social justice.	● Some service/volunteer program offer small stipends. ● This can be a great way to develop new skills and grow your network. ● Students may choose to take a gap year (a year break between high school and college) and complete a service program to strengthen their college applications.
Military	The military is formed of six main branches: Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, Army, Air Force and Space Force.	● The U.S. military operates in more than 100 countries. ● Provides housing and wages. ● You will have to take a test to determine the work you will be assigned (you do not choose your assignment, but they try to align it with your skills and interests). ● You will typically have to sign a contract to work for a certain amount of time. You cannot abandon your commitment, or you will face legal consequences.