

Evaluating Your Educational Options

- Community Colleges
- Career and Technical Schools
- Four-Year Colleges
- The Military
- Apprenticeships

Community Colleges

Provide affordable, career-oriented programs which allow students to begin their careers after two years or less of college. Students complete short-term programs to receive certificates or diplomas; those completing two year programs earn associate degrees. Students can also transfer to a four-year college after their first year or two to earn a bachelor's degree.

- ❖ Community colleges are affordable and the classes are small
- ❖ Students with high school diplomas and GED's are welcome. **You do not need to take SAT's or ACT's.**
- ❖ Community colleges meet the needs of their local communities by offering classes on Saturdays and evenings. They usually do not have dorms and all students commute.
- ❖ Students who are not academically prepared to attend four-year colleges can start at a community college and then transfer to a four-year school.

Career and Technical Schools

Offer short-term training in a wide variety of career fields. While some programs last only a few weeks, others take up to two years to complete.

- ❖ Prepare students for a specific career. Students spend most of their class time in job-related settings. Student-teacher ratio is low and students generally receive a lot of individual instruction.
- ❖ These schools usually accept any student with a high school diploma or GED.
- ❖ Guidelines to evaluate a career or technical school:
 1. Licensing and accreditation – means a school meets the minimum standard of the accreditation agency. Be wary of any school that is not accredited.
 2. Check out the facilities. Take a tour. Is the equipment up to date and adequate for the number of students enrolled
 3. Placement. Does the school offer placement assistance after completion of their program. What percentage of the school graduates find jobs in their field of training?
 4. Cost. Total cost of tuition, supplies, and fees.
 5. Quality of Instruction. What are the qualifications and credentials of instructors? Are courses and books up to date?
 6. Reputation and Stability. How long has the school been in operation? How many students complete the program? Talk to alumni and businesses for opinions of the school and call the Better Business Bureau.
- ❖ Career and technical schools can be expensive.
- ❖ Career and technical school credits usually do not transfer.

Four-Year Colleges

A bachelor's degree is earned at four-year colleges. A bachelor's degree can open doors, provide status and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. Colleges vary greatly in their size, costs, admissions policies and in the majors they offer.

- ❖ Four-year colleges generally offer a wide variety of majors.
- ❖ Colleges want students who are academically prepared. Students are expected to be ready for college level work and have completed college preparatory work in high school.
- ❖ Four-year colleges have specific requirements for admission. ACT/SAT scores will be required for admittance.
- ❖ Four-year colleges should be carefully researched. The following Web sites can be helpful. They will also provide free SAT preparation information

www.collegeboard.com

www.campustours.com

www.collegenet.com

www.fastweb.com

www.educationplanner.com

www.princetonreview.com

- ❖ Four-year colleges can be expensive.
- ❖ Financial assistance is available in the form of Grants, scholarship, work-study and loans.

The Military

The military trains young men and women to protect the interests of our country. It offers training in over 2,000 job specialties. The military provides a good salary and free job training as well as opportunities for career advancement and travel.

- ❖ The four major branches of the service are Army, Navy, Air Force and the Marines. There are also opportunities in the Coast Guard, National Guard and the reserves.
- ❖ To enlist, a young man or woman must earn a minimum score on the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) and pass a physical exam.

Apprenticeships

Students who prefer hands on training may want to consider this approach. Apprentices learn their trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

- ❖ Apprentice work under the supervision of a journey worker and receives at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training.
- ❖ An apprentice also receives almost 150 hours of related instruction a year in order to learn safety measures, theories and techniques.
- ❖ Programs are administered by employers, labor unions, and employer association.