

Need Help Creating Your Career Plan?

Dear Student,

In your Universal Encouragement Program guidance survey, you indicated an interest in getting help with career planning. Whether you have a career in mind or are still exploring, we can work together to identify possibilities and decide what to do next.

What is a career plan?

A career plan is a written guide that connects what you know about yourself with opportunities for education, training, and work. It includes careers you want to explore, skills you want to develop, and steps you can take toward your goals.

Your plan does not need to map out your entire life. It should help you make useful choices now while leaving room for new interests, experiences, and opportunities.

How can you build your plan?

1. Learn about yourself.

Think about the subjects, activities, and problems that interest you. What do you enjoy doing? What are your strengths? What would you like to learn? Consider what matters to you in work, such as helping others, creating things, solving problems, earning a dependable income, or having time for family and other interests.

Career interest and work values assessments can suggest possibilities to investigate. Their results are starting points for discussion—not instructions about which career you must choose. Your skills can also grow with practice and experience.

2. Explore several careers.

Choose two or three occupations to investigate. Find out:

- What people actually do in these jobs and what their working conditions are like.
- What education, training, experience, or licenses are needed.
- What workers typically earn, including when they first enter the field.
- Where jobs are available and what the employment outlook suggests.
- What related occupations might also interest you.

Employment projections are estimates, so use them alongside your interests, goals, and conversations with people in the field.

3. Compare education and training pathways.

Depending on the occupation, preparation may include a four-year college, community college, technical school, registered apprenticeship, certificate program, or employer-provided training.

Explore in-person, online, and hybrid options. Compare admission requirements, program length, total costs, financial assistance, student support, and whether the program prepares you for the credential or license your career requires. We can help you evaluate these choices.

4. Use your school years to prepare and explore.

Together, we can select courses that build useful skills and keep future options open. Career and technical education, electives, clubs, projects, and—when appropriate—dual enrollment can help you explore your interests.

You can also learn through career talks, workplace visits, job shadowing, volunteering, internships, or part-time work. Virtual career events and interviews with workers can be useful when travel or scheduling is difficult. Family responsibilities and community activities can build valuable skills, too.

5. Write down your next steps.

Start with a simple plan:

- **Careers I want to explore:** Two or three possibilities.
- **What I need to learn:** Questions about the work and its requirements.
- **My next actions:** A course, activity, conversation, or research task.
- **Support I need:** Help with transportation, costs, learning needs, or finding opportunities.
- **My timeline:** When I will take each step and review my progress.

For example: “This semester, I will research two health careers, talk with someone working in one of them, and meet with my counselor about relevant courses.”

6. Review and revise your plan.

In middle school, focus on discovering interests and trying different activities. In high school, gradually connect those experiences with course choices and plans after graduation. Review your plan at least once each school year and whenever your goals change. Changing direction is a normal part of learning about yourself.

Where can you get started?

[My Next Move](#) offers career exploration by keyword or industry and an interest assessment that suggests occupations to investigate.

[CareerOneStop](#) provides tools for researching careers, education and training, wages, and employment outlooks.

Visit the counseling office to get started or bring a plan you have already begun. You do not need to have everything figured out before asking for help. We can work together to turn your interests and hopes into manageable next steps.

Sincerely,

Your Counselor