

# Unit 4: Career Readiness

## Subtopics

1. Career Awareness
2. Work Experience
3. Certificates/Licenses
4. Military
5. Trade Schools

## 1. Career Awareness

### Background

Out-of-school time programs can play a pivotal role in college and career readiness for their participants in authentic and engaging ways, such as “exposure to and exploration of special interests, building relationships with trusting mentors, and career exploration and preparation” (Cohen, 2). OST programs have an opportunity to contribute to student’s career readiness across a continuum from career awareness in the elementary school grades, to career exploration in the middle grades, and career preparation and training in the high school grades. The information, resources, and activities included in this section are all careerfacing and focused on career exploration and preparation.

### How-Tos:

**Help youth understand and appreciate that career interests can change over time and sometimes overnight and that that’s totally normal!**

To engage youth in some interesting and fun activities to raise their awareness of careers and explore different careers, you can refer back to the activities included in the “Guiding Youth Through College and Career Decisions” section in this toolkit, or find other activities in the following resources:

[BOOTS Wyoming](#): College and career exploration tool for state-based opportunities and career options  
[Career Exploration Activities: How to Help Your Students Find Jobs They’ll Love](#):

Indeed

[Career Exploration Activity Library](#): Exploring.org

[Middle School Work and Career Readiness Resources](#): Junior Achievement

[High School Work and Career Readiness Resource](#): Junior Achievement

### Interest Inventories

Career interest inventories are a great way for middle and high school youth to figure out where their interests lie and how that might be able to help them find a career path. Career inventories are “a career tool for self-assessment that aids in career planning to assess the likes of particular objects, activities, and personalities, using the theory that individuals with the same career tend to have the same interests” (Business Dictionary).

These assessments and inventories will be useful in aiding your students in identifying their interests as they relate to possible careers.

1. [Find Your Calling](#): Help youth answer the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The resources include an interest assessment and detailed data matching occupations to interests.
2. [Career One Stop - Self-Assessments](#), U.S. Department of Labor: This portion of the Career One Stop website offers an interest assessment, skills assessment, and work values matching tool to help youth consider different options and confirm types of careers that might be a good fit for them.
3. [Career Clusters Activity](#), EducationPlanner.org: This online activity for students that explore career “clusters” (groups of careers that share common themes or similar skills) based on their responses to a series of questions. This site also features skill matching, a career search, career videos, and schools for specific careers.
4. [Student Interest Survey for Career Clusters](#), Advance CTE: This guidance tool allows students to respond to questions and identify the top 3 Career Clusters of interest based on their responses.

### **Activities: Bring Careers to Youth, Career Fairs, Researching Businesses, and Job Shadowing**

#### **Host a Career Fair!**

Career Fair and Career Day events can be helpful in exposing students to a variety of career paths, some of which they may not have considered or thought to be not for them. Becoming aware of the opportunities available to them, especially in their local area, can be transformational to their career exploration efforts.

Host your own career fair for youth in your program to learn more about local jobs and industries. If youth in your program are older, encourage them to plan the career fair alongside the adult staff!

Take a field trip to a career fair near you with a group of youth.

Plan a virtual career fair.

#### **Research Local Businesses**

Research is a big part of the career and job search process and can help youth identify companies in their field of interest, prepare for interviews, learn more about industries and businesses, find companies that share their values, and more. A simple approach to researching businesses and careers is made up these three steps:

1: Identify companies of interest - Use the U.S Department of Labor’s Business Finder to locate and get contact information for employers in the local area. *Note youths interest in specific careers and help them make connections to companies that have similar interests!*

2: Conduct Research - The [Research Employers](#) resource from the U.S. Department of Labor outlines a series of questions to guide research on each company of interest as well as where to find the answers and information. [The Complete Guide to Researching a Company](#) resource from Indeed contains a lot of great information on how to work through this step.

3: Organize findings - Come up with a digital or paper-based way to organize and manage the information. Discard the information that has little or no immediate relevance. The [Company Research](#) student resource is a helpful tool in guiding and note-taking efforts for students!

### **Job Shadowing OR Inviting Experts into Program**

Job Shadowing is a method for learning about a particular job or career by spending time following (or “shadowing”) a professional as they work. Accompanying and observing this person as they complete the tasks related to their job can provide a deeper understanding of their career or particular job. This can also be done by inviting experts into program to explain their work and answer a series of questions generated by youth in the program.

### **Mizzen by Mott activities that help explore career options/interests:**

[Career Bingo](#): Students learn about a wide variety fo careers as they play a version of bingo (games for grades 6-8 and 3-5)

[Career Match Exploration](#): Students choose to enroll in college, or vocational-technical school, or possibly the military after high school. This activity helps students research an institution of interest for their lives and share with peers (grades 9-12)

### **For more general information on careers take a look at the following resources:**

[K-12 Resources for Teachers and Students](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[K-12 Education Resources Site](#), Junior Achievement

[Article: Helping Youth Prepare for Career](#), What Can Out-of-School Time Programs Do?

[Article: 3 Keys to Building a Career Mindset in High School](#)

[Career Planning for Higher Schoolers](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[‘What Do You Like to Do?’ Career Inventories for Middle Schoolers](#), National College Attainment Network

## **2. Work Experience**

After learning some job readiness skills and figuring out some potential career paths, the next step youth should take is to gain some work experience. Work experience is any activity in which a student is at a worksite doing real work for pay. This can take the form of internships or apprenticeships, work-based learning experiences arranged through a school’s CTE program or part-time employment.

Work experiences are designed to:

- Promote hands-on, real-world experience in a field of interest
- Provide productive value for the employer
- Offer opportunities to develop, practice and demonstrate employability skills
- Build occupational knowledge
- Create awareness of the education needed to be successful in the industry (“Work Experience Fact Sheet”)

Teaching youth about the value of work experience as early as possible in the middle grades is helpful because by the time they are of age to work they can begin seeking out opportunities that will provide them with experience and information about the world of work and career paths of interest.

[Student Resource: Work Experience](#) is an accompanying resource for students to reference for similar information to what is found here. You can also check out these lessons on employability skills for grades 9-12 from [Workforce Solutions](#).

### **The Value of Work Experience:**

1. Having prior work experience will make you more likely to be successful in your job search.
2. Work experiences are a great way to explore different career paths, industries, types of work, and workplace environments. If you are unsure about your desired career, work experiences can help you figure it out.
3. It's the best way to understand a particular job or industry. You will have opportunities to see the job in action, ask questions and learn from actual employees in the industry, and gain firsthand experience in the career field. This is a great way to know if it is for you or not.
4. Seeking out and participating in work experiences such as internships or part-time jobs in your chosen field demonstrates interest and dedication. It tells future employers that you are motivated to work in that field.
5. If you are struggling with career decisions, or have no clue what you'd like to do for a career, trying out a variety of work placements may help you narrow down your options and make decisions about your potential career path.
6. Internships, service learning, and part-time or summer jobs can all help you learn what it means to be an employee and about work in general. This is definitely valuable to figure out before your first full-time job.
7. Experiencing work will teach you about yourself. Learning what you like and dislike about that particular industry, what your skills and strengths are, any potential weaknesses or areas that need improvement, and more before you land your first “real world” position will be beneficial.
8. These experiences may lead to a job offer! If you enjoy the work and are doing a good job in your position, you may be offered more responsibilities or even a full-time position.

9. Work placements are a great opportunity to network with people in your community and/or desired career path. This will help you build your contacts and could lead to possible recommendations or referrals.
10. Work experience builds your resume. Having a couple experiences described on your resume will put you further ahead than those without work experience.

*\* Adapted from Why is Work Experience Important? All About Careers*

## Internships and Apprenticeships

**Internships** are a type of pre-professional work experience where students “gain relevant knowledge and the skills required to succeed in a specific career field while making some money through an hourly wage, weekly salary, or stipend over the course of the internship” (Loretto). Companies will offer internships because they understand the value that interns can bring to the company and that they may be investing in a future employee.

Internships can open the door to employment opportunities, either within the company of the internship or otherwise. Internships on a resume tell employers that a candidate has had some hands-on experience and that will outshine those who do not have an internship on their resume. Internships also offer an immersive learning experience showing what it is like to work in a particular field that research and informational interviews cannot provide.

An **apprenticeship** is a program designed to train individuals on a specific type of job through on-the-job learning under another, more experienced employee. Apprenticeships combine a company’s need for highly skilled employees with a training program for new hires or employees who need to upgrade their skills. It is common to find apprenticeship programs in manufacturing and construction industries, but they are also becoming more widely available in growing industries such as IT, healthcare, energy, transportation, and logistics (“What is an Apprenticeship?”).

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services provides internships and apprenticeships as a great way to explore careers and try different jobs on for size through the workforce development training fund. Some of the available resources can be used to:

- Business Training Grants: To teach new skills or retrain current employees.
- Pre-Hire Grants: To train potential employees before job placement.
- Internship Grants: For structured learning experiences to enhance knowledge and skills.
- Apprenticeship Grants: For the development of a registered apprenticeship program where there is a shortage of skilled employees.

[Available apprenticeship programs within Wyoming can be found on the apprenticeship.gov website.](https://www.apprenticeship.gov)

Here you can explore sponsors who will take on apprenticeships and information about contacting folks directly.

Mizzen by Mott offers high school students an opportunity to connect with peers or older students who have completed an internship and learn about the various experiences that an internship may offer. [Take a look at the activity lesson plan here.](#)

## Community Service Learning/AmeriCorps

**For youth that want to learn more about diverse work experience, check out these links:**

[Non-Degree Credentials, Work-based Learning, and the American Working Class, American Enterprise Institute](#)

## 3. Certificates and Licenses

### Certificates:

Post-secondary certifications are vocational awards that require less than two years to complete, usually in middle-skill jobs with a goal to quickly prepare workers for the job. “Certificates are the fastest growing post-secondary credential, and second only to Bachelor’s degrees in the number earned each year” (Carnevale, et al, “Certificates”). Certificate programs are typically offered by community colleges, trade schools, and through non-degree courses at colleges and universities.

Most certificate programs are designed for people with a high school diploma or GED. “People usually earn certificates to help them prepare for a specific occupation; in other words, certificates are for people who want to train for a job rather than to earn a college degree. In some cases, however, a certificate can pave the way to college because certain programs’ credits count toward a future degree. And for some people, certificate programs help them prepare for licensure, certification, or other career-related qualifications” (Torpey 3).

Program Length: Certificate programs can last anywhere from a few months to several years.

- Short-term certificates require less than one year of instructional time.
- Medium-term certificates require one to two years of instructional time.
- Long-term certificates require two to four years of instructional time.

Types of Jobs: There are a multitude of jobs that certificate programs can lead to, including the following::

- Aviation
- Agriculture / Forestry / Horticulture
- Auto Mechanics

- Business / Office Management
- Computer and Information Services
- Construction Trades
- Cosmetology
- Culinary / Food Service
- Drafting
- Electronics
- Healthcare
- Metalworking
- Police / Protective Services
- Refrigeration, Heating, and Air Conditioning
- Transportation and Material Moving

General Resources for Certificates:

- [Certificates: A Fast Track to Careers](#): U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Will I Need a License or Certificate for My Job?](#) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- [Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees](#): Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce
- [Types of Training: Certifications](#): CareerOneStop
- [Certification Finder](#): CareerOneStop

## Licenses:

Licenses, just like certifications, demonstrate that an individual has specific knowledge or skills necessary to perform a certain job. Licenses are required, by state law, for workers in certain identified fields as a measure to ensure that only individuals who are skilled, competent, and ethical practice in a given occupation. In order to obtain a license, you must provide evidence that you meet the state's standards for that occupation or career. "Steps include completing specified training, logging a designated amount of work experience, and taking a licensure exam. Most exams assess knowledge of work processes, codes, policies, standard practices, and more" ("Licensed Occupations"). Many licenses require a degree as part of the standards for a particular profession, such as lawyer, doctor, or teacher.

The terms "certification" and "license" are often used interchangeably, however, they are not the same. The key difference between them is that a certification is not usually required for a job, but a license is legally required for anyone practicing certain professions.

Types of Jobs: In many states, licensed occupations include the following list of professions:

- Building Contractors
- Counselors
- Cosmetologists
- Doctors

- Electricians
- Land Surveyors
- Lawyers
- Nurses
- Teachers
- Therapists

ACTIVITY!!!

**For more information about certificates and licenses check out the following resources:**

[More and More Jobs Today Require a License. That's Good for Some Workers, but Not Always for Consumers:](#) Harvard Business Review

[Will I Need a License or Certificate for My Job?](#) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[Alternative Post-Secondary Pathways Research sheet.](#)

## 4. Military

Joining the military after high school comes with a vast array of considerations and potential benefits. It is definitely a serious decision that should not be taken lightly, but if one decides to enlist, there can be some major lifelong benefits. Some jobs within any of the five branches of the U.S. military mimic that of a civilian job, where the individual works Monday through Friday with typical hours. Other positions, however, may involve more commitment, more unpredictability, and more volatile situations. A few of the potential benefits include:

- A steady paycheck and potential for bonuses
- Education benefits through programs such as the GI Bill and Tuition Assistance Program
- Advanced and speciality training
- Possibility for travel
- Tax-free room and board
- Health and Dental care
- Special home loans and discounts
- Highly sought-after skills, leadership, and training experience

There are both full- and part-time service options available for military service. For example, enlisting in the Army Reserves means that, under normal circumstances, you “work” one weekend a month and two weeks a year for training. People who are enlisted in the Army Reserves still have lives and jobs outside their military obligations, such as other meaningful employment.

**For more information about military options check out the following resources:**

[Learn more about full- and part-time options](#) from the U.S. Department of Defense.

## 5. Trade Schools in Wyoming





WyoTech, a for-profit institution, is located in Laramie, Wyoming, and was founded in 1966. Jim Mathis became owner in 2018 with the goal to “provide a top-notch, concentrated training program that prepares students for the growing demand for technicians in the automotive and diesel industry” (*Why WyoTech*).

## **Programs**

WyoTech offers three different programs for students: Automotive Technology, Collision, and Refinishing Technology, and Diesel Technology. Specialties are also offered in Advanced Diesel, Chassis Fabrication, High-Performance Power Trains, Street Rod, Trim and Upholstery, and Applied Service Management. Training occurs eight hours a day, five days a week for a total of nine months. Click [here](#) to learn more about each program.

## **Scholarships**

WyoTech provides a list of outside scholarships that students can apply for to help with the costs. To check out the list of scholarships with more information, click [here](#).

## **Housing**

WyoTech provides housing options for students. Some benefits of living on campus include living within walking distance to all classes and shops, access to onsite student resident assistance and access to leases that match the length of the student’s enrollment at WyoTech. Apartments at WyoTech are multi-resident suites. There are both private and double-occupancy bedrooms with a shared kitchen, living room, and bathroom. Click [here](#) for more housing information.

## **Career Services**

WyoTech offers a free, web-based tool for students through the College Central Network that is designed to help students connect with employers. Students can upload resumes, create a shareable portfolio to showcase examples of their work and search for job opportunities.



## CHEEKS BEAUTY ACADEMY

*Est. 1984*

Cheeks Beauty Academy is located in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Since 1984, Cheeks Beauty Academy has been dedicated to sculpting professionals through a proven curriculum and real-world experience. Staff members deliver advanced classes, salon presentations, and more. Their mission is “to provide a quality education in cosmetology and related fields that will prepare the student for the state licensing examination and entry-level job skills” (*About Us*).

### Programs

Several programs are offered at Cheeks Beauty Academy in Wyoming. Click on the programs below to learn about the costs and more details about each one.

- [Barber Program](#)
- [Barber Stylist Program](#)
- [Cosmetology Program](#)
- [Hairstyling Program](#)
- [Instructor Program](#)

To get started at Cheeks Beauty Academy, visit their website at <https://www.cheeksbeautyacademy.com/>.



Rocky Mountain Academy of Hair, Skin, and Nails is located in Casper, Wyoming. This school will prepare students for all the necessary training to have a successful career in cosmetology. Students will have the opportunity to learn from experienced cosmetologists and will be introduced to services such as haircutting, hair coloring, facials, lash extensions, nail art, and more.

## **Programs**

Students can choose from six different programs:

- Cosmetology
- Nail technology
- Esthetics
- Hairstyling
- Barbering
- Barbering styling

To find out more information on each program, check out the [student information packet](#) on their website at <https://rockymountainacademy.net/>.

**For more information about trade schools, take a look at these resources**

## **Works cited**

Cohen, Marjorie D., et al. Afterschool Programming as a Lever to Enhance and Provide Career

Readiness Opportunities. Washington DC: American Institutes for Research, [ccrcenter.org/sites/default/files/Afterschool%20Career%20Readiness.pdf](https://ccrcenter.org/sites/default/files/Afterschool%20Career%20Readiness.pdf). Accessed Oct. 7, 2020.

interest inventory. BusinessDictionary.com. [www.businessdictionary.com/definition/interest-inventory.html](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/interest-inventory.html). Accessed Oct. 5, 2020.

Loretto, Penny. "How to Get Paid for an Internship." The Balance Careers. Oct. 25, 2019. [www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-a-paid-internship-1986731](http://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-a-paid-internship-1986731). Accessed Oct. 14, 2020.

Torpey, Elka. "Certificates: A Fast Track to Careers." Occupational Outlook Quarterly. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Winter 2012-13, [www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2012/winter/art01.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2012/winter/art01.pdf).