

Thoughts about your life after high school:

What does your post high school path look like?

Does it involve college? If it does, refer to the **Thoughts about your college search** article in this section, but college is not your only option and may involve many years of study to get you to where you want to go in life. **Planning now for your future can save stress and disappointment later on.**

What are your interests and could they be incorporated into a job in the future?

Consider your interests and potential job prospects when considering your plans for after high school. It's a good idea to gain experience through volunteering and having a job in that area. If you don't like the job, you'll know that is an area that you don't want to pursue!

What are you good at?

Don't forget to include areas of expertise; there may be job potential in that area!

Visit the **College and Career Center** to find **Interest Inventories** (they are most helpful in identifying areas that you **don't** like) and **Aptitude Assessments** (these can be helpful but you probably already know what you're good at!). There are a number of tools available on-line that can help you in these areas.

Post high school options to consider:

Of course there is college but college can be a

- 4-year college or university,
- 2-year community college with a 2-year degree,
- Certificate program or
- Transfer degree that will allow you to transfer to a 4-year college (this option is often times much less expensive than four years at a college/university).
- And you can get accepted to college and get a one year deferment to gain valuable life experiences before beginning your college study.
- Several other options to consider can help pay for college or training in a specific field: AmeriCorp, military service, internship or entry into the workforce to save for college (some employers actually make your savings, contributing to your college education or training in specific skills that are used in your job).

Something to keep in mind is that ANY post high school training or schooling will increase your employability and income! Generally speaking the more years of schooling the higher the income but this isn't always the case. **READ ON!**

A **2-year degree or certificate program** can prepare you with skills that will lead to immediate employment. These programs can be found at community colleges, technical institutes and trade programs.

They cover a **wide variety of jobs and careers**: Health Occupations (nursing and dental hygienist), Building Trades, Business, Computers, Cosmetology, Auto Mechanics and Auto Body. This is not an exhaustive list. Please visit the College and Career Center for more information on these programs.

If you know what field you'd like to go into, **you can start as early as your junior year!** Have you heard of Running Start? Running Start is taking courses at the community college that count for both high school and college credit and **it's free!**

To share a short story, I have a friend who didn't care for the book work side of high school, in fact, he barely graduated. After graduation, he attended Lake Washington Vocational Institute and earned a certificate in Auto Body. His first year, he made more than I made as a high school counselor with 15 years experience and over 8-years of post high school study! He has become quite an accomplished painter, with a number of photos of his cars being published in magazines! He had no trouble finding work and has been courted by other shops that provide even better pay opportunities. The negative part is that he had to pay over \$2000 in the early 1990's (yes, tuition has gone up!) and there were high school students sitting in his classes getting the exact same certificate for free!!

Running Start can pay for these programs at institutes like the Seattle Community Colleges (North, Central or South), Seattle Vocational Institute, Renton Vocational Institute or a program through Seattle Public Schools called City Campus.

Remember the first paragraph: **Planning now for your future can save stress and disappointment later on.**