

EXPLORE YOUR CAREER HORIZONS

Toolkit for New Jersey Students and Young Adults



Whether you have identified a specific career goal, are considering one or more areas of interest, or are simply seeking some direction, this *Toolkit* is for you. Here you'll find a framework for career exploration with examples of organizations and websites to support your efforts as you:



The *Toolkit* also includes some industry-specific resources to help you research these occupational options and look for similar resources for other industries.

Most fields offer an array of opportunities, some of which require college or advanced degrees, while others require certification, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training and a positive attitude. Whatever path is right for you, take advantage of the many different ways you can expand your knowledge, develop your skills, and prepare for your successful future.

FIND YOUR PATH



Comprehensive Career Resources for Exploration, Training, Work Experience, and More

CareerOneStop (<https://www.careeronestop.org>)

A true “one-stop” for career information that spans industry and job exploration, training, applying for jobs, and more. The site is sponsored by the US Department of Labor and includes a variety of current resources, a video library, and links to other sites.

GetMyFuture

(<https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture>)

Part of the CareerOneStop family of sites, GetMyFuture is designed specifically to help teens and young adults research careers, learn about and locate training or education programs, and conduct a successful job search.

My Career NJ Career Pathways

(<https://mycareer.nj.gov/career-pathways>)

Valuable introductions to high-growth industries and occupations and a searchable database that provides more in-depth information about specific jobs, including what they do, how to get started, education, and other experience, as well as local training resources, a link to current job listings on CareerOneStop, and more.

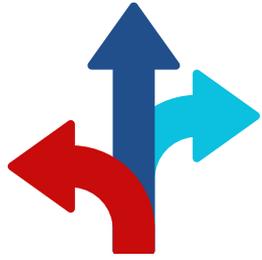
My Next Move (<https://www.mynextmove.org>)

Searchable job profiles based on data from O*NET Online (<https://www.onetonline.org>) with links to training, certification, local job openings, and more. The site also features the O*NET Interest Profiler.

US Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook (BLS OOH) (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>)

Current and comprehensive look at a wide range of jobs, including what someone in a particular role does, where they might work, and what education, skills, and experience they need, along with data about pay and job prospects. OOH also includes a list of similar occupations with high-level descriptions and links for more information.

LEARN & TRAIN



Career and Technical Education (CTE), Training, and Accreditation

CareerOneStop Find Training

(<https://www.careeronestop.org/FindTraining/find-training.aspx>)

Valuable overview of training options, information about paying for training, and a searchable directory of training programs, colleges, and universities by city, state or zip code.

Career Tech NJ

(<https://careertechnj.org>)

Comprehensive information for high school students and parents as well as adult students from the NJ Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools (NJCCVTS), which represents the vo-tech school districts in NJ's 21 counties. The site includes links to the county vo-tech school websites, CTE program information, and a video library.

My Career NJ Training Explorer

(<https://mycareer.nj.gov/training>)

Searchable database for training in NJ.

NJ Department of Education Career Readiness

(<https://www.nj.gov/education/cte>)

Access to lists of secondary and post-secondary CTE programs statewide and other information. The Resources section includes a "Career Readiness Toolbox" with links to career- and college-focused websites.

Online Learning Platforms

Find free and low-cost learning opportunities on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) such as Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org>) and edX (<https://www.edx.org>), as well as learning platforms like Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org>).

Technology Certification

Numerous educational institutions, organizations, and companies, including technology industry leaders like Microsoft, Google, and Amazon Web Services, offer skill-specific technology certifications. Courses may be online, classroom-based, or hybrid.

Union Apprenticeships

Labor unions representing workers across industries offer structured training programs that combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction to prepare individuals for careers in the skilled trades. Use the websites listed in this *Toolkit* as well as other resources to research potential apprenticeships.

Question: Can I get financial assistance for learning and training?

YES! Scholarships, fellowships, grants, and other financial assistance are available for all sorts of learning and training programs, from high school to associate's, bachelor's and graduate degrees to vocational programs and professional development.

Many of the resources included in this Toolkit offer information about scholarships and other financial assistance, such as CareerOneStop's searchable scholarship finder and the College Board's BigFuture platform.



College Options

College Board (<https://www.collegeboard.org>)

In addition to developing and administering standardized tests like the PSAT and SAT, College Board offers college and career research resources on their BigFuture platform.

College Navigator (<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>)

Official data on enrollment, financial aid, and graduation rates from the US Department of Education.

NJ Council of County Colleges (<https://www.njcommunitycolleges.org>)

Information for students, educators, and businesses about the state's 18 community colleges.

School-supported Platforms: Many high schools provide access to college and career research platforms, such as Naviance and Schoolinks. Contact your school counseling department for information.

High School Alternatives

Pathways to a High School Diploma

(<https://www.nj.gov/education/adulted/pathways>)

Information from the NJ Department of Education regarding alternative high school options for young adult and adult learners, including (1) General Equivalency Diploma (GED); (2) Thirty College Credit Program, and (3) Adult High School Program. Note that many public and nonprofit organizations offer GED prep and related services.

GET REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship.gov (<https://www.apprenticeship.gov>)

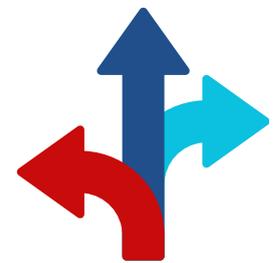
Informative website for students and career seekers that includes a searchable Apprentice Job Finder database, plus resources for employers and educators.

NJ Apprenticeship Network (NJAN)

(<https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/apprenticeship>)

Information about apprenticeships in general as well as NJ-specific opportunities and contacts.

LEARN & TRAIN



Question: What if I'm not sure what I want to do next?

Some young people take a gap year, typically following high school graduation, to gain more insights and experiences before committing to further education or a particular career path. A gap year could involve work (volunteer, paid, or both), courses to acquire specific skills and/or achieve personal growth, research, travel, and/or other experiential learning opportunities.

Design Your Own Gap Year: Use the resources in this Toolkit to research and pursue meaningful gap year activities.

Structured Gap Year Programs: Many organizations and companies offer structured gap year programs. Gap Year Association, Teen Life, and other organizations provide searchable gap year program directories and related information and resources.



GET REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE



Military Service

CareerOneStop Military Options (<https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/military-options.aspx>)

Overviews of the branches of the US military (Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force, Space Force) with links to each branch's main website and information about becoming an enlisted personnel, warrant officer, or officer.

Today's Military (<https://www.todaysmilitary.com>)

Comprehensive resource for young adults, parents, and educators about every facet of military life, from learning about the different military branches and ways to serve to eligibility and joining to life in the military and more.



Paid Work

NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development Career Services (<https://nj.gov/labor/career-services>)

Tools, training, job postings, and other resources for job seekers, as well as a dedicated section for young workers (<https://nj.gov/labor/youngworkers/>) that includes the online application and instructions for working papers.

One-Stop Career Centers (<https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/contact-us/one-stops>)

Services and support for jobseekers, including guidance from employment counselors, at sites in every NJ county.

Paid Job Postings: Online platforms like Indeed, LinkedIn, and Handshake (for college students via their school) offer searchable job opportunities. School counselors (for high school students) and career counseling centers (for college students) can also assist.

Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP): Many local governments, workforce development boards, and nonprofit organizations run SYEPs to provide young people with paid work experience, career exploration, and skill development opportunities during the summer months.



Volunteer Work

Jersey Cares Youth Service Opportunities (<https://www.jerseycares.org/youth-service>)

Events and information about volunteering for youth (ages 4 to 20).

NJ Department of State Volunteer and National Service (<https://nj.gov/state/volunteer.shtml>)

Information about volunteering in NJ and national volunteer programs with AmeriCorps.

Volunteer Job Postings: Online platforms like Idealist, Indeed, and others offer searchable volunteer opportunities. Local nonprofit and government organizations may have event-based, short-term or long-term volunteer roles as well.





Building and Construction Trades

- **Associations, Industry Groups, and Trade Unions:** There are many national and state organizations for the building and construction industry, such as Associated Construction Contractors of NJ (ACCNJ), New Jersey Builders Association (NJBA), and North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU).
- **Education and Training Options:** Vocational-technical schools, community colleges, and apprenticeship programs offer training in various trades like carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and HVAC, often with hands-on experience. Tradespeople can also learn on the job, starting in entry-level positions and assisting skilled workers. Some community colleges and universities offer certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate programs in building and construction-related fields, such as Construction Management and Project Management.

Education

- **Traditional and Alternate Routes for Teachers** (<https://www.nj.gov/education/certification/teachers>): Individuals who plan to teach in NJ can complete a formal teacher preparation program at an accredited college or university before being hired as a teacher, also known as the traditional route. The state also offers an alternate route that allows individuals to begin teaching with a Certificate of Eligibility (CE) while simultaneously completing a teacher preparation program.
- **NJ School Careers** (<https://www.nj.gov/education/careers/leavacancies>): NJ Department of Education website with links to education opportunities at public and charter schools throughout the state.

Firefighting and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

- **Fire and EMS Career Exploring** (<https://www.exploring.org/fire-ems>): Hands-on program for young people interested in a firefighting or EMS career that is offered by some local fire departments and EMS/ambulance squads.
- **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Training:** Aspiring EMTs must complete an approved EMT training course (offered at various community colleges, hospitals, and private training centers), pass a written exam, and get certified by the state. The NJ EMT Training Fund provides financial assistance for training and certification or recertification of volunteer EMTs.
- **Local Fire Academies:** NJ has multiple fire academies across the state that provide training for firefighters, from basic training to specialized courses and advanced certifications.
- **Volunteer Fire Departments and EMS/Ambulance Squads:** Many NJ municipalities have volunteer fire departments and EMS/ambulance squads that provide training, community, and opportunities to serve. The state's Volunteer Tuition Credit Program provides credits at county colleges, vocational schools, and technical programs, and some individual departments offer their own tuition assistance or reimbursement programs.

Hospitality

- **American Culinary Federation (ACF)** (<https://www.acfchefs.org>): Nationwide professional organization for chefs and cooks offering educational resources, training, apprenticeships, competitions, and accreditation programs for current and future chefs and pastry chefs.
- **ChooseRestaurants.org** (<https://chooserestaurants.org>): National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's (NRAEF) website with information about careers in the restaurant, food service, and hospitality industry, including programs for high school students, scholarships, and more.
- **Education and Training Options:** Several NJ high schools offer specialized Hospitality and Tourism programs that prepare students for careers in the industry. Many community colleges and universities offer certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate programs in various hospitality fields, such as Hospitality Management, Culinary Arts, Event Management, and Hotel Management, among others.



RESEARCH SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES



Law Enforcement

- **Discover Policing** (<https://www.discoverpolicing.org>): Comprehensive introduction to policing as a profession, different types of police agencies and officers, learning opportunities for youth, and more.
- **Junior Police Academy**: Programs offered by many local police departments and sheriff's offices throughout the state to introduce youth to various aspects of law enforcement.
- **Law Enforcement Exploring** (<https://www.exploring.org/law-enforcement>): Hands-on program for young people interested in a career in law enforcement or a related field in the criminal justice system. The NJ State Police has an Explorer program, as do many local police and sheriff's departments.

Manufacturing

- **NJ Manufacturing Extension Program (NJMEP)** (<https://www.njmep.org>): Consulting and training for manufacturers across industries, including aerospace, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and more, and focused on Operational Excellence, Innovation and Growth and Workforce Development.
- **New Jersey Manufacturing Skills Initiative** (<https://njmanufacturingskills.org>): Workforce development program based on the strategic partnership between NJ's community colleges, NJMEP, NJ Business and Industry Association (NJBIA), as well as other education and workforce development partners, and funded by the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Transportation

- **NJ Aviation Education Council** (<https://aviationec.org>): Statewide nonprofit network for students, educators, aviation and aerospace industry members, and government agencies to share career-related knowledge and resources.
- **NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT)** (<https://dot.nj.gov/transportation>): State agency responsible for managing and improving NJ's transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airports, and public transportation systems.
- **NJ Transit Careers** (<https://www.njtransit.com/careers>): Job opportunities with NJ's public transportation provider, which employs individuals across a wide range of trades, professions and crafts to support bus, rail, and light rail operations statewide.

And there's so much more: In addition to the examples provided here, consider careers related to energy, financial services, government, healthcare, human services, law, real estate, retail, technology, and more.

STAY CURIOUS!

Use this *Toolkit* now to investigate industries, identify jobs that excite you, and take the next steps available to you as a teen or young adult to set and achieve your career goals. Then return to the *Toolkit* in the months and years ahead to enhance and expand your skills, develop your network, and continue to pave your path.

The best way to have a rich and rewarding career – or perhaps multiple careers – is to continue to learn and grow, so ask questions, challenge yourself, help others, and importantly, *stay curious*.

Supporters

