



Future Careers

Beyond College in Pennsylvania

30-Minute Parent Workshop

May 13, 2025 · 12:00 PM

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Helping Families See All the Pathways

Today's Agenda



30 minutes · 4 sections

1

Shift the Mindset

Reframing success beyond college only

3 min

2

Career Pathways

CTE, apprenticeships, credentials, work-based learning

10 min

3

Promising Careers in PA

High-demand sectors with real wage growth

5 min

4

AI-Resistant Careers + Resources

Future-proof paths & PA tools for families

7 min

Shift the Mindset

There is no single pathway to success.

High-demand careers come through apprenticeships, certifications, technical training, and direct-to-work pathways.

College is one option — not the default.

Parent Takeaway: Ask about every path — not just college.



MCIU
CAREER CONNECTIONS

Pathways to Careers

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

High school programs with real certifications and industry skills

Apprenticeships (Earn While You Learn)

Paid job + training + credential. Build experience without debt. What is an Apprenticeship??

Industry Credentials & Certifications

Short-term, stackable credentials: OSHA, CNA, CompTIA, welding, and more. ETPL
List:

<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/JobSeeker/ManageServices/SearchTrainings.aspx>

Pathways in Detail



Career & Technical Education

- Available in high school through career & technical centers
- Students graduate with certifications, technical skills, and industry connections
- Examples: Welding, HVAC, IT, health careers, cosmetology

Apprenticeships

- Paid job + structured training + industry credential
- Reduces or eliminates student debt while building real experience
- Growth areas: Skilled trades, healthcare, manufacturing, IT

 *Ask your school: Does our district have a CTE center? What apprenticeships are available locally?*

Pathways in Detail

Industry Credentials & Certifications

- Short-term, stackable, and lower-cost than a 4-year degree
- Examples: OSHA, CNA, CompTIA, welding, manufacturing credentials
- ETPL list helps identify approved training programs

Work-Based Learning Philosophically

- Includes internships, job shadowing, and employer-connected learning
- Builds employability skills from an early age
- Helps students test out career interests before committing



 *Many students combine these — a CTE student can also do a work-based internship and earn a certification.*

Promising Careers in Pennsylvania

Healthcare Support
& Technical Roles

1

Skilled
Trades

2

Advanced
Manufacturing

3

Information
Technology
& Cybersecurity


4

Transportation
& Logistics

5

Strong demand · practical entry options · room for wage growth

Promising Careers in Pennsylvania

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- 1. Healthcare Support & Technical Roles Includes CNAs, LPNs, medical assistants, phlebotomists, surgical techs, and radiology techs.** Entry points are short certification programs (CNA can be done in 4–8 weeks) or associate degrees for technical roles. Montgomery County has major health systems nearby — Jefferson, Penn Medicine, Tower Health — creating strong demand.
 - Entry-level CNA in the Philadelphia area starts around ~\$20/hr [ZipRecruiter](#)
[Entry-level LPN in PA starts around ~\\$30/hr ZipRecruiter](#)
 - 2. Skilled Trades Electricians, plumbers, HVAC techs, carpenters, and welders.** Most enter through apprenticeships (4–5 years, earn while you learn) or CTE programs. Montgomery County has active union apprenticeship programs.
 - Entry-level electricians in PA average ~\$26/hr ZipRecruiter
 - Entry-level HVAC techs in PA average ~\$28/hr ZipRecruiter
 - Entry-level welders in PA average ~\$24/hr ZipRecruiter
 - 3. Advanced Manufacturing Includes production operators, CNC machinists, quality control techs, and industrial maintenance.** Montco has a strong manufacturing base (pharmaceuticals, defense, food production). Many roles offer on-the-job training or short-term credentials.
 - Entry-level production operators typically start around \$18–\$22/hr in the region, with skilled CNC/machinist roles starting higher

Promising Careers in Pennsylvania



4. Information Technology & Cybersecurity IT help desk and support roles are common entry points, requiring CompTIA A+ or similar certifications — no degree needed. Cybersecurity roles often start with a Security+ cert. The Philly/Montco corridor has significant demand from financial services, pharma, and healthcare employers.

- IT help desk/support roles typically start **\$18–\$22/hr** in the region
Entry-level cybersecurity analyst roles in PA generally range **\$52,000–\$75,000/year** to start [Nucamp](#)

Transportation & Logistics CDL truck drivers, logistics coordinators, and warehouse supervisors. CDL training can be done in as little as 3–7 weeks, and some carriers sponsor it in exchange for a work commitment. Some age restrictions apply.

Entry-level truck drivers in PA start around **\$44,000–\$54,000/year**, with experienced drivers earning \$65,000–\$90,000+ [CDL eXpert](#)

1

2

3

4

5

AI-Resistant Careers & Why They Matter

The jobs safest from AI are NOT defined by degree level.
They are defined by the TYPE of work.

Simple Rule:

Jobs that are hands-on, people-focused, or unpredictable tend to be safer from AI than jobs that are repetitive and screen-based.

AI-Resistant vs. Higher-Exposure Careers

✓ More AI-Resistant

- Skilled trades (electricians, plumbers, HVAC, welders)
- Healthcare & human services (CNAs, LPNs, therapists)
- Repair, installation & maintenance (auto techs, equipment repair)
- Service & hospitality (cooks, customer-facing roles)
- Outdoor & field-based work (utility, landscaping, line work)

⚠ Comparatively Higher Exposure

- Data entry
- Some customer service & call-center work
- Routine clerical & administrative processing
- Other highly repetitive, screen-based work with standardized rules

The 'AI-Proof' Skill Set

**Human Interaction
& Communication**

**Hands-On
Technical Skill**

**Real-Time
Problem Solving**

**Adaptability in
Unpredictable Environments**

**Emotional Intelligence
& Professionalism**

"Success will come from combining practical skills, people skills, and adaptability."

How Parents Can Help Right Now

1 Help your student complete a career-interest assessment -- not just ask 'What do you want to be?'

2 Ask schools about CTE, internships, job shadowing, pre-apprenticeship, and industry credentials.

3 Review wages and outlook together before choosing a pathway.

4 Focus on fit, demand, and long-term advancement -- not just whether a path is called 'college' or not.

Parent Resources

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Career Ready PA

Hub for career readiness, workforce resources, and parent-facing supports

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/student/career-ready-pa>

PA CareerZone

Internships, job shadowing, pre-apprenticeship, and related tools

<https://www.pacareerzone.org/>

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

PA CareerLink

Free career exploration, internship search, resume development support, and job search tools supported by the PA Department of Labor and Industry with county-based centers for job seekers 18 and older <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>

Pennsylvania Career Guide Wage information, career outlooks, and planning tools for students, parents, and jobseekers

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dli/resources/statistic-materials/products/career-guide>

Anthropic — Labor Market Impacts of AI

<https://www.anthropic.com/research/labor-market-impacts>

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

Wage information, career outlooks, and planning tools for students, parents, and jobseekers

<https://www.mciucc.org/>

We'd like to hear from you!

Use the link in the chat to:

- ▶ Share something you learned from today's session
- ▶ Let us know what questions you have
- ▶ Let us know what you want to learn more about