



How to choose a college or trade school

U.S. Department of Education

While getting the right education and training will help you get a better-paying job, going to college or career school is a big investment in time, money, and effort. Make sure to take your time and research your options.

How do I find the right college or career school for me?

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

There is a wide array of schools available for higher education. Options include two- and four-year colleges and universities, vocational, trade, and career schools, online schools, and graduate schools.

Different schools serve different purposes. Make sure you choose the type of school that helps you achieve your goals.

ASSESS YOURSELF

Understanding your career goals and options (and their earning potential) will help you find a college or career school that meets your needs.

The U.S. Department of Education's college search tool, College Scorecard, is a way to find and compare



COURTESY OREGON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Picking the right college or trade school is an important step that requires a lot of research.

colleges and career schools that may fit your needs.

It provides data on college costs, graduation rates, post-college earnings, and other useful information to help you make the best decision about where to go to school to make the best use of your financial aid.

CHECK OUT SCHOOLS

To help you narrow down your college or career school options, try the following:

- Check out the school's website. Lots of colleges

and career schools offer virtual tours, so you can still "see" the campus, even if you can't visit in person.

- Attend college fairs. College fairs give you the chance to talk to representatives from multiple colleges and career schools. For instance, you can visit the National Association for College Admission Counseling college fairs.

- A great way to get a feel for a school is to contact the school and schedule a visit, preferably while classes are in session. Be

sure to bring a list of questions to ask.

- If you're in high school, ask your school counselor what information he or she has about the schools that interest you.

Visit your state higher education agency's website to learn more about colleges and universities in your state.

SCHOOL COSTS AND NET PRICE

School costs can be one of the most important factors in choosing potential colleges or career schools — and costs can

vary significantly from school to school. Learn about what is included in the cost of college and ways to reduce college costs.

Any school that participates in the federal student aid programs is required to provide information on its cost of attendance and to offer a net price calculator on its website.

Searching for a school's net price calculator is easy. This calculator will give you an idea of how much a program may cost after subtracting any financial aid.

You can look up the cost and assess the value of colleges using the College Scorecard.

FINANCIAL AID

Many students worry that tuition and the other costs of continuing their education will be out of reach. But don't let the potential costs stop you.

Most students receive some kind of financial aid, and a few students even get a "free ride," with all their costs covered. You should learn about financial aid including grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans.

Always apply for all types of aid for which you might qualify, and meet all deadlines!

Creating and managing a budget is a way to keep track of your income and expenses and save for your goals.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Different schools have different admission requirements. Learn exactly what a school requires by visiting its website or checking in with its admissions office.

Many U.S. colleges require that students submit standardized test scores as part of their application packages. For most undergraduate programs, you'll have to take either the SAT® or the ACT® Test.

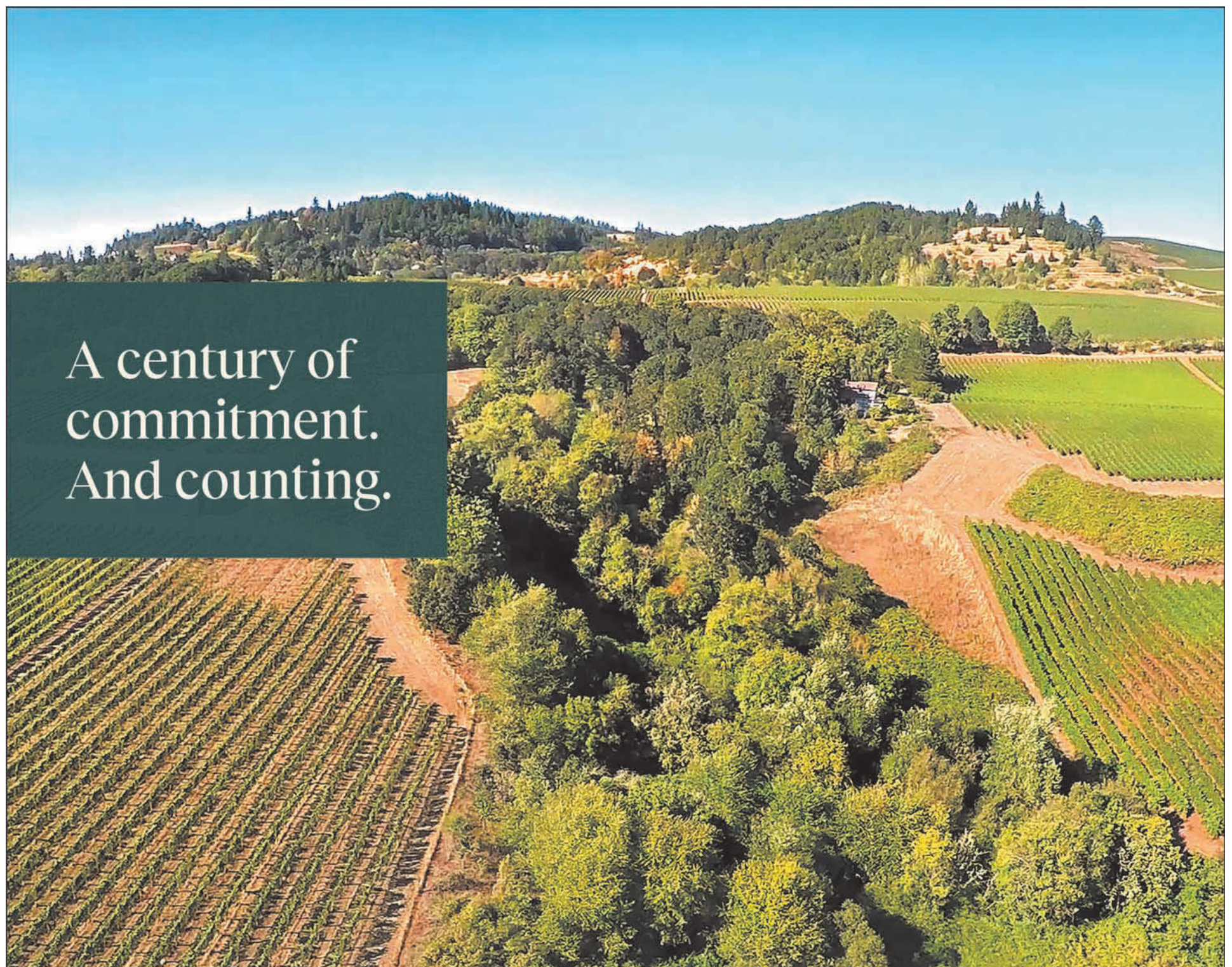
ACCREDITATION

An accredited school meets certain standards set by an independent agency.

It helps ensure the training or education you get meets employer standards in a specific field. If you attend a school that isn't accredited, you might not be able to get any financial aid.

Use our accreditation

See **HOW**, 9A



A century of commitment. And counting.

For over 100 years we have seen the cycles, weathered the storms and adapted with the times, steadfast in our commitment to support producers and rural communities alike. Because some things should never change.

Learn more at AgWestFC.com.

Equal Housing Lender
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.





Pathways to careers in the trades

Oregon Goes to College

Trades usually refer to careers in the construction, manufacturing, mechanical, and utility fields. They are usually hands-on jobs that are physically and mentally challenging. You may need to join a union for some trades.

Most trades need education or training beyond high school. There are many different avenues into the trades.

- **Certificate or Associate degree:** 1-2 year programs that focuses on skills for a specific career. Available at community colleges, trade schools or JobCorps centers.

- **Apprenticeship:** Paid on-the-job training and classroom learning for a specific trade. In Oregon, they are offered at a community college, trade school, or an Apprenticeship and Training Center (ATC).

- **Bachelor's degree or higher:** Management and engineering jobs in the trades often need an



COURTESY OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Most trades need education or training beyond high school. There are many different avenues into the trades.

advanced degree from a college or university.

Take the right classes to graduate from high school. You will need a high school diploma or GED.

Take math in high school. Most trades jobs use math regularly.

Take Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes to get hands-on experience.

Learn more about trades.

Take part in an internship, job shadow or summer program.

Volunteer with a community program where you can learn new skills and practice good work habits.

Enroll in a pre-apprenticeship program. These help you get ready to enter a trade

or apprenticeship program.

Explore career and training options at Build Oregon and Oregon Apprenticeship.

Stay healthy and fit.

Stay drug-free.

Employers may screen applicants and employees.

Get in shape. Many trades jobs are physically demanding.

How to pay for higher education

U.S. Department of Education

GRANTS

A grant is a form of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund, or you receive a TEACH Grant and don't complete your service obligation). A variety of federal grants are available, including:

- Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), and Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants.

WORK-STUDY JOBS

The Federal Work-Study Program allows you to earn money to pay for school by working part-time. You'll earn at least the current federal minimum wage. However, you may earn more depending on the type of work you do and the skills required for the position. Your total work-study award depends on when you apply, your level of financial need, and your school's funding level.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Many nonprofit and private organizations offer scholarships to help students pay for college or career school. This type of aid, which is sometimes based on academic merit, talent, or a particular area of study, can make a real difference in helping you manage your education expenses.

LOANS

A loan is money you borrow and must pay back with interest. If you apply for financial aid, you may be offered loans as part of your school's financial aid offer. When you receive a student loan, you are borrowing money to attend a college or career school. You must repay the loan as well as interest that accrues. It is important to understand your repayment options so you can successfully repay your loan.

APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Federal student aid from

the Department of Education covers such expenses as tuition and fees, housing and food, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid can also help pay for other related expenses, such as a computer and dependent care. Thousands of schools across the country participate in the federal student aid programs; ask the schools you're interested in whether they do!

Apply for federal student aid—grants, work-study, and loans—using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. And remember, the first F in "FAFSA" stands for "free"—you shouldn't pay to fill out the FAFSA form!

The FAFSA form you fill out should correspond with the school year you're planning to seek aid for. For example, if you're applying for financial aid for the 2026-27 school year, fill out the 2026-27 FAFSA form. Likewise, if you're applying for financial aid for the 2025-26 school year, fill out the 2025-26 FAFSA form. If you plan to take summer classes, contact your school's financial aid office to determine which FAFSA form you should fill out.

You can estimate your eligibility for federal student aid and your Student Aid Index with our Federal Student Aid Estimator. Be sure to use the tool before you fill out the FAFSA form.

AID FROM COLLEGES, TRADE SCHOOLS

Many schools offer financial aid from their own grant and/or scholarship funds. Find out what might be available to you:

- Visit your school's financial aid page on its website, or contact the financial aid office.

- Ask at the department that offers your course of study; they might have a scholarship for students in your major.

- Fill out any applications your school requires for its own aid programs, and meet your school's deadlines.



COURTESY OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Whether it's attending a traditional four-year university, enrolling in a community college, or pursuing certificates, apprenticeships and other trades, college offers numerous benefits.

Pursuing education beyond high school

Oregon Goes to College

For high school students nearing graduation, the question of what comes next often looms large.

While some may feel uncertain about their future path, one option stands out as a transformative opportunity: college.

Whether it's attending a traditional four-year university, enrolling in a community college, or pursuing certificates, apprenticeships and other trades, college offers numerous benefits. Let's explore some of the key benefits of furthering your education after high school.

- **Expanded Career Opportunities:** One of the most significant benefits of college is the expanded array of career opportu-

nities it unlocks. By obtaining a degree or certification in a specific field, you gain specialized knowledge and skills that make you more competitive in the job market.

Whether you aspire to become a doctor, engineer, teacher, or graphic designer, higher education provides the foundation necessary to pursue your chosen career.

- **Higher Earning Potential:** Studies consistently show that individuals with higher levels of education tend to earn higher salaries over their lifetime. According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, individuals with a bachelor's degree typically earn an average of \$2.8 million over their lifetime, while those with just a high school diploma average about \$1.6 million.

HOW

Continued from 8A

search page to check a particular school's standards or to find an accredited school in a particular field or location.

ENROLLMENT CONTRACTS
Read any school enrollment contract carefully before you sign it.

The contract explains what the school will give you for your money.

If a school representative promises you something (such as help finding a job) that's not in the contract, ask the representative to write that promise into the contract and have it signed and dated. A promise is usually not enforceable unless it's in writing.

Find out the school's tuition refund policy.

If you enroll but never begin classes, you should get most of your money back. If you begin attending classes but leave before completing your course work, you might be able to get some of your money back.

Also find out the school's return-of-aid policy. If you receive federal student aid (except for Federal Work-Study) and you withdraw from school, some of that money might have to be given back to the source

LEE'S DIESEL & MOBILE REPAIR, LLC
Rickreall, OR • 541-936-9146 • www.leasediesel.com

Pivot & Linear Irrigation Systems
Parts & Service - All Electric Machines, Diesel Engines & Generators



GPS Guidance Systems
Submersible & Line-Shaft Turbine Pumps, VFD's




Deutz Linear Engine Timing Belts
Replace every 5 Years or 4500 hrs

Lima Generator Bearing and Cap
New Engines: Isuzu, FPT, Perkins & Others

Specializing in Truck and Livestock Scales

Established in 1959, Scales NW offers a wide range of equipment, from precision lab balances to high capacity rail scales, as well as certified scale service and installation.

Scales NW is proud to serve:
California
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
Oregon
Utah
Washington

Contact Steve Orr for more information today!
Email: steveorr@scalesnw.com
Phone: (503) 510-3540

SCALES
NORTHWEST

www.scalesnw.com • (800) 451-0187

5221096-1