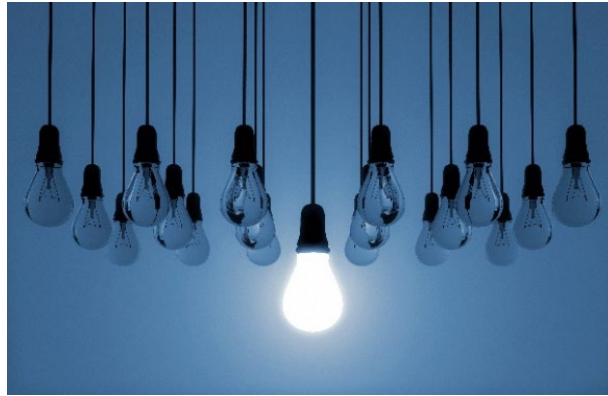




# Career Pathways Guide

for

## Nevada Students Who Have Experienced Foster Care



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## Beginning Your Postsecondary Education Journey & Launching Your Career Path

Congratulations on earning your high school diploma or equivalency certificate! Deciding what you want to pursue next, and where to focus your time and energy, can be overwhelming. BUT, there are many resources to assist you, as well as people who can help you along the way. The earlier you begin to plan for your future, the more likely you will be to achieve your personal, academic, and professional goals.

Setting postsecondary education goals as early as possible (ideally before you finish high school), and developing an informed academic plan before enrolling in college-level coursework, can help you avoid costly detours within your academic path that can prolong your college enrollment and delay your graduation/completion timeline. Delays can happen when students do not plan ahead for the coursework they will need, change their major late in their credential path, and/or realize after they have already completed a credential that they are not really that interested in working in that field.

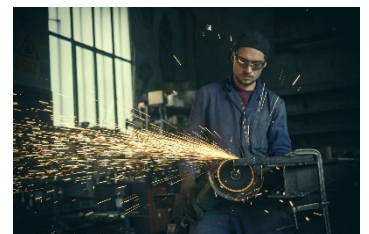
In order to make the most of your postsecondary education and ensure that you end up on the career path that you want, it is imperative that you plan ahead for your future, as much as possible, no matter where you currently stand in your academic journey. Planning ahead and regularly asking for help along the way are critical strategies to ensure that you get settled on the academic and career path that is right for you, and in alignment with your short- and long-term goals. You are much more likely to be happy and successful in your work when your job matches your interests, passions, and skills.

# 1. Choose Your Own Adventure! – Discover potential careers that may excite you.

**Explore Your Career Options:** To ensure that you pursue a postsecondary education path that will lead to a career that you will enjoy, it is wise to do a little research on potential career options before you select a postsecondary education institution and enroll in college-level coursework.

If you need support with exploring living-wage career options that may be a good fit for your skills and interests/passions, these resources can help:

- ❖ **Federal Student Aid's Career Search Tool** – This tool, housed on the *U.S. Department of Education (ED)* website, utilizes the *Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)*, which was developed under the sponsorship of the *U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration*. It allows users to explore job options in different employment fields, providing information such as: 1) an overview of what the jobs entail; 2) the knowledge, skills, and abilities required; 3) personality traits that tend to be a strong match; 4) the level of education/training required; 5) whether or not new job opportunities are likely to be available in the future; and 6) average salary ranges.
- ❖ **O\*NET Interest Profiler** – This tool is sponsored by the *U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration*. “The O\*NET Interest Profiler can help you find out what your interests are and how they relate to the world of work...[it] helps you decide what kinds of careers you might want to explore.” The tool has 60 assessment questions about work activities that some people do on their jobs; after you answer the questions, the tool will generate relevant information about which careers you may want to further explore, based on how you answered the questions.
- ❖ **Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)** – This tool is managed by the *U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)*. It allows users to search for occupations that may be a good fit for their interests and skills, by narrowing down options through the following filters: 1) Median Pay; 2) Education Level Required; 3) On-the-Job Training Offered; 4) Projected Number of New Jobs; and 5) Projected Growth Rate. Users can also compare different occupations across those 5 search filters, using their **occupation finder** tool. Additionally, users can also browse occupations by: 1) Highest Paying; 2) Fastest Growing (Projected); 3) Most New Jobs (Projected); and 4) Field of Degree.
- ❖ **BigFuture Career Quiz** – This tool is managed by College Board, through their BigFuture website, and it directly links to the information managed by the *U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration* (including the O\*NET Interest Profiler). The quiz is estimated to take about 15 minutes. It focuses on matching users with careers based on their likes and dislikes. You will want to create a free account before you complete the quiz, so that you can sign into your account before taking the quiz and save your career matches after taking the quiz.



## 2. Give Your Adventure a Sense of Direction! – Align your postsecondary education and career goals.

### Explore Postsecondary Education

#### Schools/Programs that Align with Your Career

**Goals:** Before you invest your time, energy, and money in a postsecondary education school/program, you want to ensure that it is the right school/program for you.

**What is most important for me to consider as I narrow down my postsecondary education institution/program of study options?**



Choosing the postsecondary education institution and program of study that will most effectively prepare you for your desired career path—at a price you can afford—can be overwhelming to figure out. There are many internal and external factors to consider; but, there are resources to help! Just make sure that you are using reputable resources that are not trying to “sell you” on any particular options. **Resources provided directly and/or vetted by the U.S. Department of Education (ED)**—particularly through their Federal Student Aid office—are the most reputable.

Students should always carefully weigh which available postsecondary education institution/program of study options are best for their particular situation.

[Federal Student Aid’s Choosing a School webpage](#) is a great place to begin, to obtain information about the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) colleges/universities and other college/university options that you may want to consider, in Nevada and/or in other states!

But, here are the **TOP 5 FACTORS TO CONSIDER**, as well as **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** to help you sort through your postsecondary education and career preparation options...

### 1. **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS** – Which schools/programs you can realistically be admitted to, based on the alignment between their admission requirements and your academic record

Do you meet the college/university’s minimum admission requirements? The major admission factors you need to research/consider include the following:

- **Required High School Courses** – Does the college/university require certain **high school courses** to have been completed, in order to be admitted (particularly in the areas of math, English, natural science, and social studies)?
- **Type of Secondary-level Credential Earned** – Does the college/university require a **high school diploma** for admission? Or, can you be admitted with a **high school equivalency certificate (HiSET, TASC, or GED)**?
- **Graduating High School GPA OR Official High School Equivalency Certificate Exam Scores** – Does the college/university require a certain minimum **graduating high school GPA** and/or minimum **high school equivalency certificate (HiSET, TASC, or GED) scores**, for admission?



- **Standardized Test (ACT/SAT) Scores** – Does the college/university require you to submit **official ACT and/or SAT standardized test scores**, to be admitted?
  - o **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Standardized test (ACT and/or SAT) scores are NOT required for admission to ANY public Nevada college/university (i.e. the 7 degree-granting NSHE institutions). However, if you took one or both tests, you should submit the scores to help place you in the most appropriate introductory college math and English courses. Students will have additional math/English placement options, if they do NOT have standardized test scores OR if they feel that their standardized test scores are not an accurate measure of their academic ability.

2. **BEST FIT FOR ACADEMIC/CAREER GOALS** – Which school/program is most in line with your ultimate academic/career goals—including consideration of whether or not you will have the option of building upon your credits and continuing to advance in your education (either at the same school or through transferring to a different school), if you think there is any chance that you might want to pursue more education/a higher certificate or degree after you complete a credential (at whatever level you choose)



3. **COST** – What each program/credential (certificate or degree) costs (including classes, books/supplies, and transportation) **AND** how much of your education would need to be paid for with **STUDENT LOANS** that you will need to **PAY BACK**, with *interest/extra fees*, after you leave the school/graduate—as opposed to financial aid that you do NOT need to repay (*gift aid*), provided you are maintaining sufficient attendance in your classes and adhering to all financial aid regulations



- Costs of attending college vary, based on a variety of factors—including the type and quality of postsecondary education institution that a student enrolls in, where that institution is located, the type of credential that the student chooses to pursue, and how much *gift aid* a student receives.
- For more information on FINANCIAL AID, check out our [Foster Care-Specific Financial Aid & FAFSA Guide](#):



**BEST FIT FOR ACADEMIC/CAREER GOALS & COST (continued)** – If you need support with exploring which schools/programs of study will most effectively prepare you for the career you want, at a price you can afford, these additional *U.S. Department of Education* (ED) resources can help:

- [ED's College Navigator](#) (a tool, developed by ED's *National Center for Education Statistics*, that allows users to narrow down best-fit postsecondary education institution options by inputting a range of criteria they are looking for) AND [ED's College Scorecard](#) (a tool that allows users to look up postsecondary education institutions and/or programs of study that they already know they are interested in pursuing, to assist in making a decision)
- ❖ Both tools provide users with a summary of the following key information (and more) for each institution: 1) location; 2) type of school; 3) types of credentials offered; 4) programs of study/majors; 5) whether standardized test scores are required & the admission/acceptance rate; 6) average annual cost (which you can also get information about through [ED's Net Price Calculator Center](#)); 7) financial aid & student loan debt statistics; 8) whether campus-based housing is offered; 9) campus diversity statistics; 10) extended learning opportunities (distance learning, weekend/evening courses, & credit for life experience); 11) student retention and graduation rates; and 12) typical earnings of graduates.



#### 4. **QUALITY** – Whether the institution is **ACCREDITED** and **LICENSED** by the state

**Accreditation standards** are a set of criteria that qualified higher education accrediting bodies use to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of institutions and programs. It is important to know that not all postsecondary education institutions have the same *accreditation standards*; **what is most important to look for is that the institution is accredited by an accrediting agency that is approved/recognized by the *U.S. Department of Education* (ED).**

- You can find out whether or not a postsecondary education institution—and the specific program of study you are interested in pursuing—meets at least the minimum *accreditation standards* of a qualified higher education accrediting body that is approved/recognized by the *U.S. Department of Education* (ED), by searching for that institution and/or program in [ED's Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs](#). When you search for an institution/program, the database will tell you if it is accredited and, if so, by which accrediting agency.
- **REGIONAL** accrediting organizations tend to be viewed as having more rigorous accreditation standards than those that are **NATIONAL**, so you may want to search for institutions that are accredited by one of the [six U.S. REGIONAL accrediting commissions](#). You will see that many job postings ask for credentials that are earned by an institution/program that is **REGIONALLY accredited**, so this is an important consideration in choosing a school/program.



- Be sure to **WATCH OUT FOR DIPLOMA MILLS**—unaccredited schools, or businesses claiming to be schools, that award “degrees” without requiring coursework that meets college-level standards—which you can learn more about through [ED's Diploma Mills and Accreditation webpage!](#)



**State licensure** refers to the authorization granted by a state, to a postsecondary education institution, to operate educational programs beyond high school; it is another critical component to look for in the postsecondary education institutions you are considering.

- The ***State of Nevada Commission on Postsecondary Education*** “is the predominant licensing authority charged by the Nevada Legislature for the oversight of private postsecondary educational institutions operating in Nevada. The Commission meets its oversight obligations through a rigorous licensure process and periodic reviews” (<https://cpe.nv.gov/About/About/>). You can find out more about state institution/program licensure through their [Students webpage](#)—including updates/warnings about recent closures of Nevada postsecondary education institutions that were shut down due to *accreditation/ licensure* issues.

**REMEMBER, NO SCHOOL CAN LEGALLY GUARANTEE A STUDENT/GRADUATE A JOB!!** If any school/institution does this, you should report them to the commission.

Institution/program accreditation and licensure directly impact an institution and/or program of study’s track record with overall **QUALITY**.

- In addition to researching an institution/program’s accreditation and state licensure—before enrolling or signing student loan paperwork—it is wise for prospective students to also seek out information about what **GRADUATES** of that institution/program and **EMPLOYERS** in that field/industry say about its quality.
- While institution employees may also be able to provide prospective students with useful information that will help them determine the institution/program’s quality, information provided by the institution itself is inherently biased in its favor; and, some institutions employ more **AGGRESSIVE MARKETING TACTICS** that prospective students should watch out for.



## 5. **BEST FIT FOR PERSONAL SUCCESS** – Whether an institution/program meets your particular life situation and individual needs, based on an evaluation of the following key factors: a) Program of Study Requirements; b)

Class Structure; c) Location; d) Faculty (Instructors/Professors); e) Field Work Opportunities; and f) Campus-Based Resources/Services



## Knowing Your Local Public Colleges/Universities

### 3. Know Your Local Public Schools! – Explore the programs of study and specialized resources at Nevada’s public colleges/universities.

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) oversees all 7 public, nonprofit, degree-granting colleges and universities in Nevada.



Public, nonprofit colleges/universities—on both the 2-year and 4-year level—are funded by public, taxpayer money; so, there is often a substantial financial benefit to being a **RESIDENT** (in-state) student at a public, nonprofit postsecondary education institution.

Because NEVADA RESIDENT students have paid/will pay taxes in Nevada, while non-resident (out-of-state) students have NOT paid taxes in Nevada, NEVADA RESIDENTS (taxpayers) typically benefit from the following, at Nevada colleges/universities (**must be a resident prior to enrolling in college courses**):

- **Lower fees** (RESIDENT students are NOT charged non-resident tuition)
- **GIFT AID** (i.e. financial aid that typically does NOT need to be repaid) **that is ONLY AVAILABLE TO QUALIFYING NEVADA RESIDENTS** (i.e. Nevada residents who meet all eligibility criteria)—such as the [Nevada Promise Scholarship \(NPS\)](#), the [Silver State Opportunity Grant \(SSOG\)](#), and the [Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship \(GGMS\)](#).

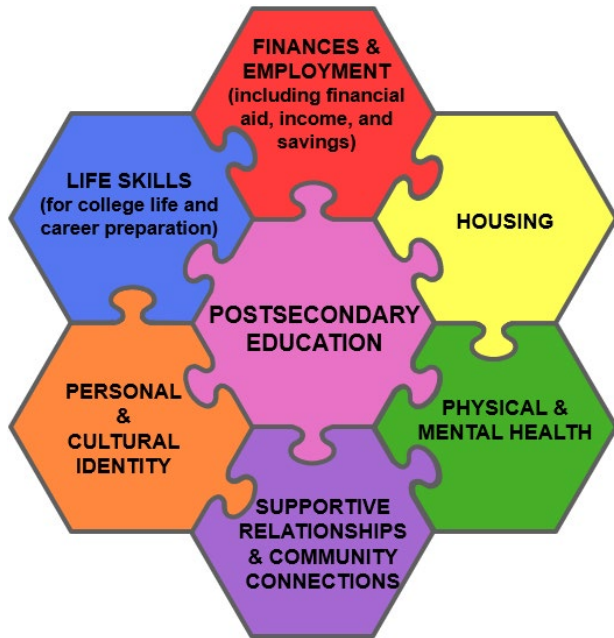
The 7 degree-granting Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions are as follows:

- ❖ 4 Community Colleges:
  - College of Southern Nevada (CSN);
  - Great Basin College (GBC);
  - Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC); &
  - Western Nevada College (WNC);
- ❖ 1 Small Teaching University: Nevada State University (NSU); and
- ❖ 2 Large Research Universities: University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) & University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)



The 7 institutions vary when it comes to the TOP 5 FACTORS TO CONSIDER, outlined in SECTION 2 above.  
DO YOUR RESEARCH! ☺

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) **ALSO** provides tailored wraparound support to students who have experienced foster care, and we encourage you to access those resources/services.



Adapted from: 1) Casey Family Programs. (2006). *It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training*. <https://www.casey.org> & 2) Fostering Success Coaching Institute. (2008). *Fostering Success Coaching: The Seven Life Domains*. <https://www.fosteringSUCCESScoaching.com>

Through a holistic approach, the NSHE Fostering Success Initiative centers postsecondary education success and career preparation as it focuses on the PRESENT and the FUTURE with students who have experienced foster care.

Enthusiastic educators engage in 3 key activities that promote student success and wellbeing:

- 1) Individualized direct coaching that centers the young person as the expert in their own experiences and needs, builds trust, and fosters self-advocacy and independent living skills;
- 2) Tailored resource and/or support service provision, within campus- and community-based settings (including “sense of belonging” opportunities); and
- 3) Timely and appropriate advocacy that assists in removing barriers.

Check out the initiative’s [Wraparound Support Flyer](#), for a comprehensive list of NSHE staff/faculty and campus-based support programs that are dedicated to serving students who have experienced foster care:



- These contact people/programs can provide you with one-on-one assistance, connect you to resources, and help you navigate any barriers that you may encounter throughout your college journey.
- They can also connect you with other college students who have experienced foster care!



For more information on what to consider, regarding **SECTIONS 2 & 3** above, check out another one of our online resources, [College 101 for Nevada Students Who Have Experienced Foster Care](#):





## Learning and Growing Throughout College

### 4. Chart Your Course! – Utilize your coursework, campus-based career services, professors/mentors, and other postsecondary education resources to help you narrow down your options and plan a career path that excites you.

**A. Choose Relevant Postsecondary Education Courses:** Use the insight gained from the previous resources to carefully decide what you want to pay for, before choosing a program of study (major) and enrolling in college-level coursework. Talk to as many experts and personal support people as you can, early on, to get the support you need to make critical decisions at key times.



**Remember, one of your first college enrollment steps is to schedule an appointment with an academic advisor**—to discuss your academic/career interests, declare a major/program of study, and receive assistance enrolling in your first semester of coursework. Additionally, you will need to continue meeting with your academic advisor at least once per semester, to ensure that you are enrolling in the correct coursework to stay on track for graduation.

**B. Seek Expert Career Exploration & Planning Support, While Enrolled in College:** To help you avoid feeling overwhelmed and confused, it is highly recommended that you seek career exploration and planning suggestions and resources from various career experts.



**Remember, this is your time, money, education, career, and LIFE;** and, you deserve to pursue a path that will financially and emotionally sustain you. Try your best to navigate the resources available to you; and, try to filter out advice that is clearly irrelevant to your values and/or goals. TRUST YOUR GUT, because you know yourself and your needs better than anyone else! 😊 Here are some resources you can access and strategies you can employ, to assist you with career exploration and planning:

- ❖ **Campus-Based Career Services** – See SECTION 7, SUBSECTION C: *Gain Practical Work Experience: Utilize Your Career Preparation/Planning & Job Attainment Resources*—under *Campus-Based Career Preparation/Planning & Job Attainment Resources*—for information about campus-based career services on the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) college/university campuses.
- ❖ **Your Instructors/Professors** – Email your instructors/professors and/or attend their office hours, to ask them questions about potential career pathways that relate to their areas of expertise. Let them know what interests you most about their course content, and ask them what resources they recommend to help you figure out what coursework, job training, and work experience you need to pursue in order to achieve your goals.



- ❖ **Informational Interviews** – A great way to figure out what you might enjoy doing for a living is to participate in “informational interviews” with people who have jobs that intrigue you. If you don’t know anyone who fits that description, ask for help identifying people. People who love what they do for a living also tend to love talking about it; so, you will find that it isn’t as hard as you think to get people to agree to an informational interview. Once you identify someone to interview—and schedule a day, time, and location—you should prepare for the meeting by coming up with a short list of what excites you about the work that person does, as well as any questions you have about their field and/or the necessary skills, training/credentials, and preparation needed to obtain a job like theirs.
  - Etiquette: Research first, show up early, bring paper and a writing utensil, and send a follow-up “thank you” note!
  - [Check out this informational interviewing resource from Yale University’s Office of Career Strategy](#)
- ❖ **Career Advice Forums** – There are also a variety of online career advice forms that you can explore, as outlined in the blog posted linked here.

## Engaging and Working Throughout College

### 5. Get Involved On Your Campus

- A. Join or Start a Club**: Most colleges/universities have a variety of student-run, campus-based organizations (clubs). These range from interest-based, to activity-based, to pre-professional clubs that correlate with your major. This is a great way to get involved in your campus community, make friends, and build your resume for the workforce and/or graduate school.



**Each Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) college/university has campus-based organizations that you can join; and, each campus-based organization has student leaders (club officers) and a staff/faculty advisor who you can talk to about joining! 😊**

- ❖ Direct links to the school-specific websites that list all of the NSHE student organizations:

- [University of Nevada, Las Vegas \(UNLV\) Student Organizations](#)
- [University of Nevada, Reno \(UNR\) Student Organizations](#)
- [Nevada State University \(NSU\) Student Organizations](#)
- [College of Southern Nevada \(CSN\) Student Organizations](#)
- [Great Basin College \(GBC\) Student Organizations](#)



- [Truckee Meadows Community College \(TMCC\) Student Organizations](#)
- [Western Nevada College \(WNC\) Student Organizations](#)

- ❖ We are working to implement clubs at the larger NSHE schools, known as *Fostering Community*. This is a campus-based club concept for students with experience in foster care. The purpose of *Fostering Community* is to give students who have experienced foster care the ability to meet other students at their own schools and throughout the public higher education system who have had similar experiences, and to engage in advocacy projects that interest them that support the local foster care community with education attainment.



## B. Participate in Student

**Government:** Participating in student government gives you a voice within your campus community, helps to build leadership skills, and looks great on a resume because it shows how involved you are on your campus. Student government participation can help to more meaningfully connect you with people in your campus community, and it is a great way to enact change around issues you care about.



## 6. Get Involved in Your Larger Community

### **BENEFITS OF GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR LARGER COMMUNITY:**

- A. **Discovering Personal Interests:** Figuring out what you enjoy and the areas in which you excel are great ways to foster self-confidence and develop skills that you may not yet have had a chance to build and refine. Getting involved in your community is also a great way to build new professional relationships and/or make new friends.
- B. **Giving Back:** It is important to contribute to your local community, even in small ways. Volunteering in your community allows you to give something of value to someone else without expecting anything in return, and that helps to build both character and trust between you and the community members who you serve.



**C. Developing Leadership Skills:** Intentionally getting to know members of your larger, local community and learning about the range of diverse interests, as well as opportunities to engage, is a great step toward becoming an effective leader. This also facilitates relationship/team-building skills, as well as skill-building in the areas of effective and empathic listening, collaboration, mentorship, and leadership.

**D. Building a Strong Resume:** When applying to colleges or for jobs, a lot of college admission representatives and employers look to see if you have volunteered and how active you are in your local community. So, aside from your own personal development and the wellbeing of your community, meaningfully engaging with your community is also beneficial for your long-term academic goals and professional career.

**E. Facilitating Personal Growth and Development:**

- ❖ **Improving Social and Relationship-Building Skills:** Getting involved in your larger, local community helps people practice and develop effective social skills. Once there is some initial momentum, it is easier to build relationships and connect with others. This does not mean that you need to be a “social butterfly,” as there are a variety of ways to get engaged and build relationships. Whether you are an extreme extrovert, an extreme introvert, or anything in between, there are ways for you to build relationships in a manner that works best for you.
- ❖ **Nourishing the Mind and the Body:** Getting involved in your community can help nourish your mind and body and/or help to relieve stress. When people feel connected to others in their community, they tend to feel less isolated and stressed. And, “giving back” to others can help to contribute to a positive mindset and increased happiness. It can also help to create a sense of accomplishment.
- ❖ **Building Self-Esteem/Confidence:** Getting involved in your community, particularly when doing “good deeds” for others, provides a natural sense of accomplishment. This helps to cultivate a sense of pride and identity, as well as self-esteem/confidence.

**WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LARGER COMMUNITY:**

**A. Volunteer:** This is the most notable and meaningful way to get involved in your community. There are many different organizations for which you can volunteer your time; and you can choose more than just one option (simultaneously or consecutively). Volunteering looks very good on a resume, to both colleges and prospective employers; so, it is highly suggested that you build substantial and personally meaningful volunteer experience.



Nevada Nonprofit Search Tools (to find places where you can “give back” to your community):

- ❖ [CountyOffice.org: Charities & Non Profits in Nevada](#)  
– Search by Nevada city or county, to find nonprofit organizations in your area where you can volunteer. Several county/city-specific links are provided below:
  - County-Specific Links: [Carson City](#); [Clark County](#); [Lyon County](#); [Washoe County](#)
  - City-Specific Links: [Carson City](#); [Henderson](#); [Las Vegas](#); [Laughlin](#); [North Las Vegas](#); [Reno](#); [Sparks](#)
- ❖ [Great Nonprofits](#) – Search by Nevada city, to find nonprofit organizations in your area where you can volunteer. Several city-specific links are provided below:
  - [Carson City](#); [Elko](#); [Henderson](#); [Las Vegas](#); [Laughlin](#); [North Las Vegas](#); [Reno](#); [Sparks](#)



### **B. Attend Community Events:**

Attending community events is good for networking with fellow community members and finding professional opportunities in your community.

### **C. Join a Community-Based**

**Organization:** Joining a community-based organization, for professional reasons, is always a good way to find something that you are really interested in. It also helps to build your resume and keep you on track with your education and/or career goals.

A Chamber of Commerce is a local association to promote and protect the interests of the local business community. Their websites list events you can attend and organizations you can get involved with. There are free resources available, as well as additional benefits that you can receive if you join as a member. The Nevada Chamber of Commerce Directory is listed below, along with several specific Chambers of Commerce.

- ❖ [Nevada Chamber of Commerce Directory](#)
  - Carson City, NV: [Carson City Chamber of Commerce](#)
  - Elko, NV: [Elko Area Chamber](#)
  - Henderson, NV: [Henderson Chamber of Commerce](#)
  - Las Vegas, NV: [Vegas Chamber](#)
  - Reno + Sparks, NV: [Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce](#)
- ❖ Additional (Non-Chamber) Resource for Las Vegas Trade Associations and Business Groups: [Vegas4Locals](#)



## 7. Gain Practical Work Experience – Develop practical job skills and obtain employment, while enrolled in college.

Build your resume, earn cash, and make connections that will help you land your dream job/career path, by gaining entry-level work experience while enrolled in your postsecondary education program.

**A. Apply For a Campus-Based Job:** Getting a job on campus is another great way for you to be involved on your college campus and build your resume, in a way that also allows you to “give back” to your campus community—including, in some instances, providing a service directly to your college peers (EXAMPLE: tutoring other students). It is also a great way to make a little extra money, to help pay for school and living expenses. And, it provides an opportunity to build



deeper connections with staff/faculty who can provide mentorship and support with your academic and career goals. Campus-based jobs also tend to be more flexible with work hours, because they honor the fact that you are a “student first.”

Each NSHE college/university has campus-based jobs that you can apply for, including *Federal Work-Study* positions that you may be eligible for based on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) information.

❖ **Federal Work-Study** = *Financial aid that income-eligible students can earn through campus-based employment, with some federal tax breaks, to help pay for their college expenses*

- This is a federal student aid program that provides part-time employment opportunities to students with financial need, while they are enrolled in school, allowing them to earn money to help pay for their education expenses.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The *FAFSA Simplification Act (2020)* REMOVED the work-study interest question from the FAFSA. Students with demonstrated financial need will automatically be offered work-study as part of their financial aid package.

**B. Apply for a Community-Based Job:** You can also build your resume by pursuing community-based/off-campus jobs, which may pay more than campus-based jobs; but it is important to consider more factors than just the pay rate. For instance, off-campus jobs are less likely to accommodate your school schedule than campus-based jobs; those roles are also less likely to offer professional development and mentorship opportunities that campus-based employers tend to





more readily offer to their student employees. Regularly communicate your academic commitments to community-based employers, to ensure that your school schedule does not clash with the hours they expect you to work. There is no shame in walking away if an employer does not respect your education goals; just make sure that, if you need to leave a job, you give at least 2 weeks' notice so that you maintain a strong reputation in the community.



### C. Utilize Your Career Preparation/Planning & Job Attainment Resources!

❖ **Campus-Based Career Preparation/Planning & Job Attainment Resources:** Below are direct links to the NSHE school-specific websites that provide helpful information about student employment preparation/training resources, job opportunities, and employment benefits—both on campus and in the larger community:

- University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV): [Career Services & Workforce Development](#); [Being a Student Employee](#); [Academic Success Center Career Services Satellite](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Handshake Job Postings](#)
- University of Nevada, Reno (UNR): [Nevada Career Studio](#); [Student Employment & Graduate Assistantships](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Handshake Job Postings](#)
- Nevada State University (NSU): [Career Services Center](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Handshake Job Postings](#)
- College of Southern Nevada (CSN): [Career Services](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Handshake Job Postings](#)
- Great Basin College (GBC): [Career Services](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Job Opportunities for Students & Graduates](#)
- Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC): [Career Hub](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Handshake Job Postings](#)
- Western Nevada College (WNC): [Career Services](#); [Workday Job Postings](#); [Student Employment](#)



## ❖ Community-Based Career Preparation/Planning & Job Attainment Resources:

- [EmployNV](#) – Oversees and provides workforce development services to Nevada employers and job seekers (for job seekers, EmployNV offers career development information, job search resources, training programs, and unemployment benefits)



- EmployNV is a collaboration between multiple organizations that support Nevadans with employment and training needs: the [American Job Center of Nevada](#), the [Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation \(DETR\)](#), the [Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation \(GOWINN\)](#), and the [Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development](#). These organizations also work closely with Nevada's Local Workforce Development Boards ([Workforce Connections](#) in Southern Nevada and [Nevadaworks](#) in Northern Nevada).
  - You can download the EmployNV app via the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).
- [United Way of Southern Nevada Workforce Development](#) – Helps individuals and families enter or return to the workforce, for career success (their goal is to increase the percentage of Southern Nevada's workers with full-time, year-round work)

## 8. Network! – Work to develop connections and build relationships with people who can support you in reaching your career goals.

- A. **Develop a 30-Second Elevator Pitch:** *Elevator pitches* are brief introductions that can take many forms and can be helpful when engaging with recruiters, conveying interest in positions through cover letters, participating in interviews, or when introducing yourself and your interests to any professional who may be able to assist you with pursuing your employment/career goals. You can use an *elevator pitch* at any stage in your employment/career journey—to explain your skills, interests/passions, achievements, and future goals, and to help others guide you to your next milestone.
- B. **Connect with Key People Who Can Assist You:** Find mentorship and opportunities through those who have come before you and are where you want to be, as well as people who are trained in workforce development topics. This includes engaging with campus-based career services and your instructors/professors, as well as others who they may be able to connect you with—as outlined in the SECTION 4B, titled *Seek Expert Career Exploration & Planning Support, While Enrolled in College*.







**C. Attend Career/Job/Internship Fairs:** Employers pay to register for career/job/internship fairs (which are FREE to students and alumni), and they can be a great way to connect with potential employers that you may not otherwise encounter.

Below are links to the NSHE schools' career/job/internship fair resources (in some cases, the school's main career services website is listed, because some schools do not have a separate webpage dedicated to career/job/internship fairs):

- ❖ [University of Nevada, Las Vegas \(UNLV\) Career and Internship Fairs](#)
- ❖ [University of Nevada, Reno \(UNR\) Career and Internship Fairs](#)
- ❖ [Nevada State University \(NSU\) Career & Internship Expo](#)
- ❖ [College of Southern Nevada \(CSN\) Career Services](#)
- ❖ [Great Basin College \(GBC\) Annual Community and College Career Fair](#)
- ❖ [Truckee Meadows Community College \(TMCC\) Career Hub](#)
- ❖ [Western Nevada College \(WNC\) Career Services](#)

## 9. Plan for Your Post-Graduation Career Journey! – Start planning for your post-graduation employment opportunities, at least 2 semesters prior to graduating from your program of study.



**A. Leverage Your Degree:** Begin researching positions that require the degree you are about to earn, at least 2 semesters (one year) prior to your projected graduation date. While you don't want to apply too early, you should start applying to positions that interest you as early as the very beginning of your final semester of courses (and potentially earlier, for jobs that have a particularly long posting/consideration period, such as county and state jobs). Planning ahead will help to ensure that you end up in a job that is both relevant to your hard-earned credential and something that actually interests you.

**B. Recognize Your Hard Work and Take Calculated Risks:** Seek opportunities that you are comfortable with and qualified for (be realistic!), but also apply for positions for which you might only meet approximately 80% of the qualifications—especially if it is an entry-level role. Employers often prioritize demonstrated adaptability, hard work, and potential over ensuring that every person they hire meets 100% of the qualifications listed. Keep in mind that some job qualifications are absolutely required/necessary to perform the job effectively, while others are considered ideal but not absolutely necessary to perform the job duties.





**C. Continue Learning:** Learning is a life-long endeavor. Even though your days of being a formally enrolled student may be coming to an end, at least for the foreseeable future, you should always strive to continue learning and building your skills—through whatever professional development opportunities are offered through your employers and/or as an alumnus of your college/university.



## Final Words of Wisdom and Encouragement ☺



Building a successful career starts with understanding yourself, gaining insight through conversations with experienced professionals and appropriately challenging workforce development experiences, and then making corresponding informed decisions about your education and career path. By thoughtfully defining your short- and long-term goals, researching potential education and career paths, gaining practical mentorship and experiences, and utilizing available resources, you will be doing everything that you can to ensure a long and

successful career, after graduation! And, remember, it is never too late to start, restart, or strategically shift your academic/career journey!

