

Alternative Paths for High School Students

Regional Occupation Programs (ROPs)

ROP provides students with quality career technical education and workforce preparation. Many courses give college credit, and some lead to certification and/or employment. Visit the California ROP website (www.carocp.org) or the Coastline ROP website (www.coastlinerop.schoolloop.com) for more information.

Apprenticeships/Internships

A way for you to earn money while learning an important skill in fields like manufacturing, construction, public administration, retail trade, and transportation industries. Visit www.calapprenticeship.org or www.careeronestop.org to search for positions.

Private Career and Technical Schools

Career and Technical Schools offer a variety of programs in fields such as automotive, mechanics, aircraft mechanics, healthcare, business, cosmetology, and truck driving. Before enrolling, do a cost comparison to see if these programs are offered for considerably less tuition through ROP or at a community college. www.rwm.org

You should carefully check out the schools by asking several questions:

- Is the school accredited by the numerous accrediting bodies in the United States?
- Have you toured the school? What were your impressions?
- Are the school's courses current and appropriate for you?
- How long will the training take?
- What is the total cost of the program including tuition, fees, supplies, and books?

The US Military

There are more than 4100 different jobs available in 142 occupations within the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, or Navy. If you join, you will go through between six and thirteen weeks of basic training. You may then go to an advanced training school or be assigned to the field in the United States or around the world. www.todaysmilitary.com

The "Gap Year"

You can travel to another country to learn a foreign language, teach English, volunteer, or get a job. Or you can explore a work area of interest while saving money for college. The gap year is meant to be filled with new and exciting life experiences, not sitting on the couch and watching TV! It provides many students with the opportunity to mature financially, socially and academically and find a clearer idea of what they want to do with their lives. Consider first gaining acceptance to a college or university and then asking for a deferral. www.gapyear.com

Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to learn more about yourself, learn new skills, make connections, and give back. You can volunteer locally, or get involved in a national or international program that gives you a chance to travel, such as AmeriCorp, California Conservation Corps, or City Year.

Work

The responsibility of holding down a full-time job is a good way to transition into adulthood. The opportunity to build a career off an entry-level job is there, if you're willing to work for it and stick it out. Job Corps, administered by the US Department of Labor, is a no-cost education and vocational training program designed for individuals who wish to learn a marketable trade. www.jobcorps.gov