Overview

After students have identified potential career choices, the next step is to develop an effective career plan that outlines a path to achieving their career goals. As with career exploration, there are several critical components to a strong career plan, including education, financial resources, support services, work experience, job search strategies, and methods for maintaining motivation and drive. Each of these components play a specific role in supporting students as they progress along their career journey. To begin the planning process, it can be helpful to start with identifying appropriate education and training experiences. Most high-value careers require at least some postsecondary education, meaning that, for many students, education and training will be an essential and necessary component of their career plan.

The intention of this lesson is to introduce the career planning process and help students connect their career choices to education pathways. Students are encouraged to explore other elements of effective career plans (e.g., financial resources, support services, etc.) when they are ready to step beyond the career exploration process and become fully immersed within the career planning process.

This lesson contains....

- Information on how to access and use the Education and Training section.
- A review of the components of an effective career plan.
- Methods for helping students start the career planning process.
- Strategies for searching for and identifying appropriate education programs.
- A review of next steps for students using insights gained from this lesson.

How to Use This Tool

Before beginning, be sure to sign into the system. The Education and Training tab is located on the homepage for Career Solutions. Simply click the Education and Training link at the top of the page.
Once within the Education and Training section, a page similar to the one below will appear. A list of links to the right of the page provide access to several helpful tools. The Education Quick List is a good place to start.

The Education Quick List displays all saved occupations within the Occupation Library and the required degree for each occupation. This page can be used to quickly compare requirements and get a general sense of education that may be needed for students’ top occupation choices.

Clicking on the column headings will sort the list alphabetically or from lowest-highest (or vice versa).
An additional helpful tool is the Countdown to College Checklist. This page contains worksheets that guide students through the tasks they need to complete as the move through grades nine through twelve.

The first worksheet is for all years and should be reviewed by all students, regardless of year. The remaining lists are for specific years. Clicking on any link will reveal the list for the selected year.
Each worksheet can be completed online and saved at any time. There is also the option to print each worksheet so that it can be completed outside of the system.

One of the more robust tools in the Education and Training section is the College Finder. This tool lists several colleges in the state and provides the ability to explore education options using filters and sorting features.
For each institution listed, a summary is provided that displays the highest degree offered, as well as whether the institution is public or private, and the number of students enrolled. Additional helpful information includes the number of degree programs, the faculty-to-student ratio, locale, and tuition rate.

To explore programs offered and specific college details, click on the Programs or College link to the right of the summary. There is also the option to share or save the college in the College Library.

Given that many students will have already identified potential occupations by this point, they will likely find this tool most useful to explore academic institutions that offer degrees and programs that align with their career choice.

To do this, they will want to use the filters focused on programs and degrees.
Using these filters, students can select the academic program/major group associated with their career choice and the degree level they need to achieve to prepare for their career.

The list that will emerge will consist of academic institutions that offer programs within the selected program/major group. These institutions will also offer degrees within the selected degree type.

Initially, the list will be sorted by the number of enrolled students. To sort by other categories, such as tuition rates or number of programs offered, use the dropdown menu in the upper right corner.
When students have found an institution that fits their needs, they can save the college in their College Library by clicking 'Save'.

Another helpful tool within the Education and Training section is the Program Finder. This tool is useful for identifying programs that are associated with specific career fields. Students who want a postsecondary experience, but have not made a final career choice, can use this tool to explore postsecondary programs that match their broad career interests.
To use this tool, students first need to select a career cluster and pathway that aligns with their work interests (see Lesson 2).

**Helpful Tip:** Students may find it helpful to review information about career clusters and pathways in the *New Mexico Career Clusters Guide*.

Once a cluster and pathway have been selected, a list of related programs will appear. Students can review the list and select a program based on their interests.
For each program, there is an information page that displays potential salary and tuition costs, along with associated career paths and education options. Some helpful features are identified below.

The final feature that students will find useful at this early stage of the career planning process is the College Library. This library functions much like the Occupation Library, providing a quick rundown of saved colleges with a brief snapshot of what each institution offers.
The College Library page provides a place for students to review and compare potential college choices. The summaries can help students quickly identify major distinguishing features between each education option. To delve further into each college, students can click on the Programs or College links to the right.

The other tools presented in Education and Training section, including the FAFSA links and the scholarship tools, focus on how to access financial resources. These tools will be most useful after students have made a college selection. It is recommended that students explore these areas at a later date when they are ready to enter the financial stage of the career planning process.
Connecting with Students

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will be given the opportunity to...

- Discuss the components of an effective career plan.
- Identify the benefits of exploring postsecondary education options.
- Examine the education requirements for their selected career(s).
- Evaluate potential education institutions that align with their career goals.
- Determine next steps in developing a career plan.

Classroom Discussions and Presentations

Introduction

The career selection process can be an exciting time for students. To help them continue this momentum and build resources that create a bridge to their career, they will need assistance in developing an effective career plan. This is where many students experience frustration that centers largely around unfamiliarity with career preparation processes. Providing a streamlined approach to navigating career resources can significantly enhance students’ chances of achieving employment success. Because the education component is often the most complex and requires a fair amount of preliminary planning to meet deadlines, this is a good place to begin. In starting this step, students will first need to examine potential career choices and identify the education requirements. Once identified, they can seek postsecondary institutions that will help them attain the necessary degrees and certificates. Ultimately, their education choice will be a driving mechanism that directs many of the remaining components of their career plan.

Talking Points

Below are some helpful comments to share with students.

- Having identified some potential career choices, the next task is to develop a career plan. (Helpful Tip: Print and share the diagram below. Use this to introduce the components of an effective career plan.)
- Career plans are made up of various important components that can support your journey to employment success. Getting your education and training in place can be an important first step.
- It can be challenging to identify the type of education you need and where you will go.
- Because the process can be complex, it is a good idea to start the education search early to ensure you have ample time to make the best decision possible, as well as meet any admissions requirements.
- Developing basic strategies to navigate the education search process can help you quickly identify the tools and information that are most useful.
- Finding the right academic institution that meets your education needs, as well as your personal and financial goals, can be just as important as your career choice.
- Taking time now to research education choices can help ensure you achieve your education goals.
Components of an Effective Career Plan

**Education and Training**

**Financial Resources**

**Support Services**

**Work Experience**

**Job Search Strategies**

**Motivation and Drive**

**Discussion Questions**

As a class or in small groups, have students reflect on the following questions. Help students talk about and work through their positive and negative feelings regarding career planning.

- Have you done any career planning yet? That is, have you started to think about what needs to be done to achieve your career goals?
- What do you think will be the most exciting part about preparing for your new career?
- When you think about preparing your career, what do you think will be the most challenging task? How might you deal with this challenge?
- How important do you think education and training will be in helping you attain your career goals?
- What potential roadblocks do you see in getting the education and training you might need? Do you think these roadblocks can be overcome? Why or why not?
- What do you hope to get out of your education and training experience?
- What type of academic institution do you hope to attend (community college, trade school, university, etc.)? Why?
Exploring the System

After discussing the components of effective career plans and helping students work through their positive and negative perspectives on the career planning process, they can be introduced to the Education and Training section in Career Solutions.

The “How to Use this Tool” section above provides a summary of useful information to share with students.

It is recommended that teachers and instructors...

- Encourage students to sign into the site to ensure they can save data.
- Help students locate the Education and Training section.
- Review the basic features of this tool, including how to access checklists and locate colleges.
- Assist students in identifying information that is most useful to explore in this section.
- Discuss how to use the information displayed to connect with colleges.

Classroom Activity

Connecting Careers to Education

In achieving their career goals, students will have to navigate a great deal of unfamiliar territory, most of which centers around the education and training requirements they need to attain to gain entry into their desired occupation. As such, they will need a fair amount of assistance in exploring their career choices and the education requirements associated with these choices. Fortunately, there are several online systems, including Career Solutions, that identify requirements for occupations, as well as academic institutions that offer programs that can help students meet these requirements. Connecting students with these systems and helping them navigate the tools within them, can help streamline the process and promote informed education decisions. This can be incredibly valuable in removing a common roadblock that students encounter in not knowing where to go next or even where to start looking.

To locate the Education and Training section, review the “How to Use this Tool” section above.

It is recommended that teachers and instructors...

- Discuss the importance of understanding education requirements and locating academic institutions.
- Review the Education and Training section in Career Solutions.
- Identify the purpose of this section as a place to explore education options and resources.
- Provide an opportunity for students to explore this tool in the classroom or at home.
- Encourage students to complete the Connecting Careers to Education sheet (see below).
- Assist students in understanding the benefits and limitations of using the strategies outlined in the worksheet to explore education requirements and academic institutions.
Exploring the Results

The purpose of this activity is to help students become familiar with the process of identifying education requirements and locating academic institutions that can help them achieve these requirements. Upon completion of the worksheet, they will have had the opportunity to compare requirements for various occupations and explore options for meeting these requirements. Ultimately, their efforts will culminate in the selection of at least one potential school that offers programs and degrees related to their chosen occupation. Students will have also reviewed college checklists and assessed their progress in completing the steps needed to prepare for postsecondary education.

The outcome of this activity is likely to be the generation of more questions than answers. As students begin to connect with schools, they will naturally be interested in learning more. At this point, it can be helpful to advise students to visit school websites and make plans to visit schools in person. Another likely outcome can be anxiety as students begin to think through the necessary steps to gain admission to their desired school. It will be important to remind students that is best to focus on one step at a time and tackle small pieces each day/week. Also, sharing resources that can help support them through the process, such as counselors and coaches, can reassure students they are not alone and others are available to help.

Overall, the point of this activity is to help students get started in the career planning process by opening the door to their academic journey. This is a powerful first step that can begin to bring their career goals into focus. Moving from what they need to how to get it can be a significant leap that provides the critical momentum needed to continue to the finish line – employment success!
Connecting Careers to Education

**Instructions:** Use the information and tools presented in the Education and Training section in Career Solutions to answer the questions below.

**Identify the What and Where – What education do you need and where can you get it?**

Before you begin exploring education options, it can be helpful to get a sense of the type of education you will need for your chosen career path. Once you know what you will need, you can begin the process of locating appropriate academic institutions. The questions below will help you work through these steps.

1. Visit your occupation library and review the education requirements for your top career three career choices. Complete the table below. List the occupation titles in the top row. (Helpful Tip: Education information is displayed within each occupation profile.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education/Training Requirements</th>
<th>Occupation 1</th>
<th>Occupation 2</th>
<th>Occupation 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Common Degree Requirement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Most Common Certificate Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most Common Training Program</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Typical Amount of Work Experience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Review the table above. Which of the three career choices seems most appealing, now that you have the education and training requirements listed? Why?
3. Choose one of the three occupations that you explored above. Use the College Finder in Career Solutions to find three academic institutions you might like to attend that fit the education requirements for the occupation. Complete the table below. *(Helpful Tip: Using the program and degree filters will help focus the list on institutions that meet minimum requirements.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Title:</th>
<th>Degree:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program:</td>
<td>Certificate:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic Institution 1</th>
<th>Academic Institution 2</th>
<th>Academic Institution 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students Enrolled</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Degree Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location (city, suburb, rural, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Review the table above. Which of these three academic institutions would you be most likely to choose? Why?

5. What other factors might you want to consider before making a final decision about a school?
Identify the How – *How will you achieve your education goals?*

Exploring education options and navigating the application and funding process can be somewhat challenging. To help you keep focused and on track, there are checklists available in Career Solutions. Take time to review these checklists and answer the questions below.

1. Review the check list for All Years, as well as the checklist for your current year. How many of the items on the All Years list have you completed? How many for your current year list?

2. Did you encounter any items that you have questions about? Where might you go to get additional information or assistance?

3. What important deadlines are coming up? What might you need to focus on now to be sure you’re ready for the next step or submission date?

4. Review the checklist for next year. What would you consider as the top three tasks that you need to complete that year? If there is not a list for the next year, look ahead and generate these items on your own.
**Broadening Your Scope** – *What other types education programs might you be interested in?*

Identifying the type of education you will need and where you will get it is one way of selecting an academic institution. Another method is to explore programs of study that fit your interests and determine which institutions offer these programs. This approach often works best if you are struggling with an occupation choice and would prefer to study within a particular field before making a career choice. The questions below will walk you through this process.

1. **Use the** [New Mexico Career Cluster Guide](#) **to select a career cluster and pathway that fits your work interests. List your selected cluster and pathway below. (Helpful Tip: Your work interests were identified using the Work Interests Assessment in Career Solutions and should be saved in the system.)**

2. **Use the Program Finder in Career Solutions to select your cluster and pathway. Once these have been selected, choose a program that you think would be a good fit. List your chosen program below.**

3. **What are some occupations associated with this program of study?**

4. **What academic institutions offer this program of study?**

5. **Does this approach to exploring education options and careers work better for you? Why or why not?**
Next Steps

At the end of the lesson, take a moment to review and assess the learning objectives. Engage students in a brief discussion of the learning opportunities that were made available in the classroom.

In this lesson, students were provided the opportunity to...

- Discuss the components of an effective career plan.
- Identify the benefits of exploring postsecondary education options.
- Examine the education requirements for their selected career(s).
- Evaluate potential education institutions that align with their career goals.

After providing a brief overview, encourage students to...

- Continue their reflection on the career planning process.
- Connect with potential academic institutions to get additional information.
- Explore resources that can help them navigate entry into postsecondary opportunities.
- Prepare for future planning activities that can help outline their career pathway.

Components of an Effective Career Plan

Education and Training
Financial Resources
Support Services
Work Experience
Job Search Strategies
Motivation and Drive
### Additional Resources

Additional national and state-based resources that support career exploration activities are provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O*NET Online</td>
<td>onetonline.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O*NET Resource Center</td>
<td>onetcenter.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Next Move</td>
<td>mynextmove.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerOneStop</td>
<td>careeronestop.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Outlook Handbook</td>
<td>bls.gov/ooh/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Career Clusters Framework</td>
<td>careertech.org/career-clusters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions strives to be a gateway to employment. This site presents links to multiple resources, including: career systems, planning tools, education options, and more.

Career Solutions is an online career exploration and planning website for youth and young adults. The website provides access to interactive tools that assist individuals in exploring careers and planning their future.

The New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System is New Mexico’s official online portal to virtual job matching services, employment resources, the Unemployment Insurance System, labor market information, and more.

The New Mexico Career Clusters Guide is designed to be a tool for planning and preparing for a career. It provides a structure for selecting careers based on linking personal attributes to occupations and training requirements.

The New Mexico Career Guide is an all-in-one job seeker resource. It includes sections on career exploration, planning, experiences, education, the job search, and school listings.

New Mexico Career Pathways displays regional labor market information for school districts organized around the National Career Clusters Framework. The site includes interactive tools, regional reports, podcasts, and more.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions site offers a Labor Market menu. This menu presents links to data, statistics, dashboards, resources, and publications related to labor market information.

LASER is a comprehensive labor market information system. Several search tools and functions are available that allow current and historic labor market data to be customized to meet individual needs.

The Next Step Plan is a personal, written plan developed by each student at the end of grades 8-11 and during grade 12. The purpose of the plan is to target students’ postsecondary interests and outline studies for high school.
# New Mexico Career Awareness Websites and Resources

## Work-Based Learning Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Internships / Student Work</td>
<td>The New Mexico Internships / Student Work site connects individuals to practical work experiences in their local community. Helpful guides and information pages are available to explain and direct the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Technical Leadership Project (CTLP)</td>
<td>The Career Technical Leadership Project (CTLP) manages organizations that engage students in career and technical education activities as an integral part of the instruction program to meet the needs of a well-trained workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Agricultural Education &amp; FFA Association</td>
<td>The New Mexico Agricultural Education &amp; FFA Association provides opportunities for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators Rising</td>
<td>Educators Rising cultivates highly skilled educators by guiding young people on the path to becoming accomplished teachers, beginning in high school and extending through college and into the profession.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Postsecondary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Dashboard</td>
<td>The purpose of this site is to display information related to New Mexico’s higher education institutions, including: key performance indicators, institution facts, contact information, and location map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation (NMEAF)</td>
<td>The New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation provides resources for financial planning to fund higher education. This site presents several tools and information pages related to funding higher education.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For additional information, please visit: [NMPED College and Career Readiness Bureau](ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/college-career-readiness)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>User Level</th>
<th>Career Exploration</th>
<th>Career Planning</th>
<th>Labor Market Information (LMI)</th>
<th>Support Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Young Adults</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Job Descriptions</td>
<td>Work-Based Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Save, Review, and Compare Tools</td>
<td>Resume and Interview Tools</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Career Cluster/Pathway Overviews</td>
<td>Education and Training Information</td>
<td>Local Job Listings</td>
<td>Local/Regional Focus</td>
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<td>Career Exploration Assessments</td>
<td>Financial Planning Tools</td>
<td>Local Career Events and Services</td>
<td>State Focus</td>
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<td>Easy</td>
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<td>Education and Training Information</td>
<td>Regional Reports and Analyses</td>
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</table>

**Career Resources**

- **Department of Workforce Solutions**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

- **Career Solutions**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

- **Workforce Connection**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

**Career Guides**

- **Career Clusters Guide**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

- **Career Guide**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

**Labor Market Tools**

- **Career Pathways**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

- **Department of Workforce Solutions**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

- **LASER**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced

**Plans and Pathways**

- **Next Step Plan**
  - Career Exploration: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Career Planning: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Labor Market Information (LMI): Easy, Moderate, Advanced
  - Support Services: Easy, Moderate, Advanced
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<td>Financial Planning Tools</td>
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<td>LMI for Career Clusters</td>
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<td>Local/Regional Focus</td>
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**Work-Based Learning Experiences**

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**Career Technical Leadership Project**

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**Educators Rising**

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**Postsecondary Education**

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