

Why Go to College? (How about ... to get a good job!)

Can't I get a good job now?

Yes, maybe you could, but a college degree will make your chances even better. Check out the earnings and unemployment rates for people 25 years and older with different levels of education:

Unemployment rate in 2010	Level of education completed	Mean (average) earnings in 2010
14.9%	Less than a high school diploma	\$28,184
10.3%	High school graduate, no college	\$39,988
9.2%	Some college, no degree	\$46,228
7.0%	Occupational program (career school)	\$46,332
7.0%	Associate degree (academic program)	\$49,764
5.4%	Bachelor's degree	\$72,020
4.0%	Master's degree	\$82,576
1.9%	Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.)	\$103,844
2.4%	Professional degree (e.g., M.D., J.D.)	\$124,176

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, unpublished tables, 2011.

Sometimes it's hard to stay in school if you think you need to be working to earn money. But if you get an education beyond high school, you'll have a wider variety of jobs to choose from, and you'll earn more—especially in the long run.

But I don't know what career to go into!

If you can't decide what to do, talk to your school counselor or visit www.studentaid.ed.gov/myfsa to fill out an interest inventory called the Career Finder. Based on your answers, the questionnaire will provide a list of careers that fit your interests. You can then use the college search tool on our site to find schools offering courses of study appropriate to your career choice.

Doesn't college cost a lot of money?

Think of college as an investment: you spend money now so you can earn more later. And the U.S. Department of Education will help you pay for your education. Take a look at www.studentaid.ed.gov for information about our federal student aid programs. The site also has a free scholarship search at www.studentaid.ed.gov/scholarship. Still have questions? Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

