



# Creating an Individualized Employment Plan



# Overview

- Obtaining a Degree or Certification
- How to Prepare for The Workforce
- Expectations in The Workforce
- Job Opportunities

# Obtaining a Degree or Certification

1. Choose the right degree or certification for your goals

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Degree or Certification				
Long-term Career Goals	Long-term Lifestyle Goals	Required Hard Skills	Anticipated Soft Skills	Personal Passion / Interest

Before choosing a school you want to attend, you need to decide on the degree or certification you want to pursue. You should never choose a school rashly. Ask yourself what is your ultimate goal and what would you like to get out of your degree or certification. A degree or certification is a big investment. Make sure that any degree or certification you choose won't just provide short-term gains. Look at long-term job prospects and job growth projections to ensure you're entering a stable or growing field.

## 2. Identify Your Funding Plan

Financial limitations is one of the top reasons people leave school before finishing a degree or certification. If you want to go back to school, make sure you have a clear understanding of the different options for funding your degree or certification. The cost of your degree or certification will vary by each school. Always submit a FAFSA, even if you don't think you'll qualify for aid. Many schools also offer scholarships, especially within specific areas of study. Professional organizations are another source of scholarship and grant funding. Take the time to apply for any scholarship or grant for which you are eligible. You should exhaust every funding opportunity before taking out loans. The Cherokee Nation Career Services department offers financial assistance to eligible participants seeking short-term training. They assist with the cost of tuition, books, and fees you can check your eligibility by calling (918) 453-5555. The Cherokee Nation College Resources department assists with long-term training, you can check your eligibility by calling (918) 453-5465. Below are additional resources.

FAFSA- <https://studentaid.gov>

Scholarships- <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships>

Workforce of Oklahoma- <https://oklahomaworks.gov>

### 3. Explore Your Options and Pick The Right School

## What to Look For in a School

Flexible  
Scheduling  
& Start  
Dates

Student  
Centered  
Learning  
Model

Programs  
Designed  
for  
Working  
Adults

Friendly  
Transfer  
Credit  
Policies

Support  
Services

If you want to go back to school, you want to thoroughly research and vet schools to find the right one. Not only are you looking for overall degree or certification quality, but how a school will fit your needs and support you as a learner. Make sure that you are attending an accredited school.

## 4. Apply and Enroll

Once you decide on a school, you have to apply, get accepted and enroll at the school. This process varies slightly depending on the school, but a general checklist includes:

- *Determine if standardized tests or placement tests are required by your school.*
- *Submit your application and application fee if necessary. Most often, your application will be submitted online. Be aware of any admissions deadlines that apply.*
- *Enroll and submit a deposit if necessary.*
- *Send previous transcripts to be evaluated for transfer credit.*
- *Finalize your financing by accepting any financial aid or loans you may be taking out.*
- *Register for classes and pay the required tuition and fees.*

## 5. Build A Plan To Successfully Complete Your Degree or Certification

Even after you enroll, the journey back to school has just started. Take advantage of the momentum you've built and make a proactive plan for success. It pays to get ahead of the curve so you don't get overwhelmed.

- *Plan your schedule. Time management is key to success. Figure out how much work you can realistically take on at one time. Be proactive in removing obstacles that may detract from getting your degree or certification.*
- *Choose a strong support system. Make sure you have people who will hold you accountable and motivate you to complete your degree or certification. It helps to have a well-rounded support system made up of people who can empathize with different challenges you may face.*
- *Know when to ask for help. There is no shame in asking your professors, instructors, classmates or advisers for additional support. Know if there are resources available, from tutoring to office hours and student support groups.*
- *Create a dedicated learning environment. Set up a space that is designed for productivity and removes distractions.*
- *Don't let fear get in your way. Fix your sights on your goals and have confidence that you can reach them.*

# Definitions

- Postsecondary Non-degree Award- *These programs lead to a certificate or other award, but not a degree. The certificate is awarded by the educational institution and is the result of completing formal postsecondary schooling. Certification, issued by a professional organization or certifying body, is not included here.*
- Associates Degree- *An associate degree is a two-year college degree that you can obtain from a community college, junior college, online university, or some four-year institutions in the US. In terms of education, an associate degree falls between a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree.*
- Bachelor's Degree- *A bachelor's degree is an undergraduate degree in which you study a subject of your choice at an academic institution, and is commonly known as a college degree.*
- Master's Degree- *A postgraduate academic degree awarded by universities or colleges upon completion of a course of study demonstrating mastery or a high-order overview of a specific field of study or area of professional practice.*

# Preparing for The Workforce

## 1. Develop Workplace Readiness Skills

Workplace readiness skills are critical for job success. Focus on developing and improving your professional skills and personal qualities for the workplace. Skills like a positive attitude, teamwork, and a strong work ethic make a great employee who has a positive impact on the work culture.

## 2. Make a Good First Impression

Don't overlook the basics of making a good first impression. Employers want to see that you have the basic professional skills when you first meet. While at home, practice how to introduce yourself, make eye contact, and interview. You can do this with friends, teachers, and family members in-person or through video conferencing.

## 3. Show Interest

Employers want to see that potential employees want to get and keep the job. When interviewing, don't forget to tell the interviewer how interested you are in the job. Part of being interested is learning about the business and the position. When you are working, show your commitment to the job by being willing to do the work.

#### **4. Focus on Your Strengths**

Don't waste time focusing on things you are not good at. With the help of your teachers and family members, discover, talk about, and build on your strengths. Knowing what you are good at helps you find the right job fit and land the job!

#### **5. Practice Teamwork and Collaboration Skills**

Getting practice on the job is important, but you can begin to practice developing workplace readiness skills like teamwork and collaboration at home before you even get that first job. Work with family members as a team to complete projects and chores. Try role-playing different scenarios that may arise while working with others on the job.

#### **6. Improve Customer Service**

Many jobs require some level of customer service. While at home, greet others when you walk into a room and have frequent conversations with them. If someone is having a bad day or struggling with something at home, jump in and help without being asked!

#### **7. Build Your Confidence**

The more confident you are, the more you can sell yourself at an interview and succeed with your tasks on a job. Build these skills through understanding your strengths, practicing career-related skills, and gaining work experience.

# Expectations in The Workforce

Employer expectations of employees refer to what employers want to see or hear from their Employees while they are working. These expectations may change depending on the profession. Meeting and exceeding employer expectations can lead to career advancement.

## **1. Have a Positive Attitude**

Employers may want their employees to have a positive attitude that extends to coworkers and makes the workplace have a cheerful atmosphere. Having a workplace that is happy can lead to improved employee morale, which can provide a better experience for everyone. To keep a positive attitude at work, try to focus on the parts of your job that you enjoy, push yourself to get more accomplished and surround yourself with positive colleagues if you can.

## **2. Dress Properly**

It's important for employees to dress appropriately for the work environment they are in because clothing can help to present a professional image of the company to customers and other members of the public. Many companies have dress codes listed in their employee handbook that can guide you on what you can wear while on the job.

### **3. Be Punctual**

A great way to show your motivation and professionalism is to be punctual for your job. Being punctual can show your commitment to planning and overall respect for your employer's requirements. Punctuality can also help you advance in your career because your employer may see you as organized and reliable.

### **4. Be Dependable**

Employers want to trust that their employees are working efficiently and that they can depend on their employees to produce their best work. For example, if an employer assigns you a project that is due tomorrow, they know they can depend on you to finish the project quickly without lowering the quality. You can be dependable for your company by staying organized and being consistent in your work, which shows employers they can trust you to do your job.

### **5. Desire to Grow**

Employers may try to help their employees develop their skills, so they expect employees to have a desire to grow and an eagerness to build their skills. Employers may expect their employees to have a high growth potential that they can develop while working.

## **7. Communicate Effectively**

Employers may expect their employees to communicate their needs, ideas and opinions effectively. It's important for employees to express their thoughts to others constructively, which requires verbal and written communication skills. A good way to provide clear communication at work is by providing context to your thought, then explaining thoroughly what your idea means.

## **8. Meet Deadlines**

It's necessary for employees to meet their deadlines so the company can stay on schedule and keep its clients satisfied. To better meet deadlines, prioritize projects by the due dates, plan enough time to finish each task and organize deadlines in a calendar or planner.

## **9. Be Self-Motivated**

Employers value employees who are self-motivated and have an inherent drive to finish their work and to do their work well. Employees who are self-motivated can finish a project on their own without being closely managed. You can work on being self-motivated by focusing on one project at a time and writing a list of steps that can help you finish your work independently.

## **10. Learn From Your Mistakes**

Employers understand their employees make mistakes from time to time. Instead of being discouraged by your mistakes, employers often encourage you to use your mistakes as a learning experience. To better learn from your mistakes, remember what caused the mistake in the first place to avoid that error in the future.

# Job Opportunities

## 1. Identifying Job Opportunities

- *Use the internet to identify and search for job opportunities.*
- *Define networking and create a networking list.*
- *Create a to-do list for job fairs you want to attend.*
- *Create an error free resume that accurately reflects your abilities and is appealing to prospective employers.*

Below is a list of useful websites when searching for a job.

<https://www.indeed.com>

<https://www.monster.com>

<https://www.careerbuilder.com>

<https://www.glassdoor.com>

<https://cherokee.org>

## 2. Preparing for an Interview

- *Carefully examine the job description.*
- *Consider why you are interviewing and your qualifications.*
- *Perform research on the company and role.*
- *Consider your answers to common interview questions.*
- *Wear appropriate attire.*
- *Practice your speaking voice and body language.*
- *Prepare thoughtful questions for interviewer.*
- *Conduct mock interviews.*
- *Print hard copies of your resume and references.*
- *Prepare your travel arrangements.*
- *Sell yourself.*

### 3. Occupations

Description	Median Hourly Earnings	Entry Level Education
<b>HealthCare</b>		
Licensed Practical Nurses	\$22.00	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Registered Nurses	\$29.89	Bachelors Degree
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	\$28.87	Associate's Degree
Surgical Technologists	\$22.47	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Dental Hygienists	\$38.17	Associate's Degree
Paramedics	\$18.58	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Medical Assistants	\$15.84	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
<b>Education</b>		
Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	\$23.70	Master's Degree
Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	\$28.94	Bachelor's Degree
Career and Technical Education Teachers	\$18.36	Bachelor's Degree
Teachers	\$19.66	Bachelor's Degree
Instructional Coordinators	\$23.97	Master's Degree

## Occupations Continued...

Description	Median Hourly Earnings	Entry Level Education
<b>Construction</b>		
Carpenters	\$18.96	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Cement Mason, Concrete Finishers	\$21.76	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Heavy Equipment Operator	\$22.10	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Electricians	\$25.12	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	\$22.83	High School Diploma or Equivalent
<b>Manufacturing</b>		
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$22.95	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	\$17.92	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	\$17.96	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Structural Iron and Steel Workers	\$22.97	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Production Workers, All Other	\$17.63	High School Diploma or Equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	\$31.20	High School Diploma or Equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	\$29.58	High School Diploma or Equivalent

## Occupations Continued...

Description	Median Hourly Earnings	Entry Level Education
<b>Hospitality</b>		
Cooks	\$13.71	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Desk Clerks	\$13.00	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Cashiers	\$11.13	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Janitors and Cleaners	\$11.60	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Security Guard	\$14.46	High School Diploma or Equivalent
General and Operations Managers	\$37.57	Bachelor's Degree
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	\$36.26	Bachelor's Degree
<b>Social Work</b>		
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	\$20.13	Bachelor's Degree
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	\$22.84	Bachelor's Degree
Healthcare Social Workers	\$23.12	Master's Degree
Forensic Social Workers	\$30.10	Master's Degree
Victim Advocates	\$14.88	Bachelor's Degree

## Occupations Continued...

Description	Median Hourly Earnings	Entry Level Education
<b>Information Technology</b>		
Software Developers	\$45.85	Bachelor's Degree
Computer Systems Analysts	\$38.08	Bachelor's Degree
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	\$37.07	Bachelor's Degree
Web Developers	\$19.97	Associate's Degree
Technical Support Specialists	\$19.33	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Firefighters	\$22.85	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	\$22.69	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	\$22.20	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	\$22.63	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Professional Welders	\$21.56	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
High Voltage Linemen	\$31.12	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award
Fiber Optic Technicians	\$21.08	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award