



NEED TO KNOW SERIES

One-Pager

What Do I Need to Know About Planning for College or Work?

Explore Your Options

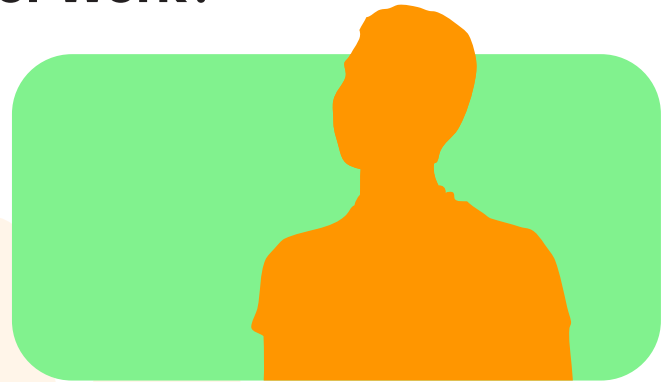
College or Vocational Training: Think about what aligns with your interests, skills, and future goals. College typically offers broader academic education, while vocational training focuses on specific job skills like automotive repair, culinary arts, or nursing.

Career Planning Resources: Use tools like CareerZone (from the New York State Department of Labor) to learn more about different careers. You can explore fields like arts, business, engineering, and healthcare to see which ones match your abilities and passions.

Talk to Trusted Adults: Speak to your guidance counselor, caseworker, or a trusted mentor about what career path might be right for you. They can help you explore different opportunities based on your strengths and long-term goals.

How to Pay for College or Vocational Training?

- **Scholarships and grants** don't need to be repaid and are often based on need or merit.
- **FAFSA:** Complete it to apply for federal financial aid at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov).
- **ETV Program:** Provides up to \$5,000 per year for college or training expenses for youth in foster care. ETV funding must begin before their 21st birthday and ends at their 26th birthday.
- **FYCSI:** Helps with tuition, fees, books, housing, and more. For New York State residents who have been in foster care or were adopted after age 13 and must be enrolled and attending a SUNY, CUNY or private college/university with a HEOP program in New York State.
- **Student Loans:** Loans can be taken out to help pay for college and are paid back with interest.



Pro Tips

- **Start Early:** Plan for college or vocational training as soon as possible. Consult a guidance counselor to explore options. Speak with your case worker about going on college tours and exploring areas of study.
- **Know Your Resources:** Look into programs like EOP and HEOP for academic and financial support. Don't hesitate to ask for accommodations, such as extra time on exams.
- **Apply for Financial Aid Early:** Complete FAFSA as soon as it opens, which is typically on October 1st. Check eligibility for special aid programs like ETV and FYCSI.
- **Stay Connected:** Build relationships with advisors and professors for guidance and resources.
- **Use Career Planning Tools:** Leverage online resources like CareerZone to explore interests and careers that fit your skills.
- **Ask for Help:** Contact disability services for accommodations like assistive technologies and note-takers.
- **Be Open to Change:** It's okay to start undecided; around 80% of students change their majors. Take time to explore different courses and fields.

