

NEW MEXICO 4-H

Aggie Next Step

Post-High School Pathways



Post Secondary Pathways



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Post-High School Pathways

LESSON FOCUS

Choosing what to do after high school can feel confusing and overwhelming because there are many pathways, each with different time commitments, costs, and potential earnings. In this lesson, participants will explore those pathways, understand how education level relates to income and job stability, and see that multiple routes can lead to similar career goals.

PREPARATION

Review lesson materials and determine which worksheets and handouts you will use for the lesson. Print enough assessments, worksheets, and handouts for each participant.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have participants complete the *Pre-Assessment*.

2. Project or display the prompt: "When people choose a path after high school, they often think about more than pay. Rank your top three factors that matter most to you."

- Time in school
- Cost
- Monthly pay from future career
- Job stability
- Work environment
- Flexibility

(Participants should record rankings. They will return to this prompt at the end.)

3. Place *Post-High School Pathways Station* prompts around the room. Distribute the *Post-High School Pathways* worksheet. Explain that they will participate in a Gallery Walk to learn about different pathways. Assign small groups of students to begin at different stations. They will spend a few minutes at each station, reading and reflecting. After time is up, participants rotate clockwise to the next station.

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Identify** multiple post-high school pathways and analyze the benefits and challenges of each.
- **Compare** pathways using weekly/monthly earnings and unemployment rates to understand trade-offs in income and job stability.
- **Reflect** on why individuals with the same career goals might choose different post-high school pathways.



Post-High School Pathways

4. Distribute **Education Pays** and review the graph. Participants can complete the worksheet through a whole-group discussion, or you can have them work in pairs or small groups.
5. Distribute **Same Career: Different Paths** and guide participants through completion. Emphasize that there is no single right or wrong pathway—each option has its own benefits and trade-offs, such as time, cost, and potential earnings.
6. Return to the rankings from the warm-up. Now have participants answer: *Which pathway best matches your top one or two factors?* If time allows, have 2-3 students share their top factors, pathways, and reasoning with the class.
7. **Exit Ticket** – Depending on time, this can be done as a class discussion, as an individual worksheet, as homework in class, or during the following class.
8. **Have participants complete the Post-Assessment.**

REFLECTION

Choosing a post-high school pathway isn't just about picking the "right" option – it's about understanding the different paths and choosing the one that fits your goals and situation. Exploring pathways now can help you make smarter decisions, compare options realistically, and ask better questions as you plan your next steps.



Post-High School Pathways

EXTENSIONS

Distribute the math section of *Education Pays* and allow participants to complete it individually or in pairs. Encourage discussion.

Participants create a chart, poster, or diagram comparing 2 or more pathways.

DIFFERENTIATION

Content Support: Predefine key terms like *pathway*, *unemployment rate*, *trade-offs*, *median earnings*, and *post-high school*.

On the *Education Pays* worksheet, assign only a few key questions or assign specific parts to each pair or small group.

English Language Learners: Allow students to respond verbally or with bullet points, rather than full sentences, when appropriate.

Pair students with a supportive peer for discussions and collaborative activities.

Provide key terms translated if needed.

Processing Time: Provide additional think time before students respond or share.

Process Differentiation: Allow students to complete worksheets as a whole class discussion, in pairs, or in small groups.

Offer step-by-step guidance for students who need more support, while allowing others to work independently.

Advanced or Early Finishers: Ask students to research an additional pathway that was not mentioned (e.g., Enter the workforce, Americorps, Apprenticeship) and create a graphic similar to the Gallery Walk stations.



Post-High School Pathways

RESOURCES

Optional Videos

Note: Please preview all videos before showing them to students to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant, and aligned with your classroom needs.

Learn About Your Post High School Pathways

<https://youtu.be/Efo6aFFI9Qk?si=EHnImDIE0WqneVOD>

Your Post-High School Options: The Complete Guide

https://youtu.be/5a_AtKfOTH4?si=RHzTjTRXwDL8JJ8S

NM Standards:

NM PED Standards: Career and Technical Education (CTE):

1.1.1: identify required training, education, and certification to prepare for employment

2.2.2: Identify the main ideas of an informational text

3.1.1: Employ critical thinking skills to solve problems and make decisions

9.1.1: Identify the use of positive work behaviors and personal qualities needed to be employable

9.2.1: Develop a personal career plan

NM Social Studies Standards – Financial Literacy (Grades 9-12)

Econ.54: Identify various strategies students can use to finance higher education and how to access student aid through completion of the FAFSA

Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) Standards: Career Ready Practices (CRP):

CRP-10: Plan education and career path aligned to personal goals

Optional ELA Alignment (Grades 6-12)

SL1: Participate in a range of conversations and collaborations