

# Alternatives to Traditional 4-year College



Have you wondered if the traditional 4-year college is right for you? Worried about the high cost of college? Or are you ready for a break from school?

There are other options!

Included in this packet is information about the following alternatives to 4-year college that can result in high-paying, in-demand careers!

- **Trade/Technical School**
- **Apprenticeships**
- **Military Options**

## Trade/Technical School

Trade/technical programs focus on providing students with the education they need for a specific job. Trade/technical programs differ from 4 year colleges in a number of ways:

- They focus only on the skills necessary for a particular job, cutting out the “general education” credits that don’t directly apply to your career.
- Trade/technical programs typically focus on hands-on learning and less classroom lecture.
- They are much shorter in length. Students can typically finish a trade/technical program in anywhere from 6 months to 2 years.
- The tuition is generally less expensive, as many of these programs are located at community colleges, where tuition is much more affordable than 4 year colleges.
- They have a great job placement rate. The instructors maintain working relationships with professionals in the industry, and through these relationships many students in these programs already have jobs lined up before they graduate.

Not every career requires a 4 year bachelor’s degree! Locally, Kalamazoo Valley Community College has MANY trade/technical programs that can earn you a Certificate or Associate’s Degree and get you ready for a job. Here are some examples of trade/technical programs at KVCC:

Dental Hygiene	Culinary Arts
Nursing (RN)	Brewing
Certified Nurse Asst (CNA)	Graphic Design
Emergency Medical Technician	Web Development
Welding	Administrative Assistant
Automotive Tech	Wind Turbine
Manufacturing Tech	Corrections Officer
Fire Science	Police Academy ....and many more!!

Aside from local community colleges, many other public colleges have trade/technical programs, including Baker College, Ferris State University, and Davenport University. You may also find private trade/technical schools that focus on your specific career of interest, for example, cosmetology schools (ex. Empire Beauty) or schools focused on automotive technology (ex. Universal Technical Institute).

# WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER TRADE SCHOOL

## DRAWBACKS OF TRADITIONAL COLLEGE

### 1 LENGTH

A Bachelor's Degree typically takes 4 years to complete, compared to a 2-year Associates or Trade School program. Students at four-year colleges enter the workforce at age 22, having already missed out on two years of income and workplace experience.



### COST 2

An average Bachelor's Degree in the U.S. costs \$127,000. 70% of students take out loans to pay for school. One in five will graduate owing \$50,000 or more. Another 5.6% leave school owing more than \$100,000 in debt.

### 3 DROP-OUT RATE + LATE GRADUATION

According to the Institute of Education Statistics, 40% of students at four-year colleges drop out -- meaning many will leave school in debt with no degree to show for it. Of those that do finish school, 64% take longer than four years to graduate, costing themselves nearly \$70,000 per year between lost wages and educational expenses, according to U.S. News.



### 4 POOR ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A college degree hardly guarantees a good job. The unemployment (8.5%) and underemployment (16.8%) rates for college graduates under the age of 25 are nearly double what they were in 2007, according to a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute.

## TRADE SCHOOL AS AN ALTERNATIVE



### What is Trade School?

Trade school, or Vocational/Tech School, is a streamlined approach to education that teaches skills related to a specific job.



SMALL CLASS SIZES



HANDS-ON LEARNING

ENTER WORKFORCE ~2 YEARS SOONER



Mechanic, Dental Hygienist, Electrician, Nuclear Technologist, & Pharmacy Technician are among the many lucrative career paths available for Trade School graduates



### BACHELOR'S DEGREE

It would take 2.7 years of income to pay for cost of an average college degree

### VOCATIONAL TRAINING

It would take 11 months of income to pay for an average Trade School education

### H.S. DIPLOMA



\*Average annual income for entry level position

## Apprenticeships

**Apprenticeship** = a method of training individuals for a particular job while paying them for this training. An apprenticeship can be anywhere from 1-5 years in length, during which time apprentices earn wages to learn that particular career fields. Apprenticeships include:

- **Business Involvement:** Employers are the foundation of every apprenticeship program. They play an active role in building the program and remain involved every step of the way. Employers frequently work together through apprenticeship councils, industry associations, or other partnerships to share the administrative tasks involved in maintaining apprenticeship programs.
- **Structured On-the-Job Training:** Apprenticeships always include an on-the-job training component. Apprentices receive hands-on training from an experienced mentor at the job site. On-the-job training focuses on the skills and knowledge an apprentice must learn during the program to be fully proficient on the job. This training is based on national industry standards, customized to the needs of the particular employer.
- **Related Instruction:** One of the unique aspects of apprenticeships is that they combine on-the-job learning with related instruction on the technical and academic competencies that apply to the job. Education partners collaborate with business to develop the curriculum, which often incorporates established national-level skill standards. The related instruction may be provided by community colleges, technical schools, or apprenticeship training schools – or by the business itself. It can be delivered at a school, online, or at the job site.
- **Rewards for Skill Gains:** Apprentices receive wages when they begin work, and receive pay increases as they meet benchmarks for skill attainment. This helps reward and motivate apprentices as they advance through their training.
- **Nationally-Recognized Credential:** Every graduate of an Apprenticeship program receives a nationally-recognized credential. This is a portable credential that signifies to employers that apprentices are fully qualified for the job.

Apprenticeships prepare individuals for in-demand skilled trades jobs, including:

- Electrician
- Machine Repairer
- Machinist
- Maintenance Mechanic
- Millwright
- Mold Maker
- HVAC Technician
- Tool & Die Maker
- Welder
- Pipefitters and Plumbers
- and more!

The skilled trades are looking for apprentices to fill the void left by many retiring workers. An abundance of jobs are available in these areas, and employers are willing to train and pay hard working apprentices!

So where do you find more information about local apprenticeships?

Kalamazoo Electrical JATC (electricians): [www.kalamazoojatc.com](http://www.kalamazoojatc.com)

Local 357 Plumbers/Pipefitters/HVAC/Welders: [www.ualocal357.com/apprenticeship-information.html](http://www.ualocal357.com/apprenticeship-information.html)

Michigan Statewide Carpenters and Millwrights: <http://www.realapprenticeship.com/>

Pure Michigan Talent Connect: [www.mitalent.org](http://www.mitalent.org) Click on “Skilled Trades” then “Apprenticeship”

Local job search sites like [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) or [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com), type in “apprenticeships”

Michigan trades/apprenticeship info [www.going-pro.com](http://www.going-pro.com)

## **Military Options**

The military is a great option for students looking to use their talents and skills to serve our country. There are 5 branches of the military:

Army

Navy

Marine Corps

Air Force

Coast Guard

The graphic on the next page explains the focus of each branch and full time versus part time options. There are many jobs within the military aside from the front line combat that most people associate with being a soldier. There are jobs in nursing/medicine, communications, mechanics, cyber security, environmental services, human relations, and many more!

The best way to learn more about your options within the military is to schedule a meeting with a local recruiter. They will sit down with you and your family and explain the opportunities available in the various branches of the military. Here is the contact information for the Kalamazoo area recruiters:

Army Recruiting Center	269-372-2593	3254 Stadium Drive
Navy Recruiting Center	269-372-0346	3254 Stadium Drive
Marine Corps Recruiting	269-324-4122	3254 Stadium Drive
Air Force Recruiting Center	269-775-1579	3266 Stadium Drive
Coast Guard Recruiting	248-582-8364	Detroit





**Army**  
FULL/PART-TIME

**FULL-TIME**

**Army**  
As the oldest branch of the U.S. Military, the Army protects the security of the United States and its resources.



**Marine Corps**  
FULL/PART-TIME

**FULL-TIME**

**Marine Corps**  
The Marine Corps is often first on the ground in combat situations.



**Navy**  
FULL/PART-TIME

**FULL-TIME**

**Navy**  
The Navy delivers combat-ready Naval forces while maintaining security in the air and at sea.



**Air Force**  
FULL/PART-TIME

**FULL-TIME**

**Air Force**  
The Air Force protects American interests at home and abroad with a focus on air power.



**Coast Guard**  
FULL/PART-TIME

**FULL-TIME**

**Coast Guard**  
The Coast Guard is a maritime force offering military, law enforcement, humanitarian, regulatory and diplomatic capabilities.

**PART-TIME**

**Army Reserve**  
The Army Reserve trains part-time near home until needed, and members deploy alongside the Army.

**PART-TIME**

**Marine Corps Reserve**  
Marine Corps reservists train domestically and deploy with the rest of the Corps.

**PART-TIME**

**Navy Reserve**  
The Navy Reserve trains close to home. They serve in the U.S. or abroad in support of the Navy's mission.

**PART-TIME**

**Air Force Reserve**  
The Air Force Reserve trains and serves on a part-time basis, performing flying and other specialized missions for the Air Force.

**PART-TIME**

**Coast Guard Reserve**  
The Coast Guard Reserve typically trains and serves near home, offering the chance to contribute part-time and make a difference.

**Army National Guard**

Army National Guard members deploy with the Army on a part-time basis. Their service focus is on the state level, but they may also serve nationally.

**Air National Guard**

The Air National Guard trains part-time to assist, first on the state level, but they may also serve nationally.