



HELPING STUDENTS SELECT BEST BETS

Counseling to Careers provides districts, community-based organizations, schools, and community colleges with the tools to better connect students with programs of study that align with their interests and regional employment needs.

WHAT IS COUNSELING TO CAREERS?

Counseling to Careers is a four-month engagement that guides the use of labor market information to identify high-demand career pathways and associated postsecondary programs—or “best bets.” It features a training with customized, ready-to-use curriculum and resources for supporting teams of senior staff and counselors through a process to identify and package information about best bets for use by students.

WHAT DOES IT DO FOR COMMUNITIES?

By making information about college and careers transparent and accessible, Counseling to Careers:

- > Streamlines the counseling process
- > Empowers students to become informed consumers

- > Strengthens relationships between colleges and their community partners
- > Informs planning and revision of college pathways

Together, this will help improve college graduation rates.

WHO BENEFITS?

- > **Students**, who are more likely to earn college credentials that lead to high-quality employment
- > **Community colleges**, that improve their completion rates and strengthen community partnerships
- > **Schools, workforce agencies, and other community partners**, that can access clearer pathways to careers with high-growth employment

COUNSELING TO CAREERS OFFERS A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO A PERSISTENT CHALLENGE

- > Fewer than half of all students who enter community college earn a degree or certificate within six years.
- > Those students who do graduate too often leave in debt and struggle to find decent-paying jobs.
- > Research shows that the sooner students choose an academic or vocational program of study, the more likely they are to graduate.
- > Counseling to Careers provides the critical link to help students choose the right postsecondary programs.

THE COUNSELING TO CAREERS TRAINING

Counseling to Careers features two training sessions, spaced over four months, that build capacity for districts, community-based organizations, schools, and community colleges to identify best bets. The intervening period gives participants time to put the Counseling to Careers process to action by conducting research and working with partners, supported by ongoing technical assistance from Jobs for the Future.

UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL LABOR MARKET BALTIMORE-TOWNSON, MARYLAND

Customized analyses of the local labor market

The chart below offers a regional view of the largest occupations that require less than a bachelor's degree and have median salaries at or above the regional median (\$19.03). Jobs with a high national percentage of employees with a bachelor's or higher may be difficult to access without a BA in some regions. Supervisors/managers and sales representatives are excluded from this list.

OCCUPATION	REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT (2010)	Regional Wage Information (2010)			NATI WIT% (2001)
		10th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	
Registered Nurses	30,670	\$24.76	\$37.04	\$46.02	55.7
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	10,020	\$16.93	\$23.09	\$27.67	16.6
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	9,820	\$20.11	\$26.49	\$30.15	32.0
Computer Support Specialists	7,050	\$14.78	\$24.14	\$30.48	41.1
Electricians	6,800	\$14.98	\$22.71	\$28.55	7.8
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	6,390	\$10.77	\$19.71	\$25.97	4.2

UNIT 5 IDENTIFYING BEST BETS BEST BET CHECKLIST

Rubrics to analyze research findings

Secondary training programs are... potentially a best bet, or is not a best bet. Since there is no best bet for everyone, the tool also asks that you briefly outline characteristics of students who would be a good match for each best bet you identify.

IN THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW, YOU EVALUATE A SERIES OF "BEST BET" CRITERIA UNDER FOUR KEY QUESTIONS:

- 1) Is this training program designed to meet industry needs? Does it have a track record of placing graduates in jobs in related industry?
- 2) Is this training program accessible to your students (or at least a subset of them)?
- 3) Are students likely to succeed in this training program? Does it have a track record of supporting and graduating students like yours?
- 4) Is the occupation (targeted by this training program) a best bet?

STEP 1:

If you researched...

... a postsecondary training program (through postsecondary interviews), please write its name and location here:

Next, complete the blue sections under questions 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 3-7). To fill out the last section, see instructions in the green box.

Sterile Processing Technician

Best bet profiles and pathways in-hand for use by counselors and students



DOES MY JOB HOT?

- Training programs are typically 2-5 months long, including both lecture and lab/practical practice. Programs prepare students to take a professional certification exam.
- Program graduates often receive a Certificate of Completion in Central Processing, which—along with professional certification—can get them an entry-level job as a Sterile Processing Tech.

Faster than average growth:

- In Massachusetts, this job is expected to grow 20% from 2008-2016.

Good pay (Boston 2010 figures):

- Typical entry-level wage: \$13.73/hr.
- Median wage: \$18.31/hr. (50% of Sterile Processing Techs earn less than this number, and the remaining 50% earn more)

Typical job benefits include:

- Medical & other insurance
- 401(k) retirement savings plan
- Tuition and certification fee reimbursement

Room for advancement:

- A Sterile Processing Tech can move up to...

WHAT I DO: I am a medical professional

SESSION ONE (TWO DAYS)

- > Teams of senior staff and counselors learn how to engage in a sustainable process for verifying best bets in their communities
- > They receive tools and resources that have been developed and tested to support this work, including:
 - » Customized analyses of their local labor market
 - » Detailed, actionable strategies to further build knowledge of the labor market
 - » Interview guides, sample email and phone scripts, and tracking sheets, all of which can be edited and adapted
 - » Rubrics to analyze research findings

- > Participants leave this session with an action plan to kick off the work

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (ONGOING)

- > Regularly scheduled check-in calls and webinars, along with a designated point-of-contact at JFF to support teams
- > Access to a customized website with downloads of all training materials

SESSION TWO (ONE DAY)

- > Participants identify best bet programs and explore ways to package this information for use by counselors and students
- > Focus on developing strategies to continue identifying best bets and integrating those into a more informed counseling process

Ultimately, participants walk away with best bet profiles and pathways in hand for use by counselors and students, along with the tools, resources, and knowledge to continue developing and refining these profiles.

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Jobs for the Future works with our partners to design and drive the adoption of education and career pathways leading from college readiness to career advancement for those struggling to succeed in today's economy.



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