

The NEW Career Exploration Guide

LMI Tuesdays

April 4, 2023

Jamie Vaughn

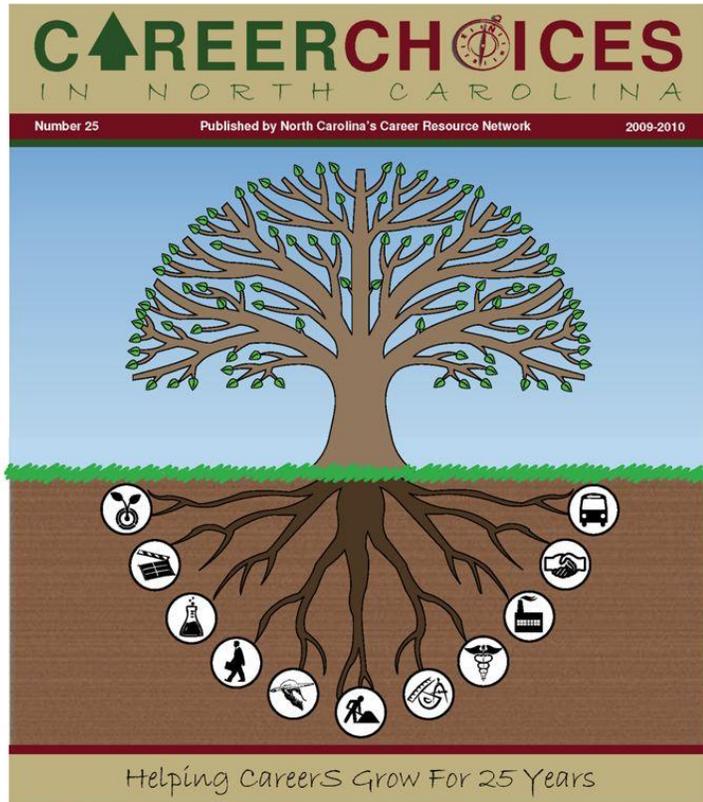
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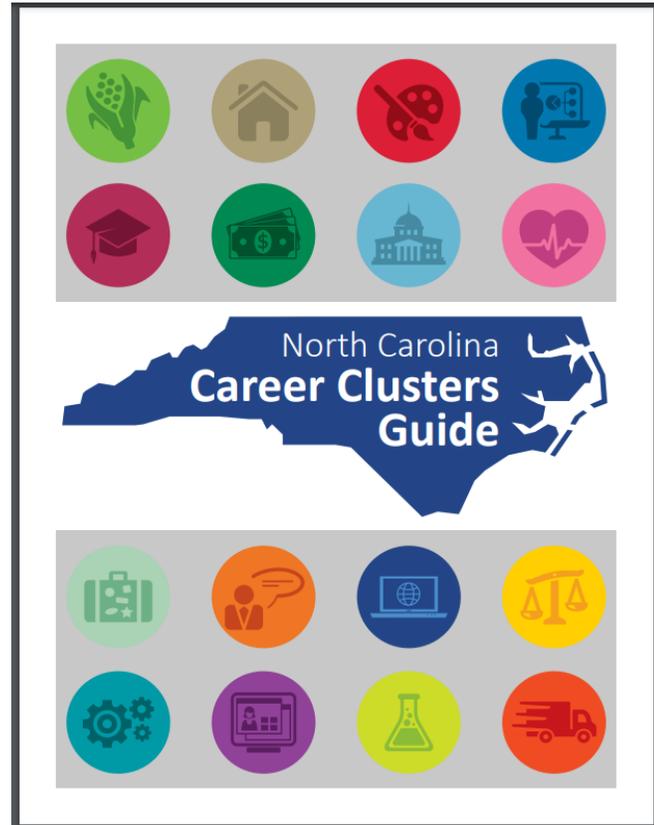
Labor & Economic Analysis Division

History of the Career Exploration Guide

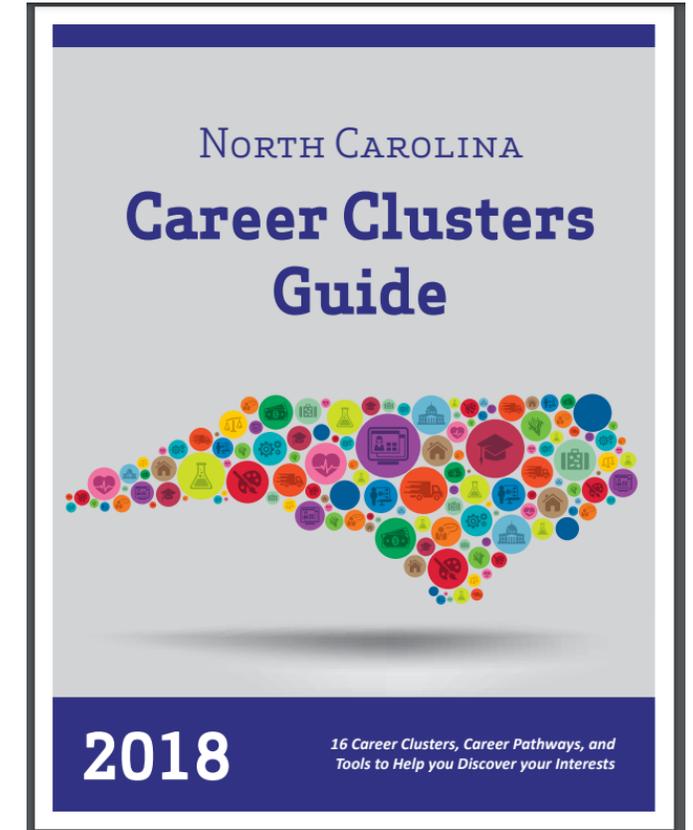
Started in 1984



2009



2015



2018

Who created the guide?

- NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division
- NC Community Colleges Career and Technical Education
- NC DPI Career and Technical Education



Why create the Career Exploration Guide?

- Offline Resource
 - Reinforce learning
 - Expressed need from:
 - Educators (K-12, Community College, University)
 - Counselors (K-12, Community College, University, Career Centers)
 - Workforce Development Boards
- Linkage to [NCcareers.org](https://www.nccareers.org)
 - For additional exploration
- Access to additional explorers

North Carolina Career Exploration Guide



Your Resource for Career Clusters, Pathways
and Occupations to help grow your future.



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Interest Finder

The Interest Finder is designed to help you identify your interests and translate them into occupations. **Don't worry if you have enough education or training to do the work or how much money you would make.** Check the boxes of activities you *think* you may like doing if you were skilled and able to do so.

Scan this QR code to access the online Interest Finder:

nccareers.org/interest-finder

Work Activity	Like	Dislike	Unsure
Build kitchen cabinets			
Lay brick or tile			
Develop a new medicine			
Study ways to reduce water pollution			
Write books or plays			
Play a musical instrument			
Teach an individual an exercise routine			
Help people with personal or emotional problems			
Buy and sell stocks and bonds			
Manage a retail store			
Develop a spreadsheet using computer software			
Proofread records or forms			
Repair household appliances			
Raise fish in a fish hatchery			
Conduct chemical experiments			
Study the movement of planets			
Compose or arrange music			
Draw pictures			
Give career guidance to people			
Perform rehabilitation therapy			
Operate a beauty salon or barber shop			
Manage a department within a large company			
Load computer software into a large computer network			
Operate a calculator			
Assemble electronic parts			
Drive a truck to deliver packages to offices and homes			
Examine blood samples using a microscope			

Record total number of likes for each color/pattern: 

Career Cluster Match

Career Clusters are groups of related types of work. They give you an easy way to explore different kinds of jobs within one broad category. Start with one of the clusters—like health care or construction—to learn what it involves, current trends, and the different careers it offers.

It's often easier to change jobs and advance within a career cluster. Identifying with a cluster can help you build your career and choose credentials—such as a college degree, specialized training, or certifications—that will qualify you for a variety of different, but related, jobs.

To identify the clusters most interesting to you, place a check mark in the space next to the items that best describe you. Then add the number of checks in each row. Enter that number in the "Total Checked" column on the right. The row with the most checks corresponds to the Career Cluster that is most likely to interest you.

Scan this QR code to access the online Career Cluster Match

nccareers.org/clustermatch

	Activities That Describe What I Like To Do	Personal Qualities That Describe Me	School Subjects That I Like	Total Checked
ROW A	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how things grow and stay alive <input type="checkbox"/> Make the best use of the earth's natural resources <input type="checkbox"/> Hunt and/or fish <input type="checkbox"/> Protect the environment <input type="checkbox"/> Be outdoors in all kinds of weather <input type="checkbox"/> Plan, budget, and keep records <input type="checkbox"/> Operate machines and keep them in good repair	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliant <input type="checkbox"/> Nature lover <input type="checkbox"/> Physically active <input type="checkbox"/> Planner <input type="checkbox"/> Creative problem solver	<input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Life Sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Earth Sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	_____
ROW B	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and follow blueprints and/or instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Picture in my mind what a finished product looks like <input type="checkbox"/> Work with my hands <input type="checkbox"/> Perform work that requires precise results <input type="checkbox"/> Solve technical problems <input type="checkbox"/> Visit and learn from beautiful, historic, or interesting buildings <input type="checkbox"/> Follow logical, step-by-step procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Curious <input type="checkbox"/> Good at following directions <input type="checkbox"/> Pay attention to details <input type="checkbox"/> Good at visualizing possibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Patient and persistent	<input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical/Heat, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration/Tech Education	_____
ROW C	<input type="checkbox"/> Use my imagination to communicate new information to others <input type="checkbox"/> Perform in front of others <input type="checkbox"/> Read and write <input type="checkbox"/> Play a musical instrument <input type="checkbox"/> Perform creative, artistic activities <input type="checkbox"/> Use video and recording technology <input type="checkbox"/> Design brochures and posters	<input type="checkbox"/> Creative and imaginative <input type="checkbox"/> Good communicator, good vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Curious about new technology <input type="checkbox"/> Relate well to feelings and thoughts of others <input type="checkbox"/> Determined/tenacious	<input type="checkbox"/> Art/Graphic Design <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Speech & Drama <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism/Literature <input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual Technologies	_____

Introduction to Career Clusters Matrix

Now that you've finished the Interest Finder, circle the column headings on these two pages that match the interest areas that you discovered on page 10. Then look at the occupations listed under your types and mark any that appeal to you.

Remember! The occupations in this matrix give you only a few examples.

To find additional careers, explore the career clusters information that follows. Below are examples of occupations organized by interest type and cluster.

Source: O*NET OnLine and LEAD

	Realistic	Investigative	Artistic		Social	Enterprising	Conventional
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	Pest Control Workers; Logging Equipment Operators; Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	Zoologists & Wildlife Biologists; Animal Scientists; Environmental Engineers			Farm Labor Contractors	Natural Sciences Managers; Farm Product Buyers & Purchasing Agents; Agricultural Engineers	Environmental Science & Protection Technicians; Farm Equipment Mechanics; Pesticide Handlers, Sprayers, & Applicators
Architecture & Construction	Construction Laborers; Roofers; Sheet Metal Workers	Landscape Architects; Civil Engineers	Interior Designers; Architects			Construction Managers; Cost Estimators; Supervisors of Landscaping Workers	Crane & Tower Operators; Highway Maintenance Workers; Electricians
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	Telecommunications Line Installers; Motion Picture Camera Operators; Craft Artists	Telecommunications Equipment Repairers; Film & Video Editors; Multimedia Artists & Animators	Art Directors; Editors; Photographers		Broadcast News Analysts; Choreographers; Public Address System & Other Announcers	Agents of Artists, Performers & Athletes; Musicians & Singers; Commercial & Industrial Designers	Broadcast Technicians; Technical Writers; Telecommunications Equipment Installers
Business Management & Administration	Postal Service Mail Carriers; Library Assistants; Clerical; Office Machine Operators	Management Analysts; Operations Research Analysts	Fundraisers; Training & Development Specialists		Customer Service Representatives; Human Resources Specialists; Training & Development Managers	Industrial Production Managers; Computer & Information Systems Managers; Chief Executives	Auditors; Compensation, Benefits, & Job Analysis Specialists; New Accounts Clerks
Education & Training	Vocational Education Teachers; Multimedia Collections Specialists; Museum Technicians & Conservators	College Economics Teachers; Health Specialties Teachers; Instructional Coordinators	Interpreters & Translators; Preschool Teachers; College Art, Drama, & Music Teachers		Special Education Teachers; College Recreation & Fitness Studies Teachers; School Counselors	Preschool Education Administrators; Curators; College Business Teachers	Librarians; Teacher Assistants; College Education Administrators
Finance	Auto Insurance Appraisers	Financial Analysts; Risk Management Specialists; Insurance Underwriters			Insurance Sales Agents; Personal Financial Advisors; Postmasters & Mail Superintendents	Loan Interviewers & Clerks; Brokerage Clerks; Credit Analysts	Bill & Account Collectors; Loan Officers; Tellers
Government & Public Administration	Agricultural Inspectors; Transportation Security Screeners; Construction & Building Inspectors	Statistical Assistants; Occupational Health & Safety Specialists	Urban & Regional Planners		Emergency Management Directors; Eligibility Interviewers; Legislators	Equal Opportunity Representatives & Officers; Tax Examiners & Collectors; Financial Examiners	Court Clerks; Transportation Inspectors; Assessors
Health Science	Veterinary Assistants; Medical Equipment Preparers; Surgical Technologists	Surgeons; Podiatrists; Pharmacists	Recreational Therapists; Psychiatrists; Speech-Language Pathologists		Nurse Practitioners; Pediatricians; General; Respiratory Therapy Technicians	Opticians; Dispensing; Psychiatric Technicians; Medical & Health Services Managers	Dental Assistants; Pharmacy Technicians; Medical Transcriptionists
Hospitality & Tourism	Dishwashers; Bakers; Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners		Chefs & Head Cooks; Recreation Workers; Cooks, Private Household		Tour Guides & Escorts; Waiters & Waitresses; Concierges	Lodging Managers; Umpires & Referees; Bartenders	Hotel Desk Clerks; Reservation & Transportation Ticket Agents; Food Service Managers
Human Services	Tailors; Massage Therapists; Shampooers	Healthcare Social Workers; Marriage & Family Therapists; Industrial-Organizational Psychologists	Cosmetologists; Childcare Workers; Substance Abuse Counselors		Clergy; Rehabilitation Counselors; Personal Care Aides	Skincare Specialists; Manicurists & Pedicurists; Credit Counselors	Barbers; Religious Activity Directors; Social & Human Service Assistants
Information Technology	Computer User Support Specialists; Network & Computer Systems Administrators; Software Developers, Applications	Computer Programmers; Software Quality Assurance Engineers & Testers; Information Security Analysts	Video Game Designers; Web Developers		Informatics Nurse Specialists	Computer Network Support Specialists; Search Marketing Strategists; Information Technology Project Managers	Computer Network Architects; Web Administrators; Database Administrators
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Parking Enforcement Workers; Bailiffs; Forest Fire Inspectors & Prevention Specialists	Forensic Science Technicians; Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics; Fish & Game Wardens	Forensic Artists		Crossing Guards; Animal Control Workers; Probation Officers	Lawyers; Sheriffs & Deputy Sheriffs; Private Detectives & Investigators	Paralegals & Legal Assistants; Security Guards; Police, Fire, & Ambulance Dispatchers
Manufacturing	Dental Laboratory Technicians; Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators; Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Industrial Engineering Technicians; Medical Equipment Repairers; Tool & Die Makers	Stone Cutters & Carvers; Glass Blowers; Musical Instrument Repairers & Tuners		Medical Appliance Technicians	Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers; Production, Planning, & Expediting Clerks; Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers & Repairers	Purchasing Agents; Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers; Machinists
Marketing	Driver/Sales Workers; Demonstrators & Product Promoters	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists; Sales Engineers	Public Relations Specialists; Models; Merchandise Displayers		Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers; Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	Real Estate Brokers; Wholesale & Retail Buyers; Parts Salespersons	Real Estate Sales Agents; Cashiers; Marketing Managers
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	Mechanical Engineers; Chemical Engineers; Electrical Engineers	Microbiologists; Materials Scientists; Chemists	Mathematicians; Biochemists & Biophysicists; Sociologists		Political Scientists	Industrial Engineers; Economists; Architectural & Engineering Managers	Social Science Research Assistants; Quality Control Analysts; Statisticians
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	Automotive Body Repairers; Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists; Commercial Pilots	Traffic Technicians; Avionics Technicians			Bus Drivers; Flight Attendants; Ambulance Drivers & Attendants	Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors; Logisticians; Taxi Drivers & Chauffeurs	Air Traffic Controllers; Cargo & Freight Agents; Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, & Ambulance

Explore Occupations

Now that you have learned more about yourself, use that information to focus on a handful of occupations. Visit the pages that can tell you more about your preferred cluster, its pathway, and related jobs. Additionally, you can:

- View a brief description, employment data and wages for selected careers.
- Read a personal career story from someone working in the cluster.

For more detailed information about any occupation, including local wages and videos, visit [NCcareers.org/occupation](https://nccareers.org/occupation).

Agricultural, Food & Natural Resources  18-23	Architecture & Construction  24-29	Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications  30-35	Business Management & Administration  36-41
Education & Training  42-47	Finance  48-53	Government & Public Administration  54-59	Health Science  60-65
Hospitality & Tourism  66-71	Human Services  72-77	Information Technology  78-83	Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security  84-89
Manufacturing  90-95	Marketing  96-101	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics  102-107	Transportation, Distribution & Logistics  108-113

SELECTED CAREERS OPENINGS & RATINGS KEY

As you look at the Selected Careers in each career cluster, you'll notice stars in the columns for 10-Year Openings and Growth Rate. The ratings range from 1 to 5 stars. The higher the number of stars, the greater the number of openings or rate of growth.

★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★
Best	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

The minimum education requirements listed are determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Actual market conditions may require additional education and/or training which can be found at your local North Carolina Community College.

Additional details about how NC's Community Colleges can help is available in the Education and Training section starting on page 117.



Health Science

Where do medical technologies and human touch intersect? They meet within the Health Science career cluster, which is a North Carolina and national growth industry. As the number of Americans over age 65 has grown and as more people survive serious injuries and other health issues, the need for healthcare has increased. If you want to work in a cluster that has strong job growth, this cluster may be for you. It is expected to include the greatest number of new jobs in North Carolina over the next 10 years and about one-third of the state's "hot jobs."

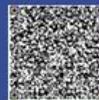
Hospitals or doctors' offices usually come to mind first when we think about healthcare workplaces, but home health care organizations and nursing homes also employ workers in this cluster. Some employees in this industry have 8-to-5 schedules, while others work less traditional shifts.

If you're thinking about a healthcare career, many jobs require good math and science skills. Jobs in this industry include a wide variety of educational backgrounds, ranging from medical degrees to many jobs that require less than four years of college.

CAREER RESEARCH

- Council on Education for Public Health
ceph.org
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
eatright.org
- Johnson & Johnson/Discovering Nursing
discovernursing.com
- Association of University Programs in Health Administration
aupha.org/resourcecenter/futurestudents
- HOSA – Future Health Professionals
hosa.org

Find more
Health
Science
Occupations:



CAREER PATHWAYS



CORE SKILLS

- Science
- Service Orientation
- Social Perceptiveness
- Instructing
- Active Learning
- Reading Comprehension
- Learning Strategies
- Active Listening
- Writing
- Judgment and Decision Making

SELECTED OCCUPATIONS

Biotechnology Research & Development Pathway

- **Architecture and Engineering**
Biomedical Engineers
- **Life, Physical, and Social Science**
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists

Diagnostic Services Pathway

- **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical**
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians; Diagnostic Medical Sonographers; Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other; Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other; Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists; Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians; Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists; Nuclear Medicine Technologists; Radiologic Technologists; Respiratory Therapy Technicians; Veterinary Technologists and Technicians
- **Life, Physical, and Social Science**
Epidemiologists

Health Informatics Pathway

- **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical**
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians
- **Healthcare Support**
Medical Transcriptionists
- **Office and Administrative Support**
Medical Secretaries

Support Services Pathway

- **Healthcare Support**
Healthcare Support Workers, All Other; Medical Equipment Preparers; Orderlies; Pharmacy Aides; Phlebotomists; Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers
- **Management**
Medical and Health Services Managers

Therapeutic Services Pathway

- **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical**
Anesthesiologists; Athletic Trainers; Audiologists; Chiropractors; Dental Hygienists; Dentists, All Other Specialists; Dentists, General; Dietetic Technicians; Dietitians and Nutritionists; Exercise Physiologists; Family and General Practitioners; Genetic Counselors; Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners, All Other; Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other; Hearing Aid Specialists; Internists, General; Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses; Medical Records and Health Information Technicians; Nurse Anesthetists; Nurse Midwives; Nurse Practitioners; Obstetricians and Gynecologists; Occupational Therapists; Ophthalmic Medical Technicians; Opticians, Dispensing; Optometrists; Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons; Orthodontists; Orthotists and Prosthetists; Pediatricians; General; Pharmacists; Pharmacy Technicians; Physical Therapists; Physician Assistants; Physicians and Surgeons, All Other; Podiatrists; Prosthodontists; Psychiatric Technicians; Psychiatrists; Radiation Therapists; Recreational Therapists; Registered Nurses; Respiratory Therapists; Respiratory Therapy Technicians; Speech-Language Pathologists; Surgeons; Surgical Technologists; Therapists, All Other; Veterinarians
- **Healthcare Support**
Dental Assistants; Home Health Aides; Medical Assistants; Nursing Assistants; Occupational Therapy Aides; Occupational Therapy Assistants; Physical Therapist Aides; Physical Therapist Assistants; Psychiatric Aides

SELECTED CAREERS

* See data sources and notes about Selected Careers on page 126.

• Certifications and/or degrees are available through NC Community Colleges to help a candidate become more competitive in the marketplace.

Occupation*	Job Description	Career Pathway	10-Year Openings	NC Annualized Growth Rate	Annual Entry/ Median Wages*	Minimum Education	Interest Areas
Athletic Trainers	Specialize in preventing, diagnosing, and treating muscle and bone injuries and illnesses.	Therapeutic Services	★★★	★★★★★	\$34,270 / \$46,350	Bachelor's degree	SRI
Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians	Operate specialized equipment to conduct tests that help doctors analyze and diagnose heart and lung conditions. May assist physicians and surgeons during surgical procedures.	Diagnostic Services	★★★	★★★★	\$33,050 / \$64,440	Associate's degree	RIS
Dental Hygienists	Clean teeth, examine patients for signs of oral diseases such as gingivitis, and provide other preventative dental care. Educate patients on ways to improve and maintain good oral health.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★	★★★	\$54,620 / \$72,020	Associate's degree	SRC
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	Operate special imaging equipment to create images or conduct tests that help physicians assess and diagnose medical conditions.	Diagnostic Services	★★★	★★★★★	\$54,010 / \$70,400	Associate's degree	ISR
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	Help people who have disabilities, chronic illnesses, or cognitive impairments. They also may care for and assist people who are elderly, convalescing, or who have disabilities perform daily living activities at the person's home or in a care facility.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★★	★★★★★	\$17,360 / \$22,340	High School +	SR
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	Provide basic medical care, working under the direction of registered nurses and doctors.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★★	★★★	\$36,530 / \$47,080	Postsecondary nondegree award	SR
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	Perform diagnostic imaging examinations on patients. MRI technologists operate magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners to create diagnostic images.	Diagnostic Services	★★	★★★★	\$54,510 / \$70,900	Associate's degree	RCS
Medical & Health Services Managers	Plan, direct and coordinate medical and healthcare services and facilities. May manage large physician group practices or specialize in clinical areas or departments.	Support Services	★★★★★	★★★★★	\$69,710 / \$103,940	Bachelor's degree	ECS
Medical Assistants	Complete administrative and clinical tasks in hospitals, offices of physicians, and other healthcare facilities.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★★	★★★★★	\$26,660 / \$34,740	Postsecondary nondegree award	SCR
Medical Secretaries	Perform routine clerical and organizational tasks.	Health Informatics	★★★★★	★★★★	\$26,650 / \$35,500	High School +	CS
Nuclear Medicine Technologists	Prepare and administer radioactive drugs for imaging or treatment.	Diagnostic Services	★★	★★★★	\$53,220 / \$70,480	Associate's degree	IRS
Nurse Practitioners	Coordinate patient care and may provide primary and specialty health care. The scope of practice varies from state to state.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★	★★★★★	\$85,130 / \$106,770	Master's degree	SIR
Nursing Assistants	Provide basic care and help patients with activities of daily living. Orderlies transport patients and clean treatment areas.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★★	★★★	\$20,530 / \$27,610	Postsecondary nondegree award	SCR
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Help patients develop, recover, and improve the skills needed for daily living and working. Provide patient therapy, working under the direction of occupational therapists.	Therapeutic Services	★★★	★★★★★	\$44,500 / \$66,490	Associate's degree	SR
Phlebotomists	Draw blood for tests, transfusions, research, or blood donations.	Support Services	★★★★★	★★★★★	\$26,540 / \$34,780	Postsecondary nondegree award	CRJ
Physical Therapist Assistants	Help physical therapists provide physical therapy treatments and procedures. May also assist in developing treatment plans, tracking progress, and modifying specific treatments based on patients' progress and PT's treatment plans.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★	★★★★★	\$44,660 / \$61,090	Associate's degree	SRI
Radiation Therapists	Administer doses of radiation to patients who have cancer or other serious diseases.	Therapeutic Services	★★	★★★★	\$58,210 / \$80,420	Associate's degree	SRC
Respiratory Therapists	Care for patients who have trouble breathing due to chronic respiratory diseases like COPD. Work with patients of all ages and provide emergency care to patients suffering from heart attacks, drowning, or shock.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★	★★★★★	\$44,500 / \$59,040	Associate's degree	SIR
Surgical Technologists	Assist in surgical operations.	Therapeutic Services	★★★★	★★★	\$33,960 / \$44,880	Postsecondary nondegree award	RSC
Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	Do medical tests that help diagnose animals' injuries and illnesses.	Diagnostic Services	★★★★	★★★★★	\$25,750 / \$35,470	Associate's degree	RI

Career Stories



Jann Sanders

Gaston College
Nurse

Q: What is the best part of your job?

A: The best part of my job is that I get to bring some kindness and tenderness into the life of my patient. As much as I can, I like to love on my patients.

Q: Why is your job important?

A: Nurses, because we spend the most time with the patient and caring for them, can catch vital information that providers may not be able to. Nurses are the middlemen between the patient and the providers.

Q: Where did you get your training / education?

A: I attended Gaston College Nursing Program. I also worked as a CNA and served as a caregiver for my mother-in-law and father-in-law before their passing. There is something to be said about life experience. I gained a wealth of knowledge in all 3 places.



Seham Alimusleh

Alamance Community College
Dental Assistant

Q: How did you decide to pursue your occupation?

A: I have always loved going to the dentist as a kid and everyone was so nice. I have been a patient at the orthodontist for 3 years wearing braces. I have seen a lot and it was something I enjoyed.

Q: Why is the work you do important?

A: Most people have insecurities about their smile and I think helping them with these insecurities is important.

Q: What would interest others about your career choice?

A: Seeing the smile on your patients face after their appointment or after a big change they made to their smile.

Q: What kind of training and education do you need for this job?

A: Hands-on training and practice at private practices.

Setting Goals?

Now that you have found your interests and explored occupations in the first two sections, the next step is to set some career goals.

Goals should not only be about identifying the job you want, but about how you plan to achieve it. Ultimately, this requires an understanding about how to grow your career. Growing in your career can be defined in several ways, including taking on additional responsibility, gaining more experience and, of course, earning a higher salary.

This is important because having goals keeps you focused on where you want to go. Setting goals has several benefits including: constantly giving guidance and direction, facilitation planning, motivation and inspiration as well as allowing for evaluation.



Where to get help with Goal Setting

No matter where you are in your career journey, there's someone here to help you.

Middle School or High School Students

Talk to your School Counselor or Career Development Coordinator (CDC).



SCHOOL COUNSELOR



CAREER DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR (CDC)

Community College or University Students

Visit your school's career center.



COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAREER CENTER



UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER

Not Enrolled in School

Visit your local NCWorks Career Center.



Career Planning Tools

First Step/Next Step

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American holds over 12 jobs by the time they reach age 55 – and half of those jobs occur before age 25. The report highlights that changing jobs and increased education, especially while you're early in your career, can lead to a rapid increase in pay. You should not just expect a lot of change in your career, but plan for it. Planned job changes should create better pay and benefits, increased responsibility, or increased job satisfaction – or preferably all of the above. How can you plan changes that best meet your career goals?

NCcareers.org has tools to help you identify more than a single occupation, but potentially connected jobs. The **Next Step** and **First Step** tools use data to identify related occupations - those that require similar skills and knowledge but typically pay more – providing a potential path to career advancement.



The **Next Step** tool was developed to guide users with a known starting job to identify occupations that can advance their career. It provides a list of occupations that typically pay more to help workers understand how they can increase their earnings. The occupation may also require more education and/or experience so it allows a career planner to understand the path to earning more money.



The **First Step** tool works the same way as the Next Step tool, but in reverse. During career exploration, you may have your sights set on an occupation you are not yet prepared for. Using this tool, you can find jobs that are typically a step down – i.e. pay a little less and may have lower education requirements or require less experience.



Education and Training

North Carolina has a strong education and training system, which is important given how employers often seek to hire individuals with a certain level or type of education or training.

After high school, there are a variety of education and training options:

- North Carolina community colleges (58 public postsecondary institutions that offer education and training that generally takes two years or less to complete).
- Public UNC System colleges or universities (16 colleges/universities offering four-year bachelor's degrees and a variety of advanced and professional degrees).
- Independent colleges or universities (private postsecondary institutions that offer two-year degrees, four-year degrees, and/or advanced or professional degrees).
- Other training providers.

It is important to have in mind what kind of careers you may want to pursue as you consider the postsecondary education or training path that is right for you.

Note that there are pathways between types of postsecondary education. For example, certain associate's degrees at community colleges are designed for students to transfer easily to a four-year college or university for their junior and senior years to earn a bachelor's degree. Also, some people who earn an academic degree (such as a bachelor's degree) may later obtain more specialized training or credentials for their chosen career in another postsecondary education or training program, at the same or another type of institution.

Community Colleges

Community colleges offer many different kinds of education and training options.

Here are some examples:

- Academic programs leading to an academic credential (Certificate, Diploma, or Degree).
 - Some are designed to lead a student directly into the workforce after completion, such as Career and Technical Education programs.
 - Some associate's degree programs are designed for "College Transfer" – to be able to transfer to another college or university, often to be able to complete a bachelor's degree.
- Short-term workforce training (weeks or months of job training) to prepare for specific jobs, usually not for college credit, but often students earn an industry-recognized credential.
- Programs for those who have not yet earned their high school diploma to earn their high school diploma as an adult or take tests to earn their high school equivalency.
- Programs for English Language Learners to learn English in order to pursue further education or training, or to have the language skills for the workplace.
- Entrepreneurship courses and business counseling.
- Apprenticeship programs, work-based learning courses, and other work-based or simulated work opportunities to understand what it is like to work in a specific field.
- Dual enrollment programs (such as Career and College Promise) that enable high school students to take community college courses while still in high school.

On the following pages, several types of community college program areas are highlighted.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO EARN A CREDENTIAL?

Typical time to earn an academic credential from a Community College, if you're studying as a full-time student:

- **Certificate**
One semester
- **Diploma**
Two semesters plus summer session
- **Degree**
Two years
 - Associate in Applied Arts/ Science to prepare for employment
 - OR
 - Associate in Arts/Science to transfer to a four-year college/university.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP



Victor Hall

Surry Community College
HVAC Apprentice

Q: What made you interested in this career path?

A: I started with an internship as a custodian, and once that was over the opportunity to go to the maintenance department opened up. I am now able to expand my knowledge with the apprenticeship.

Q: What do you like about your job?

A: Everything. Critical thinking – this job really pushes you to think out of the box sometimes; Electricity – this has been one of the best things to learn about; Being able to see hard work pay off – seeing a project all the way through is rewarding.

Q: Where did you get your training/education?

A: I am part of the apprenticeship program, which means I attend Surry Community College, and also get training on the job.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?

A: Staying on the maintenance side of the school system.

THE ADVANTAGES OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Registered Apprenticeships offer advantages for both job seekers and employers – a true win-win situation: You get to learn skills that an employer needs, and the employer gets a qualified worker.

A few other benefits could include:

- You earn a paycheck that gradually increases as you learn new skills.
- In addition to providing hands-on training, your employer may pay for you to earn college credit.
- Your employer may hire you after you've successfully completed your apprenticeship.
- You may receive an industry certification that you can use anywhere in the country.

For more information about apprenticeships, visit apprenticeshipnc.com



Job Search

Understanding the Job Search Process

There are multiple steps to securing a job once you know what you're looking for.

1. Find the jobs available now.

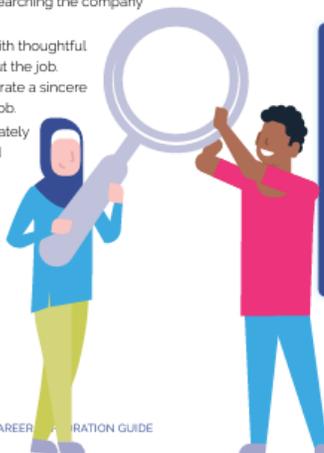
- Start on online job boards like [NCWorks.gov](https://www.ncworks.gov), [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com), or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com).
- Many jobs are available by word-of-mouth or direct from an employer's establishment.
- Use friends and acquaintances to 'network' and expand your job search.

2. Fully complete the application process.

- Employers can require an application, resume, references, and/or an example of your work.
- A cover letter could be helpful to highlight your experience and qualities.
- Ensure your application and/or resume addresses the key duties and requirements of the job listed in the ad.
- Read the entire job ad and provide what the employer asks for.

3. Ace the interview process.

- There could be multiple interviews, test(s), a live demonstration of your work, and more.
- Prepare by researching the company and position.
- Be prepared with thoughtful questions about the job. It can demonstrate a sincere interest in the job.
- Dress appropriately and make solid eye contact.



PREPARE FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

'Job' and 'career' are similar terms, but knowing the difference and planning with a *career-oriented mindset* can help build a better future.



HOW CAN NCWORKS CAREER CENTERS HELP THE PROCESS?

With more than 80 NCWorks Career Centers across the state, job seekers can access tools necessary to be successful.

Services offered to job-seekers, at no charge:

- Career assessment and guidance
- Access to training and education programs
- Learn about job fairs and workshops
- Information on the job market
- Assistance with job searches
- Resume and cover letter preparation
- Practice job interviews
- Free computer and Internet access

Veterans, young adults, migrant farm workers, and former offenders can access special programs through their local NCWorks Career Center. For more information and to set up an appointment, visit [ncworks.gov](https://www.ncworks.gov).



LEARN HOW TO ACE THAT INTERVIEW!

If you are successful through these steps and are chosen, you will receive a job offer. The top negotiation point is salary and understanding what a fair wage is for your based on your skill level, experience and other areas is important but don't underestimate the value of a total compensation package which can include health insurance, retirement, and many more valuable items.



How can you access?

- Printed Copies will be available
 - Middle & High Schools
 - Community Colleges
 - Career Centers
 - And more
- Online in [NCcareers.org](https://www.nccareers.org) Educator Resources Section

Career Exploration Guide

- Click on Educator Resources link in Footer



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Governance Committee



Advisory Board



By Topic

By Grade

About the Lesson Plans

Printables & Tools



Printables

[NEW Career Exploration Guide \(Updated Spring 2023\)](#) – North Carolina’s guide to career clusters, pathways, and occupations to help grow your future.

[Mini-Career Cluster Handbook](#) - A small version of the Career Exploration Guide.

[Career Cluster Re-Entry Guide](#) - A small version of the Career Exploration Guide focused on individuals reentering the workforce after a period of incarceration.

[Career Cluster Military Guide](#) - A small version of the Career Exploration Guide focused on individuals entering the civilian labor force after exiting military service.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Handbook for
Career Explorers and Changers



Your Guide to NC Careers

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Handbook for
Re-Entering the Workforce



Your Guide to NC Careers

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Handbook for Existing Service Members
Re-Entering the Civilian Workforce



Your Guide to NC Careers

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