K12 ACADEMICS — CAREER EXPLORATION SERIES

Career Spotlights

A guide for students & families — a tour of four high-demand fields (healthcare, technology, public service, and green energy), the range of roles in each, and how to find your way in.

K12 ACADEMICS

Find Your Community

2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community** — for every kind of learner.

FOUR FIELDS WORTH A CLOSE LOOK

Some fields offer **unusual opportunity** — strong demand, many roles at many education levels, and multiple ways in. This guide spotlights four: **healthcare, technology, public service, and green energy**. It's not a ranking or a push — it's a tour to spark exploration, in **ten steps**.

General guidance. Demand, pay, and requirements vary by role, region, and time. This guide describes fields and routes; for current data on any specific career, check the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, O*NET, and CareerOneStop.

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STEP 01 OF 10

Why Spotlight These Four Fields

WHAT TO KNOW

These fields stand out for **opportunity**: consistent demand, a huge range of roles at every education level, and multiple entry routes. That means real options whether you want a certificate, a two-year degree, a bachelor's, or beyond.

BY THE NUMBERS

Strong demand	Every level	Many ways in
across the country	cert to advanced degree	not one path

HOW TO HELP

Use these spotlights to **explore, not to decide** — the best field is the one that fits *your* interests and strengths, and these are simply rich places to look.

GOOD TO KNOW

"High opportunity" means options, not obligation — explore any field that genuinely interests you, spotlighted or not.

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STEP 02 OF 10

Spotlight: Healthcare

WHAT TO KNOW

Healthcare is vast and durable, driven by an aging population and constant need. It spans **direct patient care, diagnostics, therapy, technology, and administration** — with roles from entry-level to physician.

BY THE NUMBERS

Durable demand	Huge range	Meaningful
people always need care	aides to physicians	helping people

HOW TO HELP

If you value **helping people and stability**, explore healthcare's enormous range — there's a role and an education level to match almost anyone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Healthcare isn't only doctors and nurses — technologists, therapists, techs, and support roles are in high demand too.

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STEP 03 OF 10

Getting Into Healthcare

WHAT TO KNOW

Routes vary widely by role: **certificates and associate degrees** (medical assistant, radiologic tech, LPN, paramedic), **bachelor's** (RN, many therapists), and **graduate/professional degrees** (physician, PA, pharmacist).

BY THE NUMBERS

Fast routes	Bachelor's	Advanced
cert & associate roles	RN, therapists	physician, PA, pharmacist

HOW TO HELP

Match the **role to the route**: start with community-college health programs to enter quickly, with clear ladders (e.g., LPN → RN) to advance later.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many enter healthcare through a **short program, start earning, then upskill** — often with employer tuition support.

4 STEP 04 OF 10

Spotlight: Technology

WHAT TO KNOW

Technology touches every industry, and it increasingly values **demonstrated skill over pedigree**. Roles span software, IT support, cybersecurity, data, cloud, and design — in tech companies and everywhere else.

BY THE NUMBERS

Everywhere	Skill-first	Broad
every industry needs it	proof over pedigree	dev, IT, security, data

HOW TO HELP

If you like **solving problems with technology**, explore tech broadly — and remember many roles reward a strong portfolio and certifications, not only degrees.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to be a "genius coder" — IT support, security, data, and design offer many on-ramps.

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STEP 05 OF 10

Getting Into Technology

WHAT TO KNOW

Routes include **self-teaching plus a portfolio, industry certifications** (CompTIA, Cisco, cloud), **coding bootcamps, associate degrees**, and **bachelor's degrees** — chosen to match the role and employer.

BY THE NUMBERS

Certs & portfolio	Bootcamps	Degrees
for many roles	fast & intensive	for some paths

HOW TO HELP

Build **proof of skill** — projects, certifications, contributions — alongside any formal study; in much of tech, what you can *do* opens the door.

GOOD TO KNOW

Start free: many **high-quality tech courses and tools** cost nothing — build things before spending on a program.

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STEP 06 OF 10

Spotlight: Public Service

WHAT TO KNOW

Public service — **government, education, public safety, and nonprofits** — offers stability, benefits, and the reward of serving a community. Roles range from teachers and civil servants to first responders and public-health workers.

BY THE NUMBERS

Serve others	Stability	Broad
real community impact	benefits & pensions	gov, education, safety, nonprofit

HOW TO HELP

If **purpose and stability** matter to you, explore public service — it spans nearly every skill set, from hands-on to analytical to caregiving.

GOOD TO KNOW

Public-service roles often include **strong benefits, job security, and pensions** — real long-term value beyond the paycheck.

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STEP 07 OF 10

Getting Into Public Service

WHAT TO KNOW

Routes depend on the role: **academies and certifications** (police, fire, EMS), **bachelor's and licensure** (teaching, social work), and **civil-service exams and applications** for many government positions.

BY THE NUMBERS

Academies	Degree + license	Civil service
safety roles	teaching, social work	exams & applications

HOW TO HELP

Identify the role, then follow its specific route — an academy, a licensure program, or a civil-service application — and watch for hiring cycles.

WATCH OUT

Government hiring runs on **cycles and formal processes** — learn the steps early and apply on time.

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STEP 08 OF 10

Spotlight: Green & Energy

WHAT TO KNOW

The **clean-energy and sustainability** field is growing fast: solar and wind installation and maintenance, energy efficiency, electric-vehicle and battery work, and environmental roles — many hands-on, many new.

BY THE NUMBERS

Fast-growing	Hands-on + technical	New roles
clean energy expanding	install to engineer	emerging every year

HOW TO HELP

If you care about **sustainability and like practical, future-facing work**, explore green energy — it blends the trades, technology, and science.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many green jobs are **skilled-trade roles** (solar/wind technician) reachable through certificates and apprenticeships, not just degrees.

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STEP 09 OF 10

Getting Into Green Careers

WHAT TO KNOW

Routes span the spectrum: **trade certificates and apprenticeships** (solar, wind, EV technicians), **associate degrees** (energy tech), and **bachelor's and beyond** (environmental science, engineering).

BY THE NUMBERS

Certs & apprenticeships	Associate degrees	Degrees
technician roles	energy tech	science & engineering

HOW TO HELP

Match your interest to a route: hands-on installers via **certificates and apprenticeships**, or analytical roles via **science and engineering degrees**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Green energy is where the **trades and technology meet a growing market** — a strong bet for hands-on and technical students alike.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Explore Any Field: The Method

WHAT TO KNOW

The same simple method works for **any** field, spotlighted or not: **research it, talk to someone in it, try a taste of it, and make a plan** for your next steps.

BY THE NUMBERS

Research	Talk & try	Plan
BLS, O*NET, real roles	interviews, shadowing	concrete next steps

HOW TO HELP

Pick any field that interests you and run the loop: **read real data, talk to a professional, get hands-on exposure, and write down your next steps.**

GOOD TO KNOW

This four-part method — research, talk, try, plan — is how to explore **every** career, long after this guide.

QUICK REFERENCE

The Four Fields at a Glance

A snapshot of each spotlighted field — the range of roles and the common routes in. (Check current pay and outlook at BLS.)

Healthcare

Roles: aide, medical assistant, tech, LPN/RN, therapist, PA, pharmacist, physician. Routes: certificate → associate → bachelor's → graduate/professional.

Technology

Roles: IT support, cybersecurity, networking, data, software, design. Routes: certifications + portfolio, bootcamps, associate and bachelor's degrees.

Public service

Roles: teacher, civil servant, police/fire/EMS, social worker, public-health worker. Routes: academies, licensure, degrees, and civil-service exams.

Green & energy

Roles: solar/wind technician, EV/battery tech, energy auditor, environmental scientist, engineer. Routes: certificates and apprenticeships to degrees.

The universal method

For any field: **research** it (BLS/O*NET), **talk** to someone in it, **try** a taste (shadow, course), and make a **plan**.

FIND YOUR FIELD

Find Your Community.

Explore our Career Clusters, Jobs Without a Bachelor's, and Apprenticeships guides — among **1,297 free resources** to help every student find their path.

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