

## How to Choose an In-Demand Career

Every occupation requires the right mix of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Before you invest your time and money preparing for an occupation that interests you, career experts advise you to consider career fields that are in demand or poised for growth.

“Once you’ve identified the right career, the next step on the path to a great job is a great education at an affordable price”, says Jenni Smith Gilmer of Richland College. “We offer high-quality career and technical education, with classes available on days, nights, weekends and online to accommodate just about any schedule. New technologies are rapidly accelerating the pace of change in the job market, she adds. Although some innovations often signal the end of certain occupations, other jobs will be created that may be less obvious.

When considering in-demand careers, Texans have a distinct advantage: While the nation as a whole experienced job growth of 1.3 percent in the last year, Texas saw a 2.4 percent growth rate, according to the Texas Workforce Commission. Although all industries experienced growth, jobs in construction, trade, transportation, utilities and manufacturing had the greatest increases.

If you’re preparing for a career that goes beyond current job openings, Ms. Gilmer recommends consulting resources such as the Texas Workforce Commission. “Do some research”, she says. “It will definitely pay off down the line”. Although an education may qualify you for a career, it’s no guarantee that you’ll get the job you want, experts say. “Most colleges provide career services beyond classroom instruction,” Ms. Gilmer says, “so you can get help researching career options. Counselors can match you to your best career choice, help you develop interview skills and build a resume that will get noticed.”

According to North Central Texas InterLink, the following are among the top industries and occupations for long-term growth, as identified by employers:

- Accounting
- Computer/Information Technology
- Education
- Engineering
- Health Services

To decide on a career, determine the skills you enjoy using. Then identify the environment in which you’d prefer to work. Some skills, such as sales, can be used in a range of environments. Try to narrow and clarify your career goals. A career development professional can help you evaluate your interests, skills, values and personality. A career assessment can measure your existing skills—including some that might surprise you. Your career counselor can then suggest several career options that might appeal to you. It’s important to develop realistic short-term and long-term goals. What industry or occupation is most likely to provide a way for you to meet those goals? A career counselor can give you valuable insight about different industries and jobs.

Choosing a career isn’t something you should take lightly. Don’t rush into a career just because you think it’s a good opportunity. You might need a lot more information than you can get in a short session with a career adviser. Many schools offer a wide variety of career development courses that can help you further explore your values, skills, interests and abilities as they relate to the professional world.