

# College & Career Connections Road Map Checklist

## Explore

- Complete a [My Next Step form](#) to get personalized feedback for your journey.
- Listen to at least 5 episodes from our [College Exploration podcast](#) series.
- Take a [Virtual College Tour](#) and talk to someone about your experience.
- Prepare for the Digital SAT/ACT using [Learning Express Library](#).
- Learn about Financial Aid options using [Ferguson's Career Guidance Center](#).
- If you are a Charlotte Mecklenburg School (CMS) student, check out [Find Your Path](#) online.
- As you start your college and career journey, reflect on what you know about yourself and use that to help guide you. Think about your interests, talents, and skills. What are you passionate about?
- Looking to earn a high school equivalency credential? Check out [Learning Express Library](#) for resources.
- Figuring out how to pay for college is overwhelming. Check out [CFNC's site](#) to help guide you through the process. Be sure to check out all their other resources, such as [Plan Your Future](#) and [Apply to College](#).
- Make an appointment to speak with your school counselor about your college and career options.
- Learn what clubs, sports, and extracurriculars your high school offers, so you can start exploring early.
- Listen to at least 5 episodes from our [Career Spotlight podcast](#) series.
- Prepare for career exams using [Learning Express Library](#).
- Find Internships, Apprenticeships, or Job Postings using [Ferguson's Career Guidance Center](#).
- Start planning your career with [NCCareers.org](#) and [explore occupations](#).
- Discover what career matches your skills with [Skills Matcher](#).
- See what is important to you in a job with [Work Values Sorter](#).
- Take a quiz to see if you would be a successful entrepreneur with [Be Your Own Boss](#).
- Shadow a professional for a workday and reflect on your experience.
- Discover what [career cluster](#) fits your college and career goals.
- Learn about unique opportunities in our community to see if any are right for you: [NCWorks NextGen](#), [Career & College Promise](#), [Road to Hire](#), [Carolina Youth Coalition](#), [Year Up](#), [Bonita Rising](#), [College Access for All](#), [LAWA](#), and [military career](#) options.
- Not every career requires a college degree. Explore [this list](#) to see what paths are available.
- There is a lot to consider when you get a job. Learn about [Workplace Basics for Success](#) from Goodwill.
- Explore coding & technology careers by watching a Library Codelab program on our [YouTube channel](#).
- Getting started on your college and career journey will be easier if you bookmark this [helpful resource](#).
- Exploration is an ongoing process when it comes to your future. If you completed an activity that is not on this list and it helped you explore your college and career options, use this as a free space.



## Read

- Search for books in our [catalog](#) to help you on your journey and plan to read at least one.
- What do you know about budgeting? Place a hold on one or more books from this [recommended reading list](#) and start reading to learn more!
- Want to find out more about financial aid and scholarships? Place a hold on one or more books from this [recommended reading list](#) and start reading to learn more!
- Looking to explore colleges and majors? Place a hold on one or more books from this [recommended reading list](#) and start reading to learn more!

- You can never be too prepared for standardized tests! Place a hold on one or more books from this [recommended reading list](#) and start reading to learn more!
- Reading keeps your mind sharp and allows you to use your imagination. Check out any of our online resources to help you find your next escape: [Comics Plus Teen Library](#), [Libby Teen Collection](#), [YALSA Teen Book Finder](#), or [hoopla](#).
- Read one of these articles, "[Teen Guide - 5 Steps to Saving for Something You Really Want](#)" or "[Budgeting for Teens: 14 Tips For Growing Your Money Young](#)" Read this article, "[Teen Guide - 5 Steps to Saving for Something You Really Want](#)"
- Knowing what you want your path to be, make a list of at least five articles, books, or resources that you plan to read to better prepare yourself.

## Write

- Find out what a brag sheet is and use these [helpful hints](#) from CFNC to write your own.
- Write a professional resume with [Resume Builder](#), using tips from [Ferguson's Career Guidance Center](#).
- Write at least one personal essay that can be used for applying to college or a scholarship using [this guide](#).
- Learn about planning a schedule on [LinkedIn Learning](#), and then write one that works for your style.
- Keep an updated list of your references to use for applications.
- Learn how to take effective notes by taking a course in [LinkedIn Learning](#).
- Imagine what your life would be like if you had your dream job. From that perspective, write a letter to your present-day self to encourage planning for your future.
- Make a list of all your extracurricular activities and academic accomplishments to include in your applications.
- What is your elevator pitch to give prospective schools or employers? Write down why you are an ideal candidate by highlighting your achievements, community involvement, key characteristics, etc.

## Create

- Share any of your college and career activities from your journey on social media by tagging us @cmlibraryteens
- Create a [digital portfolio](#) to help you stand out. Try using freeware like Canva to create yours!
- Create a plan to help you save and budget for your future using CFNC's [Financial Literacy](#) resources.
- Create a journal or blog to help you plan, while also improving your writing skills.
- Create a [LinkedIn profile](#) to build your professional presence (for ages 16 and up).
- Create your own calm and use our [Teen Health and Wellness](#) resource to learn about emotional and mental health, as well as mindfulness and meditation.
- Listening to music while studying can be beneficial. Create your ideal environment by downloading or streaming music from our resource, [Freegal Music+](#).
- Open an email account with a professional address.
- Take a course on [LinkedIn Learning](#) to build your skill set.
- Build a list of schools using [College Navigator](#) to do a side-by-side comparison.
- In thinking about your future, where do you see yourself in five years? Create your college and career goals, as well as your plan to achieve them.

## Plan

- Complete a School Search using [Ferguson's Career Guidance Center](#) to compile a list of prospective schools that best meet your needs.
- Looking for interesting things to do in your downtime? Look at volunteer opportunities or part-time jobs to broaden your experiences.
- Keep track of important deadlines and plan a detailed list of tasks to help you stay on target.
- Take a course on [LinkedIn Learning](#) to help you plan and manage your time effectively.
- Prepare for career exams using [Learning Express Library](#).
- Search [scholarship opportunities](#) using resources from Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.
- Plan for college by learning about [Better Money Habits](#) from Bank of America.
- Plan for college by using this interactive "[Get College Ready](#)" guide from Wells Fargo.
- Start asking teachers, advisors, and supervisors for letters of recommendation to build your portfolio.
- Do an [online practice application](#) to help you prepare for the real thing.
- Learn important Skills for School, Work, and Life using our [Teen Health and Wellness](#) resource.
- NCcareers.org now offers you a personal career GPS! Map your path to success with their [Career Plan Builder](#).

## Act

- Participate in a College & Career Connections [program or workshop](#) at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.
- Create digital content for our CMLibrary Teens account on Instagram and earn community service hours. Find out about possible projects and submit at least one using [this form](#).
- Apply to a job, internship, apprenticeship, certificate program, or post-secondary institution.
- Find out if you qualify for [NC College Connect](#), which is a new program that provides a simpler way to apply to college.
- Register for a [My Next Step session](#) with the Library to discuss your future plans.
- Register and take AP/IB exams.
- Visit campuses in-person or online. Select your top 5 and bookmark their applications.
- Joining the military? Register and take the ASVAB test.
- File for [FAFSA](#) and financial aid.
- Get help with your resume through a [Library program](#) or resource.
- Attend a college or career fair.
- Get the homework help you need by accessing [Tutor.com](#), which includes up to 15 free tutoring sessions each week, submitting a paper for review, plus other tools like test prep, videos, and job resources.
- [Become a VolunTeen](#) at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, or volunteer anywhere in the community.
- Earn community service hours by participating in select [Library programs](#), such as a Teen Advisory Council.
- Use [Northstar Digital Literacy](#) to assess your digital literacy skills in multiple key areas. Start by requesting your Northstar Learner Account to unlock your access!
- Attend a [Library Codelab program](#) to get an introduction to coding, programming, or tech careers.
- Planning to get your driver's license? Check out [Driving Test Prep](#), so you're ready to take the wheel!

## Setting Your Compass

- Check out *Finish High School* on [Get My Future](#) to see why you should invest in yourself.
- Get a [Reality Check](#) to help you gain perspective as you begin your journey.
- Take this [Interest Finder](#) to get headed in the right direction.
- Find your career path using these tools on [Ferguson's Career Guidance Center](#).
- Visit [My Next Move](#) to map out your route to the future.
- Follow us [@cmlibraryteens](#) on Instagram to learn about all of our programs and resources for teens, discover new books, and so much more!

## Sign up for the Beanstack Challenge

- Make your life easier and [register for this challenge](#) during the school year, which will track all of your activities for you, allowing you to earn badges along the way. Once you finish, you'll be eligible to win a completion prize (while supplies last), while also being entered into a grand prize drawing in June!