American Staffing Association

# Post-High School Next Steps

# Background and Methodology

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll, on behalf of the American Staffing Association, from April 21–23, 2025, among 2,093 adults ages 18 and older. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval.
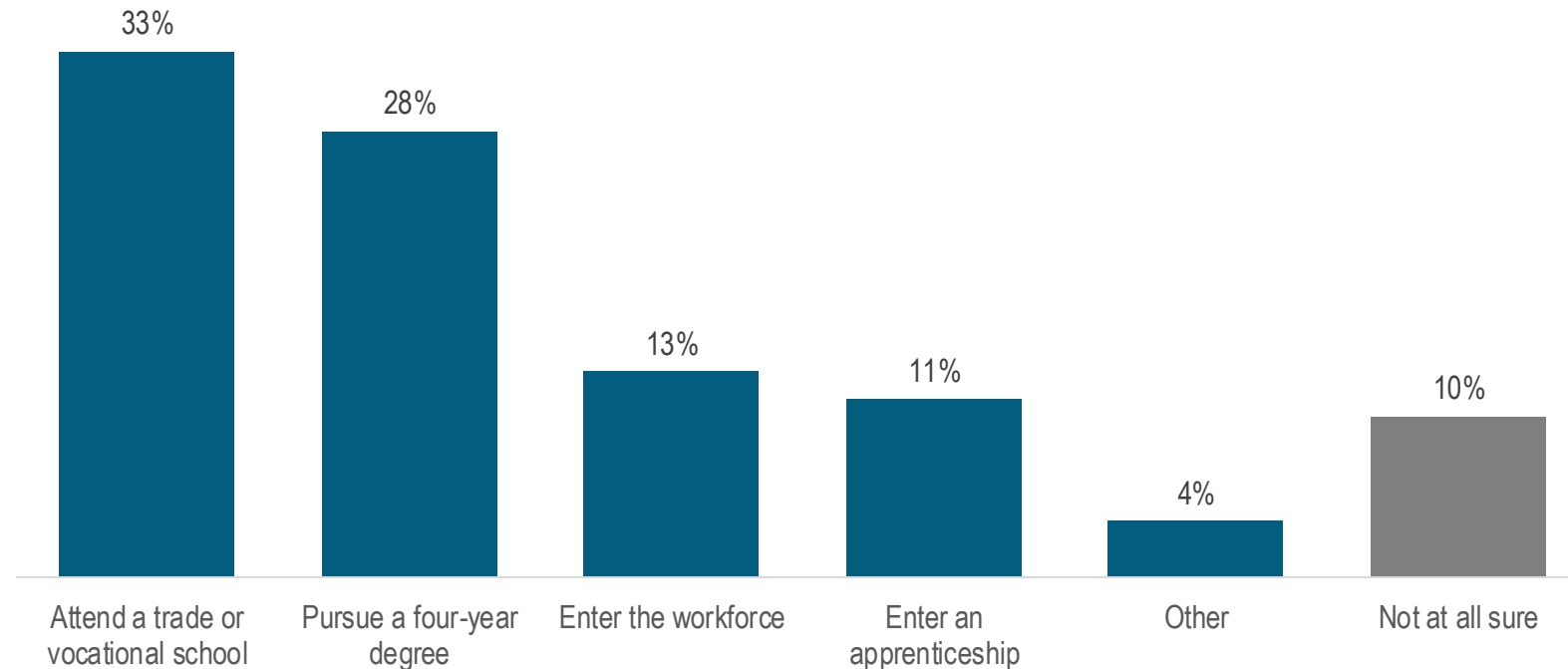
For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 2.5 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

Contact ASA with further questions about the methodology.

Note when reading tables

Circles on data points represent a statistical significance.

# One-Third of U.S. Adults Would Suggest Trade or Vocational School for Graduating High-School Seniors



Bar chart:
- Attend a trade or vocational school: 33%
- Pursue a four-year degree: 28%
- Enter the workforce: 13%
- Enter an apprenticeship: 11%
- Other: 4%
- Not at all sure: 10%

Q: What would your advice be to young people looking at options after graduating high school?
Base = U.S. adults; n = 2,093

# Older Generations More Likely to Suggest Trade or Vocational School

## Recommended Post-High School Path by Generation

| | Gen Z (18-28) (n=307) | Millennial (29-44) (n=541) | Gen X (45-60) (n=505) | Baby Boomer (61-79) (n=651) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attend a trade or vocational school | 22% | 31% | 37% | 41% |
| Pursue a four-year degree | 36% | 27% | 27% | 24% |
| Enter the workforce | 22% | 17% | 14% | 4% |
| Enter an apprenticeship | 10% | 14% | 9% | 12% |
| Other | 4% | 4% | 3% | 4% |
| Not at all sure | 7% | 8% | 10% | 15% |

Q: What would your advice be to young people looking at options after graduating high school?
Base = U.S. adults; n = 2,093

# Highest Household Incomes Are More Likely to Suggest a Four-Year Degree

## Recommended Post-High School Path by Household Income

| | Less Than $50k (n=620) | $50k–$74.9k (n=353) | $75k–$99.9k (n=363) | $100k+ (n=739) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attend a trade or vocational school | 35% | 43% | 38% | 29% |
| Pursue a four-year degree | 21% | 24% | 23% | 34% |
| Enter the workforce | 14% | 12% | 15% | 12% |
| Enter an apprenticeship | 12% | 11% | 12% | 11% |
| Other | 5% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Not at all sure | 11% | 8% | 9% | 11% |

Q: What would your advice be to young people looking at options after graduating high school?
Base = U.S. adults; n = 2,093

# Hispanic Adults More Likely to Suggest a Four-Year Degree

## Recommended Post-High School Path by Race/Ethnicity

|  | Hispanic (n=262) | Black (non-Hispanic) (n=289) | White (non-Hispanic) (n=1,328) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attend a trade or vocational school | 33% | 31% | 36% |
| Pursue a four-year degree | 34% | 22% | 26% |
| Enter the workforce | 16% | 23% | 10% |
| Enter an apprenticeship | 11% | 12% | 12% |
| Other | 2% | 3% | 4% |
| Not at all sure | 4% | 10% | 12% |

Q: What would your advice be to young people looking at options after graduating high school?
Base = U.S. adults; n = 2,093