

MAKING COLLEGE PAY

How can your son or daughter get the best return on your investment in their college education—a good job and launch into their first career?

Good grades and the right major are important blocks in the foundation of finding a job after graduation. There are, however, other steps students can take to increase their value to potential employers.

- Do an internship. Maybe the most important thing a student can do is find an internship—get real work experience in the field. Many employers look within their own internship programs when they need to fill entry-level positions.

That means, if a student does a good job while in an internship, he or she may get a job offer from that organization. And, while an internship could be the foot-in-the-door that a new grad needs, it also gives a student a realistic look at the prospective job, company, and career.

- Go to the career center. Research shows that tapping into the resources offered by career services can increase the likelihood of getting a job offer.

While career counselors won't "place" a student in a job, they teach students skills that will help them find their way onto and up the career ladder. They teach students how to put together winning resumes and cover letters, how to interview successfully, and how to dress professionally. They critique resumes, practice interview techniques, and field job listings. Most services at the campus career center are free.

Plus, career counselors know the employers that hire on their college campuses—they work with them on a regular basis—and can put a student in touch with the organizations looking for new hires.

- Start the job-search process early.
 - Find the right major and start to plot a career path during the freshman year.
 - Start exploring internship opportunities. What's better than an internship the summer after junior year? Multiple internships. Freshmen and sophomores may find internships too.
 - Get ready to be recruited in the fall. Employers do many of their on-campus interviews—for internships and entry-level positions—in the fall. And while employers interview in the spring, it's best to be an early bird.

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.