

# TRAIN BALTIMORE

## BUILD YOUR SKILLS, FIND YOUR PATH

### Start Smart!

#### Questions to Ask Before You Sign Up for Training

Choosing the right training program is important. Before you spend your time and money on a program, you need to know it is going to pay off. A good program should be able to answer the following questions before you agree to enroll.

##### ✓ The Basics

- What types of jobs will you be ready for? Is there demand in the field?
- Does the program offer help with job placement? If so, how do they help?
- What percent of graduates are employed in the field they trained for?
- What is average starting pay for graduates?
- If you have a criminal record, will that make it hard to find work in this field?

**Ask yourself:** Do I have the information I need to feel sure I will be able to get a job in the field I train for – quickly and with a starting pay I can live off of?

##### ✓ Cost

- What is the total cost? Are books and other supplies included in the tuition?
- Will you have to pay for exams or certification?
- How does the cost of this program compare with similar programs at other schools?
- Does the school offer financial aid, including grants, scholarships, or loans? Will you know whether you're eligible before you enroll?
- What is the refund policy?

**Ask yourself:** Can I afford this program? If I take out loans, will I be able to get a job where I earn enough to pay them back?

##### ✓ Outcomes

- What is the program's graduation rate?
- If the school offers student loans, what is their default rate? A high default rate is a sign that graduates are not finding jobs that pay enough to make ends meet.
- How do current or former students rate the program?

**Ask yourself:** Do I feel confident in this program's track record?

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### ✓ Student Support Services

- Can the school help if you're having problems attending class or meeting class requirements? Is there full-time staff to help students deal with outside issues?
- Is extra help available if you're having trouble learning the material?
- Does the program offer a stipend to students in training?
- Are there other types of student services or assistance available?

**Ask yourself:** What challenges might I face during the program? Will the program be able to help me deal with these issues and still graduate?

### ✓ The Program

- Is the program run by an accredited school, government agency, union, or reputable nonprofit? If not, make sure the program can prove a track record of success.
- What are classes like? Are they big or small? Are they hands-on or in a classroom?
- Do the teachers have experience in the field? What qualifications do they have?
- Do you need to complete an internship or clinical placement in addition to training?
- Do you have to sign an enrollment contract?

**Ask yourself:** Can I see myself doing well in this program? Do I have the time and interest? If you're not sure, ask about sitting in on a class to see what it's like.

### ✓ Convenience

- Is the program accessible? Is there public transit nearby, or will you be able to easily drive and park?
- What is the schedule like? If needed, are evening and weekend options available?
- What are the facilities like? Do they supply computers, tools and other supplies?

**Ask yourself:** Will I be able to get there easily from home? From work? From my child's daycare? Will the class times work with my current schedule?

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