



*presented by BOCES 2 Center for Workforce Development*

## **Pathways After High School**

There are over 600 pathways after high school with most pathways falling into four categories:

- Employment – Starting a career right away
- Military Enlistment – Serving in the armed forces
- Higher Education & Training – Pursuing college, career training, or apprenticeships
- Entrepreneurship – Building your own business

No matter which path someone chooses, it rarely follows a straight line. Many individuals move between work and education, gaining skills and expanding opportunities as they progress in their careers.

## **The Many Forms of Higher Education**

Higher education isn't limited to traditional colleges. Apprenticeships, career training, and on-the-job learning all qualify as higher education. Skilled trades pathways often provide excellent wages with little or no education debt—an attractive option for many students seeking financial stability.

## **The Demand for Skilled Trades**

Skilled trades professionals are essential in every industry. From home construction and electrical work to engineering and manufacturing, tradespeople build, maintain, and improve the spaces we live and work in. With strong demand for these careers, trade skills remain a valuable and rewarding choice.

## **ACT WorkKeys**

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is an industry-recognized credential that certifies foundational skills necessary for workplace success. This portable certification can help students stand out when seeking employment or training opportunities.

Monroe County is striving to become a Work Ready Community by leveraging the ACT WorkKeys NCRC to bridge the skills gap, streamline workforce efforts, and connect businesses with qualified employees. Their initiative focuses on helping individuals earn the credential while encouraging employers to recognize its value.

Students are encouraged to take the ACT WorkKeys assessments in Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy. As participants of the TradeUp event, students can complete the assessments at CWD at a special discounted rate of \$10 per test. Plus, if they take two, they get the third one free!

To learn more about ACT WorkKeys visit <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/act-workkeys.html> or call CWD at 585-349-9100.

### **Insights from Industry Experts**

At the panel discussion, representatives from unions, civil service, and private industry shared key advice:

- You shape your future – Consistency and hard work lead to success in any industry.
- Explore your options – There are countless career paths, so find one that aligns with your interests.
- College is not the only route – While a four-year degree is one option, training and experience can also lead to a fulfilling, well-paying career.
- Encouraging students to explore multiple paths ensures they make informed decisions about their futures and find fulfilling careers that match their skills and aspirations.