

Career Counselor

Help people pick a direction and get hired. Steady hours, modest pay, a master's degree for the better jobs.

TYPICAL PAY

\$64,330

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$45k to \$105k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

College career centers, state workforce offices, high schools, pr...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Psychology, English and anything that forces you to talk to strangers. Peer tutoring and mentoring look good on an application.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Psychology, sociology, human services or education. Any major can work, but these line up with graduate school prerequisites.
- 3 First job in the field** 1 to 3 years
Academic advisor, admissions counselor, job coach at a workforce office or case aide. This is where you find out whether you actually like the work.
- 4 Master's degree** 2 to 3 years
Counseling, student affairs or career development. Programs accredited by CACREP (the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) are the ones state boards recognize.
- 5 Credential or state license** After the master's
The National Certified Counselor credential, or your state's school counselor certificate, or a full state counseling license if you want to do therapy too.

Pros and cons

- + You watch people change direction and make it stick
- + Regular hours and a real calendar, not shift work
- + Jobs exist in every city and every state
- A master's degree is expected for most of the good jobs
- Caseloads are big and the paperwork never ends
- Pay is modest for the education it takes

Good to know

The job started in Boston in 1908

Frank Parsons opened the Vocations Bureau in Boston in 1908 and wrote a book about matching people to work. Historians usually date career counseling in the United States to that year.

Six interest types run the whole field

Most career tests sort you into six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. Psychologist John Holland built that model, and the free government career site My Nex...

Optional boosts

National Certified Counselor. Facilitating Career Development training. School Career Development Advisor. Certified School Counselor from the American School Counselor Association.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors (21-1012.00)
National Board for Certified Counselors: the National Certified Counselor credential
National Career Development Association
Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/career-counselor>



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