



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BEFORE YOU ENROLL MAKE SURE SCHOOL IS LICENSED

Unlicensed schools leave students with bills, broken promises

OLYMPIA--During a down economy, the promise of a job after training is a tempting offer. But a state watchdog agency urges potential students to verify a school is licensed before spending time and money.

A state license is required for most private vocational programs. Without a license, the school may be operating illegally and a student's investment in education won't lead to a new career, just more bills.

"Many students are blindsided when they enroll in schools that lack a license," said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the Workforce Board, the state agency that licenses and regulates private career schools.

"They may discover the classes they took don't count toward a credible certificate or degree, or they could pay for training they never receive. And if the school shuts down, they might not be able to get their money back."

As the agency that regulates private career schools, the Workforce Board maintains a list of licensed schools. View the list at www.wtb.wa.gov/currentlicensedschools.asp.

Ask questions to make sure a school delivers on its promises

The Workforce Board suggests potential students ask questions before they enroll.

- **What percentage of the school's graduates find jobs?** Schools that meet minimum post-school employment and earnings are called Eligible Training Providers. You can find all these Eligible Training Providers and other information about 5,000 Washington programs at www.CareerBridge.wa.gov.
- **Do you need a state license to practice your chosen occupation?** Some professions require a state license for you to operate. You should learn what the state licensing requirements for an occupation are *before* talking to a school. Talk to the state Department of Licensing. See www.dol.wa.gov/business/professionals.html.
- **Are the school's facilities and equipment up-to-date?** Ask to sit in on a class or tour the school. Good schools are happy to show off facilities, equipment and instructors.
- **What is the school's refund policy?** There can be significant differences between refund policies at public and private institutions.

For a **complete list of questions** go to www.wtb.wa.gov/ChoosingASchool.asp