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## The Benefits of Technical Trade Schools – The New Normal



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**Product or Service:** Education

**No. of Employees:** 299

**Head of Company:**

Jim Bologna, President and CEO

**Year Founded:** 1946



Jim Bologna,  
President and CEO

While some of us have earned our degrees at traditional colleges or universities, today's generation is fortunate to have another viable option. Trade schools like Porter and Chester Institute provide career training programs that teach students the necessary skills to step out into the real world and begin working as a professional. The perception of technical or trade school education has been that it didn't prepare you for a well-paying career. But times have changed. There's a growing demand for skilled trades, healthcare and information technology workforce that's projected to continue. Today, more people are looking at the opportunities offered by schools like Porter and Chester Institute and the reasons are many.

One reason is lower cost. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), while degree costs vary by school and program, trade schools cost significantly less than four-year institutions, as most students will complete their education in one year as opposed to four.

If there is anything good that may have come out of COVID-19, it would be flexibility. Like many, Porter and Chester had to shift to an online, asynchronous way of classroom learning. Multiple start dates and day and evening classes throughout the year also add flexibility and decrease the waiting time to get started in a program. Porter and Chester still requires students to get hands-on experience in our industry-modeled labs. Today, as we continue to move towards a "new normal," we realize that hybrid or blended learning offers recent high school graduates, veterans and adult learners the flexibility that they need to work or care for their families while learning healthcare, skilled trades, or information technology.

Another benefit of trade school is the shorter time to graduation. With programs running from ten to twelve months, knowing that there is a demand for workers in automotive, computers, skilled trades, medical and dental assisting, or practical nursing is a great motivator.

At Porter and Chester Institute we work hard to build strong relationships with our corporate partners, as well. From National Lumber, Jaguar, Bridgeport Boatworks and the list goes on. Not only do we partner with area businesses to provide externship opportunities to some of our students, we also involve industry leaders in providing feedback to ensure that our students are learning the skills necessary to enter the workforce and begin their career.

The value of a Porter and Chester education in today's economy speaks for itself. Each and every day, we receive calls from businesses in the trades and in healthcare looking for our graduates to apply for open positions.

The skill gap is wider than ever and the demand for workers in healthcare and the skilled trades is higher than ever. There is no time better than the present to put the value of technical or trade schools back on the map as a path to success.

If you haven't been on a Porter and Chester campus, I want to personally invite you to take a tour. Seeing it is believing it!

**By Jim Bologna, President & CEO, Porter and Chester Institute**

*Porter and Chester Institute, a private sector, post-secondary technical institution with nine campuses throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts, featuring 11 different career programs.*