

11. Solar Panel Installer

Rayce is an installer at a solar energy company in his hometown. No one in his family ever went to college, so education was never a priority. Besides, he didn't take school seriously. He figured he'd just find a job after graduation. That all changed during his sophomore year when a local organization came to his class to present a college and career seminar. He learned that the fastest growing job in America (solar panel installer) only requires a high school education and offers a higher-than-average starting salary.

There was a solar panel installation company in his town, so he decided to contact them to ask about the skills and education they required. They confirmed that he only needed to graduate from high school, but they'd like for him to have some electrical experience. They also encouraged him to become familiar with the risks involved with the job. Rayce added electrical classes to his 11th grade schedule, and as a senior, he got an internship at the solar company. After graduation it became a fulltime job. The company provided on-the-job training and certification and will pay for any continuing education he chooses to pursue.

At 20 years old, Rayce is making \$35,000/year, which is already above the entry-level salary for his career, due to the knowledge and experience he gained in high school, and now, to add to his skills and his salary, he is looking at being certified in solar panel maintenance.