

THE ALTERNATIVE DE REE

SELF-RELIANCE
CENTRAL

A PLAN FOR AN ALTERNATIVE FOUR-YEAR PLAN
FOR A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE WHICH GIVES
REAL WORLD SKILLS OVER FOUR YEARS
WHILE **PAYING FOR ITSELF.**



PPL



CORDON BLEU



EMS



DIVING



AMATEUR RADIO



EMERGENCY
WILDERNESS
FIRST AID



BASIC
FIREARM
TRAINING



SPANISH



MANDARIN



CDL



MOTORCYCLE
LICENSE



**REAL SKILLS.
REAL EXPERIENCE.
REAL RETURN.**

**FOUR YEARS.
A BETTER FUTURE.
ON YOUR TERMS.**



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CENTRAL

Self-Reliance Central

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Table of Contents

	Introduction	3
Year 1	Year 1 — Age 18: Foundation + Licences + Weekend Stack	4
Year 2	Year 2 — Age 19: Trades + Aviation + Advanced Diving + Radio	5
Year 3	Year 3 — Age 20: Paramedic + Cordon Bleu + Cloud + Wilderness	6
Year 4	Year 4 — Age 21: Specialise + IFR + Divemaster + Launch	7
	What the Résumé Looks Like at 22	8
	Earning Power at 22	9

Introduction

~\$70,000	21	\$0	\$90k+
total cost	credentials	debt at end	year-4 earnings

This plan proves you don't need a degree to build an extraordinary career. Every credential here is nationally recognised, income-generating, and stacks on the last. By the time your peers walk across a stage, you'll hold 21 licences, have four years of real earnings behind you, and owe nothing to anyone.



Year 1 — Age 18: Foundation + Licences + Weekend Stack

YEAR 1 · AGE 18

FOUNDATION + LICENCES + WEEKEND STACK

Budget: ~\$17,500

Modules

<p>EMT-Basic (NREMT) 120-hr course + national exam. Starts paying \$16–22/hr immediately. Cost: ~\$1,310</p>	<p>[new] CDL Class A Licence 4–8 week program: 18-wheelers, buses, tankers, hazmat. Many employers reimburse. At 18 you can drive commercially within your home state — interstate routes open automatically at 21. Cost: ~\$3,000–5,000</p>
<p>CompTIA A+ IT fundamentals — entry ticket to the entire tech industry. Self-study at home. Cost: ~\$750</p>	<p>Private Pilot Licence — begin Start ground school and flight hours. FAA requires 40 hrs minimum. Cost: ~\$7,000</p>
<p>Spanish — DELE B2 Structured tutoring + immersion. Most useful second language in North America. Cost: ~\$2,700</p>	<p>[weekend] Motorcycle M Endorsement MSF Basic RiderCourse — one weekend. Rounds out a licence portfolio beautifully. Cost: ~\$350</p>
<p>[new] [weekend] NRA Basic Pistol + First Steps Rifle Standard civilian firearms safety certifications. One weekend each. Cost: ~\$150 + range</p>	<p>[new] [weekend] PADI Open Water Diver World's most recognised diving cert. Pool sessions + 4 open water dives. Cost: ~\$350–500</p>
<p>OSHA 30 + CPR/First Aid Required for virtually every trade and construction role. Cost: ~\$180</p>	

Credentials earned this year:

EMT-B (NREMT) · CDL Class A · CompTIA A+ · OSHA 30 + CPR · DELE B2 Spanish · Motorcycle M · NRA Pistol + Rifle · PADI Open Water

Income tip: EMT weekends at \$16–22/hr. CDL opens in-state commercial driving at 18 — interstate routes and full OTR money unlock automatically at 21. Eight credentials in year one.

Year 2 — Age 19: Trades + Aviation + Advanced Diving + Radio

YEAR 2 · AGE 19

TRADES + AVIATION + ADVANCED DIVING + RADIO

Budget: ~\$17,000

Modules

<p>Welding — AWS SENSE Level 1 Community college or trade school. Welders earn \$45–90k; pipeline welders much more. <i>Cost: ~\$5,500</i></p>	<p>PPL — Complete + IFR Start Finish solo cross-countries and checkride. A PPL at 19 stops conversations. <i>Cost: ~\$4,700</i></p>
<p>Plumbing Apprenticeship — Year 1 Paid apprenticeship (\$18–22/hr) alongside classroom credits. <i>Cost: Net positive</i></p>	<p>CompTIA Network+ / Security+ Security+ is DoD-approved. Opens government contract roles at \$60–80k. <i>Cost: ~\$1,150</i></p>
<p>[weekend] FCC Amateur Radio — Tech + General Study free at HamStudy.org, sit both exams same day. <i>Cost: ~\$30</i></p>	<p>[new] [weekend] PADI Advanced Open Water 5 adventure dives incl. deep and navigation. Unlocks 30m depth. <i>Cost: ~\$350–450</i></p>
<p>[new] [weekend] PADI Rescue Diver Transforms a diver into someone who can save lives underwater. <i>Cost: ~\$400–500</i></p>	

Credentials earned this year:

FAA Private Pilot Licence · AWS SENSE L1 Welding · CompTIA Network+ · CompTIA Security+ · FCC Amateur Radio (Tech + General) · PADI Advanced OW · PADI Rescue Diver

Income tip: Apprenticeship stipend offsets most costs. Licensed pilot, certified welder, rescue diver, radio operator — at 19.

Year 3 — Age 20: Paramedic + Cordon Bleu + Cloud + Wilderness

YEAR 3 · AGE 20 PARAMEDIC + CORDON BLEU + CLOUD + WILDERNESS Budget: ~\$23,500

Modules

<p>Paramedic Certification (NREMT-P) 1,200+ hr program building on EMT-B. Nationwide demand at \$50–75k. <i>Cost: ~\$7,500</i></p>	<p>[new] Le Cordon Bleu — Diplôme de Cuisine World's most recognised culinary credential. 9-month program. Classical French technique, pastry, kitchen management. <i>Cost: ~\$11,000–13,000</i></p>
<p>AWS Cloud Practitioner + Solutions Architect The #1 cloud platform. Solutions Architect alone is a \$100k+ credential. <i>Cost: ~\$700</i></p>	<p>[new] [weekend] Wilderness First Responder (WFR) 70-hr intensive — gold standard for backcountry medicine. Required for outdoor guides and search & rescue. <i>Cost: ~\$700–900</i></p>
<p>Personal Finance Self-Study Taxes, investing, insurance, compound interest. Huge edge in every career context. <i>Cost: ~\$600</i></p>	

Credentials earned this year:

NREMT Paramedic · Le Cordon Bleu Diplôme de Cuisine · AWS Cloud Practitioner · AWS Solutions Architect Assoc. · Wilderness First Responder (WFR)

Income tip: Year 3 is the heaviest at ~\$23.5k. Cordon Bleu mornings + Paramedic evenings is a realistic split schedule.

Year 4 — Age 21: Specialise + IFR + Divemaster + Launch

YEAR 4 · AGE 21 **SPECIALISE + IFR + DIVEMASTER + LAUNCH** **Budget: ~\$13,500**

Modules

<p>Instrument Rating (IFR) — Complete Fly in cloud and low visibility. IR + PPL at 21 opens commercial aviation. <i>Cost: ~\$8,000</i></p>	<p>Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) Globally recognised cybersecurity specialist. Opens \$90–120k roles. <i>Cost: ~\$3,450</i></p>
<p>Plumbing Apprenticeship — Year 3 Full apprentice wages (\$22–28/hr). Journeyman licence at ~25. <i>Cost: Net positive</i></p>	<p>Mandarin HSK 3 or Portuguese B1 Trilingual path in progress at 22. Massive differentiator alongside Spanish. <i>Cost: ~\$1,600</i></p>
<p>[new] [weekend] PADI Divemaster First professional PADI rating — can legally guide paying divers anywhere on earth. <i>Cost: ~\$600–900</i></p>	

Credentials earned this year:

FAA Instrument Rating · CEH · Plumbing Apprentice Yr 3 · Mandarin HSK 3 / Portuguese B1 · PADI Divemaster

Income tip: At 21: pilot, paramedic, Cordon Bleu chef, ethical hacker, rescue diver, wilderness medic, and Divemaster.

What the Résumé Looks Like at 22

21 nationally recognised credentials

Spanning healthcare, aviation, culinary arts, cybersecurity, diving, firearms, trades, vehicles, and languages.

PADI Divemaster + Rescue Diver

The full PADI professional stack. Paramedic + Rescue Diver is an extremely rare combination in expedition and maritime contexts.

NRA Basic Pistol + Rifle

Responsible firearms ownership credentials. Signals discipline and opens security and range instruction paths.

Wilderness First Responder

Gold standard for backcountry medicine. Required for expedition guides and search and rescue. Almost no college graduate has this.

Le Cordon Bleu Diplôme de Cuisine

The world's most recognised culinary name. Private chef (\$500–2,000/day), catering, hospitality management, and food media.

FAA PPL + Instrument Rating

Fewer than 0.2% of Americans are licensed pilots. At 21 with an IFR rating, it's a genuine conversation-stopper.

CDL Class A + Motorcycle M

Can legally operate an 18-wheeler, bus, tanker, and motorcycle. In-state commercial driving from age 18; full interstate routes unlock at 21. Almost nobody under 30 has this full vehicle stack.

Spanish B2 + Mandarin / Portuguese in progress

Trilingual path established at 22. Invaluable to any multinational or government employer.

Earning Power at 22

	College Graduate	Alternative Degree Path
Starting salary	~\$55,000	\$65,000–90,000
Student debt	~\$40,000	\$0
Work experience	Internships	4 years real earnings
Credentials	1 degree	21 licences & certs
Career flexibility	Single field	7+ independent paths

Income streams available at 22:

- **Cybersecurity / cloud (CEH + AWS)** — \$70–120k entry; remote-friendly; near-zero unemployment
- **Paramedic (full-time or agency)** — \$50–75k base; massive overtime; WFR adds search & rescue roles
- **Private chef / catering (Cordon Bleu)** — \$500–2,000/day private events; \$60–80k salaried in high-end hospitality
- **PADI Divemaster** — Dive guide income anywhere tropical; \$30–80/hr
- **CDL trucking** — In-state commercial driving from 18; full OTR interstate routes at 21 — \$65–85k; tanker/hazmat premium adds 15–25%
- **Welding** — \$45–90k; pipeline specialty \$150k+ with experience
- **Plumbing (journeyman at ~25)** — \$60–75k employed; own business potential \$150k+
- **Aviation path** — Commercial licence by ~23–24; regional airlines \$60k, majors \$150k+



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