



WHAT ARE YOU UP FOR?

MY LIFE AS



AN AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN: STEPHANIE EDWARDS

Stephanie Edwards admits she wasn't the best student. Still, she had high hopes for a career that would enable her to provide a good life for her son. Her high school automotive class had appealed to her, so she sought a technical school certification. The program took a year. Now, she's a line mechanic at Gulf States Toyota.

Toyota alone needs one certified technician for every 800 to 900 vehicles under seven years old. Currently that ratio is one to 1,300 and rising, due to growth in vehicles in the Houston area.

"When parents say to their child that they would like them to go to college, it's not so much about the college," Stephanie said. "It's about wanting their child to have a good and successful life... You can absolutely do that with a technical school education."

REQUIREMENTS:

Advanced tech education and certification, Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification, on-the-job education and training

SALARY:

\$40,000 to \$60,000 median wage for certified service technician

CAREER PATH:

Apprentice, line mechanic

ADVANCEMENT:

Master technician, team leader, shop foreman, service writer, service manager, service director, parts manager

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Enroll in your high school's automotive program, if possible. Gain certifications before applying for a position. This will fast-track your growth and can enable you to train at factory training facilities. Computer proficiency. Good customer service and communications skills. Knowledge about the most current automotive technology, which changes at the rate that cell phone technology changes.

KEY CAREER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Hook up the car's computer to diagnostic tools to see what's going on in the car's computer. Diagnose problems and perform repairs and preventive maintenance on engines, transmissions, electrical systems, brakes, and tires. Less experienced automotive service technicians generally work on used cars—trying to figure out what they need to be ready to be sold—and small customer complaints, such as radio, door lock, and Blue Tooth problems.