

WESTERN ILLINOIS WORKS

Serving Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, Knox,
McDonough, Pike, Schuyler, and Warren Counties

Sarah's Career Journey – From Struggle to Success

Sarah, of Pittsfield, Illinois, is a recent Individual Achievement Award recipient from WIOA (Western Innovation and Opportunity Act). Sarah epitomizes what WIOA clients are able to achieve.

Struggling to Support Her Family

She first applied for assistance as a single mom of three girls, as a Certified Nursing Assistant. Although she was working full-time, she still qualified for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), struggled financially, and lived in a tiny, cramped two-bedroom trailer.

Sarah wanted to be a nurse but decided to wait until her children were just a little older, as she did not want to miss their early development.

She said they were, “Just living, not living life, but surviving life day-by-day.”

Gaining Confidence

Sarah applied for the WIOA grant to obtain her Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) license. She also applied for SNAP Supportive Services while she was in the nursing program.

She scored high with healthcare services on her WorkNet Career Cluster assessment and said that her inspiration to be a nurse came from her mother, who is also a nurse.

Then Sarah scored well on the nursing entrance exam, which gave her the confidence she needed.

Sarah's research determined that the nearest nursing school for her was 72 miles round-trip and that without transportation reimbursement, she would be unable to complete her training. Later, her clinicals would be even further at 117 miles round trip.

Surviving and Thriving

Through the WIOA program, Sarah received tuition assistance, books, fees, scrubs and shoes, mileage reimbursement for training, and monthly gas cards from SNAP to cover getting to work.

Sarah's employer worked with her, adjusting her schedule to part-time on weekends, so she could continue her training, and offered her a position as an LPN when she was licensed.

Sarah said she was able to survive and thrive because she was not working full-time and trying to excel at a rigorous course of study.

Since then, Sarah has graduated and has completed her final licensure test.

When Sarah started in the program, she was receiving \$15 per hour and barely covering her monthly expenses. As an LPN, Sarah makes \$27 an hour at her current employer.

Sarah has almost doubled her income, moved into a home that fits her family, and because of Western Illinois Works, has a sustaining career, all within a year of her original application.

Sarah said, “I did want to add a huge thank you to the WIOA program. I couldn't have done this without the support.”



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Your program allowed me to not only complete the program, but absolutely thrive. With your help, and the support from WIOA, I graduated valedictorian.

“Sarah was determined to make a better life for herself and her children. She knew she was capable of more, and she was right.”

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www.WorkforceCanHelp.com

