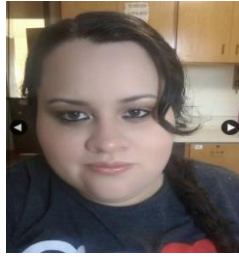


Joanna's Zamudio Success Story



Joanna Zamudio was born and raised in Hermiston, Oregon. Her whole working life has been spent working in agricultural work. That is the only kind of employment Joanna has surrounded herself throughout the years. She has worked at different staffing agencies sorting potatoes and dealing with labor unions. She was often getting paid about \$15,000 annually. Joanna later in life became a single mother, and the demands of child care for a single mother were challenging. Her work schedule was loaded with hardly any time for breaks, and she could not spend quality time with her daughter due to the long working hours. Due to the barriers that came with being a single mother, Joanna did not believe she would ever be able to continue her education and find better-paying employment that would lead to a better future for her and her daughter. She was never encouraged to do more for herself, so she feared stepping outside her comfort zone. Due to her family's farming roots, she followed her family's path, fearing the unknown.

Joanna was intrigued by the idea of going to college but felt frightened to begin this new journey. Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC) was recommended to her by a coworker who advised her to schedule an appointment. Joanna was eligible in the National Farmworker Jobs Program, one of the programs OHDC offers to Farmworkers. Joanna was able to create a plan with the help of the OHDC staff.

Joanna had the opportunity to do a Work Experience (WEX) at the local OHDC office in Hermiston, where she was able to gain office administration skills to polish her resume. During her WEX, she was also able to interact with agriculture participants who shared similar backgrounds. OHDC staff encouraged Joanna to take Fred Pryor courses and keyboarding training. Job readiness was another crucial in-house training that provided basic employability skills, resume building, and effective interview communication skills. When she began acquiring new skills, she decided to enroll at the local Blue Mountain Community College and major in business administration. The OHDC staff supported her in her decision and encouraged her to complete her Associate's Degree.

As a full-time college student, she received support services from OHDC, including fuel for her commute to school, household goods, and nutritional meals. As a result of her studies, Joanna has graduated with an Associate Degree in applied science and business administration. A local accounting firm now employs her. After working in agriculture for a long time earning minimum wage and extremely long hours, she now earns \$16 an hour with sick leave, personal time off, vacation time, and yearly bonuses.

“My OHDC experience helped me realize that life is full of limitless opportunity. When one door closes, a new one opens, there are endless possibilities when you have positive affirmation.” - Joanna Zamudio