



# ARE YOU READY TO MOVE AHEAD?

## WE'RE HERE TO CLEAR A PATH FOR YOU.

Supporting local youth is a primary focus for United Way, and we are committed to investing in young people in our community to help them make a “180” in their lives. We’re doing this by removing barriers and supporting students on the path to *successful employment and income stability*.

**This is not just another jobs program.** There are plenty of employers looking for trained workers, and Workforce180 is the bridge: connecting job training and certified skills with stable, long-term employment. Participants in our Workforce180 initiative learn specialized skills and earn certifications for in-demand careers. When a student successfully completes their certification, employers are waiting!

### HOW DOES WORKFORCE 180 WORK?

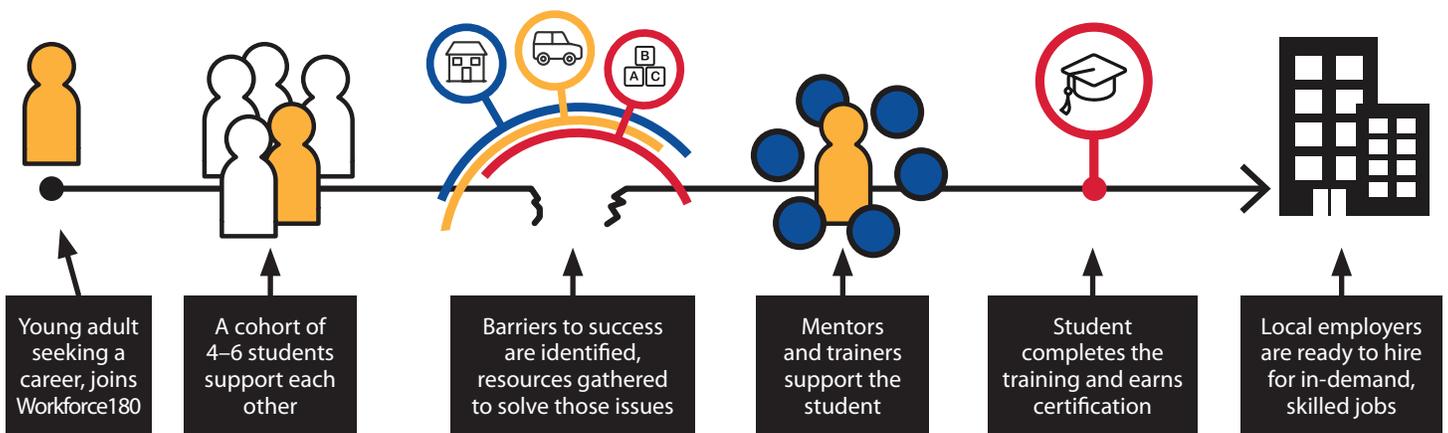
**WHO:** 18–30 year olds who do not have a career path, and whose income and work situation is unstable

**WHAT:** Students are brought together into a cohort group of 4–6 participants

**THEN WHAT:** United Way invests in career training for the participants, in fields such as Certified Nursing Assistant, Paramedic training, or the trades (construction, plumbing, electrical, etc.)

In addition, United Way staff works with each participant to determine what barriers exist that would keep them from successfully completing the path to certification. They then gather the necessary resources — such as social services, shelter assistance, childcare — to help solve those problems. Each cohort group meets regularly to support one another, as well as receive support from professional trainers, mentors, and even potential employers.

**Participants who have successfully completed the Workforce180 pathway say this team approach made a huge difference to them — they knew their mentors and United Way were beside them, making sure they had what they needed to succeed.**



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## ARE YOU READY TO START YOUR CAREER PATH?

If you can see yourself earning a certification that will lead to an in-demand career, but would benefit from mentorship and support of United Way partners, apply to join an upcoming Workforce180 cohort.

There are currently two cohorts in progress, pursuing Nursing-related credentials and Paramedic training. Our goal is to have as many as 10 cohorts and 50 participants in Workforce180, moving toward a credentialed skill. Looking forward, we would like to add other career tracks such as technology, agriculture and a variety of options in the trades.

**NEXT STEPS:** To learn how you, or someone you know, can become part of Workforce 180, call United Way of McLean County at **309-828-7383** or email [klorenz@uwaymc.org](mailto:klorenz@uwaymc.org).

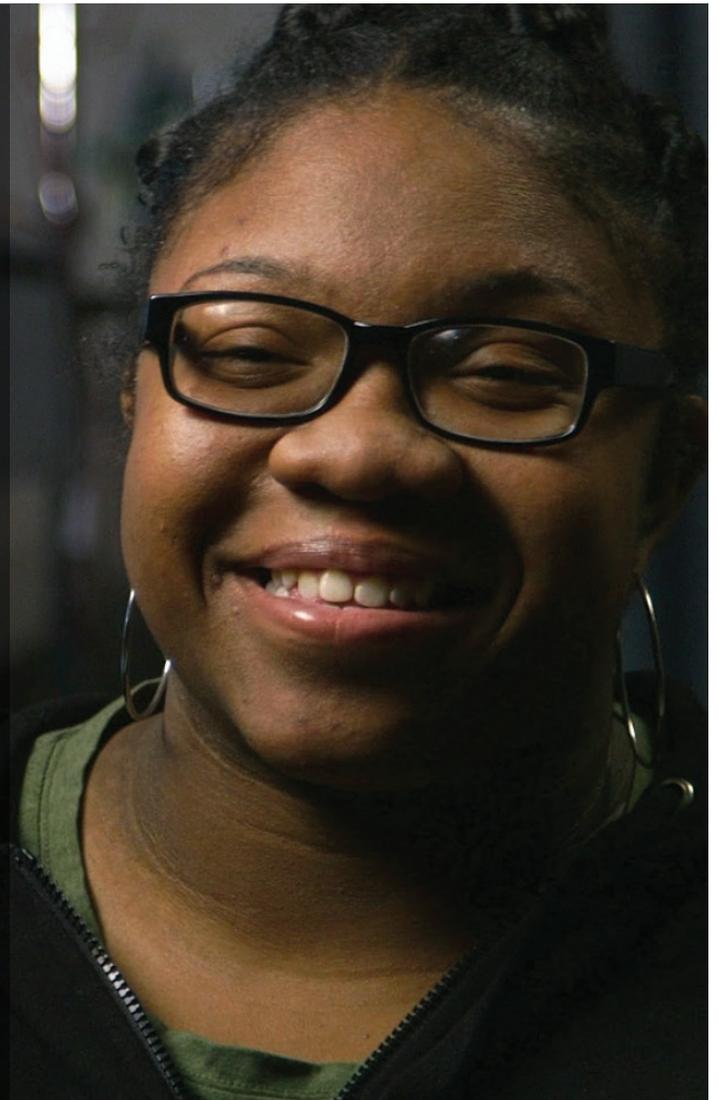
### TRANSFORMING LIVES: **MEET SIERRA**

Sierra is one of six young women to enter our inaugural **Workforce180** initiative. She's turned her life around in the Heartland Community College CNA program through Workforce180 support.

"I was trying to work hard at two jobs, just to keep money coming in. To be in the CNA program, you have to pass a math class, and I wasn't able to pay for the almost \$800 class. Workforce180 said they could pay for it.

"Words can't describe how it felt to have them say 'we're going to make sure you have everything so you don't fail and you can be successful'... that meant a lot to me. It lifted a weight off my shoulders."

**Sierra was able to complete her clinicals in September, despite the pandemic, and is now working as a Certified Nursing Assistant.**



*"My thoughts for my future? Just... the sky's the limit for me!" — Sierra*