

SHAWNTRAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY



 **PITTSBURGH, PA**
Pathway to Success
in Healthcare

HPOG offers a lifeline for student debt

Shawntray did what most people do who want to make a better life for themselves, she went to school and got a degree. After completing her bachelor's degree in Psychology, she realized entry-level jobs in her field barely paid enough to cover food and housing. To earn a decent living, she needed a master's degree. But after racking up \$30,000 worth of student loans, the prospect of taking on more debt was not appealing.

Knowing it was time for a change, Shawntray joined AmeriCorps and used the time to examine her options and consider her next move. After that, she started working part-time in a local hospital cafeteria but struggled to make ends meet. Shawntray knew she wanted to help others and be financially independent. She applied the education benefit she earned through AmeriCorps towards a semester at Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). On the first day of the Fall 2017 semester, her life changed forever.

While taking prerequisite courses, she learned about CCAC's HPOG program, the **Pathway to Success in Healthcare**, from some fellow classmates. She realized it was the perfect opportunity for her to finally embark on a rewarding career path. By the end of the semester, she submitted an application, and received a letter confirming her

acceptance into the program shortly thereafter. With Pathway to Success in Healthcare's assistance, Shawntray was ready to begin a nursing program.

HPOG helped cover Shawntray's transportation expenses so she could commute to school. They covered the cost of tuition, books, and educational supplies allowing her to focus on her studies. As soon as she began the nursing program, Shawntray transferred from her cafeteria job to a nursing assistant position. She gained on the job experience and confidence. This made her realize that becoming a nurse was within her reach. Shawntray completed the nursing program, passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) exam and now makes \$27.09 an hour as a nurse.

“HPOG offered so much for me to truly succeed. Through the program I received mentorship, financial support, and just feeling like I could make something of myself.”

This success story was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.