

My name is Michelle Cannady and I am a leader at Community Voices Heard. I am here this afternoon to give my testimony on my future goals and the need for New York State to create a New York State Career Pathway Fund to advance the skills of low-income workers and meet the demands of business. When I was growing up and I was asked the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I said "A Doctor". So, when I was in high school, I had the opportunity to study nursing – which is a good career pathway because there is a shortage of nurses and they are in demand. But I didn't have the stomach for it.

Next I went to school for accounting and business management. I did excellent in that field and I love accounting because math is one of my favorite subjects and I'm good at it. But I had a hard time finding a job because I lacked interviewing skills and concrete on-the-job experience. I became discouraged and gave up. Instead, I stayed at home and raised my sons.

Now that my children have grown up, I would like to get into the workforce but I lack the skills and the experience. While I was raising my sons I was on public assistance numerous times. Under the Work Experience Program (WEP) I had various job assignments and acquired different skills. But these skills did not pertain to the job I wanted.

A career pathway program would help me achieve this goal – the goal of getting a job that I want, and working my way up within a career that I desire. I may begin as a clerical worker to administrative assistant and work my way up the career ladder. The sky is the limit. But what I need is a program that will help me chart out the pathway and take me step by step up the ladder from one skill set to the next.

Career pathways programs would:

- ✓ Help lower the unemployment rate by getting people into jobs where there is a great demand.
- ✓ Connect people with occupations with the largest projected growth or the largest number of jobs.
- ✓ Provide on-the-job training, licensing, and additional education.
- ✓ Prepare others to fill positions opening up by people who are retiring.
- ✓ Help prepare youth to get high school diplomas and move on to further education.
- ✓ Boost the states' economy, family earnings and the tax role.
- ✓ Close the gap by meeting the needs of the employers.

Recommendation

A career pathways program would invest in my future and the future of the next generation. As a woman seeking a career and leader at Community Voices Heard, we would like to see \$50 million dollars annually drawn from New York State's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant for the creation of the New York State Career Pathways Fund.