

# SPOTLIGHT on the Corridor

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## Embracing Change to Leverage New Opportunities

Growing and changing is a part of life and along the way we have many improvements and enhancements. After teaching Art and Design Technology classes overseas, Valerie Van Sice needed a change. She decided to come back home to Cleveland, OH and think about what she'd like to do next.

Upon returning home, she had to sign up for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Subsequently, she discovered that each element she had filled out on the government's form online had been shared with fourteen different marketers. This began her interest in privacy and security as it relates to technology.

Looking for an economical path to learn about information security, she sought out Cuyahoga Community College and enrolled in the Cleveland Codes: Software Developers Academy. As a newly returned Ward 6 resident, she did not know about the funding from the Opportunity Corridor being managed by Ohio Means Jobs for residents surrounding the Corridor.

However, because Ms. Van Sice had to sign up with Ohio Means Jobs as a part of the process for Cleveland Codes, she learned that she qualified for the funding that would cover her tuition, books, provide a laptop and even transportation assistance through bus passes.

"Cleveland Codes and Nicole at Ohio Means Jobs worked really hard to make sure the funding I received was in compliance with the grant. I am very grateful to them and the Opportunity Corridor," stated Ms. Van Sice.

From the outside it could look like Ms. Van Sice reinvented herself, but she just leveraged her current skills of creative problem solving while embracing the art of communication through coding. "When I think about where I was in March and where I am now...I've learned so much about how developers build and test software," Ms. Van Sice said.



Valerie Van Sice

"Our teacher, Kurt Jensen, brought in his developer team and we had a lot of opportunities to talk shop, and Seth Pinckney worked hard to make sure things ran smoothly for us, in spite of the challenges of launching a program like this," said Ms. Van Sice. "It's great to see how Cleveland has changed, with all of the revitalization that's happened since I've been gone. It's good to be home."

Ohio Means Jobs with the help of the Opportunity Corridor wants to give residents the opportunity to leverage their skills for new opportunities just like Ms. Van Sice.

For more stories like this one and to find out additional information about the Opportunity Corridor go to <http://opportunitycorridor.transportation.ohio.gov/>.

