

## Investing in our Neighbors Improving Lives Strengthening Communities

# Winter 2026

To learn more about Job Skills and other Family Outreach programs contact  
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### Devonah's Pathway to a Successful Career Starts with SENCA

The year was 2024, Devonah's family of five were living in a rented, single-wide trailer in southeast Nebraska. "It was a tight fit for our family," said Devonah. "It often felt like we were living in a shoe box but the rent was within our family's single-income budget-so we made it work."

At the time Devonah stayed busy as a stay-at-home mom of three while her husband held down a full-time job. With the dream of owning their own home, the couple knew in order for their dream to become a reality they would need a second income.

Several of Devonah's family members had careers in nursing which sparked Devonah's interest in healthcare. When discussing various options one of Devonah's friends mentioned phlebotomy, the medical practice of drawing blood. Devonah liked the idea and contacted the local Southeast Community College (SCC) Learning Center in Nebraska City to learn more about the program.

When discussing program costs, and financial assistance that might be available, the SCC representative suggested Devonah contact the local Southeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership (SENCA) Outreach Office. Devonah learned that SENCA's Job Skills program may be able to provide income qualifying individuals, like herself, with financial assistance to help offset educational costs.

Devonah shared. "My awareness of SENCA programs began as a Head Start parent. Two of our older children attended SENCA's Head Start Preschool, and our 3-year-old is currently enrolled in the program. The teachers and staff are all so patient and kind, I just love them." Devonah didn't hesitate contacting SENCA's local Outreach Office to schedule an appointment.

"Not only did SENCA provide educational funding assistance through their Job Skills Program, Cathy, the local Family Development Associate (FDA), assisted me with the required paper work. Cathy also stayed in contact with me throughout the program providing emotional support and to ensure our family was doing ok."

After successfully completing the phlebotomy program, Devonah enrolled in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program offered through SCC. Once again SENCA provided assistance by helping Devonah secure financial assistance through a Pell grant to help with educational costs.

More than a year later, the family of five is now a family of six. Devonah's determination and use of local resources has helped her transition from a full-time, stay-at-home mom to a mom who now balances home life with expanding her education and career.

Not only is Devonah studying to become a Licensed Practical Nurse, she is employed, as needed, at a local care facility and hospital as a CNA and Phlebotomist.

To reduce daycare costs and save toward purchasing a home, Devonah works night and weekend shifts when her husband is home and can watch the children.

With the additional income Devonah earns from working in healthcare, the family was able to move out of the single-wide, rented trailer. They purchased a nice size home, with a wonderful yard that meets the family's needs. When asked where she sees herself in the next five years Devonah replied, "My career goal is to become a Registered Nurse utilizing SCC's Associate Degree in Nursing program and work at the local hospital in labor and delivery."

Devonah is very grateful for the assistance she received from SENCA. *"SENCA is a wonderful resource in our community. Even when SENCA is unable to meet a specific need, they go above and beyond to provide individual support and assistance by partnering with others in the community who may have the resources to help. I love that about SENCA."*



Trace, Koby, Hayzley, Ryker,  
Amelia, and Devonah



Happy to be in  
their new home.

### SENCA Job Skills Improving Lives/Strengthening Communities

Since 2014, SENCA has partnered with Southeast Community College to offer healthcare and manufacturing classes such as Certified Nurse Assistant, Med Aide, Phlebotomy, and Welding for under-skilled, low-income individuals. SENCA provides financial assistance to qualifying students for the cost of the course on a loan basis.

After completing the class and gaining employment, students repay the loan allowing SENCA to offer educational opportunities to other individuals. All students participate in 90 days of follow-up case management with a trained Family Development Specialist and work on budgeting, life skills, and job soft skills.

Individuals who participate in Job Skills gain the skills and education needed to become gainfully employed, thereby reducing dependence on government programs for economically challenged households. Local employers gain well trained, responsible staff, and a skilled job pool to help meet their staffing needs. The estimated increase in income for participants who gain employment, results in a 21 to 1 return on investment.