

Vanessa Redwood

Teaching and Smiling Again

Vanessa relocated to Columbia from Kansas City in hopes of getting a fresh start in life. Vanessa was unemployed and homeless when she enrolled in SkillUP on September 19, 2019. Vanessa visited the Columbia Job Center and was quickly referred to Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA) agency for assistance, in overcoming her barrier of being homeless and needed assistance that the Job Center could not provide.

During her initial assessment with her case manager, Mia Ponder, Vanessa revealed that she is a retired teacher and had been substitute teaching, however her license had expired. CMCA was able to assist Vanessa pay for a new background and finger print check, the cost of the license and her substitute teaching certificate. With her certificate in hand, Vanessa applied with Columbia Public Schools to be a substitute teacher. She began substituting in December 2019 and is currently employed part-time with Columbia Public Schools as a teaching assistant, working 3 days a week. Vanessa has also taken a second part-time job at a funeral home in Columbia and has also found stable housing. Vanessa states, "I am thankful and grateful for the help from CMCA. My future is looking brighter."



The SkillUP program is Missouri's employment and training program for Food Stamp (SNAP) recipients. The program is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.