

Kenya Launched a Banking Career & Escaped Poverty



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TUITION-FREE BANKING TRAINING

"That was one of the best experiences I've ever had," said Kenya Cunningham, graduate of the inaugural [BankWork\\$](#) training program, when speaking on her experience at Goodwill.

BankWork\$ is an eight-week intensive training program that gives participants the skills, access and coaching needed to succeed and grow in banking careers. Participants learn about the financial services workplace, bank regulations and products, cash handling, processing customer transactions and more.

LAUNCHING A NEW CAREER

Kenya was no stranger to Goodwill when she enrolled in the BankWork\$ program. She had already taken Goodwill's Microsoft Excel and Customer Services courses but was hoping for something more intensive that would put her on a sustainable career path.

"I was working a couple part-time jobs that weren't paying anything. I was struggling. I was below poverty level, and I was barely making it," she explained.

Today, Kenya works as a Customer Banking Relationship Specialist for Bank OZK, a job she was able to land less than two months after graduating from the BankWork\$ program.

"Here I help you open checking [accounts], savings [accounts], money markets, CDs and IRAs. So, I'm the person you come to when you need your banking stuff handled," she said of her job.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

When taking one of Goodwill's [tuition-free training programs](#), participants are assigned an [Employer Engagement Specialist](#) and Career Navigator who help them with their resume, interview skills, job search and more.

Thanks to the help of Employer Engagement Specialist Craig Kalhagen, Kenya was able to land her current role and beat out 17 other people for her position.

"He had us do a video mock interview. And I thought I'm never going to do a video interview for a bank," she said. "And low and behold I had to do a video interview for Bank OZK, and I was prepared."

PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

Training programs like the one Kenya took are available free of charge to the community, thanks to shopping and donating at Goodwill's 36 [retail locations](#) and more than 40 [donation sites](#), in addition to corporate, community and philanthropic donations.

"Goodwill is the place where you can turn your life around in a few weeks," Kenya said. ***"You can go from, like myself, below poverty level to now middle-class income."***

HELP OTHERS LIKE KENYA

Since the Charlotte region is the second-largest banking center in the nation, home to more than 91,000 financial services jobs and has no other workforce development programs dedicated to the finance industry, Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont partnered with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and CareerWorks to expand its training division to offer the BankWork\$ program so that people have equitable access to career development opportunities.

If you would like to help fund Goodwill's programs and services that we offer to the community free of charge – like the ones that helped Kenya on her pathway to prosperity – consider [dropping off your gently used donations](#) at one of our locations or [making a financial contribution](#).

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